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3 DRAFT CHAPTER
TO BE SENT TO
TRAFFORD**4: NORTH/SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

- 4.1 Under a new British/Irish Agreement and in the context of the establishment of an Intergovernmental Council to deal with the totality of relationships a North/South Ministerial Council to be established to bring together those with executive responsibilities in Northern Ireland and the Irish Government in particular areas.
- 4.2 Northern Ireland to be represented by relevant Assembly Secretaries and chairs; the Irish Government by relevant Ministers. The Council to meet:
- (i) in general format twice a year with Northern Ireland represented by the Assembly Commission and the Irish Government led by the Taoiseach/Tanaiste;
 - (ii) in different formats to consider specific sectoral issues (e.g. environmental issues, agricultural issues) as business requires with the relevant Assembly secretaries and chairs, and Irish Ministers attending.
- 4.3 All Council decisions to be by agreement between both sides, North and South. Each side to take decisions in the Council only within the delegated authority of those in attendance. Other decisions to require the explicit approval of the Assembly and the Oireachtas. Each side to remain accountable to the Assembly and the Oireachtas respectively.
- 4.4 The Council to be a forum for those with executive responsibility on each side to:

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- (i) discuss with each other any matter relevant to the interest of either side;
- (ii) consult with each other on all such matters with a view to co-operating with each other where that would be in the mutual interest of both sides;

and in accordance with paragraph 3 above

- (iii) cooperate with each other in specified areas;
- (iv) take decisions together in further specified meaningful areas with a view to action at an all-island or cross-border level.

4.5 Implementation of decisions to be for each side, working through existing democratically accountable machinery. But, by agreement between each side, suitable implementation bodies and mechanisms at a cross-border or all-island level to be established for policies agreed by the Council.

4.6 Legislation, as necessary, to enable the Council and agreed implementation bodies and mechanisms to function. Initial list of areas for cooperation and decision-taking, together with relevant implementation bodies, at Annex X.

4.7 These arrangements to be capable of development, by agreement between each side and after endorsement by the Assembly and Oireachtas.

4.8 Standing secretariat, consisting of officials from the Irish Civil Service and the Northern Ireland Civil Service, to service the Council.

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