

Oifig an Tánaiste agus Aire Gnóthaí Eachtracha
Office of the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs



Mr Gareth Graham
Democratic Services Assistant
Belfast City Council
Legal and Civic Services Department
City Hall
Belfast BT1 5GS

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Reference No: DFA-TMO-06767-2023
Your Ref: C&CR 12.10.2023 GG/

Dear Mr Graham,

On behalf of the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Micheál Martin TD, thank you for your correspondence of 10 November in relation to the decision by the Climate and City Resilience Committee to request that the Department of Foreign Affairs consider including some Northern Ireland landmarks in the design of the new passport. It is also noted that the decision was ratified by the full Council at a meeting on 1 November 2023.

The existing Irish Passport, first issued in 2013, is a vital document of the Irish State and is currently ranked 4th in the Henley Global Passport Index as it provides our citizens with visa-free access to 190 countries. Frequent passport redesigns with enhanced security features are recommended by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). Therefore, the upcoming redesign is central to maintaining the integrity and reputation of the Irish Passport.

As part of the redesign process, the Department of Foreign Affairs sought input from the public on aspects of Ireland's diverse natural environment, which will feature as part of the new passport book and card design. This public consultation was conducted for an initial two-week period from 27 June to 11th July. Due to the large take up by the public as well as to allow for more contributions, the consultation period was extended for an additional week and concluded on 19 July.

The animals and vegetation provided in the consultation represented a wide range of species that are indigenous to the island of Ireland. The lists provided were not exhaustive but represent a meaningful sample to capture the island's wide range of fauna and flora. An open response box was also provided for the public to provide alternative suggestions. Overall this consultation provided an opportunity for everyone with an interest in the next passport design, regardless of location, to make relevant suggestions.

This public consultation received over 15,000 replies and is now helping to inform the design considerations for the new passport book. It is hoped that as a result of this process the public will connect with the next passport book and, in doing so, ensure the unique Irish identity is reflected in the next passport.

The results of the consultation are expected to be released before the end of the year and will be publicly available.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "L. Christian". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Lorraine Christian
Private Secretary to the Tánaiste and
Minister for Foreign Affairs