



**Comann nam Pàrant
(Dùn Èideann is Lodainn)**

Written Deputation to Policy and Sustainability Committee

Tuesday 21 March 2023 at 10am

We write regarding item 7.5 on the agenda at the policy and Sustainability Committee and would like to highlight our suggested amends and considerations for you below regarding the draft Gaelic Language Plan 2023-27.

Overall:

We would direct the committee, and those with responsibility for drafting the plan ahead of public consultation, to view our response to the Scottish Government's Languages Bill Consultation: <https://cnpduneideannblog.files.wordpress.com/2022/11/final-response-to-scottish-government-languages-bill-consultation.pdf>

This document highlights key areas identified by Comann nam Pàrant as being essential to the national plan and which will be relevant for your own. We ask that you take the time to read through this and note areas relating to Edinburgh and the Lothians and how these might be incorporated into your own plan.

We would also highlight the following areas for consideration:

That the following elements should be incorporated as requiring specific, measurable outcomes (rather than the current draft which appears rather general):

- More support in the classroom to improve Gaelic fluency of GME pupils, eg. Language Assistants in classrooms to supplement teachers.
- Increase the number of Gaelic medium extra-curricular activities undertaken – a 'Gaelic First' policy with English only as a last resort for GME pupils. Currently C7 GME residential is undertaken through English - this should be undertaken through Gaelic with the support of partner organisations.

That in terms of structure, we would expect to see Principles, Outcomes and and separation of corporate service outcomes/aims from the high level aims:

- The plan does not include any **Principles**. It should be expected that any GLP states the key principles of Equal Respect, Active Offer, and Mainstreaming and a clear description of how the City of Edinburgh Council will be guided by these principles in its policy making and subsequent implementation actions.
- None of the Actions are stated in terms of what **Outcome** is desired. It will also be difficult to measure success when actions are not clearly described in terms of current baseline position - current practice - and key, measurable, results which will demonstrate progress to outcomes.
- It would be useful to separate **Corporate Service Outcomes/Aims** from the **High Level Aims** so that there is real clarity in terms of specific actions which impact the what and how of Council services versus high level aims of the plan.

Compared to the [Plan of 2018-22](#), the Actions in the draft appear more general. For example, it is difficult to see what specific actions will be taken to enhance GME at Second Level in this version of the draft plan.

Given the scope of section 2.1 of the Implementation Plan (Continue to improve the quality of provision of Gaelic Medium Education from 0-18), we would recommend that greater detail is given here. There is an external link to a GMEIP (Gaelic Medium Education Improvement Plan) file in the document but this is not included in the papers. We hope this will be incorporated fully into the consultation in a clear and accessible manner to enable meaningful participation in the consultation process. Section 2.1 will be of great interest to the families we represent.

We would wish to see explicit commitment to:

- The creation of GME primary schools (rather than GME 'units' within English Medium schools)
- No catchment reviews of GME pupils at secondary level until a guaranteed, sustainable, long term alternative for secondary school provision is available
- No capping of the numbers of children entering GME primary provision - not only because these pupils have a right (schedule 1 of paragraph 4 of the 2010 Act applies) to be taught in Gaelic but also because the increase of pupils at primary levels then bolsters a GME secondary.
- Expansion of primary school provision so there is a greater critical mass of GME high school pupils sooner rather than later.
- Seeking participation from Scottish Government in a Short Life Working Group in Edinburgh to ensure that progress on a GME high school is made and that any proposals align with the national strategy for GME

We would also seek information on how the Council will report and assess against their Gaelic Language Plan commitments. In addition, we would seek greater clarification as to how the actions will be funded, given that it is dependent on the Scottish Government and other sources. We would seek confirmation that the plan is feasible and achievable.

In terms of amends to wording, we would suggest:

Under High Level Aim 2.1 change to 'Continue to improve the quality of provision of Gaelic Medium Education from 0-18 in line with national guidance and shaped by stakeholder participation, which includes the voices of children and young people **and to extend GME provision at all levels from 0-18**'

And in the actions under that aim, add a point '**5. Develop additional GME primary provision through establishing an additional school, and establish a new GME secondary for Edinburgh**'

We hope this is useful to you. We look forward to seeing the next draft at public consultation