

Policy and Sustainability

10 am, Tuesday, 23 May 2023

Response to the consultation on the Scottish Parliament's draft Gaelic Language Plan, 2023-28

Executive
Wards - all
Council Commitment

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 To note the response to the Scottish Parliament's consultation on their draft Gaelic Language Plan for 2023-28, approved by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Deputy Leader under urgency provisions set out in A4.1 of the Committee Terms of Reference and Delegated Functions so as to meet the consultation deadline.

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Report

Response to the consultation on the Scottish Parliament's draft Gaelic Language Plan, 2023-28

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report summarises the Council's response to Scottish Parliament's consultation on its draft Gaelic Language Plan, 2023-28, which was open from 20 February until 3 April 2023.
- 2.2 The Council's response was supportive of the commitments made in the draft plan and made some suggestions for further development.

3. Main Report

- 3.1 Under the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005, the Scottish Parliament has a statutory obligation to support Gaelic through the development of a Gaelic Language Plan to help ensure that Gaelic continues to thrive. As required by the Act, the draft plan must be subject to public consultation.
- 3.2 The Council's response to the consultation is shown in the appendix. It was supportive of the commitments and actions set out in the draft plan to increase the visibility, awareness, learning and use of Gaelic.
- 3.3 The response welcomed the Scottish Parliament's commitment to participate in Capital Gaelic, led by the City of Edinburgh Council in partnership with National Library of Scotland, which aims to establish a more collaborative and streamlined approach to promoting and embedding Gaelic in Edinburgh.
- 3.4 The Council made some suggestions for further development of the draft plan: to build opportunities for engagement with the community and education services; and to support and embed collaboration with other public bodies to maximise use of resources and impact.

4. Financial impact

- 4.1 None

5. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 5.1 The response has been informed by the priorities in the Council's own draft GLP, currently out for consultation.

6. Appendix

Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body

Consultation on Draft Gaelic Language Plan, 2023-2028

The City of Edinburgh Council's Consultation Response

1. Do you agree with the Parliament's commitments regarding visibility in the Gaelic Language Plan?

Yes. The visible normalisation of Gaelic helps to raise awareness of the language to visitors and staff alike and recognises the value and importance of Gaelic.

Bilingual lanyards and the use of the same font size for Gaelic and English in bilingual signage shows the equal status of the languages.

2. Do you agree with the Parliament's commitments regarding staffing in the Gaelic Language Plan?

Yes. These are comprehensive.

A new commitment to offer places on Gaelic Awareness training to staff from other public bodies is encouraging and will help to maximise both use of available support, and in line with the ambitions of the Capital Gaelic project, will help to develop a collaborative approach to meeting the aims of the Gaelic Language Act.

The Capital Gaelic project, led by the City of Edinburgh Council in partnership with National Library of Scotland, aims to establish a more collaborative and streamlined approach to promoting and embedding Gaelic in Edinburgh.

3. Do you agree with the Parliament's commitments regarding day-to-day operations in the Gaelic Language Plan?

Yes. As stated in the draft plan, these actions will increase the visible and audible presence of the language and create opportunities for its practical use. The proposed actions are comprehensive.

As noted above, the Scottish Parliament's commitment to *participate in Capital Gaelic to promote events/provision and create links with other providers of Gaelic services* would enable bodies to collaborate and co-ordinate efforts to increase the visibility of Gaelic at the initial point of contact with the public.

The current lack of availability of outreach education sessions for schools because of recruitment highlights the need for robust workforce planning across Scotland. Having education sessions in Gaelic promotes inclusion and the knowledge that the language offers opportunities when young people leave education, as well as giving the clear message that children and young people in GME get the same opportunities as those in mainstream education. Again, there are opportunities for collaboration between organisations, maximising available capacity and resources.

The Gaelic language audio tour which is available to visitors, and tours or information sessions in Gaelic provide good examples of opportunities to increase visibility, ensuring the language is heard and spoken. This in turn will encourage uptake.

4. Do you agree with the Parliament's commitments regarding communications in the Gaelic Language Plan?

We agree that the use of Gaelic across communications media can assist Gaelic development by increasing the visibility and status of the language. The actions proposed are comprehensive.

We particularly welcome the commitment to produce new communications products for the Gaelic community, steered by consultation with them, which will help to maximise the use and impact. It will be important to make sure that information provided in Gaelic is varied, aligns with use needs and interests and contains all of the content provided in English, rather than being a summarised form.

Recognising the importance of making sure that children and young people in Gaelic Medium Education (GME) develop a strong sense of Gaelic culture and community, developing opportunities for engagement with learners and community through hosted Gaelic events and exhibitions by the SPCB will help to enhance the visibility and status of Gaelic out with the classroom.

5. Do you agree with the Parliament's commitments regarding corpus in the Gaelic Language Plan?

Yes. The actions listed are comprehensive, and will allow Gaelic to develop as a language, and ensure the quality of Gaelic translation.

Translation, proof reading and the introduction of a Computer Aided Translation Tool are areas where there are opportunities to share resources across public bodies and we are keen that these are explored.

6. Do you agree with the Parliament's commitments regarding mainstreaming in the Gaelic Language Plan?

Yes. As above, the commitments are comprehensive.

We would suggest though that while transitioning the Gaelic Working Group into a formal diversity and inclusion network, it will be important to retain the focus on Gaelic and the commitments in the plan.

7. Do you agree with the Parliament's commitments regarding parliamentary business in the Gaelic Language Plan?

Yes, again these are comprehensive, and the opportunities for joint training identified would be of interest.

8. Do you have anything further to suggest regarding the Scottish Parliament's Gaelic Language Plan in general, and its effectiveness in fulfilling the objectives of the National Gaelic Language Plan?

The Scottish Parliament's plan sets out a detailed and comprehensive range of actions to increase the visibility, awareness, learning and use of Gaelic.

Areas for further development would be to build opportunities for engagement with the community and education services; and to support and embed collaboration with other public bodies to maximise use of resources and impact. As noted in above, involvement in the Capital Gaelic initiative, mentioned in the plan, would be one way of doing this.