

Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd
The Highland Council

Buidheann Buileachaidh na Gàidhlig – 29 Cèitean 2014
Gaelic Implementation Group – 29 May 2014

Agenda Item	5
Report No	GIG 9/14

Potential Shared Service with Argyll and Bute Council

Report by the Director of Education, Culture & Sport

Summary

This Report provides Members with information on discussions with Argyll and Bute Council on the possibility of sharing a Gaelic Education Officer resource between the Authorities.

The Report contributes to the delivery of:

- Government National Performance Outcomes 3, 4, 5 and 16.
- Scotland's National Gaelic Language Plan across its Development Areas on Home and Early Years; and Education: Schools and Teachers.
- The Programme of The Highland Council and its cross cutting commitment to 'the principle of equal respect for the Gaelic and English languages, whilst also recognising the diversity of indigenous language and dialects within the Highland area'; and
- The Highland Council Gaelic Language Plan; specifically Theme 2, Strategic Commitment 2, Enabling Action (v).

1. Background

1.1 This is an initiative by The Highland Council and Argyll and Bute Council, for a Pilot 23-month Placement of a Shared Gaelic Education Officer.

2. Highland Council Gaelic Language Plan Linkage

2.1 This activity has been undertaken in accordance with the Council's Gaelic Language Plan; specifically:

- **The GLP Introduction:** "The Council also believes it is important that, given the fiscal climate envisaged across the lifetime of this Plan; public authorities and their delivery partners must seek imaginative and innovative ways of sharing expertise and resources, to maximise the impact of Gaelic initiatives."
- **Part 6 - Delivering and Resourcing the Plan:** "Given the fiscal environment in which it operates, the Council is keen to explore imaginative and flexible funding approaches to support, for example, the establishment costs to facilitate growth across Gaelic Education provision."

- **Part 9 - Theme 2, Strategic Commitment 2, Enabling Action (v)** – “Review and refresh the approach to recruiting a Gaelic Education Officer.”

3. Introduction

- 3.1** The Shared Service Pilot Placement is important to the future development and growth of Gaelic Education in the Highland and Argyll and Bute Council areas. This pilot will assess the potential to develop an ongoing Gaelic Education partnership between Argyll & Bute and the Highland Council.
- 3.2** The initiative aims to improve Gaelic Educational standards and delivery; to provide important links between schools and to provide quality assurance and teacher support in Highland and Argyll and Bute Councils (HC-ABC). The project is innovative, forward thinking, maximises the use of both organisations’ Gaelic resources; and will facilitate inter-authority exchange of best practice between schools.
- 3.3** This pilot would also enable HC-ABC Education Services, which are already stretched in terms of scarce Gaelic staffing resources, to jointly focus efforts to help implement the Government’s targets for Gaelic Education as outlined in the National Gaelic Language Plan 2012-17. In addition, the project aims to improve both Councils’ delivery and quality assurance of Gaelic Education provision and help to implement some education elements in both Authorities’ Gaelic Language Plans.
- 3.4** It also fulfils Scottish Government ambitions to see more joint bids to Gaelic Specific Grant from Local Authorities. The length of the pilot placement (23 months) would be in line with teachers’ conditions of service; and also links well with the terms of Gaelic Specific Grant funding for 2014-15 and 2015-16, which encourages more joint bids from Local Authorities.

4. Aims and Aspirations

- 4.1** The overarching objectives are to enable young people, families and staff in Gaelic Education to access and contribute to, best practice; to achieve to the best possible standards; and to further enhance the revitalisation of Gaelic.
- 4.2** The pilot placement will target Gaelic Medium Education and Gaelic Learner Education in 3-18 education and will major on the implementation of the Curriculum for Excellence and the new Secondary phase qualifications. It will strengthen and maintain the status of Gaelic Education as a major success story of Scotland’s Education system of the last 25 years and will also assist in ensuring that Gaelic is factored into Council actions associated with the Government’s 1+2 language learning and the 600 hours Pre-school initiatives.
- 4.3** The role will also aim to ensure that every person accessing formal 3-18 Gaelic Education across HC-ABC will have the best possible experience available to them. A flexible, effective and efficient approach to deployment

will be agreed; which will facilitate the delivery of defined and agreed priorities that are manageable, meaningful and measurable across Council areas.

- 4.4 The core objectives and priorities of the pilot will be reviewed regularly by the Head of Education and the Gaelic Development Manager and ABC counterparts; but formally after six months and again formally after one year.

5. **Priorities for the First Year**

- 5.1 Priorities for the first 12 months would include:

- **Career-long Professional Learning**

Assessing the need for, and providing access to, high quality CLPL opportunities for all staff involved in the delivery of Gaelic Education (including Childcare and Education Workers, Gaelic Language Auxiliaries, Pupil Support and Ancillary Staff, Teachers and Head Teachers) - 2 formal events per school calendar.

- **Learning and Teaching**

Further developing a focus on pedagogy and methodology, quality assurance, assessment, inter-disciplinary learning, co-operative and active learning, ICT, language immersion practices, transitional arrangements, attainment and achievement, new qualifications, moderation of listening, talking and writing, ASN, language development and literacy; plus sharing best practice.

- **Self-evaluation**

Developing improvement planning, school handbooks, data analysis, school ethos, preparation for Education Scotland Inspection, standards and quality reports, support and challenge.

- **Enhanced additional exposure to Gaelic**

Partnership working, increased curricular areas in secondary curriculum, use of community expertise and contextual learning.

- 5.2 These priorities will be delivered through the full range of communication methods available, particularly including the use of remote communication technology and a cost effective manageable programme of school visits per academic calendar year, dependent upon support required.

6. **Next Steps for the Councils**

- 6.1 The Highland Council's Director of Education, Culture & Sport and Argyll and Bute Council's Executive Director of Community Services have agreed an initial 23 month shared service Gaelic Education pilot project placement, as outlined from 6.2 onwards.

- 6.2** The commencement of the project would be subject to agreement by both Councils on the associated terms of engagement including work priorities, the allocation of time to each Authority and the administrative arrangements for the placement. The aim is for this pilot placement to be agreed before the end of school session 2013-14; for commencement in the 2014-15 session.
- 6.3** The pilot placement would involve agreed targets and priorities, oversight, monitoring and assessment. Year 1 priorities for the pilot are outlined at **Section 5** above.
- 6.4** The Grading of the officer for the period of the pilot placement; the costs and staff support for the pilot will be jointly agreed by HC-ABC and factored into Gaelic Specific Grant consideration.
- 6.6** An evaluation and review process for the pilot will be agreed for year 2, which may include consideration of permanent future arrangements for both Councils.

7. Implications

- 7.1** As mentioned at **6.4** above, the Resource implications for the pilot will be agreed and shared between the Councils; and are expected to be contained within existing funding.

8.	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Members are invited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comment on the proposals regarding a Shared service; and • Agree to Inter-Authority discussions being progressed expeditiously, regarding mutually agreeable solutions.
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Designation: Director of Education, Culture and Sport
 Date: 19 May 2014
 Author: Kenneth A Murray