

**Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd  
The Highland Council**

**Buidheann Buileachaidh na Gàidhlig – 20 Gearran 2014  
Gaelic Implementation Group – 20 February 2014**

Agenda Item	<b>8</b>
Report No	<b>GIG 05-14</b>

**Gaelic Creative Writing Initiative for Highland Pupils**

**Report by the Director of Education, Culture & Sport**

**Summary**

This Report informs Members of the first phase of the Gaelic Creative Writing in Schools Initiative which took place between September and early October 2013. This project was undertaken in pursuance of implementing targets in the Gaelic Language Plan.

The Report also highlights the proposed second phase of the Creative Writing Programme which also includes a completion based on the theme *Homecoming*, in recognition of this year being Homecoming Scotland 2014.

The Report contributes to the delivery of:

- The National Performance Outcomes 4, 5 and 13.
- Scotland's National Gaelic Language Plan across its Development Areas on
- 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'.
- The Highland Council Gaelic Language Plan.

**1. Background**

1.1 In the autumn of 2013 the Council's Gaelic Team organised a series of Creative Writing Workshops led by Donald S. Murray an author, poet, journalist and secondary teacher.

1.2 His poetry, prose and verse have been shortlisted for both the Saltire Award and Callum Macdonald Memorial Award. Published widely, his work has also appeared in a number of national anthologies and on BBC Radio 4 and Radio Scotland. He also won the Robert Louis Stevenson Fellowship and the Jessie Kesson Fellowship; as well as being on the shortlist for the Guardian Nature Books of the Year. He has been reviewed in the Guardian, Scotsman, Herald as well as BBC TV and radio. He has also appeared on BBC 4's 'BBC Britannica' and at various nature events and book festivals throughout the country.

**2. The First Phase and the Workshops**

2.1 Donald S Murray ran the Gaelic creative writing workshops in all Primary schools where there is currently Gaelic Medium provision; and also all Secondary Schools where Gaelic is taught at both learner and fluent levels.

2.2 This work was also linked to the Year of Natural Scotland as it featured wildlife, particularly birds and sea-birds. As such, this had a number of outcomes, including

teaching young people the names of birds in Gaelic as well as fostering creative writing and different ways of observation, among the pupils.

- 2.3 The following schools participated: Acharacle Primary, Broadford Primary, Bun Sgoil Gàidhlig Inbhir Nis, Craighill Primary, Dingwall Academy, Gairloch, Kilmuir, Mallaig Primary, Mallaig High School, Plockton High School, Plockton Primary, Portree High School, Portree Primary, Sleat Primary, Staffin Primary, Tain Academy, Ullapool Primary, Ullapool High School, Inverness Royal Academy, Newtonmore Primary, Kingussie High School, Ardnamurchan High School, Farr High School, Millburn Academy, Culloden Academy, and Lochaber High School.
- 2.4 Evaluation forms were distributed to both teachers and pupils, the feedback received showed a 98.8% success rate.

## **2. Second Phase and the Competition**

- 2.1 The second phase of the Gaelic Creative Writing project will build upon and develop the creative writing skills the young people learnt in the first phase of creative writing workshops.
- 2.3 The second phase will be based on a '*Homecoming*' theme which will culminate in a Homecoming Writing Competition for all Gaelic Medium Primary School Pupils and all Secondary Pupils studying Gaelic, the closing date for the competition is 12 September 2014. It is envisaged that winners announced at an appropriate time during the Inverness Royal National Mod in October.

## **3. Implications**

- 3.1 There are no additional Implications associated with this Report.

<b>4. Recommendations</b>
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Members are invited to comment on the Report and agree to receive a further Report on the second phase of the Gaelic Creative Writing project.
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Designation: Director of Education, Culture and Sport

Date: 8 February 2014

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