

## The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Gaelic Implementation Group** held in the Council Chamber, Lochaber House, High Street, Fort William on Thursday 29 May 2014 at 10.30 am.

### **Present:**

Mrs I Campbell (Substitute)  
Mr G Farlow  
Mr C Fraser  
Mr H Fraser (Chair)  
Mr D Fallows (Substitute)

Mr A M Millar  
Mr B Murphy (Substitute)  
Mrs M E Paterson  
Dr A Sinclair

### **Also present:**

Mr A Henderson

### **In attendance:**

Mr H Fraser, Director of Education, Culture and Sport  
Mr K A Murray, Gaelic Development Manager, Chief Executive's Office  
Ms M A Macleod Mitchell, Gaelic Development Officer, Chief Executive's Office  
Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator, Corporate Development Service  
Mrs F MacBain, Committee Administrator, Corporate Development Service

### **Also in attendance:**

Mr J A Mackay, Chief Executive, Bòrd na Gàidhlig  
Ms M Macmillan, Head of Education and Learning, Bòrd na Gàidhlig  
Mr J Morrison, Chief Executive, An Comunn Gàidhealach  
Mr D MacIntyre, Director, The Market Specialists Ltd

**An asterisk in the margin denotes a recommendation to the Council. All decisions with no marking in the margin are delegated to the Group.**

## **Business**

### **Preliminaries**

#### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr J Gordon, Mr C Macaulay, Mr J McGillivray, Mr K MacLeod and Mr F Parr.

#### **2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

#### **3. Good News**

A list of Good News items was tabled and, having made special mention of the start of the building of the new standalone Gaelic Primary School in Fort William, the Group **NOTED** the Good News.

#### 4. Gaelic Language Plan 2012-16, Theme 2 “What we will do for Gaelic in Education” – Implementation Report

There was circulated Report No GIG/8/14 by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport providing Members with an update on the implementation of Gaelic Language Plan (GLP) 2012-16 Theme 2 “What we will do for Gaelic in Education” and information on a wide range of local and national level initiatives. The report also provided information on continuing engagement with the Scottish Government, Bòrd na Gàidhlig (BnG) and Education Scotland; on progress with developments in the pre-school, Primary and Secondary sectors and on plans to secure a commitment to increase teacher training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities in Inverness, in addition to those already being delivered at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (SMO) and outwith Highland.

The Report also provided information on progress across the five Strategic Commitments and provided Gaelic Education statistics for Highland in Academic Year 2013/14 as well as reminding Members of the online map which had been developed which showed Highland parents – and parents who might be considering moving to Highland – the locations where Nursery, Primary and Secondary Gaelic Education was provided.

Following a full summary of the report by the Director, the following comments were made:-

- concern was expressed about the planned closure of the Gaelic-medium Nursery at Dingwall Primary School, which was now only attended by 2 children, and the lack of consultation undertaken with Local Members on this. It was pointed out that Croileagan Inbhir Pheofharain (Dingwall Gaelic Playgroup) was attended by 23 children, who could attend from the age of 2, and provided wrap-around childcare. The 2 members of staff from the Nursery would be redeployed to the Primary School but could be transferred back if demand became sufficient for the Nursery to re-open;
- in addition to Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis and the planned Gaelic schools in Fort William and Portree, Sleat and Staffin Primary Schools were also Gaelic schools, albeit with English Departments attached to it;
- the ‘shared resources’ approach to learning and teaching materials was welcomed, and would be a useful recruitment tool in terms of reducing the amount of translation work required from individual teachers. It also facilitated an improvement in the quality of Gaelic medium resources;
- Members welcomed the news that the Council had secured 5 probationer Gaelic Primary teachers and 3 probationer Gaelic Secondary teachers for 2014-15. There remained some limitations on the supply teacher side for schools, although this was an issue in both English and Gaelic Medium;
- it was important to look at future school roll predictions before removing Gaelic-medium teachers from schools due to a drop in school roll which might only be temporary, especially in remote and rural areas where future re-recruitment could prove problematic;
- it was hoped that the Cluster-Head system would free up time for Head Teachers to improve their Gaelic skills and promote Gaelic amongst their staff; and
- the number of pupils in Gaelic-Medium Education had increased against overall declining school roll figures.

The Group:-

- i. **NOTED** progress in implementing the Education Theme in the GLP;
- ii. **AGREED** to continue the successful engagement with BnG in the birth to three sector and to seek to formulate a funding support package going forward;

- iii. **AGREED** to ensure that Gaelic requirements were fed into the Scottish Government's 600 hours Pre-school consultations in Highland;
- iv. **AGREED** to an evaluation of the Fèisgoil Pilots in Lochaber and Caithness and Sutherland;
- v. **AGREED** to support the continued inclusion of Gaelic in initiatives that could impact positively on Gaelic learning in Primary and Secondary Schools; including Gaelic Learners in Primary School, the provision for Gaelic Learners in Secondary schools and the Scottish Government's 1+2 Language Learning policy;
- vi. **AGREED** to progress discussions with BnG, UHI/SMO in respect of Gaelic Teacher Qualification and Training in Inverness; and
- vii. **AGREED** that, in relation to consolidating Gaelic Pre-School provision in Dingwall, the Gaelic Development Manager, the Area Education Manager and the Resource Manager for Early Years discuss options for future provision with the Dingwall and Seaforth Ward Members.

## 5. Potential Shared Services with Argyll and Bute Council

There was circulated Report No GIG/9/14 dated 19 May 2014 by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport providing information on discussions with Argyll and Bute Council on the possibility of sharing a Gaelic Education Officer resource between the Authorities.

The proposal was for a pilot 23-month secondment which aimed to improve Gaelic Educational standards and delivery, to provide important links between schools and to provide quality assurance and teacher support in both Argyll and Bute and Highland Councils. It would also enable education services to jointly focus efforts to implement the Government's targets for Gaelic Education. The aims of the project were detailed, together with the priorities for the first 12 months, and, although the start was still subject to agreement by both Councils on the terms of the engagement, it was hoped that the pilot placement would be agreed before the end of school session 2013/14, in time for the commencement of the 2014/15 school session. An evaluation and review process would be built in to Year 2 which would include consideration of permanent future arrangements for both Councils.

During discussion, it was explained that the secondee would have both classroom and educational development experience and stringent efforts had been made to ensure the initiative would not reduce the number of Gaelic-Medium teachers available for classroom work. Confirmation that the secondment post was additional to the current establishment and funded from existing sources was welcomed.

The Group:-

- i. **NOTED** the proposals regarding a shared service; and
- ii. **AGREED** to Inter-Authority discussions being progressed expeditiously, regarding mutually agreeable solutions.

## 6. Bòrd na Gàidhlig Presentation

There was circulated Report No GIG/10/14 dated 19 May 2014 by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport introducing John Angus Mackay OBE, Chief Executive and Ms Mairi Macmillan, Head of Education and Learning at Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

Ms Macmillan made a presentation during which she outlined continuing progress and challenges associated with Gaelic Education; the importance of partnership and the need

to further develop a nationally collegiate approach to growth and support mechanisms in Gaelic Education.

During discussion, Bòrd na Gàidhlig staff were thanked both for this presentation and their Chief Executive's recent presentation to the full Council. Members emphasised the importance of studying the economic impact of Gaelic and also highlighted the huge benefit that BBC Alba had brought, particularly in raising the profile of Gaelic.

The Group:-

- i. **NOTED** Ms Macmillan's presentation; and
- ii. **AGREED** to further develop close working relationships at local and national levels.

## 7. An Comunn Gàidhealach Presentation

There was circulated Report No GIG/11/14 dated 19 May 2014 by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport introducing Mr John Morrison, Chief Executive of An Comunn Gàidhealach (ACG). Mr Morrison gave a presentation during which he provided an update for Members on progress towards the successful delivery of the Royal National Mod (RMD) and associated Mod Fringe Programme in Inverness from 10-17 October 2014.

Members were reminded that the Council had a Service Delivery Contract with ACG which meant that the RMD would take place in Highland in 2014, 2017 and 2020. This year's Mod competitions would take place mainly in and around Eden Court Theatre but Inverness High School had also been booked and would be used mainly for children's competitions. In addition, Council premises were to be used for press conferences, media engagement and events, musical recitals, receptions and some competitions. The Local Organising Committee was developing a Mod Fringe Programme and information on the range of events was provided. In marketing the Mod it was intended that a promotional leaflet would be distributed, which would also be accessible online from August 2014, and social media would be used with Tweets issued each month from June until the Mod commenced. Further, as detailed later in the agenda, a bid had been made to Bòrd na Gàidhlig's Gaelic Language Act Implementation Fund for the Gàidhlig sa Bhaile Project for additional resources to develop and promote the visual presence and the profile of Gaelic in the City and surrounding area.

An outline was provided of the economic benefits of the Mod, with over 8,000 visitors attending the larger Mods and an estimated direct benefit to the host area of between £2.1 and £2.5 million, with these figures having excluded the economic activity of local residents. Consequently, the return on investment was significant and should not be underestimated.

During discussion, Members welcomed the 2014 RNM and urged local businesses to maximise the opportunities presented by the Mod, especially as it was taking place at a quiet time of year.

The Chairman thanked officers of the various organisations for their hard work and the Group:-

- i. **NOTED** the presentation; and
- ii. **AGREED** to continue and develop the excellent working relationships to deliver the best possible Royal National Mod in Inverness in 2014 and the surrounding area.

## 8. National and International Gaelic Related Arts, Media and Cultural Events Taking Place in Highland in 2014/15

There was circulated Report No GIG/12/14 dated 19 May 2014 by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport providing an update on the implementation of Gaelic Language Plan 2012-16 Theme 3 "What we will do for Gaelic in the Arts, Media and Heritage". Members were provided with details of forthcoming national and international Gaelic-related events, which were to take place in the Highlands between the beginning of September 2014 and mid April 2015. These events were:-

- Blas Festival from 5-13 September 2014
- Royal National Mod (including a Mod Fringe Programme) from 10-17 October 2014
- Scottish Traditional Music Awards on 13 December 2014
- Celtic Media Festival from 22-24 April 2015

Gaelic language and culture would be central to the activities in each of these events and would involve Gaelic speakers and learners from pre-school children to senior citizens. To assist the organisers of these events in staging an event in Highland, it was proposed a Cross Service Council Officials Group be set up to provide advice and support as necessary.

During discussion, Members pointed out that Cornwall should have been mentioned in the report, rather than 'England' in relation to the successful Celtic Media Festival that had been held there.

The Group:-

- NOTED** the range of events supported and hosted by Highland Council in the coming year;
- AGREED** that a Cross Service Council Officials Group be established, which would provide a co-ordinated approach to support and advise Members, the Executive Leadership Team and the organisers of the events detailed in the report;
- AGREED** to continue support for high profile partnership marketing and promotional activity and engagement for these national and international events; and
- AGREED** that the Council work with partners to continue to attract high profile Gaelic-related arts, media and cultural events in Highland to provide economic benefits within the Council area.

## 9. Gaelic Language Act Implementation Fund – Annual Reports for 2013/14 and Project Bids for 2014/15

There was circulated Report No GIG/13/14 dated 19 May 2014 by the Director of Education, Culture and Sport providing the latest Progress Reports on Gaelic Language Act Implementation Fund (GLAIF) Projects for 2013/14 and the Project Bids submitted by the Council for the 2014/15 funding round.

Members were reminded that in 2013 Highland Council had been successful in obtaining funding for three GLAIF projects, namely, Gaelic Early Years Birth to 3 Support Strategy in the Highland Council Area (3 Year Pilot), the provision of Progressive Language Classes and Iomairt Coimhearsnachd Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis. A fourth project - Gaisgich Coimhearsnachd (Community Heroes) - had initially been unsuccessful but, having been reappraised by Bòrd na Gàidhlig (BnG), had received funding approval in March 2014.

In relation to funding support for 2014/15, the Council had submitted bids for consideration by the deadline of 24 April and decisions on the applications were

expected by 1 July. A detailed summary was given of the following five submitted projects:-

- Birth to Three Sector – Final year of Pilot Project for early Years Support Strategy in Highland
- “An Drochaid” – A “Bridging Year Project” Oifigear Leasachaidh Choimhearsnachd an Inbhir Nis, based in Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis
- Gàidhlig son Inbhich - Gaelic Learning for Adults
- Gàidhlig sa Bhaile’ - ‘Gaelic in the City’
- “Siuthadaibh” A New Approach to Gaelic Community Coaching

During discussion, the following points were made:-

- confirmation was sought that the Gaisgich Coimhearsnachd (Community Heroes) project was going ahead and further detail about the original application was requested;
- the costing for each project had been submitted to Bord na Gaidhlig but, as final decisions remained to be taken by BnG, these would be confirmed once it was known which projects had been approved;
- the Gàidhlig sa Bhaile (Gaelic in the City) project would be of considerable benefit to businesses in Inverness and it was hoped that the co-operation of larger retailers with Gaelic signage would result in smaller retailers following suite;
- information was sought on the Ùlpan class in Dingwall that had to be cancelled due to a reduction in the number of pupils to 2. Many other Ùlpan classes would be continuing;
- Scotrail were praised for their use of Gaelic signage and place names and it was hoped that Serco, who had recently won the contract for sleeper services, and whichever company won the contract for the Scotrail franchise, would ensure that rail services across Scotland incorporated bi-lingual signage. It was anticipated that Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba (Gaelic Place Names of Scotland) would make representations to Serco on the matter;
- a community rail partnership was being established in Lochaber which could serve as a platform to increase bi-lingual signage as well as provide tourist information on trains;
- reference was made to the Gaelic information day that had recently been held in Inverness and which had been reasonably well attended. A follow-up meeting between UHI and Bòrd na Gàidhlig was planned; and
- it was important to continuously seek alternative sources of funding for Gaelic projects from Europe.

The Group:

- i. **NOTED** the 2013/14 Project Reports;
- ii. **NOTED** the 2014/15 Project Bids submitted by the Council;
- iii. **AGREED** to the Council opening discussions with Bòrd na Gàidhlig and the Scottish Government on ongoing funding opportunities and on GLAIF’s aims, aspirations and targeting, going forward;
- iv. **AGREED** that details of the Dingwall Ùlpan Classes referred to above, be fed back to Councillor Paterson; and
- v. **AGREED** that the original application information regarding Gaisgich Coimhearsnachd project be provided to Councillor Millar.

The meeting ended at 12.45 pm.