

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Gaelic Implementation Group** held in the Council Chamber, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Thursday 12 November 2015 at 10.30 am.

Present:

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

Mr J McGillivray
Mr K MacLeod
Mrs M E Paterson
Mr F Parr
Ms K Stephen

Also present:

Mr D Millar.

In attendance:

Mr B Alexander, Director of Care and Learning
Ms C McDiarmid, Head of Policy and Reform
Mr K A Murray, Gaelic Development Manager, Care and Learning Service
Mrs M A Macleod Mitchell, Gaelic Development Officer, Care and Learning Service
Mrs M Mulholland, Gaelic Community Learning and Development Officer, Care and Learning Service
Ms S Paterson, Gaelic Community Learning and Development Officer, Care and Learning Service
Ms J MacDonald, Senior Translation Officer, Care and Learning Service
Ms L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Corporate Development Service
Ms F MacBain, Committee Administrator, Corporate Development Service

Also in attendance:

Mr N Ross, Head of Community Growth Team, HIE
Ms I Mactaggart, MG Alba Board Member
Mr B Robertson, Acting Head of Education and Learning, Bòrd na Gàidhlig

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

Mr H Fraser in the Chair

Business

1. Apologies for Absence

An Apology for Absence was received from Dr A Sinclair.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

3. Good News

Items of Good News were circulated and the Chairman highlighted the following:

- the Royal National Mod had taken place in Oban from 9-16 October 2015 and the list of winners was circulated, with mention being made of Clann Thronairnis from Skye who had won 3 competitions including the Highland Council Fujitsu prize for Under 13 Folk Groups;
- the An t-Alltan conference for Gaelic teachers had been held in Aviemore from 30 September to 1 October 2015;
- a meeting had taken place on 30 October 2015 to discuss Gaelic Medium Early Learning and Childcare Provision on the North Coast Area of Sutherland, with informal consultation now taking place within the Farr High School catchment. If the project found adequate support, it was hoped to start provision from August 2016 on the Farr High School campus. In response to a question about Gaelic being taught at Farr High School, it was confirmed that Gaelic was currently taught to learners and discussions were underway about teaching it to fluent speakers;
- Drama Oigridh Inbhir Nis had taken part in the Ness Islands Halloween Show; and
- a Saturday morning Gaelic medium sports club had been set up in the Gaelic school in Fort William.

During discussion, local Member Mrs Paterson praised the tremendous performance of the Dingwall Gaelic Choir at the Royal National Mod in Oban. They received the overall highest marks for Gaelic and Music.

The Group **NOTED** the Good News.

4. **“Ar Stòras Gàidhlig”:** Gaelic as an Economic and Social Asset. Presentation providing an overview of the Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) Research Report and Ongoing Partnership Engagement, by Neil Ross, Head of Community Growth Team, HIE.

Mr Neil Ross gave a presentation on the ground-breaking Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) Research Report, co-funded by the Council, and the ongoing Partnership Engagement on Gaelic as an Economic and Social Asset.

During his presentation, Mr Ross summarised the research and consultation behind the concept of Gaelic as an economic and social asset. While actual value was difficult to quantify, analysis of 51 organisations had suggested that the potential value of Gaelic to the Scottish economy could be between £82m and £149m. He outlined actions and investments being undertaken by HIE to help realise this potential, with £0.25m being allocated to the Gaelic Innovation Fund for a variety of Gaelic-related projects.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:

- it would be helpful to have a notion of the estimated or potential return for every £1 spent on Gaelic;
- benchmarking with the economic value of minority languages in other bi-lingual countries would be helpful;
- social enterprise and other community projects should consider including Gaelic in their activities to benefit from the funding that was available;

- the Glenachuilish ferry referred to in the research document was based in Glenelg, not on Skye;
- it was thought that Edinburgh University might have similar research which could be cross-checked;
- the North West Sutherland Geopark was including Gaelic in its literature and was promoting geology through the medium of Gaelic. An adult Gaelic class in the area was proving popular;
- the extensive use of Gaelic on the new UHI campus was welcomed; and
- the economic benefits of Gaelic should be widely communicated, especially in times of budget pressure when Gaelic received some negative publicity.

The Group **NOTED** the presentation.

5. Gaelic Language Plan 2012-16, Theme 5 “What we will do for Gaelic in Economic Development” - Implementation Report

There had been circulated Report No GIG/11/15 dated 30 October 2015 by the Head of Policy and Reform, providing an update on the implementation of Gaelic Language Plan (GLP) 2012-16 Theme 5 “What we will do for Gaelic in Economic Development”.

During discussion, Members commented as follows:

- the Planning Service should be asked to expand their request to developers to include Gaelic on signage to refer to the possible economic benefits; and
- a Gaelic or bi-lingual soundtrack on the app that provided information on film locations in Scotland would be welcomed.

The Group:

- i. **NOTED** the implementation of the GLP Economic Development Theme.
- ii. **AGREED** to welcome the economic success of major events being held in Inverness;
- iii. **AGREED** to further explore how to attract Gaelic-related high profile economically and culturally beneficial events, which might be hosted in Highland;
- iv. **AGREED** to continued activity and action with SDS and the Scottish Government relating to Gaelic inclusion in the Labour Market Intelligence Network;
- v. **AGREED** to encourage the marketing of Gaelic Careers and Job Opportunities with the Scottish Government, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, SDS and others;
- vi. **AGREED** to foster and develop the economic potential of partnerships including Blas Festival, Fèisean nan Gàidheal, Fèis Rois and An Comunn Gàidhealach; and
- vii. **AGREED** to ask the Planning Service to expand their request to developers to include Gaelic on signage to refer to the possible economic benefits.

6. Gaelic Language Plan 2012-16, Theme 4 “What we will do for Gaelic in the Workplace” - Implementation Report

There had been circulated Report No GIG/12/15 dated 2 November 2015 by the Head of Policy and Reform, providing an update on the implementation of Gaelic Language Plan (GLP) 2012-16 Theme 4 “What we will do for Gaelic in the Workplace”.

Members having commented that there had been a big improvement in the acceptance and proliferation of Gaelic in the last 20 years, the Group **NOTED** the report.

7. MG Alba and the UK Government Public Consultation on the BBC Royal Charter Review: Scottish Gaelic Broadcasting. Presentation by Iseabail Mactaggart, MG Alba Board Member

Ms Iseabail Mactaggart, MG Alba Board Member, gave a presentation on the MG Alba situation relating to the Charter Review. Issues covered included the need to strengthen the media marketing of MG Alba, the need for sufficient funding and the importance of striving for equality of minority languages within the BBC. Of key importance was the aim for MG Alba to gain independent legal status. In relation to the Charter, a White Paper was anticipated in Spring 2016, with the new Royal Charter to be issued in 2017. Although the Charter presented many opportunities, there were risks associated with it. Ms Mactaggart summarised the aims for the future, such as improved use of social media, improving the provision for Gaelic learners and increasing funding levels.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:

- the success of MG Alba was praised, with reference to the number of people who watched it, not only in Scotland but across the rest of the UK and abroad;
- it was felt that BBC - Radio nan Gàidheal did not receive sufficient funding for the valuable service it provided, especially to remote and rural areas of the Highlands;
- it was important that MG Alba received the correct legal standing to help it safeguard the valuable services it had provided to sports such as rugby and shinty; and
- BBC Scotland did not get its fair share of the UK budget, and it was felt that this budget should be devolved.

The Group **NOTED** the presentation.

8. Homologation Of The Highland Council Response to the UK Government's Consultation on the BBC Royal Charter Review

There had been circulated Report No GIG/13/15 dated 2 November 2015 by the Head of Policy and Reform relating to the Scottish Gaelic Broadcasting elements of the UK Government's Consultation on the BBC Royal Charter Review.

The Group **HOMOLOGATED** the Council's Response submitted by the Chair of the Gaelic Implementation Group.

9. Gaelic Language Act Implementation Fund (GLAIF) Projects - Final Reports 2014-15

There had been circulated Report No GIG/14/15 dated 2 November 2015 by the Director of Care & Learning, providing the final Reports on externally funded projects through the Gaelic Language Act Implementation Fund (GLAIF).

The Group **NOTED** the report.

10. Education (Scotland) Bill. Presentation providing an overview of the impact of this legislation on Gaelic Medium Education by Mr Bruce Robertson, Acting Head of Education and Learning, Bòrd na Gàidhlig

Mr Robertson gave a presentation relating to the Gaelic elements of the Education (Scotland) Bill, its potential impact on Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Local Authorities and the national engagement Bòrd na Gàidhlig was undertaking.

Stage One of the Education (Scotland) Bill 2015 had been completed in September 2015 and amendments were being put together by late November 2015 with a view to Stage Two being completed by 8 December 2015. The Stage Three debate to finalise the process was anticipated at the end of January 2016.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig had suggested to Ministers that the Bill should presume in favour of Gaelic Medium Education (GME) across Scotland and an amendment reflecting this was anticipated. Statutory Guidance to accompany the Bill was being worked on, with formal consultation on the draft Guidance expected to start after January 2016. Highland Council, with its commitment to GME, would be influential in drafting the Guidance, which could be commented on via engagement sessions, via core group representatives, or via the Bòrd na Gàidhlig website.

During discussion, Members commented on the importance of the Bill to GME from Early Years to Secondary Education and beyond. Further points were made as follows:

- the Bill placed a duty on Local Authorities to promote and support GME and this should be made clear to Members who were not supportive of Gaelic. It would also be helpful to secure funding;
- the presumption in favour of GME expected to be written into the Bill could raise parental expectations and information was sought on whether minimum numbers of pupils would be specified, and how this would impact on teacher shortages and increasingly tight budgets. Mr Robertson replied that concerns and requests for additional funding to support the provisions of the Bill should be raised via COSLA and by writing to Dr Allan, Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland's Languages. Dr Allan could also be approached to increase support for teacher training via the UHI network. Consideration was being given to whether a minimum number of pupils for GME provision should be specified and whether it should be different in urban and rural areas;
- the Education (Scotland) Bill 2015 should also be considered by ECAS Committee in due course;
- the Bill was a positive development and would provide opportunities for teachers and the expansion of Gaelic; and
- Members were urged to lobby UK Ministers for Gaelic to be afforded equal status to Welsh.

The Director of Care and Learning responded to several points made during the presentation. Thereafter, the Group:

- i. **NOTED** the presentation; and
- ii. **AGREED** that the Education (Scotland) Bill 2015 should also be considered by ECAS Committee in due course.

11. Forward Planner for Gaelic Implementation Group Meetings in 2016 Themes and Presentation

There had been circulated Report No GIG/15/15 dated 30 October 2015 by the Director of Care and Learning and the Head of Policy and Reform. The report proposed the Gaelic Language Themes to be reported on at each of the 2016 Gaelic Implementation Group meetings plus a schedule of partner organisation presentations to complement debate and discussion on the implementation of the Plan.

The Group **AGREED:**

- i. the 2016 Gaelic Implementation Group programme of business agendas and presentations, as outlined in the report; and
- ii. to consider one of the 2016 meetings being held outwith Inverness.

The meeting ended at 12.45pm.