

Item No.	<b>3</b>
Report No	<b>G/3/20</b>

## THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** Gaelic Committee

**Date:** 5 November 2020

**Report Title:** Impact of COVID and Gaelic Recovery

**Report By:** Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance

### 1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This Report informs Members of
- a) the impact of COVID on current key priorities within the Gaelic Language Plan (GLP3) with a specific focus on the following themes;
    - Gaelic in the Home, Early Learning and Childcare
    - Gaelic in the Community; and
  - b) highlights the key areas of current and future development which will support the Gaelic Language Recovery Programme.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
- i. Consider the report and note the action that has been taken to mitigate the impact of Covid on the delivery of the Gaelic Language Plan priorities;
  - ii. Note the areas of current and future development; and
  - iii. Consider what other actions can be taken to support the Gaelic Recovery Programme.

### 3. Implications

#### 3.1 Resource

The resource implications are within the current main budget stream which include Gaelic Specific Grant, COVID support fund, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, and Gaelic Language Act Implementation Fund (Bòrd na Gàidhlig).

#### 3.2 Legal

The Highland Council have a requirement to implement its Gaelic Language Plan under the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act of 2005.

- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island)  
The Report complies with The Highland Council policies on Equality.
- 3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever  
The Gaelic Team currently attend all meetings online and virtually, thus reducing the requirement for business travel.
- 3.5 Risk  
The Risk is minimal and adheres to the current National and Highland Council guidance in relation to COVID-19.
- 3.6 Gaelic  
The report enhances Gaelic Development within The Highland Council area and supports the implementation of the Gaelic Language Plan.

#### **4. Understanding what the impact of COVID-19 has been on current projects**

- 4.1 During the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown and subsequent restrictions The Highland Council Gaelic team moved to delivering services online where possible, while still providing opportunities for GM pupils and families to be involved in Gaelic activities. COVID-19 has and continues to impact on the delivery of specific projects within GLP3 due to current restrictions relating to school lets and community facilities. The following projects which were impacted all require face-face interaction and the activities are regularly held in school premises and community centres.
- 0-3 Early Learning and Childcare sector.
  - Extra-Curricular language support activities for GM primary.
  - Gaelic Education Secondary initiatives.
  - Community based Adult Learning Classes and Family Learning Events.
  - Gaelic Parent workshops/ The Benefits of Bilingualism promotional events including the Fàs Foghlaim Resource for parents.
  - Projects supporting GM pupils during the school day.

#### **5. COVID support funding Bòrd na Gàidhlig (BnaG)**

- 5.1 GM pupils have been unable to access the full-range of Gaelic medium extra-curricular after-school activities and cultural events that they would regularly participate in prior to COVID-19. As a result, our GM children and families, particularly in the Early Years were disadvantaged in relation to their development of language acquisition skills.
- 5.2 The Gaelic Team submitted a funding application to BnaG's COVID support fund in July 2020. The application requested a total of £12,000 for projects to support the Gaelic Language Early years sector in relation to the Gaelic Language Recovery Programme. The total awarded from BnaG was £4,500. The funding received will provide support to a range of initiatives designed to support language development mainly within the GM Early Years levels.

#### **6. Key Developments for Gaelic Medium Education within the Home and Community**

- 6.1 The Gaelic Team are adhering to National and Local guidance in relation to COVID-19 and have been implementing key development projects with a blended service delivery approach, with many projects initially taking place online, key development projects to support Gaelic Medium Education are gradually being planned to take place in a face to face environment in accordance with National guidance.

- 6.2 A pilot project working with Comann nam Pàrant Nàiseanta is currently being produced and will comprise of a series of three on-line interactive workshops that will enable parents to help their children with Gaelic in the home. A video to complement these workshops is also in the production stage.
- 6.3 Following on from a survey issued to GM parents during lockdown, GM staff at Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Phort Rìgh identified that Early Years parents were concerned about Gaelic Immersion for their children in the home. To support GM parents and children in the home Gaelic Early Years staff at BSGP produced videos focusing on key words and phrases that were being taught in Sgoil-Àraich. The videos also included some outdoor learning for parents at home and this was well received by parents. A further series of Cluichidh sinn còmhla videos are to be produced in partnership with Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Phort Rìgh and Bun-sgoil Inbhir Nis. The videos will continue to support the Early Years sector in the home and GM schools plan to use the videos to deliver training to newly employed Early Years staff.
- 6.4 A series of six Gaelic football videos were commissioned during the lockdown phase by FC Sonas for football and health related fun activities that GM families could participate in. A further series of football and health related videos has been commissioned to help teachers and club leaders plan sessions for GM pupils. This is in the final production stages before being released to schools and community groups and is being delivered by FC Sonas. A Gaelic interactive football camp was also organised to take place in the October holidays, over 3 days.
- 6.5 The Gaelic Team are producing a series of short puppet play videos to support GM children at the transition stage into the Early Level; puppets are an engaging way to support oral language acquisition and communication skills.
- 6.6 Gaelic online parent classes are to be offered as a key development for supporting GM families in the home.
- 6.7 Following on from last year's event in collaboration with GM schools and Cuillin FM the Gaelic Team are developing the senior primary GM debate to take place online in February 2021. The project will support GM pupils with their language acquisition skills and increase their Gaelic usage.

## **7. Proposals for supporting young people in Secondary Gaelic Education**

- 7.1 The Gaelic Team are consulting with GM young people to ascertain and prioritise a programme of support for Secondary GM and learner pupils. The young people who are participating in the Siuthad event will be invited to express their individual opinions on what Gaelic related initiatives and activities they would be interested in attending and engaging with. It is planned to engage with Gaelic departments within Highland to identify the support required in schools in relation to Secondary Gaelic Education.
- 7.2 The Gaelic Team are working in partnership with Skills Development Scotland to deliver Siuthad, the annual Gaelic Careers Day for Highland schools, which this year will take place online. The aim of Siuthad is to raise awareness among young Gaelic speakers of the wide range of career routes and opportunities that exist for those who have the language and to encourage them to continue with their learning. Two online events are planned for this year. Thursday 12th November (Fluent Speakers S3-S6) To be delivered in Gaelic. Thursday 19th November (Learners S4-S6) to be delivered in a blend of Gaelic and English. As in previous events, there will be a series of interactive workshops from several different sectors and will also have an Exhibitor Zone/Marketplace where pupils

can converse with a wide range of exhibitors regarding careers and further/higher education opportunities.

- 7.3 The Chair of the Gaelic Committee has written to the Deputy First Minister John Swinney to provide the opening address for the Gaelic Careers Day event.
- 7.4 The Gaelic Team in partnership with Sabhal Mòr Ostaig will organise the annual week-long youth residential event Seachdain nan Deugairean. (Youth Gaelic Learning Week) Seachdain na Deugairean is offered to both fluent and learner Gaelic Secondary School pupils attending Portree, Mallaig, Ardnamurchan and Plockton High Schools. Pupils will have the opportunity to develop their Gaelic language skills through sporting, creative and cultural activities, all within a Gaelic immersion setting. This project is currently planned to take place in a face to face environment and The Gaelic Team will continue to follow National Guidance and adhere to the regulations in place for delivering projects.
- 7.5 An online after school club is in the planning stage with BSGI being used as a pilot project. The Gaelic Team are working collaboratively with staff from Inverness Royal Academy and BSGI to engage with secondary pupils who may be participating in the Duke of Edinburgh Awards or the apprenticeship schemes; the secondary pupils would work with staff to host a weekly online afterschool club for primary pupils.
- 7.6 The Gaelic Team are working in partnership with Highlife Highland to deliver the Gaelic Sports Leadership course. The Gaelic Sports Leadership project enables GM young people to initially complete the level 4 Sports Leadership award. Then the young people can progress to level 5 to further develop their coaching skills which will enable them to lead on Gaelic after school activities and it also offers them the opportunity to support the Highlife Highland Summer Programme. Gaelic after school sports clubs are now being established in Highland and young leaders who have attended the Sports Leadership project previously are now actively involved in the delivery of the clubs. A further development for the next Gaelic Sports Leadership Awards had been due to take place in April 2020 is to extend the project and offer young people in Gaelic secondary pupils in the Western Isles the opportunity to participate in the coaching programme. This event has now been postponed until the new Academic year 20/21.

## **8. Opportunities for Gaelic online digital projects**

- 8.1 The Gaelic Team developed new and accessible online Gaelic projects and resources for Gaelic Education pupils, parents, Gaelic adult learners and the wider Gaelic community. The Gaelic team continue to deliver their projects online and are gradually moving towards face-face service delivery whilst following the National and Local guidance in relation to COVID-19.
- 8.2 A series of nine short videos were created by the Gaelic Team to assist Early Years parents with Gaelic at home. The videos focused on basic Gaelic phrases and songs for parents who required more support to introduce Gaelic in the home with children in the Early Years. Songs and phrases focused on routines and play activities such as waking up, story-time, getting ready for bed.
- 8.3 Due to COVID-19 the Adult Learning Programme of Gaelic classes were not permitted to be delivered in a face to face environment. The Gaelic Team organised a series of online Gaelic Adult Learning classes that were appropriate for both tutors and students. A series of online Gaelic Grammar sessions for adult learners covering four common Grammatical structures was delivered throughout October.

- 8.4 The National Seachdain nan Teaghlach is a family learning event for Gaelic medium families throughout Scotland and is organised by the Gaelic Learning and Development group for Gaelic (GLAD), Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and The Highland Council. The event offers the opportunity for parents to attend Gaelic courses and the GM children attend a Playscheme and participate in a programme of GM activities through the medium of Gaelic. The Early Years children attend the local Fàs Mòr Gaelic childcare centre situated at the Gaelic college. Due to Covid-19 it was not possible to run the week as per previous events, however eighteen families took part in the online event (26 adults and 28 children). The project evaluation received from parents indicated that they would like to have a parental forum established for Gaelic Medium parents online to enable continued support for GM parents.
- 8.5 The Gaelic Team Creative writing project was initially designed to allow for a Gaelic creative writer/ author to visit schools and deliver creative writing sessions. Due to COVID-19 the Gaelic Team adapted the project to be delivered online. Sgrìobh Sgeulachd' is now an online Gaelic resource which leads GM teachers and pupils through a Gaelic story writing process, enabling and assisting pupils to develop their initial ideas, to shaping the structure and writing a story. The resource is available on the digital hub and is available for schools to access from across Highland.
- 8.6 On the lead up to the Virtual Mòd the Gaelic Team worked with key partners to produce online events for families and young children, some of which included working with C.A.L.A to develop a pre-recorded video which parents could view with their babies and toddlers and worked in partnership with Fèis Rois to develop a pan Highland pre-recorded family Cèilidh.
- 8.7 The Gaelic Team have developed a series of online Gaelic interactive conversation sessions with a host of Gaelic speaking young people who are currently working in the media or are well known to young GM people through established online platforms such as Youtube. This is currently being delivered on a local basis and linking with schools in Inverness and the North area. Pupils are invited to meet with the guest speakers online and this is hosted by the Gaelic Team. The first session took place on the 18<sup>th</sup> of September with FC Sonas founders and they linked in with pupils attending Mount Pleasant Primary School in Thurso.

Designation: Community Learning and Development Officers

Date:29/10/2020

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Background Papers: