

Agenda Item	5.
Report No	EDU/22/21

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Education

Date: 17 November 2021

Report Title: Gaelic Medium Education and Gaelic Learner Education – The Highland Council

Report By: Executive Chief Officer - Education and Learning

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This Report informs Members of:

An outline of the current key priorities within Gaelic Education (GLP3) with a specific focus on the following themes;

- Gaelic Medium Education – Early Years, Primary and Secondary;
- Gaelic Learner Education – Primary and Broad General Education Phase Secondary Education;

and highlights the key areas of current and future development which will support the growth of Gaelic Education in Highland Council encompassing the key priorities of GLP3.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i. consider the report and note the provision of Gaelic Medium and Gaelic Education across Highland;
- ii. note the areas of current and future development; and
- iii. consider what other actions can be taken to support the development of Gaelic Education

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:** Meetings are 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. Gaelic Medium Education

- 4.1 Gaelic Medium Education is an option within Scottish education that gives children and young people an opportunity to become fluent in Gaelic. As children and young people move from stage to stage, they will continue to develop their fluency. In so doing, they also fulfil all the aims and goals of Curriculum for Excellence and accrue all the benefits of bilingualism.
 - 4.1.1 Gaelic Medium Education is available in 14 out of 32 Scottish local authorities. Some local authorities use neighbouring local authority provision to meet the requests of parents.
 - 4.1.2 In Scotland, Gaelic Medium Education is available in 61 primary schools and their associated secondary's in Scotland, including dedicated Gaelic Medium schools. An increasing number of early learning and childcare centres, secondary schools and further education centres also provide learning through the medium of Gaelic.
 - 4.1.3 20 GME primary schools are located in The Highland Council area, accounting for one third of all GME primary provision in Scotland. For transition, continuation of Gàidhlig is available in 13/29 secondary schools.

4.2 The Highland Council Context

GME is available in the following locations in Highland.

Click here to open map

https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/878/schools/18/gaelic_medium_education

Highland Council has promoted GME in Highland schools by producing the following video linked here. The video provides information on GME as a short social media promotional tool. It provides information for parents interested in the benefits of Gaelic education.

<https://www.highland.gov.uk/gaelic>

The Highland Council provision of GME encompasses 19 ELC and Partner Centre provisions and 20 primary GME. Within this primary GME provision, The Highland Council has 3 standalone GME schools, 2 Gaelic Schools with English Medium Provision and the remainder are schools with GME provision.

Highland has 20 Secondary schools in total currently providing Gàidhlig for fluent

and/or Gaelic learners. 13 of these schools offer GME secondary Gàidhlig as part of their Gaelic curriculum and 17 offer Gaelic Learner pathways in BGE and/or senior phase. 7 of our associated secondary provisions currently provide additional subjects through the medium of Gàidhlig at BGE and/or senior phase. This includes access to Gaelic Learners BGE, made available via a Gaelic Teacher working with the Virtual Academy for this session. These numbers do not include schools where Gaelic L2 and L3 provision is in primary schools.

The Highland Council has the largest number of school provisions that offer Gaelic and Gaelic Medium education in Scotland within one authority.

4.3 Based on Highland Council data gathered from schools session 2020/21, the following pupil numbers are accessing Gaelic Medium Education in Highland.

GME ELC and Partner Centres – **349**

Primary GME – **1,058**

Secondary GME (Pupils studying Gàidhlig) – **414**
S1-3 – 306* S4-6 – 109*

*Most pupils will be undertaking other areas of the BGE and Senior Phase curriculum through the medium of Gaelic too.

GME 3-18 provision -1,821 pupils*

Secondary Gaelic Learners - 2208 pupils S1-S6 cohort*

The Highland Council has the largest number of pupils following Gaelic Learner Education in Scotland.

Nationally, based on Bòrd na Gàidhlig data, there are 3599 pupils in total undertaking Gaelic Learners education. Therefore, 61% of Gaelic learners in secondary in Scotland are in Highland Council schools.**

*based on Highland Council's September data collection session 2020/21.

**based on Bòrd na Gàidhlig data 2020/21.

4.4 The following table illustrates where there is access to GME in primary and Associated secondary schools. The % of the total school role opting to follow a GME pathway in the primary school is also illustrated.

School Name	% GME in school	Associated Secondary Gaelic Provision
Glenurquhart Primary School	7%	Secondary Provision from August 2022
Acharacle Primary School	70%	Ardnamurchan High School
Dingwall Primary School	18%	Dingwall Academy
Gairloch Primary School	30%	Gairloch High School
Bun-Sgoil Ghaidhlig Inbhir Nis	100%	Inverness Royal Academy
Newtonmore Primary School	29%	Kingussie High School
Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar	100%	Lochaber High School

Mallaig Primary School	39%	Mallaig High School
Millbank Primary School	16%	Nairn Academy
Lochcarron Primary School	27%	Plockton High School
Plockton Primary School	70%	
Broadford Primary School	45%	Portree High School
Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Phort Rìgh	100%	
Bun-Sgoil Shlèite	79%	
Bun-Sgoil Stafainn	75%	
Dunvegan Primary School	47%	
Kilmuir Primary School	64%	
Craighill Primary School	25%	Tain Royal Academy
Mount Pleasant Primary School	9%	Thurso High School
Ullapool Primary School	49%	Ullapool High School

4.5 National Comparator data from Bòrd na Gàidhlig 2019/20

Bòrd na Gàidhlig's Education data provides a further context for Highland Council's provision across 3-18 within a national context.

	National Provision*	Highland Council Provision	% of schools that provide GME located in Highland Council Area
Sgoil-àraich (ELC)	53	19 (17 HC and 2 Partner Providers)	36%
Primary GME	61	20	33%
Secondary GME	33	13	39%

* <https://www.gaidhlig.scot/en/education/education-data/>

4.6 Gaelic Medium Primary Education Request Process

Gaelic Medium Primary Education provision is mapped out on a demand led basis. Through the Education (Scotland) Act 2016, the Scottish Government has established a process for parents to request an assessment of the need for Gaelic medium primary education (GMPE) from their education authority, the local authority which provides school education in the area where they live.

A GMPE request must be submitted using one of the forms issued by the Scottish Government.

Please see the following link for further information on the details of the form -

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/gaelic-medium-primary-education-assessment-request-form/documents/>

5.0 Gaelic Language Plan

5.1 Bòrd na Gàidhlig outline key priorities for Gaelic education and learning within the National Gaelic Language Plan. They state;

*"...education, learning and the development of language skills are key priorities in the **National Gaelic Language Plan** and are essential for the future and health of the language. We work in partnership with various individuals and organisations to improve and grow Gaelic education and learning at all levels – for both young people and*

adults, and for fluent speakers and learners”

The [Gaelic Language \(Scotland\) Act 2005 \(the Act\)](#), passed by the Scottish Parliament, seeks to secure the status of Gaelic as an official language of Scotland commanding equal respect to the English language.

The Highland Council Gaelic Language Plan 2018-2023 can be read here –

https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/283/community_life_and_leisure/335/gaelic/2

The Plan is a statutory document, following the requirements of the Gaelic Language Act, where Highland Council makes a clear commitment to increasing Gaelic usage, increasing the number of Gaelic speakers, enhancing the profile of Gaelic and generating a positive image of the language. For that reason, the Highland Council has a strong focus on Gaelic Medium Education.

The Plan has 6 priority areas which are as follows:

1. Gaelic in the Home, Early Learning and Childcare
2. Gaelic in the Community
3. Gaelic in Education
4. Gaelic in the Arts, Culture and Heritage
5. Gaelic in the Workplace
6. The Social, Economic and Cultural Value of Gaelic

The specific Strategic Commitments within Gaelic in Education are bulleted below.

Priority Area 3. Gaelic in Education

- Contribute to national strategic partnership initiatives and policy formulation across Gaelic education.
- Ensure that Gaelic education is embedded in The Highland Council’s Strategic Education Improvement Planning.
- Build on established partnerships to continue to grow a professionally organised and trained staff to support the 0–3 Early Learning and Childcare sector.
- Develop 3–18 Gaelic Education through a systematic and sustainable approach to increase the percentage of Gaelic Learners in establishments.
- Work with partners to review the learning materials and learning resources provided to support Gaelic Education.

6.0 The Highland Council Vision for Gaelic Education

6.1 The strategic leadership team of The Highland Council continue to meet and communicate regularly with key agencies and partners, in line with Gaelic Language Plan priorities on Gaelic Education. The following table of pupil number data* provides background on current targets to increase pupil numbers in both GME and GLE.

Year	GME Nursery/Partner Centre Pupils	GME Primary School Pupils	Secondary School Pupils Fluent Gaelic	Secondary School Pupils Subjects through Gaelic	Secondary School Pupils Gaelic Learners
2016-17	264	896	343	265	1829
2017-18	287	923	341	259	2012
2018-19	307	963	373	282	1887

2019-20	320	1034	388	261	2131
2020-21	283	1058	414	286	2208

* based on data collected in Highland Council September pupil data survey.

6.2 An analysis of the pupil number data demonstrates % increases in 2016 to 2020 pupil number data.

ELC – 264 to 283, an increase of 7%

Primary – 896 to 1058, an increase of 18%

Secondary Gàidhlig Fluent – 343 to 415, an increase of 21%

Secondary GME – 265 to 286, an increase of 8%

Secondary GLE – 1829 to 2208, an increase of 21%

7.0 Funding

7.1 The Highland Council's Gaelic Team submit an annual application to the Scottish Government for Gaelic Specific Grant funding for Gaelic Medium Education. Outlined in the application are three overarching Project headings related to Gaelic Education:

Project 1 – Gaelic Planning, Policy Implementation and Resources

Project 2 – Gaelic in the Home and in Communities - Learning & Development Projects including 0-3

Project 3 – Gaelic in Early Learning and Childcare, Primary and Secondary Education

Further details on the application and the outcomes can be found linked here –
Item 6 Gaelic Committee

https://www.highland.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4434/gaelic_committee_comataidh_na_gaidhlig

7.2 The Gaelic Team support structure for the implementation of the Gaelic Language Plan and Gaelic Education development across Highland is structured as below.

The *Scheme of Gaelic Specific Grant* covers all areas of Gaelic education from Pre-school, Primary, Secondary, through to adult learning. The Gaelic Team structure supports The Highland Council priorities for all these areas following the targets set in the GLP. Projects with proposed outcomes to support the aims of the Council's GLP have been outlined as part of the annual Gaelic Specific Grant application.

The award for 2021 is £910,000. This contributes towards delivering against the priorities for Education identified within GLP3 and the 3 project areas outlined in 6.2 which are managed and delivered by the Highland Council Gaelic Team.

7.3 Funding is awarded by Bòrd na Gàidhlig through the Gaelic Language Act Implementation Fund. The GLAIF Funding stream is vitally important for the Gaelic Team as it assists in implementing the key performance indicators of the Highland Council's Gaelic Language Plan.

The funding enables the Gaelic Team to sustain and develop new and innovative projects which generate positive partnership working with community groups, Gaelic and cultural organisations and with the Highland Council stakeholders all of which lead

to focusing on the priorities of both the National Plan and the Highland Council's Gaelic Language Plan.

Further information is available here –

<https://www.gaidhlig.scot/en/funding/funding-schemes/glaif/>

- 7.4 BnaG established the GLAIF funding stream to assist public authorities in the delivery of commitments in their Gaelic Language Plan and support the aims and outcomes of the National Gaelic Language Plan. GLAIF has also been used to assist other public authorities in the delivery of projects ahead of their formal notice to produce a Gaelic Language Plan. This fund supports projects which will commence and aim to be completed between early August 2021 and 31st August 2022. This is dependent on national COVID-19 recovery regulations.

Further information on current GLAIF applications by The Gaelic Team officers is available in a report to the Gaelic Committee on 18th May 2021 under item 8, linked here

https://www.highland.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4434/gaelic_committee_comataidh_na_gaidhlig

8.0 Positional Vision for GME

- 8.1 The positional vision for the future of GME is as stated in the Highland Council's Gaelic Language Plan for 2018-2023 -

'3.2. Strategic Commitment - Ensure that Gaelic Education is embedded in The Highland Council's Strategic Education Improvement Planning'

Statutory Gaelic language plans are developed by public authorities in Scotland under the **Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005**. These are prepared in close cooperation with Bòrd na Gàidhlig and aim to implement the **National Gaelic Language Plan**.

The positional statement for Gaelic Education in Highland is reflected in the 'Education and Learning Plan' for 2021, created in collaboration with Education officers and led by the Council's strategic leadership team.

This Highland Council's 'Education and Learning Plan' (ELP) is now currently under stakeholder engagement using an Associated Schools Group approach. Gaelic Education is considered as part of the wider short term and longer term outcomes in the action plan with reference to the Gaelic Education key priorities and key performance results from the GLP3.

The Highland Council reports regularly on the Vision and Strategy for Gaelic to the Gaelic Committee.

The Executive Chief Officers, Education Strategic Leads and the Gaelic Development Manager are currently undertaking a further review of the next steps to form an in depth action plan and strategic vision agreement for the wider considerations for Gaelic Education growth and sustainability across Highland.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer – Education and Learning

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