

Agenda Item	7
Report No	G/4/22

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Gaelic Committee

Date: 2 March 2022

Report Title: Gaelic Language Plan Renewal

Report By: Executive Chief Officer, Performance and Governance

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to inform Members of the process for drafting the 4th edition of The Highland Council Gaelic Language Plan (GLP).
- 1.2 The report highlights the high level aims and statutory process for Gaelic Language Plan renewal.
- 1.3 The current GLP3 is a corporate plan that has significant policy implications across the public authority. It is important that staff with responsibility for key services across the public authority are involved in the preparation of the plan renewal for the next edition.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
 - i. consider the process for Gaelic Language Plan renewal;
 - ii. note the planning implications and challenges regarding the renewal process;
 - i. agree that Gaelic language plans are unique to each public authority and subsequent editions of Gaelic language plans should show incremental progress towards delivery of the corporate service aims over time.

3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource - In addition to Highland Council funding, grant funding is also provided by the Scottish Government and the various Bòrd na Gàidhlig funding streams to assist in the delivery of the Plan. Currently part of the Council's Statutory Gaelic Plan Grants Budget is used to provide financial support to key external organisations, which assist to deliver services and key enabling actions with the GLP3.

- 3.2 Legal - The Highland Council is required to have an approved Gaelic Language Plan in accordance with the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005. There are likewise obligations in ensuring that the plan commitments are implemented. Section 7 of the 2005 Act requires that public authorities review and make any amendments to their Gaelic language plans no later than 5 years after the date of the Bòrd's formal approval of the plan.
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island) - The implementation of GLP has a strong community focus across the Highlands and Islands due to the activities and the support that is provided in communities where Gaelic education and community support and development is provided.
- 3.4 Risk - Restrictions and lockdowns have curtailed, limited and in some cases stalled project development and implementation, however, maximising the use of online technologies has generated new and innovative approaches to several development projects.
- 3.5 Gaelic - Very positive implications regarding the preservation and development of Gaelic and culture across all the sectors and age groups and it also enhances the social and economic value of the Gaelic and its associated culture.
- 3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever – there are no implications as a direct consequence of this report.

4. Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005

- 4.1 The 2005 Act has three main, interrelated elements: -
 - 1. It established a statutory body, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, to encourage the use and understanding of Gaelic and to facilitate access to Gaelic and Gaelic culture with the aim of increasing the number of persons who can use and understand the Gaelic language by facilitating access to the language and culture in Scotland, and elsewhere.
 - 2. It requires the Bòrd to prepare and submit a national Gaelic language plan to Scottish Ministers. The plan includes proposals to promote the use and understanding of Gaelic, Gaelic education and Gaelic culture.
 - 3. It gives the Bòrd authority to issue a statutory notice to any relevant Scottish public authority, cross-border public authority or the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body, requiring that authority to develop a Gaelic language plan.
- 4.2 The 2005 Act states that public authorities must have regard to the National Gaelic language plan in preparing their Gaelic language plans. The Highland Council will therefore consider what steps can be taken to deliver relevant development priorities identified in the National Gaelic language plan. It is important to note that the current edition of the National Gaelic Plan is also under renewal.

5 High-level and Corporate Service Aims

- 5.1 During the renewal process, The Highland Council will liaise with Bòrd na Gàidhlig to co-produce a set of high-level aims. The aims will provide a focus on where the public

authority can most effectively contribute to delivery of the National Gaelic Language Plan. These will be considered by the Gaelic Committee and formally approved by the Council. The agreed high-level aims must subsequently be considered by the board of Bòrd na Gàidhlig and then by the Minister with Responsibility for Gaelic before they are formally issued along with the statutory notice.

5.2 Bòrd na Gàidhlig have developed a set of standardised corporate service aims which will be issued as part of the formal notice. It is expected by Bòrd na Gàidhlig that these corporate service aims are included in all Gaelic language plans. The aims included in the renewed edition of The Highland Council Gaelic Plan will be dependent on the renewed National Plan. The process of renewal must also take cognisance of Census Data.

5.3 The Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education must be a priority consideration when preparing a renewal of the Plan. Linked [here](#)

6 Consultation Process

6.1 A report on the consultation exercise must be provided by Highland Council to the Bòrd. This will include how the consultation was carried out and include a summary of the outcomes and the main themes that have emerged. The consultation report will assist the Bòrd when considering whether to approve, or to suggest modifications to the draft renewal plan.

The following elements within this process must also be followed -

- A Gaelic and English draft of the plan published and freely available to the public and employees in electronic, and hard copy format (on request)
- A consultation period of between 6 and 12 weeks to ensure that members of the public and employees have sufficient time and opportunity to make their views known
- A bilingual press release announcing the beginning of the consultation process, brought to the attention of all relevant media outlets and to the Bòrd
- A public meeting and an employee meeting, to discuss the draft plan, with evidence of effective advertising in advance and a note of the meeting

7 Submission and Approval Process

7.1 The deadline for submission of the renewed Plan will be issued in the statutory notification letter.

The Bòrd must then either approve the plan or propose modifications to it. When considering whether to approve the plan or propose amendments to it, the Bòrd has regard to broadly the same criteria that public authorities must have regard to when developing their plans:

- The current National Gaelic Language Plan
- The actual or potential demand for Gaelic provision in the body's sphere of operation
- Any representations made to the public authority regarding the exercise of its functions and the use of Gaelic
- Any guidance issued by the Scottish Ministers

7.2 A satisfactory renewed edition of a Gaelic Language Plan will receive written approval from Bòrd na Gàidhlig confirming this to the public authority. Once Bòrd na Gàidhlig has approved the plan, the approval date becomes the legislative start date which will run for a maximum of 5 years.

7.3 A Summary Overview by the Bòrd outlining the review process is available in Appendix 1.

8. Conclusion

8.1 As we go forward into the final 18 months time span within the current edition of The Highland Council GLP, officers are actively working on engagement activities to support the initial work plan for the renewal process.

A workshop is planned and further details of this are shared in the report shared at the Committee today. The outcomes and agreed actions from the workshop will inform the initial planning discussions for GLP4.

Designation: ECO, Performance and Governance

Date: 16 February 2022

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Background Papers:

The process for developing a Gaelic language plan

This final section summarises the key steps in the process described throughout this statutory guidance and applies to the preparation of plans for the first time and the review process.

Prior to statutory notification	
↓	High-level aims are agreed by the Bòrd in consultation with the public authority.
↓	High-level aims and Corporate service aims are submitted to the Minister for approval.
Statutory Notification and Development	
↓	Formal notification is sent to the authority and includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the statutory date for submission of the draft plan to the Bòrd for consideration high-level aims for the plan corporate service aims details of the officer at the Bòrd who will be the authority's main point of contact.
↓	The authority develops its draft plan, maintaining communication with their key officer at the Bòrd.
↓	The authority is strongly advised to carry out a public consultation of between six and twelve weeks on the contents of the draft plan.
↓	The draft plan is submitted to the Bòrd.
↓	An assessment of the plan is carried out by the Bòrd.
↓	The assessment is sent back to the authority. If the public authority wishes to discuss any proposed adaptations they must inform the Bòrd within one month of receipt of the assessment and the Bòrd provides guidance regarding next steps.
↓	Once agreement is reached under the conditions of the Act, the plan is re-submitted to the Bòrd seeking final approval.
Approval, publication and promotion	
↓	A plan becomes live on the date it is approved by the Bòrd. The Bòrd will provide written confirmation of approval and guidance on publication.
↓	Publication of the plan in Gaelic and English simultaneously should take place within 3 months of the approval date.
Implementation and Monitoring	
↓	Bòrd na Gàidhlig may request that public authorities with an approved GLP submit a monitoring report at least 12 months after the approval dates and on a regular basis thereafter.
Review of Gaelic language plans	
↓	After review, new editions of Gaelic language plans must be submitted to the Bòrd with any amendments required no later than 5 years after the approval date of the previous edition.