

Agenda Item	4
Report No	G/8/23

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Gaelic Committee

Date: 31st May 2023

Report Title: Gaelic Language Plan 2023–28

Report By: Chief Executive

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 The main purpose of the report is to invite Members to consider and note the Highland Council's Gaelic Language Plan 2023 – 2028 ('GLP') which is the 4th iteration.
- 1.2 It is important to highlight that the GLP is not a new plan, as each iteration builds upon the progress of preceding versions.
- 1.3 The GLP can be found in **Booklet A** (attached to this report) and has also been circulated to Members of the Committee.
- 1.4 The GLP will be submitted to the Full Council on June 29th 2023.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to agree to recommend to the full Council that it homologates the submission of the draft Plan to Bord na Gaidhlig.

3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource – Funding for the implementation of the GLP will be sought through the Scottish Government, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Highland Council and other funding streams, where appropriate.
- 3.2 Legal – The Highland Council is required to have an approved GLP in accordance with the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 ('the 2005 Act'). Section 3(6) of the 2005 Act also requires public authorities to consult persons appearing to have an interest in the draft GLP.

The GLP must be submitted to Bòrd na Gàidhlig by the 6th of June 2023, in accordance with the requirements of the 2005 Act.

- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island) – The implementation of the GLP has a strong community focus across the Highlands due to the activities, community support and development that is provided in communities through the work of the Gaelic Team. The Gaelic Team, where appropriate, work in partnership and liaise with local and community groups and organisations.
- 3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever – The Gaelic Team maximises the use of technology to liaise with colleagues and external bodies to reduce travel implications.
- 3.5 Risk – The draft GLP must be submitted to Bòrd na Gàidhlig by the 6th of June in terms of the 2005 Act.

Ongoing economic pressures could impact the Highland Council's ability to deliver the GLP. This risk is monitored via the Highland Council's Performance and Risk Management System (PRMS), which is reported on a quarterly basis, and includes a PRMS report as a standing item on the Gaelic Committee agenda.

- 3.6 Gaelic – The GLP has very positive implications regarding the preservation and development of the Gaelic language and culture across all the sectors and age groups of the Highlands. The GLP also enhances the social and economic value of Gaelic.

4. Gaelic Language Plan 2023-2028

- 4.1 The GLP is a refreshed version of three previous iterations. The GLP builds upon the previous work undertaken to further the two overarching aims of Bòrd na Gàidhlig's draft National Gaelic Plan 2023- 2028:

- Increase the Use of Gaelic
- Increase the Learning of Gaelic

As mentioned in 1.3 GLP can be found in **Booklet A**

- 4.2 The Strategic Priorities of the plan have been agreed with Bòrd na Gàidhlig. They are as follows:

- Support for all Gaelic users and learners, in their communities and in the networks in which they operate, is increased
- Provide initiatives to encourage Gaelic language learning for young people and families in the home
- Gaelic Media and Arts output - creating opportunities for expression, skills, access, participation and creativity
- Using Gaelic in businesses and social enterprises; and Gaelic as an economic asset in Scotland
- Expand the delivery of Gaelic Medium Education with increased secondary subject delivery, creation of new standalone schools and new early-years, primary and secondary provision.
- Deliver continued promotion and growth in GME and GLE at all levels including delivery of Gaelic as a modern language, with 70% of primary schools providing Gaelic as an L2 and L3 to increase the provision of Gaelic across the authority

4.4 The GLP has also been structured in line with the draft National Gaelic Plan 2023–2028, which includes the following four themes:

- Communities and Home;
- Media, Arts, Culture and Heritage;
- Business and the Economy;
- Education.

A section on Corporate Service Aims has been included as this supports and enhances the themes above, especially in relation to Gaelic/bilingualism across all Council services.

The standardised Corporate Service Aims issued by Bòrd na Gàidhlig aim to standardise key Gaelic services over time across the public sector. There is an understanding that local authorities will be at different stages with these aims however it is expected that all should be working towards these outcomes.

5 Amendments to the draft plan

5.1 The public consultation for the GLP was open for 6 weeks and closed on the 21st of April 2023

Over 500 comments were received over the course of the public consultation.

Some of the key feedback received included the following:

- The plan was too lengthy and difficult to read.
- More clarification required about our collaborative working with organisations such as Highlife Highland, Fèisean nan Gàidheal, Fèis Rois and Eden Court.
- Young people responded that they enjoyed activities such as Fèisean and sports through the medium of Gaelic.
- Pupils expressed that they would like to see a wider range of sports being offered, and on a more frequent basis.
- Concerns about lack of teachers and resources.
- The Business and Economy theme was under-represented.
- The work of Community Learning & Development Officers was praised highly.

Feedback has been reviewed and has informed the final draft of the GLP. The amendments adopted are outlined in Appendix 1 of the Plan.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer, Performance and Governance

Date: 10th May 2023

Author: Eoina Rodgers and Morag Anna MacLeod Mitchell

Background Papers: The Highland Council Gaelic Language Plan 2023–28 (**Booklet**

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