

Agenda Item	5
Report No	G/9/23

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Gaelic Committee

Date: 31st May 2023

Report Title: Gaelic Language Plan – Public consultation

Report By: Chief Executive

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 The main purpose of the report is to inform Members about the public consultation held in relation to The Highland Council's refreshed Gaelic Language Plan 2023–28 (GLP).

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
- i. Consider the report.

3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource – Between January and May the Council's Gaelic Team led on the planning for the GLP public consultation. Astar Media also supported on a short-term consultancy to arrange the drop-in events and to gather and collate consultation responses.
- 3.2 Legal – The Highland Council is required to have an approved Gaelic Language Plan in accordance with the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005. Section 3(6) of the 2005 Act also outlines the requirement of public authorities to consult persons appearing to have an interest on the draft GLP.
- 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.

- 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. The Gaelic Team car-shared, where possible to attend consultation events and a cargo bike was used to transport consultation banners and materials to the Inverness drop-in event.
- 3.5 Risk – There is no risk associated with this report.
- 3.6 Gaelic – Feedback received through the public consultation will lead to very positive implications regarding the preservation and development of Gaelic language and culture across all the sectors and age groups in the Highlands.

4. GLP Consultation Format

- 4.1 The public consultation for the draft GLP opened on the 10th of March and remained open for 6 weeks, until the 21st of April.
- 4.2 Social media posts and press releases were issued to advertise the public consultation and associated consultation events.
- 4.3 Respondents were encouraged to respond online via a consultation survey, hosted on The Highland Council website.
- 4.4 Three drop-in events were also held in Inverness, Portree and Lochaber.
- 4.5 Stakeholders, such as Gaelic organisations, were regularly emailed to encourage responses (the stakeholder mailing list can be seen in Appendix 1). They were also provided with an information pack about the draft GLP.
The pack included the following:
 - Copies of the draft GLP
 - A shorter, summary document about the draft Plan
 - A 'Key changes between the third and fourth iterations of the GLP' document
 - A GLP slide deck, which was intended to encourage discussion within organisations.
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- 4.6 A Gaelic Pupil Voice Project pack was also created and shared with Highland schools. Pupils were encouraged to identify and discuss ways to either (i) increase the use of Gaelic or (ii) increase the learning of Gaelic. Their results were shared with the Highland Council and considered as consultation responses.

5 GLP 2023-28 Consultation responses

- 5.1 Over 500 comments were received in relation to the draft GLP. This represents a more than thirteen-fold increase on the number of responses received during the public consultation for the previous version of the GLP.

6. Astar Media

Astar Media is a Gaelic company specialising in digital communications, project management and delivery and event management. They were founded in 2021 and are based in Stornoway.

Astar Media was contracted, on a short-term basis, to arrange the drop-in events, facilitate discussions at the events and to gather and collate responses. Astar Media

also designed infographics, summary documents and other consultation materials for use at the events.

The presence of Astar Media staff at the drop-in events enabled attendees to talk openly about the GLP. It also enabled the Council's Gaelic Team to engage with more members of the public at the events.

Following the close of the public consultation, Astar Media provided the Council's Gaelic Team with the collated responses, as gathered at the drop-in events. Feedback was also provided by Astar Media on the consultation process, which will inform planning for future public consultations.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer, Performance and Governance

Date: 18 May 2023

Author: Eoina Rodgers and Morag Anna MacLeod Mitchell

Background Papers:

Appendix 1

Stakeholder mailing list

Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba

Am Baile

An Comunn Gàidhealach

Bòrd na Gàidhlig

Cairngorms National Park Authority

Care and Learning Alliance

Calmac

Camanachd Association

Celtic Media Festival

CMAL

Comann nam Pàrant

Comunn Gàidhlig Inbhir Nis - The Gaelic Society of Inverness

Comunn na Gàidhlig

Convention of Scottish Local Authorities

Creative Scotland

Crofting Commission

Cultarlann Inbhir Nis

Education Scotland

FC Sonas

Fèis Rois

Fèisean nan Gàidheal

Forestry and Land Scotland

Gaelic Local Authorities Development officers (GLAD)

Gaelic Local Authorities Network (GLAN)

HandsupforTrad

Highland and Islands Airports Limited

Highlands and Islands Enterprise

Highlife Highland

Historic Scotland

Inverness BID

MG ALBA

Moray Council

National Museums Scotland

NatureScot

Northern Alliance

Paths for All

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig

Seachdain na Gàidhlig

Skills Development Scotland

Spirit of the Highlands

Sport Scotland

Scottish Qualifications Authority

The Scottish Government

University of the Highlands and Islands

Visit Scotland

Ward and city manager group

