

Agenda Item	9
Report No	G/09/24

## THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** Gaelic Committee

**Date:** 29 May 2024

**Report Title:** Gaelic Education Update

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

### 1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This Report informs Members of recent key areas of improvement within the development of Gaelic Education, including developments in the progress of workforce planning for Gaelic Medium Teacher recruitment.

This report also shares the 3 key project areas and outcomes for the Gaelic Specific Grant 2024/25.

### 2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- a) Note the areas of development and progress in Gaelic Education and Gaelic Education teacher recruitment
- b) Consider and note the 3 projects outlined in the Gaelic Specific Grant bid and award from Scottish Government for 2024/2025 that the grant will help to support.

### 3. Implications

3.1 Resource – the funding provided by the Scottish Government through the Gaelic Specific Grant (GSG) provides invaluable support for a wide range of projects that assist the Council in delivering its commitments under the Gaelic Language Plan with the majority dedicated to the delivery of Gaelic Medium and Gaelic Learner Education. Whilst this is significant and welcome, it should be noted that the majority of the Council's Gaelic expenditure comes from core Council budgets.

For the financial year 2024/25 the Council submitted a GSG application for £1.3M against total projected expenditure of £8M and was awarded £915,000.

In addition to core Council funding and the Gaelic Specific Grant, the Gaelic budget also secures additional funding through project-specific bids to Bòrd na Gàidhlig, and the Strategic Gaelic Plan Fund (GPF).

- 3.2 Legal - The Highland Council has a requirement to implement its Gaelic Language Plan under the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act of 2005. The Education (Scotland) Act 2016 requires that an education authority has a duty to promote and support Gaelic Education (section 15).
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island), – there are no specific risks arising because of this report.
- 3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever – Where possible, meetings take place online.
- 3.5 Risk – Gaelic Education outcomes within the Gaelic Language Plan and National Plan are not achieved.
- 3.6 Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people). None.
- 3.7 Gaelic - The report enhances Gaelic Education development within The Highland Council area and supports the implementation of The Highland Council's Gaelic Language Plan and the National Plan.

#### **4. Key developments in Gaelic Medium Provision**

##### **4.1 Highland Literacy Programme**

The Gaelic Specific Grant for 2023/24 has provided resources towards a 0.4 Gaelic Literacy Development Officer for The Highland Council. The funding supports a role for 1 term, to lead in creating and developing resources in Gaelic for the Highland Literacy Project. The officer will provide opportunities for online training throughout the final session of 2023/24 delivered through the medium of Gaelic. New resources and supportive online training sessions will be available across the duration of the secondment.

The first online training was held on Thursday 18 April. Sign up was available through Highland CPD (Continuing Professional Development) and an invite was extended to teachers working in Gaelic Medium in Argyll and Bute. The first session was very well attended with 50 practitioners. This evidences the demand for support in this area of curriculum development for both network opportunities and professional learning.

##### **4.2 School Improvement Planning**

The Education Collaborative Lead Team met recently at Strategic Head Teacher meetings across Highland. A key development for Gaelic was shared as part of the School Improvement Planning template update. This increases the priority of Gaelic through the renewed improvement frameworks and provides equity for the reporting on Gaelic outcomes.

The following areas are suggested for focused improvement targets and quality assurance self-evaluation throughout the school session;

- Education Scotland Advice on Gaelic Education sections; high quality immersion experiences, improving fluency, Gaelic ethos
- Secondary – Increasing immersion curriculum opportunities in BGE and Senior Phase
- Initiatives that promote and support the use of Gaelic in the home, in communities and extra-curricular experiences
- Activities to support Gaelic language and culture (arts, media, creative industries, workplace)
- Local Authority Gaelic Language Plan priority

## 5. Gaelic Specific Grant (GSG)

- 5.1 The purpose of the GSG is to provide support to new and current projects that can, or will, demonstrate their value in supporting growth in the Gaelic Education.

Under the Grants for Gaelic Education (Scotland) Regulations 1986 (Annex B), bids are welcomed in respect of expenditure to be incurred for purposes approved by the Scottish Ministers in, or in connection with, the teaching of the Gaelic language or the teaching in that language of other subjects. The Scottish Government takes the view that for Gaelic Specific Grant, the term “teaching” includes teaching all age groups in formal and informal settings.

- 5.2 Gaelic Education Projects across the bid for the Grant 2024/25.

Highland Council is the largest provider of Gaelic Medium Education in Scotland. Our education service has 29 secondary schools and 170 primary schools. The total number of operational schools, 199, covers a geographical area nearly the size of Belgium. 48% of our secondary schools offer Gaelic Education. 12% of our primary schools offer GME (Gaelic Medium Education). The area is a mix of urban, semi urban, and rural and remote areas and we have ambition to provide opportunities for Gaelic across the whole region.

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

- 5.3 Project 1 – Support towards the strategic direction for Gaelic within the Education specific priority areas of GLP4.

Key areas of focus are to ensure Gaelic in Highlands is actively promoted, and quality assured within a framework of performance and governance, reporting to Highland Council’s Gaelic Committee.

Outcomes contributing to this direction include to,

- monitor, scrutinise and promote the implementation of the Council’s Gaelic Language Plan, including the delivery of Gaelic education.
- liaise with Bòrd na Gàidhlig on the strategic development of Gaelic language.
- work with Gaelic development agencies in promoting, developing, and sustaining the Gaelic language, heritage, and culture in the Highlands.

- work with the Scottish Government and Parliament regarding legislation relating to Gaelic language.
- monitor the implications of legislation in respect of Gaelic language and advise the Council of its impact across the Highlands.
- Budget monitoring and scrutiny of Gaelic specific funding, grants, and expenditure.

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

The project has planned outcomes under each of the following headings;

- Gaelic in the Home and Communities.
- Gaelic community in ELC (Early Learning and Childcare) & Childcare.
- Gaelic community in Primary.
- Gaelic community in Secondary.

Gaelic and Gaelic Education is supported by the work of the Gaelic Community Learning and Development Officers and Gaelic Team and Education Development officers.

They play a vital role in promoting the value of Gaelic and opportunities for lifelong learning or Developing the Young force as part of the skills for life, learning and work agenda for 3-18. Additionally, the source external funding to support adult learning and to co-ordinate and deliver family support for families and 0-3 years.

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

Outcomes within this project encompass the work in Education for the demographic of 3-18 years. This is provided via support and development work that is lead and implemented by Education Officers with a remit for Gaelic within a context of strategic planning in relation to all Education priorities.

#### 6.0 **Gaelic Medium Workforce Plan Update**

##### 6.1 At Education Committee in November 2023, a report set out a summary of the Education and Learning Service Workforce Plan for the period 2023 – 2026.

As part of this report, it was recognised that recruitment of Gaelic speaking staff and Gaelic Medium Teachers is a significant problem for the Service. It is also recognised that this area of recruitment is a national issue and not specific to Highland.

Recent progress has been made across recruitment of Gaelic Medium teachers across Highland.

Contributing factors to this include closer partnership working between workforce planning, education officers and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig. This includes engaging with students to understand the needs of probationers and matching this with areas where gaps have been identified.

This partnership working was successful with 6 GME teachers currently on probationer placement across Highland. Next session, 4 students have been secured for placement across GME provision. The impact of the increased probationer placements in Highland was evidenced at the recent recruitment advertising in March 2024 with all vacancies successfully recruiting to primary and secondary Gaelic medium posts.

Secondary subject delivery through Gaelic remains a challenge. As part of the work towards closing this gap, a new partnership has been established with Strathclyde University. In April, Senior Managers from secondary schools met with students online to understand the needs of students when selecting local authorities for their probation year. Closer links for placements during next session are now planned and it is hoped that this will encourage teachers to opt for both placements and probation years in Highland going forward to meet future demands.

## 6.2 Designation:

Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2024

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Background Papers:

Appendices: