

Agenda Item	4
Report No	GC/14/24

## THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** Gaelic Committee

**Date:** 20 November 2024

**Report Title:** Gaelic Education Update

**Report By:** Assistant Chief Executive – People

### 1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report informs Members of the recent key areas of improvement and development within Gaelic Education, including:

- Dingwall Primary School's journey towards creating a positive Gaelic ethos and learner journey in their curriculum
- Progress towards delivering Gaelic Language Plan (GLP) outcome for digital learning and access to Gaelic

The report also updates Members on actions towards creating Gaelic Medium Catchments.

### 2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i. Note the content of the report
- ii. Note the ongoing development work towards providing access to Gaelic education in secondary schools by digital learning

### 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.

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 statutory duty to implement its Gaelic Language Plan in terms of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act of 2005. Section 15 Education (Scotland) Act 2016 imposes a statutory duty on The Highland Council as Education Authority to promote and support Gaelic Education.
- 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 Statutory Advice on Gaelic education requirements are not met.
- 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. **Impacts**

- 4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.
- 4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.
- 4.3 This is a monitoring and/or update report and therefore an impact assessment is not required.

## **5. Dingwall Primary School – Gaelic and Gaelic Medium Case Study**

- 5.1 In September, Dingwall Primary School head teacher, Sara MacAskill, was invited to present at a national seminar in recognition of their work in leadership of GME.

[System Learn National Seminar on Leadership in Gaelic Medium \(Primary, ELC\) | Events | Education Scotland](#)

The event was very well attended by education professionals from across Scotland. The school was highlighted as a case study evidencing what success looks like when the Advice on Gaelic Education framework is embedded into a school curriculum and improvement planning for quality assurance is taken forward.

- 5.2 Children's Rights in Gaelic Medium Education.

Dingwall Primary School was also recently celebrated and highlighted by Education Scotland for their work on their promotion of children's rights in relation to Gaelic.

The children and teachers of the Gaelic medium unit at Dingwall Primary School discuss how the school ensures its rights-based approach to learning not only includes Gaelic Medium Education, but allows it to flourish within a large English-majority school.

The school ensures that all GME children can learn about and discuss their rights in Gaelic, for example the right to be safe in Article 19. The school has a particular focus on Article 30 – Indigenous and Minority Groups – and with Article 31 (the right to rest and leisure) uses activities such as shinty, Gaelic song, traditional dance and the local environment to enrich the vital Gaelic immersion experiences for children in GME, whilst teaching Gaelic as an L2 Language throughout the English Medium Education stream to strengthen their Gaelic-positive ethos.

Link to video [here](#).

## **6. Gaelic Language Plan Outcomes – Gaelic Education**

- 6.1 Lochaline Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) – Access to Gaelic immersion

- 6.2 The Statutory Advice on Gaelic Education states that education authorities should give consideration to commencing and supporting Gaelic provision for children below school age.

In Highland, our Gaelic Community Learning and Development Gaelic Language Plan outcomes include supporting 0-3. The activity and development work in the area of Lochaline led to a statutory request for Gaelic Medium Education in the primary school. The Council aims to establish the provision, in agreement with parents, from August 2025.

- 6.3 In the interim, in alignment with the statutory guidance, access to immersion opportunities are now provided within the Lochaline Primary School ELC. This, as the guidance outlines, encourages fluency from an early age and puts young children on a path towards Gaelic fluency.

## **7.0 Update on the creation of Gàidhlig Medium catchments**

- 7.1 At the time of writing, the Council has created Gàidhlig Medium (GM) catchment areas for 19 of the 20 primary schools in Highland that offer GME, and for 13 out of 14 secondary schools.

Since the last time this was reported to the Committee, catchment areas have been approved for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis, Millbank Primary School, Dingwall Primary School, Inverness Royal Academy, Nairn Academy, and Dingwall Academy.

### Remaining GM catchments

The remaining GM catchments, that have not yet been created or proposed, relate to the new Tain Campus. At the time of writing, it is intended that a Proposal Paper to create the new catchments will be put to the Education Committee meeting of 21 November, with a request that the Committee approve a request to begin a statutory consultation. The exercise would be completed during the course of 2025.

## **8.0 Digital Schools Update:**

Gaelic is one of the priority areas within Highland Council's strengthened digital offering to enable lessons to be delivered to students who might not otherwise be able to access the subject. Gaelic Education is currently being delivered online to pupils in Thurso High School, Glenurquhart High School and Dornoch Academy.

A Gaelic teacher from Highland is currently teaching National 5 qualification (Gaelic Learners) to Senior Phase pupils from Thurso High School and Glenurquhart High School. These blended lessons are taught live using Google Meet, but also via self-study periods, where pupils can work independently on provided resources.

Gàidhlig is also being delivered to S3 BGE pupils in Thurso High School through the medium of Gaelic. These lessons are taught live through Google Meet and resources are shared directly with pupils via their Google classroom.

An S3 pupil in Dornoch Academy, who had previously been in Gaelic Medium Education, is accessing pre-recorded teaching resources to allow her to continue with GME. These are uploaded weekly to a Google classroom and the pupil is able to work through them, with support from the Gaelic teacher and also a modern language teacher in the school.

Designation:

Date:

Author: Ruairidh MacKay, Lena Walker, Ian Jackson

Background Papers:

Appendices: