

Agenda Item	7
Report No	G/16/24

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Gaelic Committee

Date: 20 November 2024

Report Title: Gaelic Conference Update

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive – People

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 The Highland Council Gaelic Conference aims to provide direct outcomes and actions to support Gaelic Language Plan (GLP) Theme, Business & The Economy. Within the theme, there are 2 key areas;

- Use Gaelic in businesses and social enterprises,
- Use Gaelic as an economic asset in Scotland.

The report provides an update to Elected Members on the planning stages, date and venue for the Gaelic Conference.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i. Discuss and note the Gaelic Conference overview.
- ii. Discuss and note how the research reports may impact the scope of the Gaelic Conference and the links to The Highland Council's GLP Theme of Business and the Economy.

3. Implications

3.1 Resource

The delivery of the GLP is funded by The Highland Council, Scottish Government grants and various Bòrd na Gàidhlig (BnaG) funding streams.

The Gaelic Conference was awarded to 21CC on the 12th September 2024 through procurement. Detail was provided at the last committee meeting regarding the funding of the conference. The costs are expected to be £29,000 and the anticipated funding will enable us to move forward with full funding details to be shared in future once the approval process is complete.

3.2 Legal

The Highland Council has a statutory duty to have a Gaelic Language Plan in terms of Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005. The duty includes an obligation to implement and accurately report commitments.

3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island)

The Report complies with The Highland Council policies on Equality.

3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever

The procurement process for the Gaelic Conference has included an essential commitment from the supplier that deliverables will meet Climate Change and Carbon Clever outcomes.

3.5 Risk

Business Continuity Plans for key risks will be carefully managed to ensure the event is a success.

3.6 Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people).

The safety and wellbeing of attendees has been included in the supplier requirements for the delivery of the Gaelic Conference.

3.6 Gaelic

Positive impact on the delivery of Gaelic Language Plan outcomes Business and the Economy.

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.

4. Executive Summary

4.1 The Highland Council will host a Gaelic Conference to address and meet key areas within the Council's Gaelic Language Plan (GLP).

The Highland Council's GLP has a clear focus on increasing Gaelic usage and the number of Gaelic speakers.

The GLP recognises that Gaelic contributes to the broad educational, social, cultural and economic value and wellbeing of the Highlands. To meet the outcomes of this, Eden Court, Inverness has been selected as the venue to host the Conference.

4.2 The Gaelic Conference will be hosted on the 1st of May 2025 at Eden Court, Inverness.

5 Gaelic Conference Purpose

5.1 The purpose of the 1 day conference was previously shared with Gaelic Committee in [September 2024](#). The main aim of the conference is to evidence the cultural value and the economic potential of Gaelic in Business and Employability across the Highlands.

In June 2024, an Invitation to Quote was procured with the aim of working with a conference provider to work in collaboration with the The Highland Council to deliver the Conference. We are pleased to confirm that the Invitation to Quote was successful, and an award has been made to 21CC Group in September.

6 Conference Overview

6.1 Initial meetings have now taken place with 21CC Group. This included the initial scoping to identify key note speakers for invitation to the conference and confirm an appropriate venue to meet the needs of the conference.

As shared at the Gaelic Committee in September, stakeholders and partners from across the Highlands as well as national and international guests will be invited. The Conference also intends to capture networking opportunities.

The Conference will be planned in close collaboration with key partners. The partnership ensures the authority has close involvement with the project.

7 Background

7.1 Gaelic as an economic and social asset

In 2014, along with Highlands and Islands Enterprise and other partners, The Highland Council commissioned an independent report to survey the impact of Gaelic on businesses and social enterprises. The purpose was to gather information on economic activity and commitment related to Gaelic, so that we can be better informed when making future decisions.

7.2 [Research report \(external link\)](#)

The report found that:

- 60 per cent of the businesses surveyed felt that their use of Gaelic enhanced the value of the language within the community
- Gaelic is an asset in particular when used to promote the creative industries, tourism, food and drink

The key findings from businesses and social enterprises consulted were that:

- Gaelic is used by more than 60 per cent of the businesses as a key element of their product or service
- Almost two thirds saw Gaelic as being an important element in the success of their business
- Gaelic is particularly important to businesses operating in the creative industries
- 70 per cent of businesses recognised Gaelic as an asset to their business
- Almost 60 per cent of businesses that already use Gaelic see additional opportunities to make more use of the language
- One third of businesses that saw the language as an asset could measure the value to their businesses. Of these 34 businesses, Gaelic contributed to turnover in the region of £4 million

7.3 Key events are delivered by Gaelic organisations in Highland to deliver the economic outcomes in relation to the Gaelic Language Plan. Examples of this include BLAS, hosting the National Mòd and supporting events such as Na Trads.

7.4 More recently, in 2022, a Short Life Working Group formed with an aim to strengthen Gaelic by means of a focus on economic opportunities and to strengthen the economy by making the most of Gaelic opportunities.

Their [report](#) outlines the context in which the group has operated, some of the challenges facing Gaelic as well as the considerable opportunities for social, economic, cultural, education and wellbeing outcomes.

8.0 **Next Steps**

8.1 The next steps for the Gaelic Conference will involve working closely with 21CC Group to finalise the agenda and speakers. We will provide a further update to Gaelic Committee once these elements are confirmed.

Designation:

Date: 6 November 2024

Author: Lena Walker

Background Papers:

Appendices: