

## **ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL**

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COMMITTEE: Finance Policy and Resources

DATE: 9 June 2015

DIRECTOR: Pete Leonard Director

TITLE OF REPORT: Gaelic Language Plan

REPORT NUMBER: CHI/13/002

CHECKLIST COMPLETED: Yes

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The Aberdeen City Council Gaelic Language Plan has been prepared within the framework of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005. It sets out how we will use Gaelic in the operation of our functions, how we will enable the use of Gaelic when communicating with the public and key partners, and how we will promote and develop Gaelic. Aberdeen City Council's Gaelic Plan will be submitted to Bòrd na Gàidhlig for approval on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee is asked to:

- Agree the content of the council's draft Gaelic Language Plan.
- Agree to receive annual monitoring of the associated action plan by means of an information bulletin.
- Submit the draft plan to to Bòrd na Gàidhlig for approval on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Funding is available towards additional costs incurred by including Gaelic through the Gaelic Language Act Implementation Fund (GLAIF) which runs annually. There are also several opportunities for funding community projects through various funds (Community, drama etc) which can be seen at: <http://www.gaidhlig.org.uk/bord/en/funding-opportunities>.

Bord na Gaidhlig will also consider funding applications made to them outside the time-frames of their set funding streams. We will promote these funding opportunities, as they become available, through Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisation (ACVO) for community groups and to our own mailing lists of organisations and community forums.

CnaG, <http://www.cnag.org/en/> also funds Gaelic projects.

Education projects have specific funding streams for Gaelic Education or are included as part of the 1+2 initiative which also has funding available toward all languages. Arts and Community projects can be supported through various bodies working in Aberdeen with Gaelic plans in place such as Creative Scotland, Aberdeen University, Scottish National Heritage, Forestry Commission and National Theatres of Scotland. Aberdeen Gaelic Club will also be aware of funding opportunities.

Many in-house changes can be made at minimal additional cost as changes are made at the point of refreshing old signage or simply raising awareness of existing provision which is not currently promoted. Classes are available through Aberdeen Gaelic Club and Aberdeen University and it is probable that they will be able to support the council in some of its plans. The Gaelic Club is already considering running some initiatives which the council could support either through funding or promotion of the events/classes which would contribute to some of the aims of the plan.

#### **4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

An EHRIA has been completed and found no adverse impact.

#### **5. BACKGROUND/ MAIN ISSUES**

The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 was passed by the Scottish Parliament in 2004. It aims to secure the status of the Gaelic language as an official language of Scotland, commanding equal respect with the English language.

Bord na Gaidhlig is a non-departmental body established under the Act and is responsible for safeguarding the future of Gaelic in Scotland, for promoting the use and understanding of the language and for developing and supporting Gaelic education and culture.

Under the 2005 Act, Bord na Gaidhlig can ask public sector organisations to prepare Gaelic Language Plans (GLPs). This is designed to help the public sector in Scotland play its part in creating a sustainable future for Gaelic by raising its status and profile and creating practical opportunities for its use.

The Bord issued notification on 2014, instructing the Council under the terms of the Act to submit a Gaelic Language Plan for consideration by 12 June 2015.

The Bord provided a list of high level expectations which had to be considered when compiling a plan in a proportionate and relevant way to Aberdeen's communities:

- I.** Implement and deliver the aims of the National Language Plan for Gaelic, with regard to Adult Learning, Gaelic Medium Education and Support for Parents.
- II.** Bi-lingual corporate logo with equality of respect for the languages, being used accordingly.
- III.** Encourage and support learners by aiming for an increase of at least 15% each year in the numbers of Gaelic learners, who are enrolled in Gaelic classes in the authority area.
- IV.** Increase the numbers of children who are accessing Gaelic education at an early stage by at least 15% each year.
- V.** Increase the numbers of children who are enrolled in Gaelic education at primary level by at least 15% each year.
- VI.** Give pro-active support to pupils who are transferring from Gaelic education in Primary School to Secondary Schools, with the aim of increasing the numbers of pupils who choose Gaelic Medium Education in Secondary School.
- VII.** Extend the range of opportunities for using Gaelic in the communities, with particular priority given to school pupils and learners of Gaelic.
- VIII.** Road entry signs which are bilingual with equality of respect for both languages.
- IX.** Bilingual street signs when new or being renewed, with equality of respect for the languages.
- X.** Bilingual corporate and vehicle signs on a renewal or replacement basis, with equality of respect for the languages.
- XI.** Bilingual titles for fairs and initiatives which are directed or funded by the authority, with equality of respect for the languages.

The Development Officer carried out the required staff survey and knowledge gathering process; which had a total of 517 responses.

A Language Plans Officer from the Bord has provided support on the draft plan to date and their initial views have been largely addressed by the version attached as Appendix 1.

A public consultation was held on the plan between 30th March and 11th May 2015. The following forms the list of consultees:

- Gilcomstoun Primary School
- Hazlehead Academy
- Aberdeen Gaelic Club
- Aberdeen University
- Aberdeenshire Council
- GMòr Group
- City Voice Blog
- Civic Forum
- Fèisean nan Gàidheal
- Comann nam Pàrant
- Cairngorms National Parks
- Forestry Commission
- Scottish National Heritage,
- Aberdeen Performing Arts,
- North East College
- The Robert Gordon University
- Clì Gàidhlig
- Aberdeen Disability Advisory Group
- Aberdeen Older People's Advisory Group
- Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations ( ACVO)
- Sabhal Mòr Ostaig

There were a total of 5 responses; 4 positive and 1 negative, to the public consultation, with fuller contributions from the Scottish National Heritage and Aberdeen University and certain themes within the plan were updated and expanded upon as a response to the consultation. The negative response would have preferred to see the focus on developing a common language such as Esperanto. An example of the positive comments appears below:

“It is pleasing to see that the Education Department of Aberdeen City have realised at last that the up-take of Gaelic in the schools offering the subject is unacceptably low. To read about a strategy addressing the matter, is equally pleasing! Education is key to the future of Gaelic (not just in Aberdeen)”

The Development Officer also engaged with the Aberdeen Disability Advisory Group, the Older People's Advisory Group, Aberdeen Women's Alliance, the North East LGBT + Development Group and a Women and Faith Group to raise awareness of the plan and to seek feedback.

## **6. IMPACT**

- **Corporate:**

The Gaelic Language Plan has been developed in line with the Council's vision, Aberdeen - the Smarter City. We will ensure all citizens are encouraged and supported appropriately to make their full contribution. In order to address this, we will challenge inequalities wherever they exist and bring our communities closer together.

The Gaelic Language Plan offers positive opportunities for joint working with partner organisations on projects/ activities.

- **Public:**

This report is highly relevant to ensuring that the council meets its statutory duties.

An Equality and Human Right Impact Assessment has been carried out and is appended to this report as Appendix 3.

It is likely that there will be public interest in the Gaelic Language Plan.

## **7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK**

The Council has a statutory duty to comply with the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005

## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

## **9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS**

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Gaelic Language Action Plan Development Officer

- Morag left Council employment in March 2015, so the contact name is now Sandra Bruce, Equalities Strategist,  
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