

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
GAELIC COMMITTEE - 5 JUNE 2008

Agenda Item	3.
Report No	G/09/08

Gaelic Language Plan and Bòrd na Gàidhlig

Report by Director of Education, Culture and Sport Service

Summary

This report details the discussions on the Highland Council's Gaelic Language Plan with Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

Implementation of the Council's Gaelic Language Plan will contribute to the Council's Programme for Administration.

1. Background

- 1.1 Following notification from Bòrd na Gàidhlig under Section 3 of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act, Highland Council submitted a Draft Gaelic Language Plan to the Bòrd in October 2007.
- 1.2 Bòrd na Gàidhlig responded with their first comments on the Draft Plan at the end of January 2008.
- 1.3 The Bòrd comments identified areas of the Draft Plan which "required amendment", and other areas where the Bòrd "recommended amendment". The recommended amendments were totally at the discretion of the Council, but the required amendments had to be addressed.

2. Summary of Bòrd response

- 2.1 The Bòrd response to the council plan was generally favourable. There were a number of "recommendations" and "required amendments" made to the plan relating primarily to the core commitments, the National Plan and to the education strategy. Through discussion between Bòrd staff and council staff agreement was reached on these issues.

3. Amendments to the Highland Council's Draft Gaelic Language Plan

- 3.1.1 The following details the required amendments and the agreed changes to the plan as shown *in italics*:

- a) far fewer activities be "dependent on additional funding". *Repeated references to additional funding removed from the "Areas for Development" grids in the Plan. This also cancelled the following point (b).*
- b) an indication be made of the funding gap for the activities which remain so marked.
- c) there be more certitude in the language employed, describing what the Council will do unconditionally. *Some additional words added to more fully explain intended actions. e.g. HC will regularly publicise...*
- d) a higher target be set to increase the number of localities served by Gaelic-medium pre-school provision by 25%. *This was an unrealistic target – not least because of timescales involved in approving the plan and the need to formally approve new provisions. Agreed to a target of 10%.*
- e) that the appearance of the main corporate Council logo be amended to aim for equality between Gaelic and English, and that the associated text be likewise bilingual (though not necessarily a direct translation, eg "Seirbheis dhan Choimhearsnachd" or "Seirbheis dhan Ghàidhealtachd"). *Agreed that "where Gaelic is used by the Council, it will consistently be accorded equal respect with English".*
- f) that the choice of letters and logos and the appearance they will take be outlined. *Agreed*
- g) that mention be made of badges, passes, vehicle livery and strap-lines. *Agreed*
- h) that internal signs be introduced to more than just public areas so as to encourage Gaelic in the workplace. *Agreed - this practice is already underway.*
- i) that a Gaelic speaker be available on every switchboard. *Agreed to work towards this with an initial objective of providing one or more Gaelic speakers at the Council Service Centre in Alness.*
- j) that the complaints procedures be published bilingually. *Agreed*
- k) that close links be established with the national Comann nam Pàrant committee, which is soon to provide an advocacy service for parents to draw attention to gaelic medium education and to train and engage parents to offer advisory services and home-visiting. *Agreed – the council is already working with Comann nam Pàrant*
- l) that core language skills be developed within the authority. *Agreed – already council policy.*
- m) that the principle of inter-authority co-operation be adopted. *Agreed – already council policy*

3.2 Recommendations are non-statutory and while Highland Council was not obliged to accept these recommendations, most of these were accepted on the basis that they improved the plan, and have no negative implications for the Council.

3.3 Council officials are content that the Council's previously agreed obligations under its original draft Plan have not materially changed as a result of the amendments to the document.

4. Discussions with Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

4.1 Following detailed discussions between Council and Bòrd officers some amendments to the text of the Plan were agreed, and the Highland Council Gaelic Language Plan (HCGLP) was re-submitted to the Bòrd on 8th May.

4.2 The HCGLP was considered at a meeting of Bòrd na Gàidhlig on 19th May.

5. Implementing the Highland Council Gaelic Language Plan

5.1 The council plan spans the period of the current administration of the council from 2007 to 2011 and consequently much activity described in the Plan is ongoing. New, and ongoing, activities are now being detailed in annual action plans to ensure delivery of the overall objectives described in the Plan. The detailed action plan for the period between June 2008 and March 2009 is covered in Agenda Item 4 of this meeting.

5.2 The Chief Executive of Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Kenneth Murray has been invited to attend the Gaelic Committee meeting and to comment on the implementation of public authority Gaelic Language Plans.

6. Recommendation

6.1 Members are invited to note and comment on the amendments to Highland Council Gaelic Language Plan following formal discussions with Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

Signature:

Designation: Director, Education, Culture and Sport Service

Date: 27 May 2008

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