

**THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL**  
**GAELIC COMMITTEE - 12 March 2009**

Agenda Item	6.
Report No	G/09/09

**Tasglann agus Ionad-Clàraidh na Gàidhealtachd / Highland Archive and Registration Centre**

**Report by Director of Education, Culture and Sport Service**

**Summary**

Progress in implementing the Highland Archive Strategy is outlined and arrangements for Gaelic provision in Tasglann agus Ionad-Clàraidh na Gàidhealtachd are described

**1. Background**

- 1.1 In June 2002 The Highland Council reaffirmed its Archive Strategy previously adopted in May 1996. The key feature of this strategy is the provision of Archives Services through a hub and spokes approach with access to archives through a network of local Archive Centres supported by a central Archive Centre as a hub.
- 1.2 The Council successfully applied to Heritage Lottery Fund for £4.3m towards the cost of the Hub with matched funding as a Highland 2007 legacy project. Good progress has been made on both hub and spokes.

**2. Current progress in Areas**

- 2.1 In Fort William –Tasglann Loch Abar / Lochaber Archive Centre was officially opened in April 2008 although public access had been available since December 2007. A Lochaber Archives Advisory Group has been established to assist with raising the Archive's profile, helping to establish a development plan and access funding opportunities. Tasglann Loch Abar has now been assessed and approved by the Keeper of the Records of Scotland. Following on from this a formal agreement between the Council, the National Archives of Scotland and the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland has enabled the transfer from Edinburgh to Lochaber of the church records for all parishes in the Lochaber Presbytery.
- 2.2 In Skye and Lochalsh a trainee Archivist continues in post. Following the feasibility study tenders have now been received for the conversion of part of the former Elgin Hostel into an Archive Centre. Work is due to commence before the end of March with public access available by Autumn 2009. Meanwhile work continues to identify those records in Inverness and elsewhere which will transfer to Skye when appropriate facilities are complete.
- 2.3 Future plans for the delivery of further spokes include a partnership with UHI Centre for History at Dornoch and the development of plans for Pairc na Gàidhealtachd (which are the subject of a separate report to this Committee).

**3. Current progress at Hub**

3.1 Construction of Tasglann agus Ionad-Clàraidh na Gàidhealtachd / Highland Archive and Registration Centre started as planned in 2007 and apart from minor delays is proceeding according to programme and budget. The Centre will open to the public in Autumn 2009.

3.2 All signage both internal and external has been specified to be in dual language. Publicity material and leaflets are being created or reviewed and will include Gaelic headings.

#### **4. Gaelic Archives**

4.1 The volume of Gaelic material in the Council Archives is slight. This is because the archives are based on official records and Gaelic has not been the language of officialdom. Earliest records are in Latin and subsequent ones in English. Modern records will increasingly include Gaelic material. Older Archives in Gaelic include an eighteenth century Lord Lovat recruiting poster and nineteenth century Gaelic poetry and literary manuscripts.

4.2 In order to meet burgeoning demand and attract new users the Centre will include a dedicated Family History Search Room staffed by trained genealogists. Old Parish Registers and other records will help to provide information on Highland families of the past as today's users trace their ancestors and learn the stories about them that the records have to tell.

4.2 Arrangements are in hand to collect modern Gaelic material and to stimulate interest amongst partners. Examples include the deposit of recordings from the National Centre of Excellence in Traditional Music and the development Gaelic oral history archives as part of the Archive Service 'Muintir an Aite - The People of the Place' project which will deliver a series of high quality exhibitions incorporating family history surgeries based on the people of the Highlands using material from Hub and Spokes Archive collections with immigration and emigration central to displays. The exhibitions will be at held within archive centres and in conjunction with local heritage establishments.

#### **5. Recommendation**

5.1 Members are asked to consider and to make any comments on the progress in implementing the Highland Archive Strategy and on the arrangements for Gaelic provision in Tasglann agus Ionad-Clàraidh na Gàidhealtachd.

Signature:

Designation: Director, Education, Culture and Sport Service

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> February 2009

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