

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

GAELIC COMMITTEE – 18 SEPTEMBER 2008

Agenda Item	4.
Report No	G/23/08

**Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between The Highland Council
and the Province of Nova Scotia**

Report by Director of Education, Culture and Sport Service

SUMMARY

This report sets out the background to the Council's links with Nova Scotia and lists recent activities and lists projects proposed.

1. Background

1.1 In October of 2002, the Province of Nova Scotia and the Highland Council, Scotland signed a memorandum of understanding which outlines areas of joint interest and cooperation to strengthen Gaelic language and culture on both sides of the ocean. The Department of Tourism and Culture took the lead in Nova Scotia to ensure activities are initiated under the terms of the Memorandum.

1.2 The Memorandum states that the signatories "recognise the unique connection that exists between the Gaelic-speaking areas of Scotland and Nova Scotia on the basis of a common language; a common culture; family ties; and emigration." The purpose of the Memorandum is to foster the conditions under which opportunities for linguistic, cultural and economic development can be linked through tourism. The linguistic and cultural activities can be pursued and "build on the past to create a stable and vibrant future."

2 Vision

2.1 The Highlands and Nova Scotia acknowledge value and invest in Gaelic, a language and culture that contributes to the diversity, vibrancy and continued growth and development of both the Highlands and the Province

3 Mission

3.1 The mission of the Office of Gaelic Affairs (OGA) is to work with Nova Scotians in the development and promotion of Gaelic language and culture in the Province.

3.2 As reflected in the OGA's Mission statement, the OGA feels that the links with Gaelic in the Highlands and Scotland as they pertain to revitalisation of the Gaelic in Nova Scotia are invaluable. The OGA wishes to develop, enhance and encourage these through strategic initiatives that support already ongoing

community initiatives in the Highlands and Nova Scotia. This links with the direction that Gaelic development is taking in the Highlands.

4. A Summary of MOU Activities from October 2002 – August 2008

4.1 36 Activities have taken place between the end of October 2002 and August 2008. The list below includes exchanges to and from the Highlands as well as Highland and Nova Scotia based projects.

- 8 Government trips
- 4 Youth trips
- 5 Music
- 10 Gaelic Educational projects, including resources, tutors exchanges
- 7 Arts/Craft
- 2 Tourism
- 4 Work terms
- 1 Planning
- 2 Literature
- 14 Gaelic-language based projects

4.2 Youth Projects

- 3 Youth (individuals and groups under 30) visits/study/work to the Highlands, partially or fully supported by MOU
- 8 Youth (individual and groups under 30) visits/study/work to Nova Scotia, partially or fully supported by MOU

4.3 Work Placements

- 5 Short-term work placements for Highland youth in Nova Scotia
- 1 Short-term work placements for Nova Scotia youth in Highland

4.4 Education

- Funding to assist with costs associated with study at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig

5. Expansion of the MOU

5.1 Mr Lewis Mackinnon CEO Office of Gaelic Affairs, Province of Nova Scotia will be in the Highlands later this month and will be available to meet with Members and Council Officials to discuss a forward plan for the future of the MOU.

5.2 Way Forward

Meetings between political leaders in both the Highlands and the Province and of various organisations, agencies and government services/departments are planned with the aim of identifying areas of common interest and complementary skills, and to explore the potential of further joint ventures or other cooperative arrangements including:

- Identification of research and development projects and programmes that may be usefully undertaken on a cooperative basis;
- Identification of mechanisms to foster productive linkages between the public, private and voluntary sectors in Nova Scotia and Scotland;
- Identification of new tourism opportunities with growth potential that are capable of benefiting both parties, and identification of the ways to facilitate their development;
- Exchange of information of activities, policies, legislation and regulations concerning areas of interest;
- Visits and exchanges of officials, personnel or other representatives on general or specific topics, including local Councils;
- Implementation of agreed projects and programmes; and encourage other forms of cooperative activities as may be decided by the signatories on an ongoing basis.

5.3 Cooperation

The departments, institutions, organisations and other entities engaged in the promotion of tourism, cultural and educational cooperation may decide the forms and conditions for cooperation within the framework of this Memorandum of Understanding.

The Signatories agree to establishing a small Coordinating Committee who will hold meetings as appropriate and who may appoint sub groups to take forward particular projects or initiatives.

6. The Committee may:

- 6.1
- Discuss any matter pertaining to this Memorandum of Understanding;
 - Consider ways and means of promoting cooperation between the Signatories, i.e. a mutually-advantageous manner;
 - Establish mutually acceptable priorities in areas of interest;
 - Exchange information and encourage improved communication between individuals and institutions of Nova Scotia and the Highlands;
 - Provide a forum for coordinating activities in the areas of cooperation set out in this

7 Suggest further Areas of Cooperation

- 7.1
- Publicly advertise areas covered by this Memorandum of Understanding and report annually for review by the Signatories on progress;

- Maintain liaison with appropriate consultative groups established by Highlands and Nova Scotia.
- Establish appropriate administrative arrangements in Nova Scotia and Scotland to expedite the work of the Committee. These arrangements in Nova Scotia will be in the office of the Executive Director, Heritage Division, Department of Tourism and Culture. In Highland these arrangements will be through the Highland Council's Gaelic Development Team.

8. General

It is in a spirit of cooperation that the Council and the Office of Gaelic Affairs in Nova Scotia hopes to build on the initiatives undertaken to date to help create greater and more frequent opportunities for exchange that will assist in language and culture revitalisation in our respective areas.

This will also open doors to other socio-economic opportunities involving cross-promotion, exchange and commerce.

- 8.1
- Subject to the approval of the Signatories, agencies and organisations other organisations may participate in particular cooperative programmes or projects.
 - This Memorandum of Understanding will be subject to the laws and regulations in force in the Highland and Nova Scotia.

9. RECOMMENDATION

9.1 Members are asked to:

- Note and comment on how the Memorandum of Understanding can be broadened to include a wider range of partners.
- Agree that all signature events are more widely publicised.

Signature:

Designation: Director, Education, Culture and Sport Service

Date: August 28th 2008

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