

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
GAELIC COMMITTEE - 7 AUGUST 2008

Agenda Item	6.
Report No	G/19/08

The National Mod and An Comunn Gàidhealach

Report by Director of Education, Culture and Sport Service

Summary

This report provides an update to Members on discussions between Council officers and representatives of An Comunn Gàidhealach concerning joint agreement between the two bodies and the future arrangements for hosting the Royal National Mod in the Highlands.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 An Comunn Gàidhealach is a charitable organisation focussed on supporting Gaelic language and culture. Although involved in a number of areas its key activity is in organising and administering the Royal National Mod, alongside support for local Mods throughout the Highlands and Islands.
- 1.2 Because of complementary objectives The Highland Council and An Comunn Gàidhealach entered into a Service Level Agreement (SLA) in 2006. This agreement expired on the 31st March 2008.
- 1.3 The SLA committed the Council to pay £40,000/annum to An Comunn Gàidhealach during the period of the agreement, alongside support in kind such as free use of school buildings during the Royal National Mod, and the support and guidance of Council staff. In return An Communn committed to host the Royal National Mod in the Highlands every three years and to work to maximise its cultural and economic impact on the community surrounding the key location.
- 1.4 Following a scoping exercise a circuit of Highland Mod venues was agreed: Inverness, Fort William, and Aviemore, alongside provision for additional locations under a 'wild card' system should there be evidence of a strong local demand.
- 1.5 This SLA has now expired and early discussions have been held with representatives of An Comunn on the potential for a new agreement to be reached.

2. New Agreement

- 2.1 The Highland Council now has a statutory Gaelic Language Plan. This contains two specific actions covering An Comunn Gàidhealach and the National and Local Mods:

- “Maintain a formal strategic agreement with An Comunn Gàidhealach to host the Royal National Mod in the Highlands every three years;”
- “Engage in dialogue with the organisers of local Gaelic Mods to enhance their appeal to the young.”

On this basis An Comunn Gàidhealach has the potential to be a key partner for the Council in progressing the implementation and delivery of the Gaelic Language Plan.

2.2 An initial meeting between Highland Council and An Comunn was held in June 2008. A number of key principles were discussed by way of making progress towards a new Service Level Agreement:

- An Comunn and The Council were content with a three year cycle for the SLA and the hosting of the Royal National Mod in the area;
- That the funding support from The Highland Council is of significant value to An Comunn in terms of bringing the Mod to the Highlands
- That more regular dialogue be scheduled during the period of the SLA to ensure effective relations are maintained and that progress towards SLA objectives is monitored and understood;
- That the Mod locations scoping exercise be revisited to take account of recent development in other potential locations – such as the provision of new schools with associated facilities in Portree and Dingwall;
- Actions and targets be included to address the participation of young people in Local Mods.

2.3 The Council has undertaken to prepare a draft SLA (based on standard Council templates) in advance of a future meeting with An Comunn, scheduled for later this month.

3.0 Recommendation

3.1 Members are invited to note the contents of the report and the progress of discussions towards securing a new Service Level Agreement between The Highland Council and An Comunn Gàidhealach.

Signature:

Designation: Director, Education, Culture and Sport Service

Date: 23 July 2008

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