

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

COUNCIL 25TH JUNE 2009

Gaelic Language Signage

Report by Chief Executive

SUMMARY

Further to the Council decision on 30th October 2008, in respect of the Gaelic Plan, this report recommends a minor change to the Highland Council Gaelic Language Plan and details the guidance on decision making, in respect of signage. It also makes recommendations on the role of AÀA in advising the Council and the establishment of a Gaelic Names Sub-Committee.

1.0	Background
1.1	The Gaelic Language Act (Scotland) 2005 led to the establishment of Bòrd na Gàidhlig and the National Plan for Gaelic. Under the Act, Bòrd na Gàidhlig has the power to require public bodies in Scotland to prepare statutory Gaelic Language Plans.
1.2	Under these powers The Highland Council were one of the first six bodies required to prepare and submit a Gaelic Language Plan. The expectation is that each Plan will make a contribution towards the achievement of elements of the National Plan.
1.3	Along with The Highland Council the other bodies initially required to produce Plans were: Comhairle nan Eilean Siar; Argyll and Bute Council; The Scottish Parliament; Highlands and Islands Enterprise; and The Scottish Government. At this stage a further 7 bodies are preparing Gaelic Language Plans, including Edinburgh and Glasgow City Councils.
1.4	The Programme for the Highland Council 2009-2011 includes a commitment to the Gaelic Language and states that the Council will <i>“Implement the Gaelic Language Plan and review it annually. We commit ourselves to the principle of equal respect for Gaelic and English languages and we recognise the diversity of indigenous language and dialects within the Highlands”</i> .
1.5	The Highland Council’s Plan was prepared during 2007, approved by Council in October 2007 and submitted to Bòrd na Gàidhlig for approval. The Council’s Plan was the first in Scotland to be formally approved by the Bòrd on behalf of Scottish Ministers in May 2008.

<p>1.6</p>	<p>The Highland Council's Plan, for the period 2007 – 2011, contains some 116 individual actions and commitments. These include actions intended to raise the visual profile of the language, such as using Gaelic alongside English in logos, printed materials and signage.</p>
<p>1.7</p>	<p>The Gaelic Plan states that the Council will work with Ainmean Aite na h-Alba (AÀA) which is a partnership organisation with representation and funding from Scottish Government, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Scottish Councils and Ordnance Survey. The purpose of AÀA is to establish correct and consistent forms of Gaelic place names for maps, signage and general use.</p>
<p>2.0</p>	<p>Introduction</p>
<p>2.1</p>	<p>At the meeting of the Council on 30th October 2008, it was agreed to reaffirm the commitment to the Gaelic Plan and agreed to produce guidelines on the implementation of the policy on Gaelic signs, which would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify the decision making process within the policy; • Identify the cases in which there is a place for local decision making and/or consultation; • Clarify the role of AÀA in providing advice to the Council; and • Identify a group within the Council to which any unresolved matters of implementation of the policy can be referred.
<p>3.0</p>	<p>Gaelic Language Plan</p>
<p>3.1</p>	<p>Having examined the Gaelic Language Plan 2007-2011, it is evident that there are sections which could have been drafted both more consistently and more clearly. The specific sections are contained in Appendix 1. It is now proposed that these sections be redrafted and that the amended wording be put forward to Bòrd na Gàidhlig as minor amendments to the Highland Council Gaelic Language Plan, as detailed in Appendix 2.</p>
<p>3.2</p>	<p>It is proposed that the following amendments be made to the wording of the plan, to ensure greater consistency and clarity :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make it clear that AAA's views are advisory and not definitive • Erect bi-lingual directional road signs only where there is a true Gaelic name – since a bilingual sign can only be meaningful where there is <i>both</i> a Gaelic and an anglicised name (as whether or not there a Gaelic name should be a matter of fact not a matter of policy) • Allow local consultation on new street name signs while stressing that bi-lingual signs should be encouraged • Allow local consultation on replacement street signs as the Plan, as it stands, is not consistent and that these should be treated in the same way as new street name signs • Establish a procedure for resolving disputes through a Gaelic

	Names Sub-Committee consisting of ten members (cross-party, with 3 members from the Gaelic Committee)
4.0	Development of Guidelines for Gaelic Signage
4.1	<u>Clarification of the decision making process</u>
4.1.1	<u>Building Signs</u> The responsibility for ensuring that the requirements of the Gaelic Plan are implemented, in relation to signs on Council buildings, lies with the Ward Manager. Within the Gaelic Plan there is a clear commitment that these signs will be bilingual where an authentic Gaelic translation exists.
4.1.2	<u>Road Signs</u> The responsibility for ensuring that the requirements of the Gaelic Plan are implemented, in relation to road signs, lies with the appropriate Area Roads and Community Works Manager. Within the Gaelic Plan there is a clear commitment that these signs will be bilingual where an authentic Gaelic translation exists. Statutory highways signs e.g. Give Way will not be produced bilingually.
4.1.3	<u>Street Signs</u> The responsibility for ensuring that new street names are identified in line with established procedure, lies with the appropriate Ward Manager. The Ward Manager is responsible for undertaking consultation with Ward Members at the Ward Business Meeting and, where appropriate, with the relevant Community Council. When the new street name has been agreed the responsibility for ensuring that the sign is included within the Road Construction Consent issued to developers, lies with the Area Roads and Community Works Managers.
4.1.4	<u>Other Signage</u> The Plan does not require other signage to be bi-lingual and Ward Managers will consult Ward Members at Ward Business Meetings and, where appropriate, the relevant Community Council, on the use of Gaelic on these signs.
4.2	<u>Local Decision Making and Consultation</u>
4.2.1	As stated in Section 4.1 it is important that Ward Members are consulted on the use of Gaelic on signage. This consultation should take place <u>where there is discretion</u> within the Gaelic Plan, as to the use of Gaelic. It is therefore proposed that Ward Members and, where appropriate, Community Councils are consulted in respect of Street Signs and on other signage other than Council building signs (internal and external).

4.2.2	Ward Members should also be consulted on the development of a list of existing and established Gaelic place names for the Highlands. It is proposed that the development of this list be the responsibility of the new Gaelic Names Sub-Committee, but that Ward Members should be consulted, through Ward Business Meetings, on that list in respect of their wards.
4.3	<p><u>Clarify the role of AAA in providing advice to the Council</u></p> <p>4.3.1 It is proposed that the role of AÀA in the future will be to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advise the Council in the use of existing and established Gaelic place names in the Highlands (there will be instances where translation would not be appropriate); • advise the Council on the compilation of a list of place names, which can be used in conjunction with the Gaelic Plan;
4.4	<p><u>Identify a group within the Council to which any unresolved matters of implementation of the policy can be referred.</u></p> <p>4.4.1 It is proposed that a Gaelic Names Sub-Committee be established and should consist of ten Members (cross party with 3 members from the Gaelic Committee). The Sub- Committee would report to the Gaelic Committee.</p> <p>The proposed remit for the Gaelic Names Sub Committee would be to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider any unresolved matters, in relation to Gaelic names, in accordance with the Gaelic Plan; • Develop a list of existing and established Gaelic place names, for the Highlands, following consultation with local Members and AÀA;
5.0	Legal Position
5.1	<p>The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 covers how minor changes can be made in an approved Plan.</p> <p>The Highland Council's Gaelic Language Plan has been approved in terms of section 5 (Approval of plans).</p> <p>Section 6 (Monitoring of implementation) makes it clear that a public authority will be held to their approved plan unless and until the plan is reviewed or amended under section 7.</p> <p>Section 7(4) allows Highland Council to make minor amendments to its approved plan without having to submit the plan to the Bord for re-approval. If, however, the proposed amendments are not minor, and would alter the approved plan substantially, sections 7(2) and (3) apply.</p>

	<p>Section 7(2) allows an authority to review an approved plan, proposing such amendments as the authority considers necessary or expedient, and submit it to the Bord.</p> <p>Section 7(3) applies, amongst other sections, the whole of section 5 to the review/amendment procedure, and accordingly the procedure for a reviewed plan being approved is the same as the procedure for approving an initial plan. It follows that the reviewed plan may be referred to the Scottish Ministers in the case referred to in section 5(5)(c).</p> <p>Unlike elsewhere in the 2005 Act, there is no minimum time limit prescribed in section 7 that an approved plan must be left alone and not reviewed.</p>
6.0	Recommendations
6.1	<p>The Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • notes the decision making process including areas for local decision making and consultation, as detailed in 4.1 and 4.2; • notes that Guidance will be produced for officers in the implementation of Gaelic Signage, based on the principles set out in 4.1 and 4.2; • agrees the amendments to the Gaelic Language Plan, as detailed in Appendix 2; • agrees that the amendments to the Gaelic Plan be put forward to Bòrd na Gàidhlig as a minor amendment to the Highland Council Gaelic Language Plan; • agrees the role of AÀA, as detailed in 4.3; • agrees the establishment of the Gaelic Names Sub Committee, as detailed in 4.4;

Signature:

Designation: Chief Executive

Author: Michelle Morris, Assistant Chief Executive

Date 18th June 2009

GUIDELINES ON THE USE OF GAELIC IN COUNCIL SERVICES

Where Gaelic is used by Highland Council, it will consistently be accorded equal respect with English.

Signage: building signs, internal and external

1. External signs on all Council owned buildings (offices, schools, leisure centres, static and mobile libraries, museums, archive centres, community centres, residential care homes, public toilets, play and leisure parks, etc) will display the building name and the services provided within the building bilingually. External signs shall have Gaelic placed above English.
2. Internal signs erected in Council buildings will be bilingual. English will be placed above Gaelic on internal signs, with English in purple and Gaelic in green. The size of the letters will be the same in each language.
3. All signs will be consistent with Disability Discrimination Act requirements.

Road Signs

1. Town, city and village welcome signs and Council road signs will be bilingual. Signs will incorporate historic village, town and city crests where appropriate.
2. Gaelic will be placed above the English on these signs. Gaelic will be green and English in black. The size of the letters will be the same in each language.
3. When existing signs require to be replaced due to age or damage, bilingual signs will be erected.
4. Historic and visitor signs commissioned by the Council to direct people to historic and visitor events and venues should be bilingual unless this conflicts with Scottish Government regulations.
5. The spelling and form of placenames will be determined through consultation with Ainmean Àite na h-Alba.

Street Name Signs

1. The adoption of Gaelic names will be encouraged on new streets and developments, using local historic and cultural connections wherever this information is available.
2. Public opinion will be sought through the local Community Councils and the views of the local elected Members will be taken into account. In the event of a disagreement, the matter will be referred to the Planning, Environment and Development Committee.
3. When existing street name signs require to be replaced due to age or damage, the new signs will be bilingual.
4. Gaelic will be placed above English on these signs. The size of the letters will be the same in each language.
5. Contractors erecting temporary signs will use bilingual signage. This will be required as an integral part of the contracting process.

Press, publicity, advertising and exhibitions

1. Press notices and releases relating to Gaelic, including advertisements relating to school enrolments, will be produced bilingually.
2. Public information displays and presentations by the Council and the supporting material such as advertisements, posters and publicity literature will include Gaelic. The Council will encourage others who wish to hold displays on Council property to include Gaelic.
3. Brochures, booklets and leaflets designed to promote, publicise or explain services, strategies, policies, procedures and legislation will include Gaelic headings and sub-headings. Where such publications are produced bi-lingually HC will in principle always seek to publish these under one cover. The Council will maintain and publish a list of these bi-lingual publications.
4. Council advertising, promotional or marketing campaigns within the Highlands through the medium of press, television, radio, internet, arts centres, cinemas, posters, bill boards, electronic messages and/or public address systems, will include Gaelic.

Official Notices, Public Notices and Recruitment Advertisements

In order to conduct its business, the Council has to advertise in newspapers to notify the public of its legal, electoral, planning and similar requirements and proposals and of tenders, contracts and services.

1. Public notices and advertisements will include Gaelic.
2. Notices and advertisements published in local and national newspapers where the subject relates specifically to Gaelic language issues will be published in Gaelic.

When preparing and publishing advertisements for staff recruitment, the Council will adhere to the following external advertising arrangements.

Advertisements for posts for which fluency in Gaelic is an *essential* qualification will appear in

- o Gaelic only in Gaelic language publications
- o Gaelic only in English language publications supplemented with an explanatory note in English.

For advertisements for posts for which fluency in Gaelic is a *desirable* qualification and for posts where no linguistic requirement has been identified, HC will consult with Bòrd na Gàidhlig on legal guidance with a view to the following arrangements.

- o bilingually in English language publications in Scotland
- o in English only in publications circulating through the UK
- o in Gaelic only in Gaelic language publications.

Jobs requiring Gaelic advertised on the Council's website will be bilingual. When notices and advertisements are published bilingually, the two languages will be equal in style and presentation.

Council website

The Council has adopted a content management system (CRM) to update its website. This website provides a toggle button with which to choose English or Gaelic versions. A Gaelic website address points users directly to the Gaelic language version of the website. Toggle buttons on the main home page are bilingual.

Because the website is driven by a CMS system, and has databases that are created in English and changed rapidly, it is not possible to achieve a fully bilingual website. Home page links to dynamic databases will not be bilingual. Downloadable documents (e.g. pdf and MS word files) will continue to be in English only, unless a Gaelic version has been produced.

However all site navigation and templates, home page (unless database driven) and content web pages (except those that are database driven and background documents) are bilingual. Links to static databases that change slowly,(e.g. the A-Z of services) will be bilingual.

Consultation will be undertaken with Gaelic language web users to establish their needs on a regular basis.

GUIDELINES ON THE USE OF GAELIC IN COUNCIL SERVICES

General Principles/Disputes

1. Where Gaelic is used by the Highland Council, it will be accorded equal respect with English.
2. Bi-lingual signage will only be used where this is a true Gaelic name or established translation.
3. Where it is being used on road signs, Gaelic will be placed above English. For all other signage English will be placed above Gaelic. The size of the letters and the design prominence will be the same in each language.
4. Consultation will take place with Ainmean Àite na h-Alba, on the spelling and form of place names, prior to determination within the Council. Where there are disputes related to spelling or form, these will be resolved through the Gaelic Names Sub-Committee, consisting of ten elected members (Cross Party Group including 3 members of the Gaelic Committee).
5. Where existing bilingual signs are being replaced, they will be replaced by new bilingual signs.

Signage: building signs, internal and external

1. External signs on all Council owned buildings (offices, schools, leisure centres, static and mobile libraries, museums, archive centres, community centres, residential care homes, public toilets, play and leisure parks, etc) will display the building name and the services provided within the building bilingually.
2. Internal signs erected in Council buildings will be bilingual, with English in purple and Gaelic in green.
3. All signs will be consistent with Disability Discrimination Act requirements.
4. When new signs are being erected or existing signs require to be replaced, bilingual signs will be erected

Road Signs

1. Town, city and village welcome signs and Council road signs will be bilingual. Signs will incorporate historic village, town and city crests where appropriate.
2. Gaelic will be green and English in black on these signs.
3. When new signs are being erected or existing signs are being replaced, bilingual signs will be erected.
4. Historic and visitor signs commissioned by the Council to direct people to historic and visitor events and venues should be encouraged unless this conflicts with Scottish Government regulations. In relation to these signs, consultation will take place with local community councils and local Members.

Street Name Signs

1. The adoption of Gaelic names will be encouraged on new streets and Council developments and when existing street name signs require to be replaced due to age or damage, using local historic and cultural connections wherever this information is available.
2. Consultation will take place with local Community Councils and Ward Members.

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