

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
Gaelic Committee – 18 September 2008

Agenda Item	3.
Report No	G/22/08

Gaelic Labour Market Survey

Report by Director of Education, Culture and Sport

SUMMARY

This report outlines the context, methodology and projected outcomes of a survey into the Gaelic Labour Market currently being carried out by consultants.

1. Background

- 1.1 It is clear that within Scotland a competitive market exists for Gaelic-speaking staff. This market is characterised by a limited labour-pool, evidenced by the recruitment difficulties experienced by most employers seeking Gaelic staff members. However the size of the market and how it is likely to grow in future in response to the Gaelic Language Act; the National Plan for Gaelic, and individual public bodies' Gaelic Plans is unclear.
- 1.2 Much of the evidence base underpinning Gaelic policies is anecdotal with few in-depth research exercises being carried out. In 1993 an analysis of the Gaelic Economy was carried out by Glasgow Caledonian University; in 1995 a PhD research thesis examined the number of Gaelic desirable and Gaelic essential posts existing in Scotland and in 2005 an analysis was undertaken of the importance of Gaelic to the Inverness and Nairn area.
- 1.3 In general this is a very thin research base on which to found policy.
- 1.4 In order to assess the current state of the Gaelic labour market, and to guide future policies, a study has been jointly commissioned by Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Skills Development Scotland.

2. Progress

- 2.1 The study is currently underway and the research is split into two stages.
- 2.2 The first stage of the work seeks to:
 - define and quantify the current Gaelic Labour market by geographic area; occupation; industry; level of Gaelic skills required; entry level for post; and salary range.
 - identify the extent of the use of Gaelic skills in the workplace and identify reasons why organisations do, or do not formally identify Gaelic language skills as necessary.
 - consider and assess the current drivers for any growth in the Gaelic labour market, including legislation.

- 2.3 The work is being carried out by Iain Campbell of Hecla Consulting (who will provide a presentation to Committee on progress and findings to date) in association with Marsaili MacLeod of the Scottish Agricultural College; Professor Michael Danson of the University of the West of Scotland; and Dr Douglas Chalmers of Glasgow Caledonian University.
- 2.4 In order to carry out the research, which involved questionnaires on Gaelic employment and skills within individual organisations, a database of 220 organisations was compiled. These included those who were known to have existing Gaelic-essential posts, as well as those who were, or who were expected to have, a demand for such posts in future. The Highland Council were one of the organisations involved, submitting a questionnaire and participating in follow-up interviews.
- 2.5 The final report is intended to provide a baseline in relation to the use and demand for Gaelic within the present labour market. This information will assist policy makers in designing appropriate strategies for the development of the market, as well as assisting employers in defining and recruiting to Gaelic-related posts in future.
- 2.6 The final report is expected to be completed in approximately 2 – 3 months time and it is hoped that this will be reported to Committee Members at some stage thereafter once the conclusions have been published by the study sponsors.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Members are invited to note the contents of this report and the accompanying presentation.

Signature:

Designation: Director, Education, Culture and Sport Service

Date: 4 September 2008

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Background Papers:

SPROULL, A. and ASHCROFT, B. 1993. The Economics of Gaelic Language Development: A Research Report for Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the Gaelic Television Committee with Comunn na Gàidhlig. GLASGOW: Glasgow Caledonian University.

GALLOWAY, J. 1995. The Role of Employment in Gaelic Language Maintenance and Development. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh.

HECLA CONSULTING, 2003. The Importance of Gaelic to the Inverness and Nairn Area. Report to Inverness and Nairn Enterprise.