

## The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Gaelic Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Wednesday 31 May 2023 at 10.30 am.

### **Present:**

Mr C Aitken (Remote)	Mr S Kennedy (Substitute)
Mr R Bremner (Remote)	Mr P Logue (Remote)
Mr I Brown	Mr D Millar (Remote)
Mrs I Campbell (Remote)	Mr C Munro
Ms S Fanet	Ms L Niven (Remote)
Mr J Grafton	Mrs M Paterson (Remote)

### **Non-Members also present:**

Mr J Finlayson  
Mr R MacKintosh

### **In attendance:**

Mr P Nevin, Interim Executive Chief Officer – Performance and Governance  
Ms C Macklin, Head of Early Years & Primary Education  
Ms L Walker, Gaelic Development Manager  
Ms M A MacLeod Mitchell, Gaelic Development Officer  
Ms E Rodgers, Gaelic Policy Officer  
Mr I Jackson, Education Officer  
Mr R MacKay, Education Officer/Teacher (Glenurquhart High School)  
Miss J MacLennan, Joint Democratic Services Manager  
Miss R Ross, Committee Officer

**An asterisk in the margin denotes a recommendation to the Council. All decisions with no marking in the margin are delegated to the Committee.**

**Mr C Munro in the Chair**

### **Business**

#### **1. Calling of the Roll and Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr W Mackay, Ms M Nolan and Mr R Stewart.

#### **2. Declarations of Interest/Transparency Statement**

There were no Declarations of Interest/Transparency Statements

#### **3. Good News**

The Chair conveyed the following items of good news:-

- a Head Teacher had been recruited to Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis;
- the outcome of a recent inspection of Glenurquhart School had been very positive;

- a number of key Gaelic Senior Executive Officers were moving on and retiring, all of whom had been very supportive of the Gaelic Committee and had engaged with Members and Council Officials during their tenure;
- the final round of Cuach na Cloinne – the Gaelic Medium Primary Schools' National Football Competition - was taking place at Canal Park, Inverness. The two teams which were battling for the Cuach were Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Phort Rìgh and Craighill Gaelic Medium, Tain;
- funding applications were being submitted to Bòrd na Gàidhlig and it was anticipated that the decisions on whether or not they had been successful would be known next week;
- successful drop-in sessions had taken place for Gaelic Language Plan 4 in Inverness, Portree and Fort William;
- the Council was continuing to work positively with FC Sonas to deliver footballing camps; and
- a major step forward was that Gaelic was now included as a STEM subject.

#### **4. Draft Gaelic Language Plan 4**

There had been circulated Report No. G/8/23 dated 10 May 2023 by the Interim Chief Executive and Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance. A draft version of the Draft Gaelic Language Plan was also circulated separately as Booklet A.

A short presentation was provided highlighting the key themes in the Plan. The Draft Gaelic Language Plan (GLP) 4 had built on the success of previous Plans and would span the years 2023–28. The consultation undertaken had helped to strengthen the Plan and its aim was to increase the use and learning of Gaelic.

During discussion, Members made the following points:-

- the hard work of officers was commended;
- the implementation of GLP 4 started now but it would need the cooperation and joint working of communities and other agencies;
- GLP 4 was a strategic document which would focus the Council's work going forward. All parts of the Council would need to consider it and how they would help deliver the stated outcomes;
- the purpose was to increase the use and learning of Gaelic in areas such as communities, businesses, the Arts etc and therefore the Council had to strengthen its commitment that it be absorbed into everyday life;
- Gaelic should be promoted as a heritage;
- in determining how GLP 4 would be resourced, it was important that it had goals set at the right level;
- Members would be kept informed of progress and advised of any areas of slippage; and
- concern was expressed around the strategic priority agreed with Bòrd na Gàidhlig to continue to deliver promotion and growth in GME and Gaelic Learner Education at all levels including delivery of Gaelic as a modern language, with 70% of primary schools providing Gaelic as an L2 and L3 to increase the provision of Gaelic across the authority. The aim of this priority was to be commended but the target of 70% was ambitious. It was acknowledged that L2 and L3 were fundamental to grow Gaelic but targets also had to be achievable.

The Committee **AGREED**:-

- \* i. to **RECOMMEND** to the full Council that it homologate the submission of the draft Plan to Bord na Gàidhlig; and
- ii. in submitting the Plan a letter also accompanies it informing Bòrd na Gàidhlig of the Committee's concern that the target of 70% of primary schools providing Gaelic as an L2 and L3 was challenging.

## 5. Gaelic Language Plan – Public Consultation

There had been circulated Report No. G/9/23 dated 18 May 2023 by the Interim Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance.

Assurances were sought, and provided, that stakeholder profiling had been considered so that the views of pupils, parents, teachers and Gaelic organisations could all be taken into account. In fact, the approach adopted by Highland had been highlighted as a model of good practise. The Chair himself had attended three consultation events and the role Astar Media had played had also generated excellent feedback.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

## 6. Performance against Gaelic Language Plan 3

There had been circulated Report No. G/10/23 dated 15 May 2023 by the Interim Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance.

Officers were commended for their excellent report, particularly the detail of the action plan, but it would also be useful for start and completion dates to be incorporated. This information was currently presented in the annual report to Bòrd na Gàidhlig but, if it was in the public domain, it would highlight ongoing activity.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

## 7. Gaelic Education

There had been circulated Report No. G/11/23 dated 5 May 2023 by the Interim Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance. In amplification of the report a presentation was provided on the background on the 1 plus 2 approach to Gaelic Learner Education across Highland schools, explaining how this had been developed, the next steps and the development work being planned and piloted in line with the Strategic Priorities set out in GLP 4 for L2 and L3.

During discussion, Members made the following points:-

- teaching a second or third language in a primary school setting was challenging and some pupils might not have developed the necessary skills;
- it was important to clearly define what was trying to be achieved when a second and third language was introduced at primary school level and that there was coordination between primary and secondary school teachers;
- the data contained within the report detailing the provision of L2 and L3 Gaelic highlighted how ambitious the 70% target set out in GLP4 was;
- Gaelic education put in context what the Council needed to do to meet the aspirations of GLP 4 and it was important to increase the number of primary schools taking on L2 and L3 Gaelic; and

- information was sought, and provided, as to what support was in place for neurodiverse pupils who might struggle to learn L2 or L3 Gaelic.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the provision of Gaelic Medium and Gaelic Education across Highland;
- ii. the areas of current and future development for 1 plus 2; and
- iii. the catchment consultation process and update for Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis, Dingwall and Nairn Gaelic Medium provisions.

## **8. Community Learning and Development Key Updates**

There had been circulated Report No. G/12/23 dated 11 May 2023 by the Interim Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance.

The project underway in conjunction with Alzheimer Scotland West Highland to bring Gaelic into care home settings was progressing well but it was hoped this could be extended so that those still living at home, whose first language was Gaelic, could also be supported.

The Committee **AGREED** to continue the initiatives detailed in the report.

## **9. World Gaelic Week 2023**

There had been circulated Report No. G/13/23 dated 2 May 2023 by the Interim Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance.

The report provided an opportunity for Members to reflect the range of activities which people had engaged in. Particular mention was made of an event in Fort William and which had not just highlighted the language but the spirit of Gaelic. There was considerable interest in Gaelic and those that encouraged the use of the language were to be applauded. In addition, Members welcomed those participants from Nova Scotia and discussions were ongoing with them exploring how they ran their Month of Gaelic.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

The meeting ended at 12.15 pm.