

The Highland Council

Agenda Item	8
Report No	G/10/25

Committee: Gaelic Committee

Date: 4 June 2025

Report Title: Lochaber Royal National Mòd 2025

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive - People

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 The report informs Elected Members of the current position regarding the Lochaber Royal National Mòd 2025.
- 1.2 The Highland Council has established a Mòd Liaison Group (MLG) which includes representatives from various teams within the authority. This includes Licencing, Roads, Education, Economic and Infrastructure and Corporate Communications. The Group also includes 2 Elected Members, Chief Executive of An Comunn Gàidhealach (ACG), ACG Communications Manager, ACG Gaelic Officer and ACG Business Management. Iain Robertson, Chair of the MLG, is also the Chair of the Local Organising Committee (LOC.)
- 1.3 ACG Chief Executive Mr James Graham, will give a presentation to the Gaelic Committee. The Convener of the LOC, Ms Carolyn Groat, Head of Languages at Lochaber High School, will also be present.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
 - i. Note the actions to date regarding the management and organisation of the Lochaber Royal National Mòd 10 - 18 October 2025.

3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource
Resources are crucial for the success of the Mòd within the Highland area. Highland Council are part-funding the Mòd, £37,500 annually over a 5 year service delivery agreement and there is in-kind support from Council Officers.
- 3.2 Legal
Legal procedures are currently being followed especially through Licencing requirements and Short Term Let licencing.

- 3.3 Risk
There is a risk that not all the funding will be secured to fully fund the event as currently planned. This is not a financial risk for the Council, but has the potential to cause reputational damage.
- 3.4 Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)
Procedures for Health and Safety are being followed as per the requirements. The Police, NHS, First Aid are all being consulted.
- 3.5 Gaelic
The Mòd is the largest annual competitive Gaelic Cultural Festival in the World. The Gaelic Language Plan has an action to host the Mòd in the Highland area. The event showcases the best of Gaelic and culture across all genres including all forms of traditional music and song, poetry, dance, creative industries, arts, literature and broadcasting.

4. Impacts

- 4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.
- 4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.
- 4.3 This is an update report and therefore an impact assessment is not required.
- 4.4 At this point there is no requirement for a full impact assessment. However, we are currently undertaking the process of scoping an Impact Assessment. The results of the scoping exercise will be included within the next Mod Lochaber Progress Report.

5. Management and Progress

- 5.1 This section provides a summary update on the following areas;
- Venues
 - Mod Academy
 - Mod Fringe Events
 - Street & Venue Dressing
 - Business Engagement

6. Venues

- 6.1 There are 9 competition venues which are secured for the events ranging from the Nevis Centre, Lochaber High School, primary schools, various churches and hotels, all of which have sub-venues within the buildings.

6.2 The Mòd Local Organising Committee (LOC) are currently undergoing a venue process recce to ascertain what resources are available in each venue and identifying any requirements which may need to be addressed.

7. Mod Academy

7.1 Fèisean nan Gàidheal are delivering the Mòd Academy through their Fèis Sgoil Tutors. The aim of the Mòd Academy is to provide additional tutoring in schools across the Lochaber area on the lead up to the Mòd. They have employed 8 tutors, and 18 schools have signed up for the programme, 297 sessions are to be delivered and 493 pupils are participating.

8. Mòd Fringe Programme

8.1 A draft list of Fringe events has been drawn up and initial discussions with Astar Media took place with a view to finalising the programme. The LOC continue to receive approaches from groups and individuals to participate in the Fringe Programme.

8.2 Due to the increased scale of the Mòd, a marquee is required for the duration of the event. This will offer several opportunities for what the event will offer which ACG are currently exploring.

The Fringe Programme will include the following:

- Ar Cànan 's Ar Ceòl Concert (A celebration of local culture and song)
- Celtic Praise
- Piping Recital
- Remembered in Exile Concert (Songs etc., from Nova Scotia)
- Lochaber Food & Drink Exhibition
- A special night in the Nevis Centre
- Closing Event

8.3 In addition, there will also be events that run throughout the week such as;

- West Highland Museum Lochaber Mod Exhibition
- Highland Society of London Highland Art Prize
- Cameron Square Street Ceilidhs

They are also engaging with establishments, restaurants and hotels to compile a definitive list of events which the businesses are planning throughout the week and will include these in the programme of events.

9. Street & Venue Dressing

9.1 Meetings have taken place regarding the branding for street dressing and banners. The plan and expectation are to erect banners at locations around and on entering the Fort William area. This will take place during the Summer to raise awareness of the forthcoming event. Street dressing will include lamp-post banners which are being designed by local primary school pupils' and will appear in advance of the Mòd. There will also be a large banner in place across the High Street. Currently options are also being currently explored for maximising branding outside and within the venues. Work is currently being undertaken by the Nevis Centre regarding the upgrading of the venue which includes technical and refurbishment requirements.

10. Business Engagement

- 10.1 The LOC continue to engage with the business sector, to provide an update and target hospitality sector businesses in the area and are engaging with West Highland Chamber of Commerce and the Fort William BID Team.

11. Climate Change

- 11.1 LOC are currently exploring the possibility of placing e-bikes at specific venues.

12. Service Delivery Agreement (SDA)

- 12.1 The Highland Council are engaging positively with ACG regarding the renewal of the SDA and this will be approved soon. Information on SDA will be brought to a future committee for approval.

Designation: Kate Lackie, Assistant Chief Officer – People

Annika Janssen, Chief Officer Education

Date: 21 May 2025

Author: Morag Anna MacLeod Mitchell

Background Papers: