

Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL



Business Services

Aberdeenshire Council

GAELIC LANGUAGE PLAN

2023-2028

Foreword

Aberdeenshire Council continues to be committed to raising awareness and promoting the use of the Gaelic language in Aberdeenshire. This is in support of the National Gaelic Language Plan and our responsibilities with regards to the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005.

Our Gaelic Language Plan for 2023-28 details how we intend to promote and support Gaelic learning opportunities, increase the presence of the Gaelic language in art and culture events, and raise awareness across Aberdeenshire of the Gaelic language and its heritage in the area. We will build on the progress made in our first Gaelic Language Plan.

Prior to the pandemic, we gave staff the opportunity to attend a Gaelic learning course held at libraries throughout Aberdeenshire, developed information about Gaelic for staff on the council's intranet, created a Gaelic version of the council logo, created an online course for staff to learn basic greetings and phrases and promoted Gaelic learning opportunities for school pupils.

There is a great language diversity within the population of Aberdeenshire . Our ancient Gaelic history is evidenced in place names throughout Aberdeenshire, some of which are detailed within the plan. Bilingualism and multilingualism are often standard due to the increase in the number of residents for whom English is not their first language.

Aberdeenshire has a rich variety of cultural heritage and resources. Although the number of residents using the Gaelic language has been low for a sustained period, the 2011 census did show that there was an increase in the area over the preceding decade. The 2022 census will give us an up-to-date picture of the use of Gaelic in the area, which can further inform our planned work.

Our plan aims to contribute to the promotion and protection of the Gaelic language in Scotland which is of great importance and value.

Jim Savege
Chief Executive

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1. INTRODUCTION

DESCRIPTION OF ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

Local authorities are responsible for providing a range of public services. This includes education, social care, roads and transport, economic development, housing and planning, environmental protection, waste management, cultural and leisure services

Aberdeenshire Council is one of 32 Council areas of Scotland. The Aberdeenshire Council area is bordered by Moray, Highland, Perth & Kinross and Angus. The council is a large organisation, with 16,000 employees and delivering hundreds of local services for the benefit of our communities. Our council activities are managed through services – Education and Children’s Services, Business Services, Infrastructure Services, and Health & Social Care. The council has six administrative areas – Banff & Buchan, Buchan, Formartine, Garioch, Kincardine & Mearns and Marr - within which local decisions are taken locally by elected Members. Corporate matters are decided at policy committees – Business Services, Education and Children’s Services, Communities, Infrastructure and Full Council. Aberdeenshire's six administrative areas each have an Area Committee, an Area Manager and an Area Management Team. The Area Manager's job, with the help of the Area Management Team, is to enable the Area Committee to make local decisions and to ensure that these decisions are carried out.

Aberdeenshire Council is made up of 70 elected councillors. They represent the 19 wards within the authority area: six wards have three councillors each and 13 wards have four councillors. We have offices in the following locations

- **Aberdeen** – our headquarters is in Aberdeen, outwith the boundary area of the Council
- **Banff & Buchan and Buchan areas:** Banff, Fraserburgh, Macduff, Maud, Peterhead and Strichen
- **Formartine and Garioch areas:** Turriff, Ellon, Oldmeldrum, Westhill and Inverurie
- **Marr and Kincardine & Mearns area:** Aboyne, Alford, Banchory, Huntly, Laurencekirk, Portlethen and Stonehaven.

Aberdeenshire Council’s vision is “Serving Aberdeenshire from mountain to sea –the very best of Scotland”. Sitting under that vision, the key plans for the council are detailed as follows:

- **Council plan** – describes how the council will achieve its vision and sets out the aims and outcomes that drive our work
- **Business plans** – describe the contribution of each council Service to the delivery of our strategic priorities

The Council's Priorities are shown below:

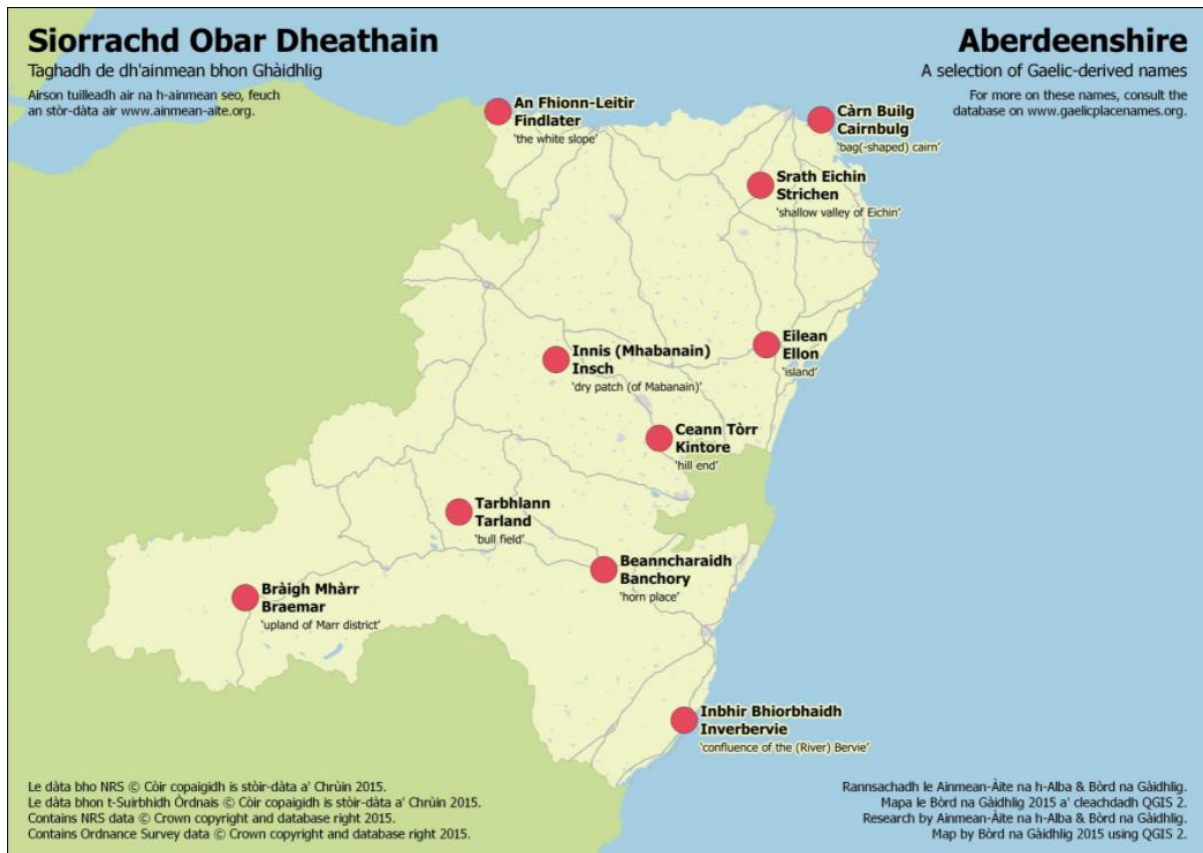
Pillar	Priority
Our People	Learning for Life Health & Wellbeing
Our Environment	Climate Change Resilient Communities
Our Economy	Economic Growth Infrastructure and public assets

GAELIC WITHIN ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

The number of Gaelic speakers in Aberdeenshire increased from 890 in 2001 to 1400 in 2011, the largest growth seen across the country. Aberdeenshire's [Gaelic Language Plan 2016-21](#) provides a breakdown of Gaelic speakers from the 2011 census results into the 2007 electoral ward areas.

The Census in 2022 will update our understanding of the Aberdeenshire population who speak Gaelic.

The map below shows Gaelic-derived place names in Aberdeenshire (source: https://www.ainmean-aite.scot/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/mapa_BnG_Sd_Obar_Dheathain.jpeg)



As an employer, Aberdeenshire Council has focussed its Gaelic language activity over the last few years on identity, communications, staff training and language development. This includes: promotion of, and support to, access Gaelic medium education in the neighbouring local authority; promotion of Gaelic learning opportunities in schools and access to resources; establishment of bilingual signs at major new builds by the council and at main area offices; the development of a Gaelic version of the council logo; a section on the Council website dedicated to [Gaelic language services](#); and the development of an internal training module to promote understanding of procedure when residents wish to communicate in Gaelic.

GAELIC IN SCOTLAND

The 2011 Census showed that around 87,000 people in Scotland (around 1.7% of the population) have some Gaelic language skills. For the first time there was an increase in the number of speakers aged under 25, even though the overall figure decreased slightly. The Census also showed that Gaelic speakers live in most communities across Scotland, with approximately 50% living in the Highlands and Islands, and 50% across the rest of the country. (Source: [National GLP](#))

THE GAELIC LANGUAGE (SCOTLAND) ACT 2005

The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 was passed by the Scottish Parliament with a view to securing the status of the Gaelic language as an official language of Scotland commanding equal respect to the English language.

One of the key features of the 2005 Act is the provision enabling Bòrd na Gàidhlig (the principal public body in Scotland responsible for promoting Gaelic development) to require a public authority to prepare a Gaelic language plan. This provision was designed to ensure that the public sector in Scotland plays its part in creating a sustainable future for Gaelic by raising the status and profile of the language and creating practical opportunities for its use.

This document is Aberdeenshire Council's Gaelic Language Plan prepared within the framework of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005. It sets out how we will use Gaelic in the operation of our functions, how we will enable the use of Gaelic when communicating with the public and key partners, and how we will promote and develop Gaelic.

Aberdeenshire Council's Gaelic Language Plan has been prepared in accordance with statutory criteria set out in the 2005 Act and having regard to the National Gaelic Language Plan and the Guidance on the Development of Gaelic Language Plans. Our Plan helps to raise the status of Gaelic in Aberdeenshire and shows how we are creating practical opportunities for the use of Gaelic in Aberdeenshire. The central purpose of this Plan is to encourage and enable more people in Aberdeenshire to use Gaelic more often and in a wider range of situations.

THE NATIONAL GAELIC LANGUAGE PLAN

Aberdeenshire Council supports the aim of the National Gaelic Language Plan 2018-23 that "Gaelic is used more often, by more people and in a wider range of situations."

We are committed to the achieving this aim by focussing our work on these three headings:-

- Increasing the use of Gaelic within our organisation and encouraging more people to use Gaelic, more often when they interact with us
- Increasing the opportunity for people to learn Gaelic as part of our day-to-day operations
- Promoting a positive image of Gaelic whenever we can as part of our day-to-day operations as an organisation

INTERNAL GAELIC CAPACITY AUDIT

A key element of our Gaelic Language Plan is to understand the Gaelic skills which exist within Aberdeenshire Council. We conducted an internal Gaelic capacity audit so that we better understand existing skills and where awareness raising or training may be required.

Aberdeenshire Council employees were invited to complete a staff survey to identify levels of Gaelic skills and interest in a learning opportunity. One hundred and forty-nine (149) members of staff responded to the survey between the period of 31st August to 19th September 2021. The majority of respondents (83%) do not have Gaelic skills. Half of respondents expressed an interest in attending an informal learning opportunity on basic Gaelic phrases. Four respondents indicated that they use Gaelic skills in their work with the council.

Respondents offered suggestions on how Gaelic could be promoted in Aberdeenshire. Respondents offered positive suggestions on how this could be done including learning through schools, including introduction to Gaelic at an early age; free or affordable classes (perhaps online) could be offered to communities and staff; and consideration of Gaelic to be used on street or road signs.

The results have been considered and some actions are already in place in the action plan, and others will be considered and progressed by Spring/Summer 2023 as indicated in the action plan.

A further audit is planned within the timeframe of the Plan to complement the initial results we have received in 2021.

CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT GAELIC LANGUAGE PLAN

The 2005 Act requires that public authorities consult on their draft Gaelic Language Plan before submitting it to Bòrd na Gàidhlig. Aberdeenshire Council consulted on the draft Plan between 26 August and 7 October 2021, and 139 people responded.

The responses to the consultation are attached as Appendix 2 to this report.

Respondents were keen to see more opportunities for young people to learn Gaelic and a focus on better promotion of Gaelic in arts and culture.

2. KEY PRINCIPLES

EQUAL RESPECT

Under the terms of the 2005 Act, Bòrd na Gàidhlig works with a view to securing the status of the Gaelic language as an official language of Scotland commanding equal respect to the English language and the Bòrd in turn expects that public authorities will demonstrate in their plans how the principle will be achieved and maintained in practice.

Aberdeenshire Council will ensure that where Gaelic is included as part of our operations and services, we will ensure those operations and services are of an equal standard and quality as those that we provide in English.

ACTIVE OFFER

Aberdeenshire Council will make an active offer of our Gaelic services to our employees and the public. Where Gaelic services are made available by us, we will take steps to make sure the community is made aware of their existence, and is actively encouraged to use them.

MAINSTREAMING

Aberdeenshire Council will ensure that opportunities for the public and our staff to use Gaelic are normalised, in support of the National Gaelic Language Plan 2018-23 aim “that Gaelic is used more often, by more people and in a wider range of situations”.

CORPORATE PARENTING

Aberdeenshire Council is aware of the duties of a Corporate Parent to ensure that looked after children and young people and care leavers with Gaelic receive the same opportunities as those with other languages. The council will ensure that any Child’s Plan (for care experienced young people) or care leaver’s Pathways Plan gives due consideration to language opportunities.

3. PLAN COMMITMENTS

HIGH-LEVEL AIMS

Aberdeenshire Council has worked with Bòrd na Gàidhlig (the principal public body in Scotland responsible for promoting Gaelic development) to create a number of High Level Aims which reflect our commitment for the Gaelic language at a strategic level and are closely linked to the National Gaelic Language Plan 2018-23.

INCREASING THE USE OF GAELIC

High-level Aim	Establish and maintain a Gaelic language plan implementation group with representation from all Council Services. Senior officers will maintain responsibility for delivery of actions within their service.		
Desired Outcome	Actions are monitored, reviewed and delivered as appropriate during the life cycle of the Gaelic Language Plan.		
Current Practice	Officers from council services implement actions from the previous Gaelic Language Plan. However, there is no defined implementation group that meets on a regular basis.		
Actions Required	How this will be measured	Target Date	Lead Officer
Establish a cross-service Gaelic Language Plan implementation group	Formation of group and schedule of meetings	September 2023	Head of Customer and Digital Services
Co-produce a Terms of Reference with the implementation group	Creation of a Terms of Reference	September 2023	Head of Customer and Digital Services
Develop a schedule of meetings to review progress on implementing actions withing the GLP	Creation of schedule of meetings	September 2023	Head of Customer and Digital Services

INCREASING THE LEARNING OF GAELIC

High-level Aim	Collaborate with other councils to increase shared resources for Gaelic development		
Desired Outcome	Resources shared with other local authorities are used for increasing Gaelic awareness and development in Aberdeenshire.		
Current Practice	There has previously been collaboration with neighbouring authorities in sharing resources and the council continues to be open to building relationships with other local authorities to share resources where appropriate.		
Actions Required	How this will be measured	Target Date	Lead Officer
Working with colleagues in other authorities who have offered to share communications resources including books, poems, language courses, online Gaelic resources available and support for parents helping children with homework	Ongoing engagement with other authorities Number of resources shared	Annually for duration of plan	Head of Customer and Digital Services
Working with other local authorities to identify where online Gaelic learning opportunities can be shared (L&D)	Number of opportunities shared, and the number of people who participate in the opportunity.	Annually for duration of plan	Head of Customer and Digital Services

High-level Aim	Fulfil the duty under the Education (Scotland) Act 2016 to promote and support, as appropriate, the potential for Gaelic medium and Gaelic learner education to residents, including the opportunity that exists under this Act for parents to request the establishment of Gaelic Medium Education		
Current Practice	<p>There is currently no Gaelic Medium Education and minimal Gaelic Learner Provision within the authority. Parents who wish to educate their children in the medium of Gaelic may send them to Gilcomstoun Primary school or Hazlehead Academy in Aberdeen City and support is available from the authority towards this in the form of paid transport. Information about GME is available on the Council website.</p> <p>The promotion of Gaelic as a viable and relevant L3 as part of 1+2 Language provision continues. Teachers benefit from access to Gaelic language learning and resources through the Regional Improvement Collaborative. New developments are promoted and signposted through the Aberdeenshire Primary Languages Portal which is accessible to all teaching staff. Schools are encouraged to signpost families to the Gaelic Learning opportunities hosted on the Northern Alliance Family Learning site.</p> <p>For reference below, e-Sgoil is a remote teaching facility based in the Western Isles of Scotland.</p>		
Desired Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of Gaelic learning opportunities and resources to families is increased • Information relating to Gaelic medium and Gaelic learner education is accessible 		
Actions Required	How this will be measured	Target Date	Lead Officer
Review, improve and update information available on the Aberdeenshire Council website relating to Gaelic Medium Education	Monitor engagement with website? Increase in number of enquires re GME to officers?	Annually in September for the duration of the Plan	Head of Education
Continue to signpost to all Gaelic learning opportunities facilitated by partners in the Regional Improvement Collaborative – for staff and families.	Website visits Increase engagements with social media posts	Termly updates for life of plan (August / October/ January/ April)	Head of Education

Continue to promote Gaelic Learner opportunities for schools through E-sgoil.	Increase uptake for National Qualifications from 1 or 2 young people per session.	Annually for the duration of the Plan	Head of Education
a) Increase use of social media to improve signposting to Gaelic Learning for children and families b) Improve promotion of Gaelic Immersion and other learning opportunities through use of established communication tools such as Weekly School Mail to all staff and corporate social media accounts for family learning in the local area or neighbouring authorities.	Number of tweets and level of engagement with Tweets Increase in enquiries about participation in staff learning opportunities.	Annually for duration of plan	Head of Education
Desired Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase awareness and engagement with Gaelic Learner opportunities through e-sgoil for Secondary age learners 		
Actions Required	How this will be measured	Target Date	Lead Officer
Continue to promote Gaelic Learner opportunities for schools through E-sgoil.	Increase uptake for National Qualifications from 1 or 2 young people per session.	Annually for the duration of the GLP	Head of Education
Desired Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase awareness and engagement with Gaelic learner opportunities through the L3 offer in Primary School 		
Actions Required	How this will be measured	Target Date	Lead Officer
Maintain up to date information relating to Gaelic learning opportunities for teaching staff on the Aberdeenshire Primary Languages Portal	Monitor site usage and engagement. Monitor attendance at events related to Gaelic. Annual SG 1+2 Survey returns will show increase in schools providing Gaelic as an L3	Updates each term for life of plan (August / October/ January/ April	Head of Education

High-level Aim	In consultation with Bòrd na Gàidhlig, provide information and carry out a survey of parents in the Council area to measure interest in the establishment of Gaelic medium and Gaelic learner education.		
Current Practice	<p>There is currently no Gaelic Medium Education within the authority. Parents who wish to educate their children in the medium of Gaelic send them to Gilcomstoun Primary school or Hazlehead Academy in Aberdeen City Council and support is available from the authority towards this in the form of paid transport. Information about GME is available on the Council website.</p> <p>Gaelic learner education is promoted as a viable and relevant L3 as part of 1+2 language provision. The annual Scottish Government 1+2 Survey is used to measure engagement with Gaelic as an L3.</p> <p>Gaelic learner provision is limited to that available to Secondary schools through e-sgoil. We were however facilitating access to this provision before it was made as a national offer.</p>		
Desired Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aberdeenshire Council have a good understanding of where parental demand exists for Primary GME, and for Gaelic learner opportunities to include Secondary pupils, in Aberdeenshire 		
Actions Required	How this will be measured	Target Date	Lead Officer
Liaison with Bòrd na Gàidhlig to establish best practice for the format and wording for proposed surveys.	Production of survey	October 2023	Head of Education
Create surveys for parents and determine most effective means of promotion.	Production of survey	December 2023	Head of Education
Conduct survey for parents	Number of responses to survey	January 2024	Head of Education
Analyse and prepare report of findings with any subsequent actions being incorporated into planning.	Report of findings produced	April 2024 and for duration of GLP	Head of Education

Desired Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To include views of young people in relation to provision of Gaelic Medium and Gaelic Learner provision 		
Actions Required	How this will be measured	Target Date	Lead Officer
Liaison with Bòrd na Gàidhlig to establish best practice for the format and wording for proposed surveys.	Production of survey	October 2023	Head of Education
Create surveys for children and young people and determine most effective means of promotion.	Production of survey	December 2023	Head of Education
Conduct survey for children and young people.	Number of responses to survey	January 2024	Head of Education
Analyse and prepare report of findings with any subsequent actions being incorporated into planning.	Report of findings produced	April 2024 and for duration of GLP	Head of Education

PROMOTING A POSITIVE IMAGE OF GAELIC

High-level Aim	Raise awareness across the Council area of the Gaelic language and its heritage in Aberdeenshire		
Desired Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is increased awareness of Gaelic events taking place in Aberdeenshire or in neighbouring areas. • To support projects which engage young people with Gaelic songs to increase young people's understanding of Gaelic language and its heritage in Aberdeenshire 		
Current Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We work in partnership with the Scottish Book Trust to provide Gaelic Bookbug bags which are available in our libraries. • We supported the Book of Deer project with a successful application to National Lottery Heritage Fund plus outreach programme spanning 7 months. 		
Actions Required	How this will be measured	Target Date	Lead Officer
Active promotion of Gaelic events when they happen on public facing comms channels, when alerted.	Visibility of events. Number of views.	Annually	Head of Customer and Digital Services
Explore collaborative opportunities with Aberdeen City Council (subject to their agreement) and other relevant bodies to reintroduce access to the Provincial Mod and Fèis activities for residents in Aberdeenshire.	<p>Discuss opportunities with Aberdeen City Council.</p> <p>Number of opportunities identified</p> <p>Number of Provincial Mod and Fèis activities events accessible for residents in Aberdeenshire</p>	Annually for duration of plan	Head of Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships
Develop a programme to support young people to participate in Gaelic songs projects	Number of opportunities shared, and the number of young people who	Annually for duration of plan	Head of Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships

	participate in the opportunity.		
Encourage targeted/vulnerable young people to participate in Gaelic songs projects	Number of opportunities shared, and the number of targeted young people who participated in the opportunity.	Annually for duration of plan	Head of Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships

High-level Aim	Increase the presence of the Gaelic language in art and culture events and community resources		
Desired Outcome	To support a range of partners and communities with the development of Gaelic activities		
Current Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We work in partnership with the Scottish Book Trust to provide Gaelic Bookbug bags which are available in our libraries. We supported the Book of Deer project with a successful application to National Lottery Heritage Fund plus outreach programme spanning 7 months. 		
Actions Required	How this will be measured	Target Date	Lead Officer
To liaise with partners and communities about Gaelic culture activities, such as Book of Deer and Gaelic Bookbug, and to support partners and communities to identify and apply for funding to support Gaelic cultural activities where appropriate	Number of partners supported. Number of activities Number of grant applications	Annually for duration of plan	Head of Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships

Encourage targeted families, young people and communities to participate in Gaelic language arts and cultural activities	Number of opportunities shared, and the number of targeted families, young people who participated in the opportunity.	Annually for duration of plan	Head of Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships
When requested to assist with the provision of community space for Gaelic artists to make or show their work	Number of community spaces made available/used	annually for duration of plan	Head of Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships
Engage with neighbouring authorities to explore holding two Gaelic/bilingual events per year	Discuss opportunities with neighbouring authorities Number of opportunities identified Number of events held each year during the life of the Plan	Annually for duration of plan	Head of Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships

CORPORATE SERVICE AIMS

This is Aberdeenshire Council's second Gaelic Language Plan and since 2016 we have taken incremental steps to support Gaelic through our corporate services.

STATUS

Desired Outcome	Logo and brand Render the corporate logo and branding in both Gaelic and English at the first opportunity and as part of any renewal process. The logo should demonstrate equal prominence for both languages.		
Current Practice	A Gaelic version of the Aberdeenshire Council logo sits within the logo suite and is promoted through the intranet page and the internal awareness training module.		
Actions Required	How this will be measured	Target Date	Lead Officer
Presence of Gaelic logo within logo suite and in visual identity. When we refresh our corporate logo and branding this will incorporate Gaelic and English within the corporate logo.	Complete	Complete	Head of Customer and Digital Services

Desired Outcome	Signage Prominent signage will include Gaelic and English as part of any renewal process.
Current Practice	<p><u>Schools</u>: New school builds, and those schools receiving Gaelic as part of the curriculum will have school name signs provided bilingually.</p> <p><u>Internal Signage</u>: A Gaelic 'Welcome to Aberdeenshire Council' sign will be placed at the reception areas of each area headquarter.</p> <p><u>Libraries</u>: Library name signs will be provided bilingually for new library buildings or upgraded library buildings.</p> <p><u>New Buildings</u>: Future building projects will have Gaelic signage included as standard.</p>

	<p><u>Multilingual Signs:</u> Gaelic will be included in future multilingual signs such information plaques at heritage sites. In such instances, design considerations will be taken to ensure Gaelic and Scots are displayed as indigenous Scottish languages.</p> <p><u>Street Names:</u> Our Street Naming and Numbering Policy permits new streets to be given their single bilingual or multilingual name official name including Gaelic.</p>		
Actions Required	How this will be measured	Target Date	Lead Officer
New school builds and schools that have projects to upgrade reception areas will have the school's name sign in reception provided bilingually.	Percentage of applicable projects meeting this requirement from date of implementation of the updated GLP.	Annually for duration of plan.	Head of Property & Facilities Management / Heads of Education
A Gaelic 'Welcome to Aberdeenshire Council' sign will be placed in the reception area of each Council Area Headquarters. This is not retrospective and will be implemented on all new projects affecting the identified Area Headquarters.	Percentage of applicable projects meeting this requirement from date of implementation of the updated GLP.	Annually for duration of plan.	Head of Property & Facilities Management
Any upgrade project to new or existing Library facilities will include a bilingual name sign at the main desk	Percentage of applicable projects meeting this requirement from date of implementation of the updated GLP.	Annually for duration of plan.	Head of Property & Facilities Management
Gaelic will be included in future multilingual signs such information plaques at heritage facilities. In such instances, design considerations will be taken to ensure Gaelic and Scots are displayed as indigenous Scottish languages.	Percentage of upgraded/replaced building signage meeting this requirement from date of implementation of the updated GLP.	Annually for duration of plan.	Head of Property & Facilities Management

This requirement is not retrospective and will be considered for all new signage and any replacement/renewals.			
We will explore adding to current guidance on the use of Gaelic placenames within the current signage policy.	Approval of new policy by relevant policy committee.	Reviewed during lifetime of plan.	Head of Roads and Infrastructure

COMMUNICATING WITH THE PUBLIC

Desired outcome	Promotion Positive message that communication from the public in Gaelic is always welcome.		
Current Practice	There is a web page on the Aberdeenshire Council website that shows that communication in Gaelic is welcome and signposts to relevant Gaelic information.		
Actions Required	How this will be measured	Target Date	Lead Officer
Web page to make clear communication in Gaelic is welcome.	Complete	Complete	Head of Customer and Digital Services
Web page above checked quarterly for accuracy		Quarterly	Head of Customer and Digital Services
'Happy to communicate in Gaelic' email footer produced for use	Produced and published on internal channels	November 2023	Head of Customer and Digital Services

Desired outcome	Written Communication Written communication in Gaelic is always accepted (post, email and social media) and replies will be provided in Gaelic in accordance with the general policy.
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Current Practice	A communications page on the council intranet was created to make clear the willingness to complete correspondence in Gaelic. The “How to Respond to Customers Who Speak Gaelic” internal training module is a mandatory course requirement for frontline customer services staff.		
Actions Required	How this will be measured	Target Date	Lead Officer
Internal comms page on intranet created to make clear the willingness to complete correspondence in Gaelic	Presence of page	Complete	Head of Customer and Digital Services
Review of above intranet page on a quarterly basis		Reviewed quarterly	Head of Customer and Digital Services

Desired outcome	Reception and phone Where Gaelic speaking staff can provide this service, they are supported to do so, and the service is promoted to the public		
Current Practice	The “How to Respond to Customers Who Speak Gaelic” internal training module highlights basic greetings, how to show if a staff member can converse in Gaelic, and what to do if staff receive correspondence in Gaelic.		
Actions Required	How this will be measured	Target Date	Lead Officer
An email signature will be produced for use by staff who wish to make it clear that they are happy to communicate in Gaelic or English.	Number of downloads from Corporate Image Library	October 2023	Head of Customer and Digital Services

Desired outcome	Public Meetings Opportunities to hold public meetings bilingually or in Gaelic are regularly explored and promoted.		
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Current Practice	Aberdeenshire Council does not currently have an agreed policy for the use of Gaelic in public meetings. A Gaelic address for the Provost has been prepared.		
Actions Required	How this will be measured	Target Date	Lead Officer
Where meetings are on Gaelic issues they will be promoted bilingually.	Number of bilingual promotions	Annually for duration of plan	Head of Customer and Digital Services
A Gaelic address for the Provost will be delivered at any appropriate Gaelic public events.	Number of Gaelic addresses delivered at Gaelic events	Annually for duration of plan	Head of Customer and Digital Services
A policy and process will be established regarding when and how Gaelic will be used at meetings	Policy and process developed	March 2025	Head of Customer and Digital Services

INFORMATION

Desired outcome	News releases High profile news releases and all news releases related to Gaelic are circulated in both Gaelic and English.		
Current Practice	Where a media release is required for a Gaelic event, this will be provided to the media dual lingually. There hasn't been a request for this so far.		
Actions Required	How this will be measured	Target Date	Lead Officer
Where a media release is required for a Gaelic event, this will be provided to the media dual lingually, provided reliable translation is available in the required timescale.	Ongoing	Annually for duration of plan	Head of Customer and Digital Services

All news releases relating to Gaelic events will be provided bilingually with provision made available for reliable translation.	At least 2 media releases per year for the life of the Plan	Annually for duration of plan	Head of Customer and Digital Services
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Desired outcome	Social Media Gaelic content distributed regularly through social media, guided by the level of actual and potential users		
Current Practice	Events in Gaelic are shared on social media, rendered in both languages, provided reliable translation is available in the required timescale		
Actions Required	How this will be measured	Target Date	Lead Officer
Events in Gaelic will be shared on social media, rendered in both languages.	Reach	As required	Head of Customer and Digital Services
Education: All Gaelic events will be promoted bilingually	Number of events promoted	Annually for duration of plan	Head of Education

Desired outcome	Website Gaelic content should be available on the public authority's website, with emphasis given to the pages with the highest potential reach.		
Current Practice	There is a web page on the Aberdeenshire Council website that shows that communication in Gaelic is welcome and signposts to relevant Gaelic information.		
Actions Required	How this will be measured	Target Date	Lead Officer
The Gaelic page on our website will be checked quarterly for accuracy	Accuracy	Quarterly	Head of Customer and Digital Services

Education: Information relating to how to access Gaelic Medium Education will also be available bilingually	Bilingual information published	December 2023 then annually	Head of Education
We have invested in plug-ins which translate our website to Gaelic. We will share this across our social media platforms to ensure the public are aware of this service.	Implementation if agreed	December 2023	Head of Customer and Digital Services

Desired outcome	Corporate Publications		
	Produced in Gaelic and English, with priority given to those with the highest potential reach.		
Current Practice	Corporate publications are not currently produced in Gaelic as it is not one of the top six languages of which translations are requested in Aberdeenshire, however information in Gaelic can be provided through our translation service.		
Actions Required	How this will be measured	Target Date	Lead Officer
We will publish at least two corporate publications annually in Gaelic.	We will monitor publications to ensure that at least two corporate publications are published in Gaelic each year.	Annually for duration of plan	Head of Customer and Digital Services
Education: We will deliver articles regarding Gaelic education and Gaelic school activities bilingually		Annually for duration of plan	Head of Education

Desired outcome	Language Utility A process is in place to ensure that the quality and accessibility of Gaelic language in all corporate information is high.		
Current Practice	We have an interpretation and translation contract in place to ensure the quality of translation is high and Gaelic is one of the languages available for translation		
Actions Required	How this will be measured	Target Date	Lead Officer
We will ensure the quality of Gaelic is retained in the procurement of any interpretation and translation provider	Appropriately considered within procurement contract	The current contract expires in 2027 and this will be part of future tendering at that point	Head of Customer and Digital Services

Desired outcome	Exhibitions Opportunities to deliver public exhibitions bilingually or in Gaelic should be explored on a regular basis, with priority given to those with the highest potential impact.		
Current Practice	Aberdeenshire Council does not currently have an agreed policy for the use of Gaelic in exhibitions.		
Actions Required	How this will be measured	Target Date	Lead Officer
Gaelic events and events with links to the Gaelic language will be promoted bilingually	Number of promotions featuring Gaelic version logo	Annually for duration of plan	Head of Customer and Digital Services

STAFF

Desired outcome	Internal Audit		
	Conduct an internal audit of Gaelic skills and training needs through the life of each plan.		
Current Practice	An internal audit of staff skills was carried out in August 2021.		
Actions Required	How this will be measured	Target Date	Lead Officer
Review of results of staff audit and development of further action required	Development of action(s) based on results	December 2023	Head of Customer and Digital Services

Desired outcome	Induction		
	Knowledge of the public authority's Gaelic language plan included in new staff inductions		
Current Practice	Internal online course 'How to respond to customers who speak Gaelic' was developed and available to all staff. From Spring 2021, this short course is a mandatory requirement for our customer services staff. It is optional for staff across the organisation to undertake training.		
Actions Required	How this will be measured	Target Date	Lead Officer
Renew and update the awareness training on ALDO (council's online training portal) to ensure it is up to date.	Awareness training will be reviewed every two years	Annually for duration of plan	Head of Customer and Digital Services / Head of Legal and people
Add a paragraph into the Service Induction guidance with link to Gaelic Language Plan.	Review Services Induction Plans to ensure link is included	December2023	Head of Legal & People
Advise new starts of the online course 'How to respond to customers who speak Gaelic'	Reports from the Learning Management System	December2023	Head of Legal & People

Desired outcome	Language Training Gaelic language skills training and development offered to staff, particularly in relation to implementing the public authority's Gaelic language plan.		
Current Practice	A series of face to face beginner evening classes were held in different areas of Aberdeenshire. These tended to have low numbers of attendees completing the whole course.		
Actions Required	How this will be measured	Target Date	Lead Officer
Further actions may arise from the Internal Capacity Audit.	Any further actions will be included in annual monitoring reports to Bòrd na Gàidhlig	December 2023 and throughout the plan	Head of Legal & People
To arrange lunch time sessions to be delivered virtually to allow larger groups of staff to attend either live or after the event	One lunchtime session to be arranged each month. This will be demand led and dependent on availability of resources	October 2023 and annually	Head of Legal & People
Sessions to be recorded so that they can be made available to all staff at a time suitable to them.	Number of sessions recorded – target 100%	October 2023 and then annually	Head of Legal & People

Desired outcome	Awareness Training Gaelic awareness training offered to staff, with priority given to directors, board members, councillors and staff dealing directly with the public.		
Current Practice	Prior to COVID Gaelic Awareness classes were being delivered in library venues throughout Aberdeenshire. These were available to all employees and Elected Members. Internal online course 'How to respond to customers who speak Gaelic' was developed and available to all staff.		
Actions Required	How this will be measured	Target Date	Lead Officer
To continue to provide Gaelic Awareness learning sessions for all employees and Elected Members.	At least two sessions to be held each year where resources are available	Annually	Head of Legal & People
Sessions will be recorded and made available to employees and Elected Members	All sessions will be recorded	Annually	Head of Legal & People
Further promote the online learning developed 'How to respond to customers who speak Gaelic'. This course provides basic information about Gaelic greetings, use of Gaelic signatures and information on the use of interpretation and translation services. The course also provides links to LearnGaelic and courses available at Aberdeen University. It also provides an opportunity to advise of any interest in accessing other forms of learning Gaelic.	Number of people accessing the course	Annually	Head of Legal & People

Desired outcome	Recruitment Recognising and respecting Gaelic skills within the recruitment process throughout the public authority		
Current Practice	Where a job has had Gaelic listed as an essential criteria in the job profile, the job advert has been posted with a Gaelic translation.		
Actions Required	How this will be measured	Target Date	Lead Officer
All job profiles with Gaelic named as an essential skill will be promoted and advertised bilingually	Percentage of job profiles with Gaelic as an essential skill advertised bilingually	Annually	Head of Legal and People

Desired outcome	Recruitment Gaelic named as an essential and / or desirable skill in job descriptions in order to deliver the Gaelic language plan and in accordance with the Bòrd na Gàidhlig recruitment advice.		
Current Practice	There were previously two temporary posts created for Gaelic Primary Teacher and Gaelic Development Officer, both of which had Gaelic in the Essential or Desirable Criteria.		
Actions Required	How this will be measured	Target Date	Lead Officer
Review HR policies and procedures to include guidance on including Gaelic as a desirable skill in the review of job profiles and/or the creation of new posts where applicable	Review HR polices and procedures	Annually	Head of Legal & People
Review job profiles to ascertain any other roles which require this essential / desirable criteria	Review job profiles carried out	Annually	Head of Legal & People

Desired outcome	Recruitment Bilingual or Gaelic job adverts for all posts where Gaelic is an essential skill.		
Current Practice	Where a job has had Gaelic listed as an essential criteria in the job profile the job advert have been posted with a Gaelic translation.		
Actions Required	How this will be measured	Target Date	Lead Officer
Where a vacancy request is submitted advising that Gaelic is in the Essential or Desirable criteria the advert text is to be sent for translation.	Appropriate vacancies have Gaelic translation advert text.	Annually	Head of Legal & People

GAELIC LANGUAGE CORPUS

Desired outcome	Gaelic Orthographic Conventions The most recent Gaelic Orthographic Conventions will be followed in relation to all written materials produced by the public authority.		
Current Practice	The council's supplier for Interpretation and Translation is used for Gaelic translations		
Actions Required	How this will be measured	Target Date	Lead Officer
To ensure that this provision is retained in future contracts	Incorporation of requirement in new contract	The next time the contract is tendered	Head of Customer and Digital Services

		- July 2027	
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Desired outcome	Place Names Gaelic place name advice from Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba is sought and used.		
Current Practice	It is understood that advice can be sought from Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba		
Actions Required	How this will be measured	Target Date	Lead Officer
Advice will be sought from Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba if required in implementing the actions detailed under "Signage"	Number of requests for advice	Annually as appropriate	Head of Property & Facilities Management

4. PUBLICATION

PUBLISHING AND PUBLICISING THE PLAN

INTERNAL

Aberdeenshire Council staff will be made aware of the plan through an article on the council's intranet, through cascading of the plan from senior management to their respective services, and through informal communication routes for staff (e.g Yammer)

Responsibility in terms of delivery of the plan will lie with the cross-service implementation and monitoring group, however all staff will be made aware of the opportunity to contribute to the actions detailed in the plan, where relevant to them. We will also ensure awareness is raised of the Gaelic information on the dedicated intranet page, and of the online training module that we had previously developed. We will be directed by the results of our staff audits with regard to the demand for opportunities to develop Gaelic language skills, and will promote opportunities accordingly through the routes detailed above.

EXTERNAL

Aberdeenshire Council's Gaelic Language Plan will be published in English and Gaelic on our website. In addition, we will:-

- publicise the plan through a variety of social media platforms
- promote awareness of, and provide access to, the plan to key stakeholders in the public, private and third sectors
- distribute copies of the plan to any relevant Gaelic organisations and other interested bodies
- make hard copies available on request

5. RESOURCING THE PLAN

The costs associated with the actions above will be covered within existing budgets for all of the council services involved.

6. MONITORING THE PLAN

An annual monitoring report on the implementation of this Plan will be sent to Bòrd na Gàidhlig and made available to the public. The report will focus on the progress of the identified actions that will help to deliver the High Level Aims and the Corporate Service Aims. This will be monitored through the Aberdeenshire Gaelic Language Plan Implementation and Monitoring Group.

7. THE GAELIC LANGUAGE PLAN IN THE PUBLIC AUTHORITY

OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PLAN

The Head of Customer and Digital Services has overall responsibility for preparation, delivery and monitoring of Aberdeenshire Council's Gaelic Language Plan. They can be contacted as follows: -

NAME: Kate Bond

POSITION: Head of Customer and Digital Services

DEPARTMENT: Customer and Digital Services

NAME OF ORGANISATION: Aberdeenshire Council

ADDRESS: Woodhill House, Westburn Road, Aberdeen, AB16 5GB

TELEPHONE NUMBER: 01467 536162

E-MAIL ADDRESS: Kate.Bond@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

DAY-TO-DAY RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PLAN

The Business Strategy Manager has day-to-day responsibility for the delivery and monitoring of Aberdeenshire Council's Gaelic Language Plan. Queries regarding the day-to-day operation of the plan should be addressed to:

NAME: Fiona McCallum

POSITION: Business Strategy Manager

DEPARTMENT: Customer and Digital Services

NAME OF ORGANISATION: Aberdeenshire Council

ADDRESS: Woodhill House, Westburn Road, Aberdeen, AB16 5GB

TELEPHONE NUMBER: 01467 533031

E-MAIL ADDRESS: Fiona.McCallum@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

GAELIC LANGUAGE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING GROUP

It is one of our High Level Aims within this Plan to “establish and maintain a Gaelic language plan implementation group with representation from all council services”. It is planned that a Terms of Reference for the group will be established by March 2022, as detailed in the actions above. This will specify which services within the council will be represented and involved in the group. A schedule of meetings will also be developed.

ENGAGING WITH STAFF

A Gaelic Language Awareness page has been developed on the council's intranet.

An internal staff audit of Gaelic language skills was held in August 2021, through our Engage Aberdeenshire community engagement online platform. This was widely promoted to staff. Through this survey we will also understand the interest in and

demand for basic Gaelic language training for those with little or no skills. It is planned that the information from this audit will be further enhanced in the duration of the Plan through engagement of staff through our Employee Engagement Group.

Once published, this Plan for 2023-28 will be widely promoted to staff to raise awareness.

ARM'S LENGTH ORGANISATIONS AND THIRD PARTIES

The monitoring and implementation group will lead on identifying opportunities where those who deliver services/goods (e.g contractors) on the council's behalf are made aware of the commitments in the council's Gaelic Language Plan.

APPENDIX 1 – INTERNAL GAELIC CAPACITY AUDIT

Introduction

An audit of staff skills in the Gaelic language is encouraged as part of the process of developing a Gaelic Language Plan. A short survey was developed and hosted on the Engage Aberdeenshire website and was open from 31st August to 19th September 2021. The survey was promoted on the council's intranet and on the internal Yammer platform, and service managers were asked to cascade to their teams.

What We Found

This section provides a summary of the feedback received as part of a consultation conducted with staff. One hundred and forty-nine (149) members of staff responded to the survey.

Level of Gaelic Language Skills

When asked what level of Gaelic language skills that they felt they had:

- 83% of respondents have no Gaelic language skills
- 14% have beginner level skills
- 2% have intermediate skills
- One respondent identified as having fluent skills

Interest in Learning Gaelic Phrases

Those who had basic, or no Gaelic language skills were asked if they would be interested in attending a "learning over lunch" session to learn some basic phrases.

One hundred and forty-five (145) responses were as split follows:

- 50% expressed interest in attending
- 36% did not have interest in attending
- 14% did not know

Gaelic Language Skills in the Workplace

Respondents were asked if they use Gaelic language skills in the workplace. Four respondents indicated that they did. Examples provided were teaching nursery and P1/2 class songs colours and numbers; giving ad hoc, mini-lessons in basic Gaelic to pupils in classes covered as a supply teacher; and assisting colleagues with pronunciation of Gaelic names e.g. places, bridges.

Awareness of Aberdeenshire Council's Gaelic Language Plan

Respondents were asked about their awareness of the council's own Plan which feeds into the National Gaelic Language Plan. 65% were not aware of the council's Plan, whilst 35% indicated that they were aware.

Promotion of Gaelic in Aberdeenshire

Respondents were asked if they had suggestions how Gaelic could be promoted in Aberdeenshire. The strongest themes coming through were as follows:

- Learning through schools, including introduction to Gaelic at an early age
- Free or affordable classes (perhaps online) could be offered to communities and staff
- Consideration of Gaelic on public signs – street signs, road signs, tourist spots and town centres were the variety of suggestions given

Aberdeenshire Council and the Gaelic Language

Respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed with a set of statements regarding Gaelic in Aberdeenshire. The statements and main responses were as follows:

Gaelic is not important to the work of Aberdeenshire Council – neither agree nor disagree was the most popular answer, followed by disagree.

It is important that customers can communicate in Gaelic with the organisation, if they feel more comfortable doing so – agree was the most popular answer

Gaelic is not relevant to me in my job role - neither agree nor disagree was the most popular answer, followed by agree.

I endorse Aberdeenshire Council's efforts to develop Gaelic throughout the organisation - agree was the most popular answer, followed by neither agree nor disagree.

I understand the role of my department in the implementation of Aberdeenshire Council's Gaelic Language Plan - neither agree nor disagree was the most popular answer, followed by disagree.

I understand my own role in the implementation of the Aberdeenshire Council's Gaelic Language Plan - neither agree nor disagree was the most popular answer, closely followed by disagree.

Other Comments

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide other comments. Responses were mixed with some respondents indicating that they would be keen to learn basic Gaelic and would like to see more learning opportunities promoted.

Next Steps

Consideration of the audit results identified that awareness needs to be raised with staff on a variety of activities. Promotion of the work that the council's Education service provides around Gaelic is already an action within the Plan, as is the need to host an informal learning opportunity for staff. Awareness raising around the role of each service in delivering the Gaelic Language Plan, of where staff can access further Gaelic learning opportunities outside work, and of the existing online basic

learning module for staff will be undertaken at the same time as promotion of the informal learning opportunity.

APPENDIX 2 – PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Introduction

A public consultation is a requirement in the process of developing a Gaelic Language Plan. The purpose of the consultation is to gather information on how to improve the Plan. A survey was developed and hosted on the Engage Aberdeenshire platform. The survey was open from 26 August to 7 October 2021. The survey was promoted via the council's social media channels and circulated to contacts (internally & externally) for cascading.

A number of comments were received around the relevance of the Plan in Aberdeenshire, with respondents expressing concern particularly around resourcing, cost and impact on service delivery. Some respondents supported awareness raising of the Gaelic Language Plan and opportunities but without any implication on resourcing.

What We Found

This section provides a summary of the feedback received. 139 people responded to the survey. The majority were over 35 years of age and were evenly split for those who specified male or female.

Level of Gaelic Language Skills

When asked if they can speak, read or write Scottish Gaelic:

- 124 respondents (89%) answered no/not applicable
- 7 respondents can understand Gaelic
- 5 can speak Gaelic
- 8 can read Gaelic
- 5 can write Gaelic

Aberdeenshire Council Webpage

The majority of respondents (66%) were not aware of the Gaelic information page on the council webpage.

Views on the Draft Gaelic Language Plan

When asked if the Draft Plan is easy to understand, respondents answered as follows:

No - 26%, Don't Know – 34%, Yes – 40%

Those who answered no, were asked to explain why. Responses included the following:

- Formatting of action tables is confusing
- Still not clear on what is being done to address the lack of Gaelic
- Use of Gaelic words without English translation

- When asked what other actions could be taken to deliver the aims in the Plan
- More opportunities for Gaelic in schools
- Highlight benefits of Gaelic (heritage) within the area to those who don't agree
- More opportunities for young people to learn Gaelic

When asked if they had anything further to suggest for the Gaelic Language Plan to fulfil the objectives of the National Language Plan respondents said:

- There should be provision for public learning of the Gaelic language

When asked if they wanted to make any other comments, respondents said

- We should raise awareness that Gaelic was once spoken in Aberdeenshire

Respondents were then asked if they had any suggestions about the ways services and/or communities can work together better to deliver actions identified in the Plan. Again most respondents did not consider that a Plan was required in Aberdeenshire. Other points made were:

- There could be better promotion of Gaelic in arts and culture
- There could be a joint approach to Gaelic / Scots language development

What We Did and Next Steps

The results of the public consultation have been considered and are incorporated within the Gaelic Language Plan as far as they support the purpose of the Plan. Some of the feedback around having a better understanding of what Gaelic opportunities are available are already included under the Education High-Level Aims, for example promotion of opportunities and a planned survey of parents and pupils to gather information about demand. Gaelic terms used within the Plan now have the equivalent English term inserted next to them to improve clarity and avoid confusion. The results of the consultation will be made available to the council's Gaelic Language Plan Implementation Group for further consideration.