

Response ID ANON-S6CK-ETKG-2

Submitted to Draft Gaelic Language Plan 2023-27
Submitted on 2023-05-05 22:28:07

Introduction

1 Your details

First name:

Comann nam Pàrant (Dùn Èideann is Lodainn)

Surname:

Comann nam Pàrant (Dùn Èideann is Lodainn)

Email address:

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Yes, I consent to being contacted about this consultation:

Yes

2 Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?

On behalf on an organisation

Organisation details

3 Name of organisation:

Name of organisation::

Comann nam Pàrant (Dùn Èideann is Lodainn)

4 Organisation type:

Third and voluntary sector organisation

Other (please specify)::

5 What is your role?

What is your role?:

Secretary

Priorities

6 Are these the right priorities for the Council's next Gaelic Language Plan to focus on?

Yes

If no, please explain why::

7 Are there any priorities which have not been included?

Yes (Please tell us what these other priorities are below)

If yes, please tell us what these other priorities are::

We would suggest the following additional information to be included in Priorities:

Priority 2: We would expect explicit commitment to training (incl CPD), recruitment and retention and continuous professional development of GME teaching and support staff at all levels from 0-18 years to underpin planned continued improvement in quality of GME provided. We would expect the Council to work with partners to ensure there is sufficient planning and a robust strategy to support GME sustainability and development.

Priority 3, Promoting Gaelic: we support this priority and further suggest the establishment of Capital Gaelic as a true brand, which is recognised in Edinburgh, nationally, and internationally.

Actions

8 Are these the right actions for the Council's next Gaelic Language Plan to focus on?

Yes

If no, please explain why::

9 Are there other actions that we could take to support Gaelic development?

Yes (please tell us what these actions are below)

If yes, please tell us what these actions are::

We would suggest current actions are expanded as follows:

1.1 We support these aims and actions, while making the distinction that GME is focused on supporting children in developing into fluent speakers of the language and that as action 3 is specific to learners it perhaps belongs elsewhere in the plan.

1.2 We support this high level aim and support the linkage of GME with a Gaelic community centre as an opportunity to provide cultural enrichment to the GME experience. We would welcome clarification on how Ionad Gàidhlig Dhùn Èideann would be financially sustainable, and how it would be linked to GME provision, for example through its location.

1.3 We would like explicit collaboration between the council and all parents of GME pupils. This can be achieved in collaboration with Parent representative groups, but must not be the only method of communication with parents. Parents need to be seen as partners in this process and the ongoing development of GME.

1.4 As per the suggested requirement for ALEOs, all new Council signage should also include Gaelic translations. Engage with appropriate language experts to ensure translations are accurate, meaningful and not limited to literal interpretations. The guidance should not be limited to council signage ie an opportunity was missed to make the tram signage in Leith bilingual. The council needs to have clear guidelines and meaningful metrics to increase visibility of Gàidhlig in the community.

1.5 We support this high level aim but require more specific actions and commitments describing what steps will be taken to increase Gaelic content and measure this progress.

2.1 The development of Cròileagan and Early Years GME provision should be aligned with plans for the expansion of primary provision to ensure sustainable growth of GME overall. The council should work with East Lothian and Midlothian to ensure proper provision of GME.

Primary provision requires expansion so that there is a greater critical mass of GME high school pupils sooner rather than later. Additional GME primary provision would have the further, eventual benefit of creating additional streams of GME students who would transfer to a thriving GME high school

Provide more specific details on how the Cròileagan provision will be strengthened and how the reach across the city will be extended. Specify goals, targets, and timelines for improvement.

We support the establishment of the role of the GME early years Development Officer and suggest that a specific role of GME/GLE Development Officer for Primary and Secondary be considered.

We support consultation and would like to see more detail in the plan, including how the consultation will be implemented, who will be involved, and how it will contribute to the improvement and development of GME.

However, the Gaelic Medium Education Improvement Plan has not been provided as part of this Draft Plan so it is difficult to comment on the specifics of this action. Specific plan is required for GME itself including the provision of teaching staff.

2.2 We support 2.2 and would suggest the following information for each sub-point:

1 We support this commitment to collaborate and would like to see the organisations named in this plan and the nature of the collaborative work, such as the frequency of meetings, joint projects to be undertaken, and expected outcomes.

2 We support a thematic review of GLE, and would encourage elaboration in this plan including the criteria, methodology, and timeline for the review, as well as the expected outcomes and actions based on the review findings.

3 We support the action to create and promote teaching materials as this is an additional burden experienced by teachers in GME due to the small population and lack of an equivalent wider resource when compared to EME. Specific targets would be expected for what materials will be produced and distributed and how many teachers would be trained.

4 Provide more details on how the Council plans to support the development of Gaelic language skills among its workforce, such as through language training programs, resources, and incentives, as well as the expected outcomes and measurement of progress. We would also suggest that CEC staff are given the opportunity to take short residential courses within the Gàidhealtachd on Gaelic language and culture. This would strengthen staff understanding of Gaelic language and culture.

5 We support this action and assume that it means Gaelic Language and not Gaelic Speaking. For this action we would request specific examples of supporting opportunities for parents, as well as the expected outcomes and measurement of progress.

3. Comann nam Pàrant is supportive of action 3 to further establish Capital Gaelic as a key feature of the Council's commitment to promoting Gaelic culture and language. In particular CNP is supportive of actions which promote normalisation of Gaelic in contexts beyond the classroom and the development of opportunities for Gaelic to be spoken, heard and seen.

CNP would encourage action which would help to bring together the many existing organisations operating in Edinburgh offering Gaelic contexts outside of formal education. Capital Gaelic has an opportunity to connect, form and promote this virtual community which would complement the Council's commitments to support the establishment of Ionad Gàidhlig Dhùn Èideann.

In terms of additional actions, we strongly recommend:

There should be clear financial backing in order to fulfil the aims and actions of the plan itself. There is a mention of finances (a note that GME comes from a variety of sources, and the actions set out in the plan are dependent on continued specific financial support from the Scottish Government), however it should be clearer to GME families which funding is confirmed and to what extent. To date, there has been consistent lack of clarity on financial support from Scottish Government. In addition, creation of GME high school not budgeted for by the Council. (Note that Scottish Government National Plan states 'We continue to support all Local Authorities who wish to deliver or expand Gaelic Education at all levels through our grants schemes.')

In terms of financial support, we would also highlight that Gaelic requires additional funding due to years of systematic poor treatment and support. In order for equal access, facilities and services that are available in English need to also be available in Gaelic. For example, the establishment of a community centre and plans to support and increase Gaelic in the direct vicinity of schools is vital. This includes all council materials being available in Gaelic and support for local businesses to become involved as well as community funding and events.

There should be further information on recruitment and retention of teaching staff at all levels, including teaching assistants. Investing in teaching staff required now to ensure that a robust cohort of Gaelic speaking staff are in a position to lead thriving dedicated GME schools in future. There should be greater capacity building and training for existing English- medium teachers interested in transitioning to GME. For example, explore the option for the Council to partnership with Scot Gov / encourage Scot Gov to create bursaries for trainee teachers.

The Plan should include a detailed approach re timescales for development of provision. Overall the actions lack detail as to how provision will be strengthened / developed. For example, staffing / finance / expansion of provision through new builds etc. We also require detailed metrics so that GME families can understand how the Council are measuring success, how the Council will know their plans and actions are working. Metrics information and outcomes should be published regular so progress can be tracked and viewed.

Improving the quality of provision should include specific actions with respect to teacher recruitment, training and retention. We would suggest that this needs to be added as a specific item with statements of current practice and position as well as desired outcome within the timescales of this plan to meet the projected roll of children in GME in Edinburgh.

We recommend that the Council complete an Internal Gaelic Capacity Audit and publish this data within Year 1 of the plan and on an annual basis for the life of the plan so that progress can be monitored. There should be action within the plan to continuously review and plan for capacity to meet the demand for GME/GLE. For example:

Stand-alone schools:

- Commitment to stand-alone primary and secondary provision over co-located alternatives - international research and good practice has shown that co-located options do not create the conditions to maximise the immersion opportunity
- Commitment to the creation of GME primary schools (rather than GME 'units' within English Medium schools) in areas of Edinburgh other than the north of the city, where Bun- sgoil Taobh na Pàirce is located

No catchment reviews:

- No catchment reviews of GME pupils at secondary level until a guaranteed, sustainable, long term alternative for secondary school provision is available - catchment reviews disproportionately affect Gaelic pupils in Edinburgh and the Lothians who do not have alternative GME provision other than one primary and one secondary.

No capping:

- No capping of the numbers of children entering GME primary provision - not only because these pupils have a right (schedule 1 of paragraph 4 of the 2010 Act applies) to be taught in Gaelic but also because the increase of pupils at primary levels then bolsters a GME secondary. In the case of Edinburgh and the Lothians, the rights of younger children to access Gaelic Medium Education at primary level should not be adversely affected by outside factors, especially ones which are not intrinsically linked to GME, such as the rising rolls issue across the city

Other comments

10 Please provide any other comments or suggestions you have about the draft City of Edinburgh Council's Gaelic Language Plan and its effectiveness in fulfilling the objectives of the National Gaelic Language Plan

Other comments:

Greater levels of accessibility / wide engagement / access to information - note on terminology such as 'Opportunities for learners to engage with Gaelic (through L3 and IDL models) will be developed and promoted in all schools' - unclear whether families will understand what L3 and IDL refers to.

Circulate Implementation Plan to GME families so that they understand the way in which actions such as 'Continuing to develop high quality Gaelic Language Education for 0-18 years will be supported by the Gaelic Medium Education (GME) Improvement Plan'.

Encourage participation from Scottish Government in a Short Life Working Group in Edinburgh to ensure that progress on a GME high school is made and

that any proposals align with the national strategy for GME.

The plan does not appear to adhere to the Bòrd na Gàidhlig guidance provided to public bodies when preparing their plans. The plan adheres in part to the template provided but not completely. https://www.gaidhlig.scot/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Gaelic-Language-Plan-Template_.pdf Comman nam Pàrant suggests that the plan be redrafted in terms of this template, as adopted by other local authorities, to improve clarity of the plan.

The draft plan lacks the recommended "Internal Gaelic Capacity Audit". If this data is not currently available can this be made an explicit action to be completed within Year 1 of the plan?

The plan should be updated to include the key principles of Active Offer, Equal Respect, and Normalising/Mainstreaming. It would be helpful for the Council to describe how it will apply these principles in the delivery of the plan.

The plan should be updated to make it clear which department and/or service area has responsibility for the high level aims and the specific actions listed.

The plan should be updated in accordance with the guidance to reflect the Corporate Service Aims and Outcomes.

The plan should be updated in accordance with the guidance to reflect the Corporate Service Aims and Outcomes. This is important to ensure the normalisation of Gaelic across the business of the Council and, to improve the deliverability of the plan by assigning specific responsibilities to the appropriate council teams and directorates.

Establishing a GME Secondary School

The draft GLP contains many actions which CNP supports in terms of improving the quality of GME. We welcome actions which will support the consolidation of GME at secondary level and the recent progress in establishing Darroch as a base for GME at JGHS. The appointment of a Depute Head Teacher for GME is also a significant step.

However, CNP feels the plan needs to contain further actions in order to establish the conditions necessary to create a standalone GME secondary school; we would suggest the following actions are incorporated or where they exist are aligned with a high level aim to expand at all levels.

Engage with parents, pupils, and the wider community to gather feedback and support for the establishment of a new GME secondary school, to ensure that the school meets the needs and aspirations of all stakeholders.

Develop a comprehensive education expansion plan that outlines the objectives, strategies, and action items necessary to establish and operate a new GME secondary school in Edinburgh.

Conduct a staffing needs assessment to understand the level of staffing required in terms of breadth and depth of experience to ensure the school has a sufficient and resilient workforce, capable of providing a majority of the broad general education through Gaelic, and a wide range of subjects through Gaelic at SQA level and always providing Gaelic as a subject at Higher SQA level.

Develop and implement professional development programs for Gaelic-speaking teachers and those seeking to teach through Gaelic, in order to ensure the highest quality of instruction and to provide ongoing support for teachers and staff.

Evaluate locations for a new GME secondary school which minimises educational disruption and maximises equity in terms of an accessible location for all children in Edinburgh.

Establish proposals for a new GME primary school, including sgoil-àraich provision, in an appropriate location in Edinburgh to ensure that GME provision becomes more accessible to a significant portion of the population and can be equitably balanced between the existing GME provision at Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce.

Work with neighbouring local authorities and the Scottish Government to provide a strategic GME provision for the region, and to ensure that the establishment of any new GME schools in Edinburgh is part of a coordinated and coherent approach to GME provision across the region.

Develop and strengthen a comprehensive curriculum offer, supported by teaching and support staff, at secondary level that delivers the majority of the broad general education in Gaelic, and offers a diverse range of subjects taught in Gaelic at the National 5 SQA level and above, including Gaelic as a subject at Higher and Advanced Higher level.

Develop partnerships with Gaelic organisations, cultural institutions, and employers to provide students with opportunities to engage with Gaelic language and culture beyond the classroom, and to develop pathways into employment in the Gaelic sector.

Feedback about this consultation process

11 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about this consultation?

Feedback about consultation process - I was given all the information that I needed to have my say.:

Neither agree nor disagree

Feedback about consultation process - This consultation exercise was clear and easy to understand.:

Agree

Feedback about consultation process - I was given the opportunity to have my say.:

Agree

Please provide any other comments or suggestions you may have about this consultation process.: