BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE (SCOTLAND) BILL:
FINANCIAL MEMORANDUM SUBMISSION
FROM SOUTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

Consultation
Did you take part in any consultation exercise preceding the Bill and, if so, did you comment on the financial assumptions made?
1. Yes - South Lanarkshire Council responded to the initial consultation of the bill in November 2012 and as part of our response which was drafted through consultation with Deaf members of our community, noted:

It is difficult to quantify actual costs without accurate figures for the size and make up of the Deaf Community and their subsequent requirements for access to services. However, it is clear that there would be financial implications for developing and implementing a BSL plan as there is with the required Gaelic Language Plans.

If applicable, do you believe your comments on the financial assumptions have been accurately reflected in the FM?
2. Whilst the FM mentions the costs associated with producing Gaelic Language plans, and assumes this as the cost of a BSL plan, the FM does not appear to account fully for the translation costs of BSL plans.

It is acknowledged that the FM gives Local Authorities discretion over the translation of the BSL plan. However, given the nature of the Bill and the requirement to draft a BSL plan, it is felt inappropriate not to take this opportunity to translate it for BSL users. The Council would expect funding to follow the Bill in terms of delivery, consultation and translation of the BSL plan as the requirement is statutorily driven. Funding is not acknowledged in the FM and clarity would be welcomed.

Did you have sufficient time to contribute to the consultation exercise?
3. Yes but consideration of producing accurate national and local population figures are required to fully quantify the financial impact on Councils and funding required.

Costs
If the Bill has any financial implications for your organisation, do you believe that they have been accurately reflected in the FM? If not, please provide details.
4. In general the FM is broad enough to cover potential costs however it does not appear to fully consider the total costs of consultation for developing the plans. The FM refers to staff time but not to the cost of interpretation services which, dependent on size of local population and the varying needs of those attending, could add a substantial amount. As noted in the response to Question 2 above, consideration is again requested for the costs of translation of the final BSL plan. The Council estimates a cost of £500-£1000 (minimum) for production of BSL video format before cost of producing disc or USB copies. Given the progress and ethos of the Bill, it is inappropriate not to
publish plans in BSL format. Consideration is again requested to funding of all aspects of the Bill including translation.

**Do you consider that the estimated costs and savings set out in the FM are reasonable and accurate?**

5. The FM costs for delivery, consultation and revision may potentially be flexible enough to cover the variation that there will be across Councils, however, to say they are accurate cannot be verified as the costs involved have not been sufficiently broken down to look at what actual costs may be across activities and Councils.

Regardless of current Council spend on this area, it is requested that all Councils be considered fairly in terms of budget allocations. These should be based on an agreed method.

**If applicable, are you content that your organisation can meet any financial costs that it might incur as a result of the Bill? If not, how do you think these costs should be met?**

6. South Lanarkshire Council currently meet the costs of providing BSL across the full range of its services as per our duties under the Equality Act 2010. The Bill introduces new duties for Councils including the delivery, consultation and ultimately implementation of the Bill. While the FM costs the delivery and consultation, it gives no indication of whether monies will be provided to Councils. The Council has no budget allocation for additional costs and an allocation from Scottish Government would be required.

The FM clearly states that it does not relate to the Local Authority implementation of the BSL plans. This is an area of concern as additional costs are likely and again, cannot be met by the Council. An allocation from Scottish Government would be required.

**Does the FM accurately reflect the margins of uncertainty associated with the Bill’s estimated costs and with the timescales over which they would be expected to arise?**

7. Without accurate local population figures for the Deaf community, it is hard to quantify what levels of engagement there would be with the development and refresh of such plans. It is therefore difficult to accurately project what the associated translation costs may be. As such it cannot be said that the FM accurately reflects the margins of uncertainty. However, again, any new costs require funding.

**Wider Issues**

**Do you believe that the FM reasonably captures any costs associated with the Bill? If not, which other costs might be incurred and by whom?**

8. It is felt inappropriate that the FM does not consider the interpretation and translations requirements of developing and producing a plan and then any required refreshment in future years. As such it does not reasonably capture the costs associated.
Do you believe that there may be future costs associated with the Bill, for example through subordinate legislation? If so, is it possible to quantify these costs?

9. It is difficult to quantify actual costs without accurate figures for the size and make up of the Deaf Community and their subsequent requirements for access to services. However, it is clear that there would be financial implications for improved access to services via means of training and in particular maintaining staff BSL skills, as well as, greater use of video translation services and face-to-face services. Again, any additional costs require to be funded. It is suggested that a further FM be issued after a period of review in order to establish subsequent funding requirements.