

Bòrd na Gàidhlig submission of 16 March 2022

PE1922/C – Cancel all Local Authority expenditure on Gaelic expansion

“There is no demand in the Central belt”

There is evident demand, as follows:

At the 2011 Census central belt local authorities (i.e. City of Edinburgh, East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Falkirk, Glasgow City, Inverclyde, Midlothian, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, West Dunbartonshire, West Lothian) accounted for more than one quarter (30%) of those living in Scotland who had some skills in Gaelic.

There is growing demand for pre-school, primary and secondary Gaelic medium education in, for example, Glasgow and Edinburgh, with 2% of pupils in primary education in Glasgow are in Gaelic-medium education. There is also growing demand for provision in areas where there is presently none - eg. East Renfrewshire.

There are longstanding ambitions to develop Gaelic Centres in both Glasgow and Edinburgh. These would be a physical space where it is recognised that Gaelic is used as the main language provided a space for fluent speakers and learners to use their skills.

“there is no economic benefit in what is a frivolous, vanity project”.

On the contrary, there are a range of examples of economic benefits, such as:

- Employment in Gaelic essential and Gaelic desirable posts in central belt local authorities - notably in education.
- Creative industries - e.g. posts in Gaelic media - some of which will be held by people who have received Gaelic medium education at schools and universities in the central belt.
- Events and festivals. For example, the 2019 Mòd Nàiseanta Rìoghail (Royal National Mòd) is reported to have generated £3.2 million for Glasgow's economy.

[Research](#) has found that businesses in the creative industries, tourism, heritage, and food and drink sectors benefit from their use of Gaelic, and that this has the potential to bring significant economic value. This “could be in the region of between £82 million and £149 million.” It is estimated that around 25% of that value would be in central belt local authority areas.

The significant potential of Gaelic is recognised in VisitScotland’s [Gaelic Tourism Strategy for Scotland](#). This states that “The Gaelic language and its associated culture represents a compelling opportunity for the Scottish tourism industry”. The underlying Mission is “To support the growth of the Scottish tourism economy through engaging more visitors in discovering and experiencing the unique Gaelic language and its associated culture.”

Gaelic as a “Unique Selling Point differentiator and authentic part of the experience of visiting Scotland” means there “significant economic potential of our Gaelic language and culture”. The economic potential flows from “a dynamic, contemporary Gaelic cultural scene spanning music, festivals such as Celtic Connections and Fèisean, regional and national Mòds, literature, drama”, as well as through media, food and drink, and sport”. The Strategy also states that “Gaelic has an exciting and growing presence in lowland and urban Scotland”.

A VisitScotland survey in 2016 found that, with no prior promotion, more than one in three (34%) visitors felt that Gaelic, as a national language of Scotland, enhanced their visit and they would like to find out more about it. Interest was primarily amongst overseas and first time visitors.

A number of central belt local authorities’ Gaelic Language Plans include actions to increase the economic benefits from Gaelic tourism. For example:

- Glasgow City Council - “support the work of other public bodies in the promotion of tourism and cultural heritage”.
- Inverclyde Council - “The Council is working to develop its tourism offer, and the National (Gaelic) Plan will be used to inform this development”.
- City of Edinburgh Council - “Continue to identify links to Gaelic in tourism policies and strategies”.