

## GAELIC ANNUAL REPORT

### Executive summary

1. Each year, Bòrd na Gàidhlig (BnG) requires public bodies who have a Gaelic Language Plan (GLP) to report on their progress to date. Our Annual Report is now due by end of January. This paper:
  - a. Provides LG with the Annual Report we intend to submit
  - b. Highlights the changes we propose in how we report on our statutory commitment to Gaelic
  - c. Outlines how the plan relates to the overall Language Policy of the Scottish Parliament.
2. Our GLP is based on the following principles:
  - a. Using Gaelic to reach out to communities across Scotland and ensuring communities can reach out to us in Gaelic (by offering outreach and education activities in local communities and facilitating interactions with the Parliament in Gaelic).
  - b. Supporting our MSPs and staff in developing confidence around using Gaelic in their work (by providing and promoting support and opportunities for them to do this)
  - c. Integrating Gaelic into the fabric of the Scottish Parliament's thinking (by ensuring work is delivered alongside and within existing programmes as well as having activities specifically for raising the profile of Gaelic).

### Issues and Options

3. Our [Gaelic Language Plan](#) runs from April 2018 to end of March 2023. Our annual reports are usually provided in August, covering the preceding year to April. This year, we have had an extension to the end of January to allow for Covid based disruptions.
4. Annex A provides our report. Broadly speaking, we are on progress up to the end of March 2020. Covid is likely to have an impact on achieving around 10% of our goals but overall, we are not concerned at the level of variation and have time to achieve before the plan ends.
5. Historically, the Annual Reports are signed by the Head of Outreach Services and seen by the Chief Executive. We propose to change this in future, to reflect the status of the reports and help us to meet our goal of raising the profile of Gaelic within our corporate operations (paragraph 2c above).
6. Since the 5-year Gaelic Language Plan is subject to consideration by LG and approval by SPCB, we are proposing that the reporting cycle follows the same process. Our proposal is that:

- a. The Annual Report is prepared by and agreed with the relevant Office Head.
- b. This is provided to LG for information annually. This is in addition to the quarterly compliance reporting that is provided to LG.
- c. Following this, the report is provided to SPCB for information annually.
- d. The report is then submitted to BnG and published on our website as a public record.

7. In addition to this, we are also about to undertake a review of the [Language Policy](#) of the Parliament. This policy determines the role of languages, including Gaelic and BSL, in our work. We believe the time is right to assess how the Gaelic and BSL Plans sit with the Language Policy and together. We want to ensure we have the right footing to move forward on in Session 6 and will look at the policy based on our values and our commitment to diversity and inclusion. This work will begin in earnest in 2021 and we hope to have it concluded ahead of Session 6 starting. The Language Policy is an SPCB approved policy.

8. Whilst not a requirement on us, we believe this proposal of reporting and publishing annually is good practice in public accountability on our Language Plans. Therefore, from 2021, we propose to replicate these arrangements for our BSL plan as well. This would see us reporting annually on Gaelic and BSL plans together to LG, SPCB and publishing on our website. We will cover that more when we review our Language Policy and Language Plans together in the work outlined above in paragraph 7.

### **Resource Implications**

9. Preparing the review and associated governance arrangements can all be delivered within existing resources.

10. Delivering a review of the Language Policy will not cost in cash terms. However, it is a significant piece of work and will require the input of the Gaelic and BSL Development Officers. These post holders are routinely fully engaged in their service delivery hence the longer timeframe for concluding the work.

11. Additionally, participation of colleagues in Public Information, Allowances, Visitor Services, Events and Exhibitions, and possibly Broadcasting and HR. These are all teams who will also welcome the longer time frame for the work.

12. We are working with colleagues in our Resources unit and Web and Social Media team to improve the accessibility of the report to meet our online requirements and improve its ability to communicate our achievements.

### **Dependencies**

13. Whilst other public bodies have Language Plans, none deliver the services we do, so it is hard to find external agencies to compare and learn with. However, both the Gaelic and BSL officers have strong networks and can call on peers for support.

## **Governance issues**

14. Publishing reports on Gaelic Language Plans is not compulsory, but some other public bodies choose to do so, or have done so, including the Scottish Government. Bng has indicated it is content for us to do this.

15. Similar reports are already produced and published by our colleagues in [Procurement](#), [Diversity and Inclusion](#) and on [Sustainable Development and Environment](#). We are working with Information and Management Governance team to ensure the implications of our actions are applied to other relevant reports.

16. We have also recently received an FOI request asking to see our Gaelic BnG annual reports. Whilst it was already our intention to propose this to LG, it is a timely reminder that the public expect accountability.

17. An EQIA on the annual report is not required. However, it will form part of our work in reviewing the Language Policy overall and we will update LG on this when that Policy is submitted for its consideration.

## **Publication Scheme**

18. This paper can be published.

## **Communications**

19. Each year, the Scottish Parliament hosts a Gaelic Week in November to raise the profile of our work. We work with colleagues to promote this. The publication of the Annual Report is not a newsworthy activity although we will work with communications colleagues to ensure its publication is recognised.

20. For internal stakeholders, given the wider context of Covid and the forthcoming election, we think it would be sensible to focus our communication efforts with elected members in Session 6. We will work within the Election Board's plans for communicating with Members in the early months of the new session around our Gaelic work, rather than around this annual report.

## **Next steps**

21. Following decisions from LG, I will prepare an SPCB paper to present the report to them, along with the governance, publication and Language Policy information included in this cover paper.

## **Decision**

22. LG is asked to confirm it is:  
a. content with the format of the Report;  
b. content with the governance proposals as set out in paragraph 6; and

- c. content for the outcome of the review of the Language Policy to be brought to the SPCB early in Session 6.

**Outreach Services**  
**8 December 2020**