Bòrd na Gàidhlig welcomes this opportunity to give our view regarding the proposed National Islands Plan. We also recognise the hard work which has been done to bring the proposed National Islands Plan to this stage.

In general, we believe that the 13 Strategic Objectives in the proposed National Islands Plan are the right ones to meet the needs of island communities.

In terms of language and culture, we acknowledge the recognition given in the proposed National Islands Plan under Strategic Objective 11 to this key aspect of life in Scotland’s islands.

However, Bòrd na Gàidhlig is of the view that the key importance of language and culture should be recognised across all 13 of the strategic objectives.

As you would expect, Bòrd na Gàidhlig is particularly keen to see the importance of Gaelic language and culture being normalised across the strategic objectives in the proposed National Islands Plan. The following is our suggestions as to how this could be achieved:

- **Strategic Objective 1:** Population Levels
  
  Additional action recommended:
  
  - Ensure that policies aim to retain and attract Gaelic speakers to live and work in Gaelic speaking island communities and supports greater daily usage of the language.

- **Strategic Objective 2:** Sustainable economic development
  
  Additional actions recommended:
  
  - Ensure that opportunities to grow Gaelic usage are considered as part of sustainable economic development
  
  - Ensure that statutory childcare through the medium of Gaelic is island proofed in support of Gaelic usage and Gaelic education provision.

- **Strategic Objective 3:** Transport
  
  Additional action recommended:
  
  - Ensure that the use of Gaelic is supported and encouraged across the transport network and that Gaelic speakers are employed to deliver this service to the public.
Strategic Objective 4 & 5: Housing and Fuel Poverty

Additional actions recommended: -
  • Ensure that enough affordable and warm housing is built with the aim of retaining and attracting young people to sustain Gaelic speaking communities.
  • Work alongside employers to ensure that housing is developed to support enterprise.

Strategic Objective 6: Digital Connectivity

Additional action recommended: -
  • Ensure that Gaelic speaking communities on islands are at the forefront of future digital connectivity projects in support of Gaelic usage and stable population.

Strategic Objective 7: Health, Social Care and Wellbeing

Additional action recommended: -
  • Ensure that health, social care and wellbeing services through the medium of Gaelic is island proofed to support Gaelic usage.

Strategic Objective 8: Environmental Wellbeing and Biosecurity

Additional action recommended: -
  • Ensure that the link between environment and social and cultural benefits is also portrayed from the Gaelic perspective.

Strategic Objective 9: Climate Change and Energy

Additional action recommended: -
  • Ensure that growth in relation to renewable energy projects benefits the aim of retaining and attracting young people to Gaelic speaking communities.

Strategic Objective 10: Empowered Island Communities and Strong Local Partnership

Additional action recommended: -
  • Ensure that the Gaelic community is encouraged and supported to represent itself through the medium of Gaelic and that their views are heard.

Strategic Objective 11: Arts, Culture and Language
Recommended modifications: -

- Page 53 – The Fèis movement is a Scotland wide initiative and not solely in Skye
- Can the first action point on page 55 be more explicitly linked to the Culture Strategy for Scotland?
- Action Point 5 on page 55. We recommend the following text “We will ensure that the effect on Gaelic language development is considered from the outset in island-specific policies and initiatives and that these link to statutory Gaelic Language Plans”

Strategic Objective 12:
Education

Recommended modifications: -

- Page 56 – Recommend that the sentence “It is vital, in islands where Gaelic is spoken, that Gaelic medium education is promoted and supported in line with the Guidance on Gaelic education...” be changed to “It is vital that Gaelic medium education is promoted and supported in line with the Guidance on Gaelic education...” as the Education Act applies to all local authorities in Scotland.
- Page 58, action point 5. Recommended that this is shortened to “Continue to support and promote Gaelic medium education at all levels.”

Strategic Objective 13:
Implementation

For information: -

- Bòrd na Gàidhlig would like to participate in the island-based focus group workshops proposed
- Bòrd na Gàidhlig would like to be a member of the National Islands Plan Governance Group to ensure that the strategic delivery is compatible with delivery of the National Gaelic Language Plan.