



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Official Report

EDUCATION AND CULTURE COMMITTEE

Tuesday 6 December 2011

Tuesday 6 December 2011

CONTENTS

	Col.
DECISION ON TAKING BUSINESS IN PRIVATE	545
“THE NATIONAL GAELIC LANGUAGE PLAN 2012-17”	546

EDUCATION AND CULTURE COMMITTEE

14th Meeting 2011, Session 4

CONVENER

*Stewart Maxwell (West Scotland) (SNP)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Clare Adamson (Central Scotland) (SNP)

*Marco Biagi (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)

*Jenny Marra (North East Scotland) (Lab)

*Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP)

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD)

*Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

*Jean Urquhart (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)

*attended

THE FOLLOWING ALSO PARTICIPATED:

Iain Aonghas MacAoidh (Bòrd na Gàidhlig)

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Terry Shevlin

LOCATION

Committee Room 2

Scottish Parliament

Education and Culture Committee

Tuesday 6 December 2011

[The Convener opened the meeting at 10:02]

Decision on Taking Business in Private

The Convener (Stewart Maxwell): Good morning, fellow committee members, and welcome to the 14th meeting of the Education and Culture Committee in session 4. I remind members to switch off mobile phones or electronic devices because they interfere with the sound system. We have received apologies from Liam McArthur, who is stuck in Orkney as the airport is closed. It is hoped that it will open some time this morning, but he will not be here in time. As far as we know, Jean Urquhart is travelling at the moment and is on her way, so I hope that she will join us shortly.

The first item of business is to decide whether to take items 3 and 4, and consideration of our draft report on “The National Gaelic Language Plan 2012-17” at a future meeting, in private. Is that agreed?

Members indicated agreement.

The Convener: Thank you.

“The National Gaelic Language Plan 2012-17”

10:03

The Convener: The main business of the morning is oral evidence on the draft of the national Gaelic language plan. I welcome John Angus MacKay, the chief executive of Bòrd na Gàidhlig. Unfortunately, his colleague Arthur Cormack is stuck in Skye this morning, so he cannot join us. I am sure that it will still be a good evidence session, and we are looking forward to it.

I remind members that evidence will be given in Gaelic and headsets are available for members to hear the translation. I ask members to remember to give the translator a brief moment before they rush into further questions.

Mr MacKay, would you like to make any opening remarks or shall we go straight to questions?

Iain Aonghas MacAoidh (Bòrd na Gàidhlig): I will speak in Gaelic after this.

Tapadh leibh airson a’ chothruim tighinn an seo an-diugh. Tha sinn air a bhith a’ dèanamh co-chonaltradh poblach bhon 4 Dàmhair. Tha sinn air cumail 19 coinneamh ann an sgìrean air feadh Alba. Tha sinn air coinneachadh ri comataidh foghlaim COSLA agus tha e air leth feumail dhuinne cothrom fhaighinn às dèidh sin cluinntinn dè th’ aig a’ chomataidh fhèin seo ri ràdh.

Following is the simultaneous interpretation:

Thank you for the opportunity to be here today. We had a public consultation from 4 October and have held 19 meetings in areas throughout Scotland. We have met the education committee of the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, and it will be useful to hear what you have to say. Thank you.

The Convener: Thank you. We begin with a question from Jenny Marra.

Jenny Marra (North East Scotland) (Lab): Good morning, Mr MacKay. I will ask you about the plan’s stated aims on home provision. Will there be sufficient demand among “prospective parents” to pass on Gaelic to any children they might have? Can the necessary practical support be provided in the current financial climate?

Iain Aonghas MacAoidh: Tha dachaighean air leth cudromach dhuinn. Sin an t-adhbhar gu bheil an dachaigh mar a’ chiad roinn leasachaidh a th’ anns a’ phlana. Gu ìre mhòr, ’s e iarrtasan bho phàrantan a tha a’ ciallachadh gu bheil foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig anns a’ bhun-sgoil ri leudachadh oir tha sinne gu math cinnteach far a

bheil cothrom aig pàrantan an clann a chur gu foghlam Gàidhlig gu bheil iad ga iarraidh.

Ach a thaobh dachaighean, tha sinn a' faicinn thairis air na ficheadan bliadhnaichean gu bheil cleachdadh Gàidhlig san dachaigh a' tòiseachadh dol sìos, a chionn 's gun robhas ag ràdh ri pàrantan nach robh feum ann an Gàidhlig. Ach tha sinn a-nis a' faicinn, far a bheil sinn a' cur air dòigh taic do dhachaighean le tadhal air dachaighean, tha na pàrantan a' tighinn air adhart agus ag iarraidh foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig. Tha sinn air sin a dhèanamh ann an caochladh sgìrean. Tha sinn a' cur daoine mun cuairt a bhruidhinn ri pàrantan, a thairgsinn taic dhaibh anns an dachaigh.

Mar eisimpleir, anns na h-Eileanan Siar an-uiridh, chuir sinn air adhart iomairt shònraichte còmhla ri Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, a' bruidhinn ri pàrantan agus gam misneachadh gus tuilleadh a dhèanamh co-cheangailte ri Gàidhlig san dachaigh agus an clann a chur còmhla ri sin gu foghlam Gàidhlig. Chaidh an àireamh chloinne a chaidh a-steach gu foghlam Gàidhlig ri linn sin suas 10 sa cheud air a' bhliadhna seo fhèin air sgàth sin. Tha pàrantan ag iarraidh foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig agus tha iad ag iarraidh taic san dachaigh agus tha againn ri tòrr a bharrachd a dhèanamh airson cur ri sin.

Following is the simultaneous interpretation:

The home is particularly important, which is why it is our first area of choice in the plan. To a great extent, it is because of demand from parents that Gaelic-medium education is provided in schools. Its provision is extending, and we are sure that when parents have the opportunity to send their children to Gaelic-medium education, they will take it.

Over the decades, the use of Gaelic in the home has begun to decline because parents were told that Gaelic was no use. However, now that we are organising support for its use in homes through home visits—in several areas, we have sent people in to talk to parents and to offer them support in the home—the parents concerned have really come on and are looking for Gaelic-medium education.

For example, last year in the Western Isles, we instigated an initiative with Western Isles Council that involved speaking to parents to encourage them to do more with the use of Gaelic in the home and, along with that, to send their children to Gaelic-medium education. As a result, the number of children entering Gaelic-medium education has gone up by 10 per cent this year. Parents want Gaelic-medium education and they want support in the home, and we need to do a lot more to support that.

Clare Adamson (Central Scotland) (SNP):

Could you give us a bit more detail on how the bòrd envisages that a legal entitlement to Gaelic-medium education will work in practice? Have you costed that?

Iain Aonghas MacAoidh: Tha e duilich a' chiad cheist a fhreagairt gus am faigh sinn tuilleadh cothrom còmhraidh ri ministearan agus comhairlean. Tha e soilleir gu bheil pàrantan ag iarraidh barrachd a thaobh misneachd a bhith aca ma tha iad ag iarraidh foghlam Gàidhlig agus ma chuireas iad an clann gu foghlam Gàidhlig gum bi sin a' mairsinn, gun seas e.

Chunnaic sinn, air sgàth cheistean mu dheidhinn ionmhas anns a' bhliadhna a chaidh seachad, suidheachaidhean far an robh na pàrantan fo eagal gun robh iad air faighinn cothrom air foghlam Gàidhlig agus gun robh comhairle a' dol ga stad. Air an adhbhar sin, tha againn ri bruidhinn ann am barrachd doimhneachd ri na ministearan agus ri na comhairlean mu dheidhinn dè an dòigh a thig againn còmhla air còraichean agus misneachd a thoirt dha pàrantan ma tha iad a' cur an clann air adhart gu foghlam Gàidhlig, gun seas sin.

A thaobh cosgaisean, chan eil fios againn aig an ìre seo. Tha fios againn gu bheil foghlam tron Ghàidhlig ann an 60 sgoil ann an Alba. Tha fios againn gu bheil sin a' tachairt air sgàth gu bheil taic aig na comhairlean bho Riaghltais na h-Alba tro thabhartasan sònraichte. Tha sin air cuideachadh leis a' chùis a thoirt air adhart, ach tha sinn cuideachd mothachail bho rannsachadh a rinn Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd an-uiridh, nuair a ruigeas a' chùis ìre àraid chan eil e a' cosg càil a bharrachd foghlam Gàidhlig a thoirt dha leanabh seach foghlam tro mheadhan na Beurla oir tha aig tidsearan ri seasamh air beulaibh chlasaichean, tha aig leabhraichean ri bhith air an cruthachadh agus ma tha iad ga dhèanamh tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig chan eil e a' tachairt tro mheadhan na Beurla. Chan eil prìs againn gu cinnteach air sin aig an ìre seo. Feumaidh sinn sin obrachadh a-mach an dèidh bruidhinn ri comhairle às dèidh comhairle às dèidh comhairle air feadh Alba, a chionn 's, ged is e plana nàiseanta a tha seo, 's ann aig ìre nan comhairlean agus aig ìre nan roinnean sin a bhios e air a libhrigeadh.

Following is the simultaneous interpretation:

It will be difficult to answer your first question until we have had more opportunity to talk to ministers and councils. It is clear that it will give parents greater encouragement to use Gaelic-medium education and to send their children to Gaelic-medium education if that education is sustainable.

In the year that has passed, questions have been asked about finance. There have been

situations in which parents have been afraid that councils were going to put a stop to the chance that they were getting to have Gaelic-medium education. We have to speak in more depth to ministers and councils about that. The best way in which all of us can give parents the right to Gaelic-medium education and the encouragement and confidence to put their children into it is by ensuring that its provision is sustained.

We do not know about the costs at this stage. We know that Gaelic-medium education is provided in 60 schools in Scotland. We also know that that is happening because of the support that the councils have received from the Government through specific grants. That has improved matters, but we are aware from research that was done by Highland Council last year that when the provision reaches a certain level, it does not cost any more to give a child a Gaelic-medium education than it does to give them an English education, because a teacher still has to stand in front of the class and books have to be provided, and if the education is being provided through the Gaelic medium, it is not being provided through the English medium. We do not have a price for provision at that level. We need to work it out after speaking to council after council in Scotland—although the plan is a national one, it will be guided through at the council level and the area level.

Clare Adamson: I will ask about the present provision of Gaelic-medium education. I am a North Lanarkshire councillor. Although North Lanarkshire Council provides Gaelic-medium education, I am concerned about whether the support services are there, especially in relation to partners.

For example, when a child is in Gaelic-medium education, they are not offered translation services with speech therapy, whereas if they had a language other than English at home—Polish or something—a translator would be provided. Are the partners in education on board as much as the local authorities are in that regard?

Iain Aonghas MacAoidh: Tha sinne mothachail air sin agus tha sinn mothachail gu bheil e a' tachairt ann am barrachd air aon chomhairle. Cha robh seirbheisean tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig airson clann ann an suidheachadh dhen t-seòrsa sin air a thairgsinn gu ruige seo agus air an adhbhar sin tha sin anns a' phlana, gum bu chòir coimhead ris a' cheist sin. Feumaidh mi cuideachd a ràdh gu bheil an roinn sa phlana seo co-cheangailte ri foghlam agus ionnsachadh air a sgrìobhadh le Bòrd na Gàidhlig ach le taic bho na comhairlean, bho Luchd-sgrùdaidh na Banrìghe airson Foghlaim, bho fiù 's oifigich bhon Riaghaltas ag obair còmhla rinn agus bho na h-oilthighean. Air an adhbhar sin, tha misneachd

againn gun tèid againn a-rithist air fuasgladh fhaighinn air a' cheist sin ma thèid gabhail ris a' phlana ach chan eil an suidheachadh sin math aig an ìre seo idir.

Following is the simultaneous interpretation:

We are aware of that problem and we are aware that it is happening in more than one council. There are no Gaelic-medium services for children in such situations up to now, and the plan says that the issue ought to be looked at.

The area of the plan connected with education and learning was written by Bòrd na Gàidhlig, with support from the councils, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education, the universities and so on—even Government officers worked with us. We are therefore confident that we can get a solution to the problem if we follow the plan, but the situation is not good at this point.

Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): On the same point, it is my understanding that there is a very ambitious programme to try to double the number of early primary children who speak Gaelic, which I think is laudable. I am a bit concerned about classroom teachers. The point about support needs has been raised, but as I understand it, both the University of Aberdeen and the University of Strathclyde have cut their teacher training courses for Gaelic teachers. Is there not a real problem about where we are going to find the teaching resource?

Iain Aonghas MacAoidh: Is ceist mhath dharribh a-rithist. Tha a' cheist sin ri coimhead ri anns a' gheàrr-ùine agus anns an fhad-ùine. Anns a' chiad dol-a-mach an-dràsta, tha fios againn gu bheil tòrr sgoiltean ann an Alba far a bheil tidsearan Gàidhlig a' teagasg agus tha tòrr chloinne anns na sgoiltean nach eil a' dol a-steach gu foghlam Gàidhlig. Chì sinn gu bheil cothrom àrdachadh nan àireamhan ann an sgoiltean far a bheil Gàidhlig mar-thà dìreach ma thig barrachd phàrantan air adhart a' cur an clann a-steach ann. Cuideachd, air a' bhliadhna seo fhèin tha sinn a' faicinn gu bheil an àireamh as motha de thidsearan ann an trèanadh na bha a-riamh roimhe seo. An ath-bhliadhna bidh mu 18 a' tighinn a-mach airson teagasg bun-sgoile agus seachdnar eile airson teagasg àrd-sgoile air sgàth gu bheil sgeama againn airson taic a thoirt dha oileanaich anns na sgoiltean, anns na h-àrd-sgoiltean agus am brosnachadh gus a dhol a-steach gu teagasg Gàidhlig.

Tha fios againn air an t-suidheachadh anns na colaistean trèanaidh an-dràsta agus tha sinn a' dèanamh rannsachadh còmhla ri na colaistean agus na comhairlean air càite am bi feum air luchd-teagaisg ùra anns na bliadhnaichean a tha romhainn gus coileanadh an amas seo. Tha sinn a' coimhead ri dè an dòigh as fheàrr air tidsearan

a thrèanadh às ùr airson sin. Ged a tha cùisean mar a bha iad le na colaistean sin a' tòiseachadh a thaobh crìonadh air falbh, tha sinn a' coimhead ri siostam ùr a chruthachadh oir tha sinn mothachail air an dearbh cheist sin. Tha e a' tighinn aig droch àm, ann an dòigh, gu bheil na colaistean a' gearradh air ais—chan eil iad a' sgur de na cùrsaichean gu tur ach tha iad a' gearradh air ais—ach feumaidh sinn coimhead às ùr aig ciamar a ghabhas sin a dhèanamh. Mar eisimpleir, tha Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd agus nan Eilean—UHI—air a bhith ag obrachadh còmhla ri na colaistean agus na h-oilthighean shìos ann an Obar Dheathain, Glaschu agus Dùn Èideann agus a' coimhead ri ciamar as urrainn dhaibh barrachd chothroman trèanadh a thoirt dha tidsearan aig an dachaigh fhèin no gun falbh a-mach às a' Ghàidhealtachd. Tha sin air feum a dhèanamh mar-thà agus tha sinn a' coimhead air adhart ri barrachd dhen sin a dhèanamh.

Following is the simultaneous interpretation:

That is another very good question, and one which has to be looked at in two ways: in the interim and over the long term. At the moment, we know that there are lots of schools in Scotland where Gaelic teachers are teaching but where a lot of children are not going into Gaelic-medium education. We can raise the numbers in schools where there is Gaelic already if more parents send their children into Gaelic-medium education. We have seen more teachers in training this year than ever before. Next year, about 18 will come out of primary school teacher training and seven will come out of secondary school teacher training, because of our scheme to give support to students in schools and to encourage them to go into Gaelic teaching.

We are aware of the situation in training colleges and we are doing research, along with colleges and councils, into where the need will be for new teaching staff in order to fulfil our aim. We are looking afresh at the best way to train teachers in order to do that. Although things were like that with the colleges—there was a decline—we are looking to create a new system because we are very aware of the problem. It comes at a bad time, in a way, because colleges are cutting back, but we need to look afresh at training. For example, the University of the Highlands and Islands is working with colleges and universities in Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow, looking at how they can give more training opportunities to teachers in their own homes, without having to leave the Highlands. That has been a great approach, and we are looking to do more of it.

Liz Smith: Thank you. I am interested that you mention UHI. Perhaps I missed something, but I could not see much mention of UHI in the plan. I would have thought that the new university was

very well placed to help to address the problem. Is there a strategic plan for how UHI can deliver in Gaelic-speaking communities?

10:15

Iain Aonghas MacAoidh: Tha sinn ag obair air. Nuair a chaidh am plana a sgrìobhadh, cha robh naidheachd mu dheidhinn Oilthigh Obar Dheathain agus Oilthigh Shrath Chluaidh air tòiseachadh a' tighinn troimhe. Bhon uair sin, tha UHI air tòiseachadh a' còmhla riinne agus ri colaistean eile mun deidhinn fhèin cluich pàirt nas motha anns a' ghnothaich seo. Ach tha Oilthigh Obar Dheathain agus Oilthigh Shrath Chluaidh air a ràdh rinne gu bheil iad ag iarraidh cruthachadh meadhan ùr airson trèanadh luchd-teagaisg Gàidhlig far am bi sàr-mhathas aig teis-meadhain sin, agus còmhla ri sin far am bithist, ag obrachadh còmhla ri tuilleadh taic a thoirt dha tidsearan nuair a tha iad air an trèanadh airson iad fhèin a thoirt air adhart.

Following is the simultaneous interpretation:

We are working on that. When the draft plan was written, the news from the University of Aberdeen and the University of Strathclyde had not come through. Since then, not only has UHI started talking to us and other colleges about playing a greater part but Aberdeen and Strathclyde have told us that they wish to create a new medium for training teachers in Gaelic with excellence at its very heart and that they will work on giving on more support to teachers who have been trained to allow them to progress.

Liz Smith: That is interesting. I am in no sense an expert on this but if there has been any criticism of the plan it is perhaps that not enough time has been spent on ensuring that Gaelic-speaking communities are given help in the education process. I would have thought that, with its 13 component parts, UHI would have been extremely well placed to help in that respect. What timescale do you have for your discussions with UHI to get that work up and running, giving your communities every possible chance of success in a relatively short time?

Iain Aonghas MacAoidh: Bhithinnsa an dòchas gum bithear air obrachadh seo troimhe còmhla ris a' UHI, Oilthigh Shrath Chluaidh agus Oilthigh Obar Dheathain. Tha Oilthigh Dhùn Èideann air a thighinn thugainn cuideachd ag iarraidh e fhèin gabhail pàirt ann an trèanadh thidsearan. Bhithinnsa an dòchas gum biodh sin air obrachadh troimhe ann an dòigh airson freagairt a bhith air a' cheist sin airson an fhoghair an ath-bhliadhna. Tha gu leòr thidsearan againn an-dràsta agus bidh 25 a' tighinn a-mach an ath-bhliadhna, ach às dèidh sin feumaidh an siostam a bhith nas treasa, nas cinntiche. Tha sinn a'

tuigsinn a-nis gu bheil Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd agus nan Eilean ag iarraidh pàirt nas motha a chluich ann an sin. Ach tha sin cuideachd a' dol a chiallachadh gum feum e barrachd taic-airgid airson sin a dhèanamh. Tha againn ris an sin obrachadh a-mach còmhla ri Comhairle Moineachaidh na h-Alba.

Following is the simultaneous interpretation:

I hope that this will be worked through with UHI, the University of Strathclyde and the University of Aberdeen. Indeed, the University of Edinburgh has also approached us, because it wants to be involved in teacher training. I hope that there will be an answer to your question by autumn next year. We have enough teachers for the moment and for next year, when there will be 25 coming out, but after that we will need a stronger system that provides more certainty. We understand that UHI wishes to play a bigger part in that, but that means that UHI itself will need more funding support. That matter will have to be worked out with the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council.

Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP): My questions are also on teaching. First, has the expansion of Gaelic broadcasting put pressure on the number of young people going into teaching? Secondly, given the shortage of certain specialist teachers teaching in English—for example, physics and mathematics teachers—are you having a problem finding specialist teachers in those areas who also teach in Gaelic?

Iain Aonghas MacAoidh: Air a' chiad cheist, bha teagamh aig daoine nuair a chaidh craoladh a leudachadh 's bha ceist air daoine an dùil an robh sin a' ciallachadh gun robh daoine a' dol a-steach airson craoladh an àite a dhol airson teagasg ach chan eil sinn a' faicinn fianais air sin idir. Tha daoine ann a tha ag iarraidh a bhith nan craoladairean nach deigheadh a theagasg co-dhiù 's tha daoine ann a thèid a theagasg nach urrainn a dhol an sàs ann an craoladh. Mar a tha na h-àireamhan air a thighinn air adhart, tha sin air cothromachadh. Tha sinn a' faicinn barrachd a-nis a' cur a-steach airson teagasg na tha a' dol a-steach dhan t-siostam craolaidh a chionn 's nach urrainn dhuinn ach àireamh àraid de luchd-craolaidh a bhith againn anns an t-suidheachadh anns a' bheil sinn.

Air an dàrna ceist, tha fhathast tòrr obair ri dhèanamh airson dèanamh cinnteach gun urrainn leudachadh foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig san àrd-sgoil. Tha tidsearan a th' anns an àrd-sgoil a chaidh an trèanadh mus do thòisich foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig a leudachadh san àrd-sgoil caran cion mhisneachail mu dheidhinn a bhith a' teagasg tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig ann an cuspairean dhen t-seòrsa sin. Ged nach robh iad air an trèanadh airson sin a

dhèanamh, tha sinn air faicinn gu misneachail, far a bheil tidsearan air an oidhirp a dhèanamh, gu h-àraid ann am matamataig, gu bheil iad a' dèanamh fìor mhath.

Seach nach eil mi air rannsachadh a dhèanamh air, tha e duilich an-dràsta dhòmhsa tuigsinn buileach carson a tha sin ach tha e co-cheangailte gu ìre ris na buannachdan a th' ann an cois dà-chànanas. Ma tha thu a' smaointeachadh ann an dà chànan, tha agad ri obrachadh nas cruaidhe le d' eanchainn agus gu sònraichte ma tha thu ag obair le rudeigin mar matamataig. Tha aig tidsearan ri mìneachadh ann an dòigh a tha gu math cinnteach dè tha iad a' ciallachadh. An àite a bhith a' cleachdadh mar a chanadh tu ann am Beurla nadar de 'jargon', nan cleachdadh tu am briathrachas àbhaisteach a bhiodh tu a' cleachdadh, agus mar sin tha agad ri mìneachadh dè tha thu a' ciallachadh. Tha sin ga dhèanamh nas fhasa dhan chlann tuigsinn aig a' cheann thall 's tha iad a' dèanamh nas fheàrr air sgàth sin.

Feumaidh mi a ràdh cuideachd, tha fianais againn far a bheil a' chlann a tha a' dol tro fhoghlam Gàidhlig a' dèanamh nas fheàrr ann am Beurla. Tha buannachdan ann a bhith an sàs ann am foghlam dà-chànanach a dh'fheumas sinn grèimeachadh ris ann an dòigh nas fheàrr na tha sinn a' dèanamh gu ruige seo. Ach tha tòrr obair ri dhèanamh, mar a thuirt sibh, air cuspairean sònraichte mar sin.

Following is the simultaneous interpretation:

On your first question, when broadcasting provision was extended, questions were raised as to whether people would go into broadcasting instead of teaching. However, we have no evidence that that has happened. There are those who wish to be broadcasters and would not go into teaching anyway; likewise, some of those who go into teaching do not feel able to go into broadcasting. As the numbers have risen, the situation has balanced out and now more people are applying to become teachers than are going into broadcasting. Indeed, there can be only a certain number of broadcasters.

As for your second question, more work has to be done to extend secondary Gaelic-medium education. Secondary school teachers who were trained before Gaelic-medium education started probably lack the confidence to teach such subjects in Gaelic. However, we have noticed that teachers who have made the effort, particularly those teaching mathematics, are doing really well. I have not researched the matter, so it is difficult for me to say why that should be but I think that it is connected with the benefits of bilingualism. If you are thinking in two languages, your brain has to work more; mathematics teachers, in particular, have to explain things in very particular and minute terms and cannot use jargon. The children

find that approach easier to understand and, indeed, are doing better as a result.

We have evidence that children who go through Gaelic-medium education do better in English. There are benefits in being involved in Gaelic or bilingual education that we need to grasp much more than we have done. However, as you said, there is a lot of work to be done with specific subjects.

The Convener: I have a question about the wider aspect of the plan. Clearly, the plan requires local authorities to provide opportunities for the public to access local services and be able to do their business in Gaelic. What are the practical implications of that for the wider community? Has any analysis been done of the cost implications of making services in Gaelic more widely available?

Iain Aonghas MacAoidh: Anns a' chiad dol-a-mach, feumaidh sinn tuigsinn nach robh cothrom aig coimhearsnachdan Gàidhlig gu ruige seo Gàidhlig a chleachdadh ann a bhith a' dèiligeadh ri comhairlean no ri seirbheisean slàinte no mar sin, oir cha robh mòran cothrom ann co-dhiù. 'S e an t-eòlas a th' agam agus gu leòr eile a chaidh a thogail ann an coimhearsnachdan Gàidhlig air a' chùis, 's e aon uair 's gum fàgadh tu a' choimhearsnachd 's nuair a dheigheadh tu a-steach gu suidheachadh foirmeil—biodh e ann an dèiligeadh ri comhairle no dèiligeadh ri seirbheis slàinte no càil dhen t-seòrsa sin—gu ìre mhòr, 's e a' Bheurla a bhathas a' sùileachadh a bhiodh tu a' cleachdadh, fiù 's ged a bhiodh tu nas fhileanta sa Ghàidhlig na tha thu anns a' Bheurla. Ach tha sin a-nis a' tòiseachadh a dh'atharrachadh a chionn 's gu bheil na comhairlean agus buidhnean poblach eile a' dèanamh planaichean Gàidhlig. Tha sin reachdail fon Achd na Gàidhlig (Alba) 2005.

Tha sin a' ciallachadh, mean air mhean, gun atharraich daoine an dòigh obrach aca agus gun toir iad spèis an toiseachd dhan chànan le nochdadh gu bheil cothrom aig daoine Gàidhlig a chleachdadh ann an caochladh suidheachaidhean. Chan eil sin a' ciallachadh gu bheil thu a' sùileachadh gu bheil a h-uile neach aig Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd, Comhairle Baile Ghlaschu no Comhairle Baile Dhùn Èideann a' bruidhinn Gàidhlig. Ach tha thu ag iarraidh sa chiad dol-a-mach gu bheil cothroman am broinn nam buidhnean sin airson daoine cleachdadh Gàidhlig, agus ma tha gun tèid an cothrom sin a thoirt dha daoine.

Tha sinn air faighinn a-mach le bhith a' dèanamh rannsachadh air seo, gu bheil barrachd dhaoine a bhruidhneas Gàidhlig ag obair ann an cuid de chomhairlean agus ann an suidheachaidhean eile na bha dùil againn. Ach cha deach a-riamh faighneachd dhaibh an robh iad deònach bruidhinn ris a' mhòr-shluagh ann an

Gàidhlig. Tha seo co-cheangailte ri co-ionannachd spèis, rud a tha an achd ag ràdh bu chòir dhuinn a bhith ag obrachadh thuige, gum bu chòir dhan Ghàidhlig faighinn co-ionannachd spèis ris a' Bheurla anns a h-uile suidheachadh far an gabh sin a dhèanamh.

Chan eil cosgais mhòr ann a chionn 's, ma tha thu a' dèanamh seo mean air mhean, tha thu a' toirt cothrom dha daoine Gàidhlig ionnsachadh gu ìre, bruidhinn ri daoine air a' fòn ann an Gàidhlig gu ìre, gun ìre as urrainn dhaibh. Tha cuid de dhaoine ann as urrainn cumail còmhraidh a' dol air a' fòn fad na tìde, agus ann an suidheachaidhean eile tha daoine ag ionnsachadh na Gàidhlig le taic bho Bhòrd na Gàidhlig is buidhnean eile, agus tha sinn a' faicinn gu bheil sin a' dèanamh feum aig cosgais bheag.

Mar eisimpleir, tha timcheall air 50 neach ann an Inbhir Nis ag obair dha Coimisean nan Croitearan, dha Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba agus dha Coimisean na Coilltearachd ag ionnsachadh Gàidhlig anns an àite-obrach agus a' tòiseachadh ga chleachdadh. Tha sinn a' faighinn fianais gu bheil sin na bhuannachd dhan bhuidheann fhèin a chionn 's gu bheil tuigse nas fheàrr aca air an obair a tha iad a' dèanamh air a' Ghàidhealtachd agus ann an sgìrean eile ann an Alba agus cuideachd gu bheil iad a' faighinn toileachas à bhith ag ionnsachadh rudeigin ùr agus mòran spòrs aca ann a bhith a' bruidhinn Gàidhlig ri chèile agus a' feuchainn seo a-mach. Tha sin againn mar fhianais bho na daoine sin fhèin. Chan eil mi a' smaointeachadh gur e rud uabhasach fhèin cosgail a th' ann, ach tha mi a' smaointeachadh gur e rud a tha buannachdail a rèir a' chosgais a thathas a' cur ann.

Following is the simultaneous interpretation:

In the first instance, we need to understand that Gaelic communities have not had many opportunities until now to use Gaelic in dealing with councils, health services or whatever. My experience is like that of a lot of others who were brought up in Gaelic communities: it was not expected that Gaelic would be used to a great extent in formal dealings with councils, health services and so on, even if someone was more fluent in Gaelic than in English. However, that situation is beginning to change because councils and other public bodies are creating their own Gaelic plans in accordance with the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005. I believe that people will gradually change their way of working and that they will respect the Gaelic language.

There are opportunities for people to use Gaelic in certain situations, but that does not mean that, for example, everybody in Western Isles Council, Highland Council, Glasgow City Council or the City of Edinburgh Council speaks Gaelic. However, we wish to see opportunities for using Gaelic in such

organisations and want such opportunities to be given to people if they do not exist at present. We have found from our research that more people in councils and other organisations can speak Gaelic than we thought but they were never asked whether they were willing to speak to the public in Gaelic. That is connected to the issue of equality of respect, which the legislation says we must work towards; in every situation where Gaelic can be used, it should have the same respect as English.

The costs are not great. If we introduce the use of Gaelic bit by bit, we give people the opportunity to learn Gaelic to a level at which, for example, they can speak to people in Gaelic on the phone. Some people can keep a Gaelic conversation going all the time. However, other people are learning Gaelic with support from Bòrd na Gàidhlig and other organisations. We regard that as doing a lot of good at little cost. There are about 50 people in Inverness working for the Crofters Commission, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Forestry Commission who are learning Gaelic in their workplace and are beginning to use it.

The evidence that we are acquiring is that that is of benefit to the organisations because there is greater understanding of the work that they are doing in the Highlands and in other areas of Scotland, and people are getting pleasure from learning something new and are enjoying trying to speak Gaelic to one another. The people themselves provided that evidence. I repeat that it is not costly to do such work.

The Convener: Is the strategy then to push forward in areas of business that are more associated with Gaelic-speaking areas? You gave the example of forestry. Some industries operate more in Gaelic-speaking areas than in other areas or certainly are the predominant industries in the those parts of Scotland. Do you expect to push forward much faster in such industries and businesses than in those in other parts of the country?

Iain Aonghas MacAoidh: Tha againn ann an stiùireadh dha na buidhnean poblach agus stèidhichte air an achd, gu bheil againn ri coimhead ri diofar sgìrean agus measadh a dhèanamh air an ìre gu bheileas a' bruidhinn na Gàidhlig gu nàdarrach anns an sgìre agus an uair sin na cothroman a tha co-cheangailte ri seo a chomharrachadh mar sin. Mar eisimpleir, bhiodh tu a' sùileachadh barrachd bho Chomhairle nan Eilean Siar far a bheil 66 sa cheud a' bruidhinn na Gàidhlig gu làitheil seach a bhiodh tu a' sùileachadh bho Chomhairle Dhùn Phris is Gall-Ghàidhealaibh, agus bhiodh tu a' sùileachadh barrachd can bho Chomhairle Earra-Ghàidheal na bhiodh tu a' sùileachadh bho Chomhairle Siorrachd Lannraig a Tuath. Tha againn dìreach ri

obrachadh sin a-mach a rèir 's mar a tha a' chùis anns na sgìrean sin fhèin, agus tòiseachadh le ge brith dè a' bhunait a tha freagarrach agus mean air mhean obrachadh suas ann an dòigh a tha ciallach.

Ach, feumaidh mi a ràdh, thàinig barrachd a-mach nuair a bha sinn aig coinneamh phoblach ann an Dùn Phris na thàinig a-mach ann an àiteachan eile ann an Alba. Agus chaidh a' phuuing a dhèanamh rinn gun robh e annasach nuair a thigeadh tu a-steach gu Crìochan Alba gum faiceadh tu soidhne ann an Gàidhlig ag ràdh "Fàilte gu Alba" ach nach fhaiceadh tu soidhne Gàidhlig tuilleadh gus an ruigeadh tu Glaschu. Tha daoine ag ràdh rudan dhen t-seòrsa sin rinn. Chan e sinne a tha ga ràdh; 's e daoine a tha ag ràdh rinn gu bheil iad ag iarraidh barrachd dhen seo.

Following is the simultaneous interpretation:

We have guidance for public bodies based on the 2005 act. We have to appraise the level at which Gaelic is spoken in different areas. The opportunities connected with that should then be identified. For instance, we would be looking for more from Western Isles Council, where 66 per cent speak Gaelic every day, than from Dumfries and Galloway Council, and we would expect more from Argyll and Bute Council than from North Lanarkshire Council. We have to work things out according to the situation in those areas. We have to begin with whatever level is suitable and work upwards bit by bit.

More people came along our public meeting in Dumfries than came to other meetings in Scotland. The point was made that it was strange that when you go into the Scottish Borders there is a sign saying "Welcome to Scotland" in Gaelic, but you do not see another Gaelic sign until you reach Glasgow. People are telling us such things. We are not saying these things; people are saying that they want more.

The Convener: You are talking, quite rightly, about different council areas, and you have been talking mostly about public bodies and local authorities. I understand how the plan relates to them, but I want to widen things out slightly. How do you engage with the wider business community? There is a lot of private enterprise in Gaelic-speaking areas; indeed, a lot of people engage with many businesses across the country. What encouragement can you give private businesses to get involved in the same process that local authorities and other public bodies are involved in?

Iain Aonghas MacAoidh: Tha sin inntinneach agus tha sinn nas misneachaile mu dheidhinn am-bliadhna na bha sinn o chionn ceithir bliadhna, a chionn 's gun deach tòiseachadh, air a' Ghàidhealtachd an toiseach, a' bruidhinn ri

gnìomhachasan priobhaideach agus a' faighneachd dhaibh an robh iad ag iarraidh barrachd Gàidhlig a chur air soidhnicean am broinn nan togalaichean aca fhèin, mar eisimpleir. Sin buidhnean turasachd, taighean-òsta 's mar sin air adhart. Ann an ceithir no còig bliadhnaichean, tha mu 140 companaidh priobhaideach air an cothrom seo a ghabhail agus tha iad air taic fhaighinn airson nan soidhnicean a chur suas. Tha iad ag ràdh gu bheil sin a' toirt rudeigin a bharrachd 's rudeigin eadar-dhealaichte dhaibh agus dha na daoine a tha a' tighinn a-steach an doras. Tha luchd-turais a' bruidhinn mu dheidhinn agus tha sin a' toirt dhuinn misneachd gum feum sinn seo a dhèanamh ann an àiteachan eile ann an Alba cuideachd, agus gu h-àraid far a bheil e na bhuannachd dha fèin-aithne Alba ann an sùilean luchd-turais 's mar sin air adhart. Ach cuideachd airson togail faireachdainn a th' aig daoine mu dheidhinn na dùthcha aca fhèin.

Air an adhbhar sin, chuir sinn raon sònraichte co-cheangailte ris an àite-obrach dhan phlana agus bidh sinn a' coimhead ri sin. Mar eisimpleir, chaidh ceist a thogail dhuinn ann an Dùn Èideann ann an seo fhèin. Tha fios agaibh gu bheil sgoil Ghàidhlig gu bhith air a fosgladh ann an Lite am broinn dà bhliadhna, agus tha a' choimhearsnachd co-cheangailte ri sin a' faighneachd dhuinn am b' urrainn dhuinn taic a thoirt airson bruidhinn ri gnìomhachasan mun cuairt air an sgoil sin airson soidhnicean Gàidhlig agus cothrom ionnsachaidh a thoirt dhan luchd-obrach, gus ma bhios a' chlann a-mach 's a-steach às na bùithtean mar sin gum faigh iad beagan cothrom bruidhinn ann an Gàidhlig timcheall na sgoile fhèin. Tha sin a' ciallachadh togail coimhearsnachd timcheall air an sgoil agus tha seo an teis-mheadhan a' phlana, gu bheil coimhearsnachd, àite-obrach, foghlam is an dachaigh ag obrachadh còmhla.

Following is the simultaneous interpretation:

That is an interesting question. We are much more confident about that this year than we were four years ago, because we have started, in the Highlands to begin with, talking to private businesses and asking them whether they want more Gaelic on signs inside their own buildings. I am talking about tourism businesses and hotels. In the past four years, something like 140 private companies have taken that opportunity. They have been given support to erect the signs and they are saying that it brings something extra and something different to the people who come in the door. Tourists are talking about it, which gives us confidence that we need to do it in other places in Scotland as well, especially where it is of benefit to the identity of Scotland and tourism and so on and where it raises the feelings that people have about their own country.

For that reason, we put the workplace in the plan. For example, we know that in Edinburgh a Gaelic school will be opened within two years. The community connected with that is asking us whether we can give support by speaking to businesses around that school about erecting Gaelic signs and providing the workforce with an opportunity to learn. If children going in and out of the shops round about see the Gaelic signs, that will build a community around the school. It is at the very centre of the plan that education and the community work together.

The Convener: Thank you very much. I know that Joan McAlpine had a question on workplaces, which you have started to address. I am sure that she has other questions, as well.

Joan McAlpine: Could you give us more details about the investors in Gaelic scheme, which you will start in 2013-14?

10:30

Iain Aonghas MacAoidh: 'S e beachd ùr a th' ann. Tha fios againn air an sgeama a th' ann air a bheil investors in people—creideas nar cosnaichean. Tha sinn a' faireachdainn gum bu chòir dhuinn coimhead ri misneachadh bhuidhnean gus a bhith a' dèanamh an t-seòrsa rud a tha sinn air a bhith a' bruidhinn mu dheidhinn an-dràsta: a' cur tuilleadh soidhnicean Gàidhlig a-steach dha na buidhnean aca; cothrom a thoirt dhan luchd-obrach aca Gàidhlig ionnsachadh; agus cothrom a thoirt a cleachdadh. Bidh sinn a' dèanamh sin caran anns an dòigh 's a chaidh an sgeama investors in people a chur air dòigh. Bidh sinn a' toirt taic dha buidhnean ach le slatan-tomhais a chruthachadh air dè bhiodh tu a' sùileachadh—bhiodh tu a' sùileachadh soidhne fàilte agus gum biodh e comasach dha cuideigin ag obair anns a' bhuidhinn a ràdh madainn mhath,feasgar math agus mar sin air adhart—a rèir 's dè an ìre aig a bheil iad a' tòiseachadh.

An uair sin, rè bhliadhnaichean, bhiodh tu ann an suidheachadh far gum biodh soidhne dhen t-seòrsa sin anns a' bhuidhinn a' sealltainn gu bheil daoine air an oidhirp a dhèanamh. Oir 's e fear dhe na trioblaidean a th' againn gu bheil luchd-ionnsachaidh na Gàidhlig, mar eisimpleir, ag ràdh rinn gu bheil iad glè thrì ann an suidheachaidhean ann am bailtean mar seo fhèin agus nach eil fios aca, nuair a thèid iad a-steach do bhùth no thig iad a-steach a dh'àite eile, a bheil Gàidhlig aig duine a-staigh an sin no nach eil. Mar sin, tha sinne an dòchas le bhith a' cruthachadh sgeama dhen t-seòrsa sin gu bheil e a' toirt brosnachadh dha buidhnean, bùithtean agus taighean-òsta nochdadh gu bheil iad fhèin a' toirt taic dhan Ghàidhlig agus sinne a' toirt dhaibh duais air choreigin airson sin fhoillseachadh.

'S e gnothaich ùr a th' ann. Tha mar-thà coimhearsnachd na Gàidhlig againn mar sgeama far a bheil sinn a' toirt brosnachadh dha coimhearsnachdan, gu h-àraid air a' Ghàidhealtachd, cur air adhart iad fhèin mar choimhearsnachd Ghàidhlig na bliadhna agus a' sealltainn dhuinn dè na rudan a rinn iad gu sònraichte airson Gàidhlig a thoirt air adhart. Agus tha sin air soirbheachadh. Bhiodh sinn an dùil togail air seòrsa sgeama sin leis an tè seo.

Following is the simultaneous interpretation:

The investors in Gaelic scheme is a new idea. We know about the investors in people scheme, and we feel that we should be encouraging organisations to do what we have been talking about—to erect more signs in their buildings and give their workforces more opportunities to learn and use Gaelic. We will do that in the same way as the investors in people scheme works—through giving people support, and through criteria about what is expected and what people should be competent at doing according to the level at which they start. Over the years, we would provide signs for organisations that would show that people had made the effort.

One of our problems is that learners of Gaelic say to us that often they do not know, when they go into shops or other places in cities, whether anyone in them speaks Gaelic. We hope that the creation of an investors in Gaelic scheme will encourage organisations, shops, hotels and so on to show that they are supporting the language, and we will give them an award for doing that. As I said, it is a new idea. The Gaelic community already has a scheme that encourages communities, especially in the Highlands, to put themselves forward as the Gaelic community of the year and to show what specifically they have done for Gaelic during the year. We expect to build on that scheme.

Joan McAlpine: Has any research been done on the effect of signage in Gaelic? Obviously, we have seen an increase in such signage in the past few years. Does any research show that it has increased interest in Gaelic and encouraged more people to learn it?

Iain Aonghas MacAoidh: An aon rannsachadh a chaidh a dhèanamh aig an ìre seo, 's e rannsachadh a chaidh a dhèanamh air an sgeama a dh'ainmich mi nas tràithe—Gàidhlig dha gnìomhachasan—far an robh 140 buidheann gnìomhachais air gabhail an cothrom soidhnichean Gàidhlig a chur suas. Bha a' mhòr-chuid aca ag ràdh gun robh e air diofar mòr a dhèanamh dhan bhuidheann aca, gun robh iad toilichte gun d' rinn iad e agus gun robh seo a' ciallachadh, leis a' bhuannachd a chunnaic iad a' tighinn às, gun robh iad a-nis a' bruidhinn mu dheidhinn cothroman ionnsachaidh a thoirt dha na

daoine a tha ag obair dhaibh. Ach cha deach rannsachadh mòr a dhèanamh air na soidhnichean a tha air an dol suas ann an àiteachan poblach aig an ìre seo.

Following is the simultaneous interpretation:

The only research that has been done was on the scheme that was mentioned earlier. The majority of the 140 businesses that had erected Gaelic signs said that it had made a great difference to their organisations and that they were happy that they had erected them. Among the benefits that they spoke of seeing from that was that they were giving learning opportunities to their workforce. However, no significant research has been done on signs that have been erected in public places.

The Convener: I would like to follow up on that. Obviously, you plan to introduce the scheme in the next year or two. What engagement have you had so far with employer organisations or the trade unions, for example? If you have had any communication with them, how enthusiastic are they to get involved in the scheme?

Iain Aonghas MacAoidh: Tha sinn air a bhith a' bruidhinn ris an STUC a chionn 's gu bheil sinn mothachail gu bheil againn ri bhith mothachail air còraichean luchd-obrach. Ma tha thu a' bruidhinn mu dheidhinn cuid de dhreuchdan, bu chòir dhaibh a bhith air am meas riatanach no air am meas cudromach dhan Ghàidhlig, ach chan eil sinn air a' chòrr a dhèanamh ach sin a chionn 's, gu ruige seo, 's ann air na seirbheisean poblach, air foghlam agus air coimhearsnachdan as motha a tha an aire air a bhith a thaobh leasachadh na Gàidhlig. Ach, mar a thuirt mi, tha am plana seo a' sealltainn gu bheil ùidh againn a-nis ann an seo a leudachadh a-mach, agus bhiodh an STUC, CBI 's buidhnean dhen t-seòrsa sin againn anns an amharc airson bruidhinn riuthasan 's obrachadh rudan suas còmhla riuthasan anns na bliadhnaichean a tha romhainn.

Following is the simultaneous interpretation:

We have been talking to the Scottish Trades Union Congress, because we know that we need to be aware of the rights of the workforce. Some posts should be appraised as being necessary or important to Gaelic, but we have not done any more on that because until now we have, in relation to development of Gaelic, concentrated on public services, education and communities. As I said, the plan shows that we now have an interest in other areas. We hope to speak to and work out matters with the STUC, the Confederation of British Industry and other groups in the years ahead.

The Convener: You referred to your plan to put up signage in workplaces to show that they have tried hard to be involved, and you said that it will

be a bit like the investors in people awards. Hotels and bars have signs that say that French, German or Italian are spoken in them. Do you hope that organisations and businesses in Gaelic-speaking areas and elsewhere in Scotland will add Gaelic to that list?

Iain Aonghas MacAoidh: Ma tha e fìor gu bheil Gàidhlig air a bruidhinn san àite sin, bhiodh e ciallach dhuinn tòiseachadh a dh'obrachadh gu ruige sin. Chan eil teagamh sam bith. Nuair a smaoinicheas sibh air, tha grunn chomhairlean ann an Alba—Comhairle Siorrachd Lannraig a Tuath, Comhairle Siorrachd Lannraig a Deas, Comhairle Siorrachd Àir an Ear agus mar sin air adhart—far a bheil sgoiltean Gàidhlig mar a th' ann an Dùn Èideann, agus chanadh tu gum biodh e ciallach Gàidhlig fhaicinn a' nochdadh ann an sgìrean dhen t-seòrsa sin co-dhiù, ann an taighean-òsta agus àiteachan eile, oir bhiodh na daoine òga a tha a' tighinn tron t-siostam a tha sin a' coimhead airson dearbhadh gu bheil iad ann an suidheachadh far a bheileas a' cur luach 's a' cur meas ann an cànan a tha iad fhèin air ionnsachadh anns an sgoil.

Tha fios agamsa gu pearsanta, a chionn 's gun robh mi ag obair aig Bòrd Leasachaidh na Gàidhealtachd agus nan Eilean, gu bheil soidhnichean Gàidhlig ann an taighean-òsta 's àiteachan dhen t-seòrsa sin a' dèanamh diofar dha-rìribh dha luchd-turais a tha a' tighinn a-steach dhan dùthaich air an dàrna làimh ach a' toirt misneachd dha daoine a tha a' bruidhinn Gàidhlig no dha daoine aig a bheil ùidh ann an Gàidhlig cuideachd. Agus tha fios againn bho rannsachadh a rinn Riaghaltas na h-Alba ann seo fhèin an-uiridh gu bheil còrr agus 80 sa cheud de shluagh na h-Alba ag iarraidh daingneachadh ann an aithne na Gàidhlig ann an Alba, agus 's e bhith faicsinneach anns a h-uile h-àite a ghabhas fear dhe na dòighean as fheàrr air sin a dhèanamh. Ma tha cothrom aig daoine bruidhinn ann am Fraingis no ann an Gearmailtis no a' toirt spèis do is a' cur luach air na cànanan sin ann an Alba, chanadh tu gum biodh e nàdarrach gu leòr gum biodh cànan Gàidhlig a bhuineas dha Alba air a mheas san aon dòigh agus gum biodh co-ionannachd spèis aig Gàidhlig, chan e a-mhàin ri Beurla ach ri cànanan Eòrpach eile.

Following is the simultaneous interpretation:

If it is true that Gaelic is spoken in those places, we would start working on that. When you think about it, a number of councils in Scotland as well as Edinburgh—North Lanarkshire Council, South Lanarkshire Council, Ayrshire Council and so on—have Gaelic schools, so it would be sensible to see Gaelic appearing in those areas' hotels and other places. Young people who are coming through those systems will look for confirmation that they are in a place where Gaelic is respected.

I worked at the then Highlands and Islands Development Board, and I know that Gaelic signs in hotels and other such places not only make a difference to tourists who come into the country, but give confidence to people who speak Gaelic and who are interested in it. We know from research that the Scottish Government undertook last year that more than 80 per cent of the people of Scotland want confirmation of the identity of Gaelic in Scotland; making it visible in places is one of the best ways of doing that. If people have the opportunity to speak other languages—French, German and so on—and respect is shown to those languages in Scotland, it is natural to expect that the Gaelic language, which belongs to Scotland, should be seen in the same way and shown the same respect as other European languages.

Joan McAlpine: You cite the Scottish Government survey of the interest in Gaelic among the wider Scottish public. Have you been working closely on the new strand of Scottish studies for the curriculum in order to introduce more Gaelic to people who might not have the opportunity to have Gaelic-medium education but who would like to learn more about the language?

Iain Aonghas MacAoidh: Tha an cathraiche againn nach robh an seo an-diugh air a bhith an sàs anns na còmhraidhean sin còmhla ri oifigearan an Riaghaltais. Tha sinn a' faicinn sin gu math cudromach. Bha 90 sa cheud, mas math mo chuimhne, dhe na daoine a fhreagair an rannsachadh sin aig an Riaghaltas ag ràdh gum bu chòir dha rud ùr a bhith anns a' churraicealam co-cheangailte ri tuigsinn mu dheidhinn na h-Alba. Tha fios againn gu bheil feum air rudan co-cheangailte ri Gàidhlig a bhith air a chur a-steach an sin cuideachd, agus tha sinn a' bruidhinn ris an Riaghaltas mu dheidhinn sin, aig ìre a' chathraiche againn a bhith an sàs ann.

Following is the simultaneous interpretation:

Our chairman, who is not here today, has been involved in talks with Scottish Government officials who also see that as being necessary. If I remember rightly, 90 per cent of those who responded to the Government's survey said that there ought in the curriculum to be a new subject connected with Scotland, and we know that some things about Gaelic need to be included in that. We are involved in that work at the level of our chairman.

Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): The national language plan highlights the arts, media and heritage as being important aspects of building Gaelic within Scottish culture. How are you getting involved in events that are of national importance, such as the Commonwealth games?

Iain Aonghas MacAoidh: Tha sinn ag obair ann an co-bhanntachd ri Alba Chruthachail agus tha oifigear againn—tha sinne a’ pàigheadh dàrna leth an tuarastail ’s Alba Chruthachail a’ pàigheadh an leth eile. Agus ann an co-bhoinn ri Alba Chruthachail, tha sinn a’ cur aghaidh air gnothaichean dhen t-seòrsa sin agus tha sinn an dòchas faicinn tachartasan tighinn a-mach far am bi Gàidhlig air fhoillseachadh no ceòl Gàidhlig agus na h-ealain Ghàidhlig air am foillseachadh ann an co-bhoinn ri gnothaichean eile a tha a’ dol air adhart tron cheangal a tha sin. Tha sinn a’ meas sin cudromach.

Mar eisimpleir, tha sinn air faicinn, nuair a tha sinn air tachartasan sònraichte a dhèanamh aig fèis Dhùn Èideann thairis air na bliadhnaichean, gu bheil sin air feum a dhèanamh airson iomhaigh na Gàidhlig a thogail. Ach tha e cuideachd air feum a dhèanamh a chionn ’s gu bheil e a’ togail mothachadh dhaoine a tha a’ tighinn a-steach dhan dùthaich gu bheil Gàidhlig beò an seo fhathast. Tha sinn an dùil prògram de ghnòthaichean a chur air adhart co-cheangailte ri sin tron cheangal a tha seo le Alba Chruthachail.

Following is the simultaneous interpretation:

We are working on such things in conjunction with Creative Scotland and have a joint officer—we pay half his salary and Creative Scotland pays the other half. We hope that there will be events at which Gaelic and the Gaelic arts will be visible and that there will be other things going on through that link. We consider that to be important. Gaelic events that take place each year at the Edinburgh fèis raise the profile of the language and raise awareness among people who have come into the country that we have the Gaelic language. We are establishing programmes of that nature through our link with Creative Scotland.

Claire Baker: When we took evidence on the budget from the Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs, she made it clear that there will be no resources to fund work that would be additional to what the Government has already identified its involvement in, whether in response to pleas from local authorities or from other festivals and organisations. I do not have a copy of the budget with me, so I cannot reference it. However, Gaelic has an increasing budget, and the framework is quite broad. As other members have said, we are in difficult financial times. Given the limited resources, where should the focus be over the next few years, in order to make a difference?

Iain Aonghas MacAoidh: Tha am plana a tha seo a’ nochdadh gu bheil e cudromach gu bheil sinn a’ cleachdadh nan ealan ann a bhith a’ cur taic ri foghlam, ri sgoiltean gu sònraichte. Chì sinn sin mar bhunait airson obair ùr a dhèanamh—mar eisimpleir, cur air adhart na sgeamaichean drama

a bheir cothrom dhan chlann Gàidhlig a chleachdadh agus togail misneachd annta fhèin cuideachd.

Sin aon seòrsa rud tha a’ tighinn troimhe anns a’ phlana a tha cudromach dhuinn ach cuideachd, mar a dh’ ainmich sibh, tha gnothaichean ann mar geamaichean a’ Cho-Fhlaitheis nach tachair ach a h-uile grunnan bhliadhnaichean agus chitheadh tu gum biodh sinn a’ coimhead ri tachartasan sònraichte a dhèanamh.

Aig an ìre seo, tha fèisean againn air an ruith air feadh Alba. Tha daoine òga a’ tighinn troimhe ’s iad a’ fàs uabhasach fhèin math air cluich ionnsramaidean-ciùil is seinn òrain Ghàidhlig. Bhiodh tu a’ sùileachadh gum biodh sinn a’ cleachdadh nan goireasan a tha sin airson daoine a thoirt gu chèile, airson tachartasan sònraichte a chur air dòigh airson togail iomhaigh na Gàidhlig, can aig fèis Dhùn Èideann agus co-cheangailte ri tachartasan geamaichean a’ Cho-Fhlaitheis. Ach bhiodh sin a’ tachairt tro bhith ag obair còmhla ri sgoiltean agus na fèisean a tha a’ tachairt taobh a-muigh nan sgoiltean agus ag obair còmhla ri daoine òga gu sònraichte.

Following is the simultaneous interpretation:

The Gaelic plan shows the importance of using the arts to support education, especially in schools. We see that as being a good basis for new work. For example, drama schemes will give children the opportunity to use Gaelic and improve their self-confidence. That is also in the plan.

Events such as the Commonwealth games, which were mentioned, happen only every so many years. At this stage, we are looking at specific events; we have fèisean running throughout Scotland. The young people who are coming through are becoming very adept at playing instruments, singing and so on. We will use resources such as the fèisean to bring people together and to organise specific events to raise the profile of Gaelic, for example at the Edinburgh fèis and at the Commonwealth games. That will happen through working with schools, through fèisean outwith the schools, and especially by working with young people.

The Convener: There is not just the Commonwealth games. Would the Ryder cup at Glengaeles in 2014 be another opportunity to promote art and culture? An enormous number of tourists will be coming from around the world, particularly from America, to attend the Ryder cup. Some of those people will have roots in Scotland, so I am sure that they will also spend time looking at their heritage and Scotland’s past.

Iain Aonghas MacAoidh: Càil sam bith a ghabhas a dhèanamh airson togail iomhaigh na Gàidhlig agus foillseachadh cultar na Gàidhlig tha againn ri dhèanamh, agus a h-uile cothrom a th’

ann airson gnothaichean dhen t-seòrsa sin a dhèanamh, thathas ga chleachdadh. Sin an t-adhbhar a tha an ceangal againn le Alba Chruthachail gus am bi sinn a' coimhead còmhla ann an dòigh a tha ro-innleachdail air dè tha a' tighinn romhainn agus ciamar as urrainn dhuinn feum a dhèanamh dheth.

Following is the simultaneous interpretation:

Anything that can be done to raise the profile of Gaelic and to promote Gaelic culture will be done; we will take every opportunity to do that. That is why we have a link with Creative Scotland—it allows us to look forward strategically at what will be happening and how we can use it.

The Convener: I understand what you said about Creative Scotland, but are there links to other organisations such as VisitScotland and EventScotland, which are closely involved in the organisation of large-scale events, in particular the Ryder cup?

Iain Aonghas MacAoidh: Tha obair againn ri dhèanamh ann an co-bhonn ri VisitScotland gu sònraichte. Thairis air bliadhnaichean tha na h-uimhir de dheasbaid air a bhith ann mu dheidhinn an ìre gun robh no nach robhas a' toirt aire dhan Ghàidhlig ann a bhith a' foillseachadh Alba gu h-eadar-nàiseanta. Agus tha fios againn an dèidh a bhith a' bruidhinn ri daoine a tha a' ruith taighean-òsta far a bheil iad a' cleachdadh Gàidhlig ann an clàr-bidhe 's rudan dhen t-seòrsa sin, gu bheil e mar gum biodh na bhuannachd, gu bheil luchd-turais mothachail air. Tha VisitScotland a' dèanamh plana Gàidhlig agus bidh sinn a' sùileachadh gum bi sinn ag obair ann an co-bhonn ris a' bhuidhinn sin barrachd ann an dòighean ro-innleachdach anns na bliadhnaichean a tha romhainn, air sgàth sin.

Tha sinn mar-thà air a bhith ann an cuid de ghnòthaichean còmhla ri EventScotland a tha a' cur air adhart nan tachartasan. A-rithist, 's e a th' againn ri dhèanamh ach dèanamh cinnteach gu bheil sinn a' coimhead romhainn fada gu leòr agus a' coimhead ri dè na buidhnean a bu chòir a bhith ag obrachadh ann an co-bhanntachd còmhla rinn agus sinn a' dèanamh sin còmhla riuthasan. Ach, mar a chì sibh anns an leth-uair a thide a tha sinn air a bhith a' bruidhinn an seo, tha sin a' ciallachadh gu bheileas a' sùileachadh gu bheil sinn mar bhuidheann beag a' smaoinichadh mu dheidhinn a bhith ag obair ann an coimhearsnachdan air feadh Alba air an dàrna làimh agus ag obair aig àrd-ìre còmhla ri buidhnean poblach nàiseanta cuideachd. Chan urrainn dhuinn a h-uile rud a dhèanamh leis na goireasan agus leis a' mhaoin a th' againn. Feumaidh sinn a bhith gu math cinnteach gu bheil sinn a' cur fòcas air na rudan a tha gu math cudromach dhuinn.

Following is the simultaneous interpretation:

We need to do some work in conjunction with VisitScotland in particular. Over the years, there has been a lot of discussion about the attention that has been paid to Gaelic in the promotion of Scotland internationally. We have spoken to people who run hotels who use Gaelic in menus and so on, which helps tourists to become aware of the language. VisitScotland is creating a Gaelic plan; we will seek to work with it more strategically in the years ahead.

We have already been involved in some events that EventScotland is progressing. Again, we need to ensure that we are looking far enough ahead to see which groups and organisations can work in conjunction with us. However, as you will have gathered in the half hour that we have been speaking to you, we are a small organisation, which on the one hand is working in communities throughout Scotland and on the other hand is working at a high level with national public bodies. We cannot do everything with the resources and funding that we have, so we need to be very certain that we are focusing on the matters that are most important.

Claire Baker: My other question is about how important single outcome agreements are when it comes to local authorities taking forward the agenda. You mentioned that you are a small organisation that is having to deal with 32 local authorities. What capacity exists for you to do that?

10:45

Iain Aonghas MacAoidh: Tha sinn a' meas seo cudromach. Cha robh sin ann nuair a chaidh a' chiad plana Gàidhlig a dhèanamh agus cha robh cus tuigsinn againn gu bho chionn ùine ghoirid dè bha na single outcome agreements tha sin a' ciallachadh, ach tha sinn a-rithist air cur dhan a' phlana gu bheil sinn mothachail air an sin. Ann an còmhraidh ri COSLA o chionn ceala-deug agus a' dèanamh taisbeanadh aig a' bhuidhinn sin anns an Ògmhios am-bliadhna, thog mise a' cheist a tha seo co-cheangailte ri ciamar a dhèanadh sinn cinnteach còmhla ri COSLA agus ri na comhairlean, far an robh e iomchaidh sin a dhèanamh, gun robh a' Ghàidhlig air a gabhail a-steach anns na h-aontaichean a tha sin.

Tha mise air cuireadh fhaighinn a dhol a bhuidhinn ri buidheann anns na h-Eileanan Siar a tha a' dèiligeadh ri sin. Agus tha iad mothachail ann an sgìre mar na h-Eileanan Siar, far a bheil a' Ghàidhlig cho làidir, gum bu chòir dha Gàidhlig a bhith a' nochdadh barrachd an sin. Fiù 's ann an àiteachan mar Dùn Èideann, ma tha foghlam Gàidhlig a' tòiseachadh tighinn air adhart, bu chòir dhan sin a bhith a' nochdadh ann an seagh air

choreigin anns na h-aontaichean a tha sin, a chionn 's mura h-eil, chan eil an aonta cho coileanta 's bu chòir dha a bhith.

Tha sinne mothachail agus chì sibh anns a' phlana a-rithist gu bheil a' Ghàidhlig air a cuir ri cuid mhath dhe na toraidhean nàiseanta agus ma tha sin fìor, bu chòir dhen sin a bhith a' nochdadh ann am builean aontaichte a th' aig na buidhnean sin aig ìre roinneil cuideachd a chionn 's gur ann air na toraidhean nàiseanta a tha iad a' stèidheachadh nan cùmhnantan aca fhèin leis an Rìaghaltais.

Mar sin, tha seo cudromach dhuinn gun teagamh sam bith a chionn 's ma tha seo a' seasamh mar siostam ann an Alba feumaidh a' Ghàidhlig a bhith mar phàirt dheth.

Following is the simultaneous interpretation:

We consider that the single outcome agreements are important. They did not exist when the first Gaelic plan was created. Until very recently, we did not have a great understanding of what single outcome agreements mean. We have added to the plan that we are aware of them. When we talked to the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities a fortnight ago and in June, we discussed the question of how we, working with COSLA and the councils, will ensure that, where it is appropriate to do so, Gaelic is included in the agreements.

I have received an invitation to speak to a group in the Western Isles about the issue. People in areas such as the Western Isles, where Gaelic is so strong, are aware that Gaelic ought to appear more frequently in the single outcome agreements. In places such as Edinburgh, where Gaelic education is beginning to progress, Gaelic should appear in some form in the agreements. If it is not included, an agreement is not as strong as it should be.

We are aware, as you will see in the plan, that Gaelic has been added to a lot of the national outcomes. Given that, Gaelic should appear in councils' single outcome agreements, because their contracts are based on the national outcomes. This is important to us. Single outcome agreements are part of the system in Scotland, so Gaelic must be part of them.

Liz Smith: I will come back to education. We are obviously going through a time of curriculum change and there are impending changes to the Scottish Qualifications Authority. Can you tell us a little bit about the objectives of Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and how the groups that are involved in producing and distributing materials fit into the process? What are they doing to try to promote the fabric of the Gaelic language?

Iain Aonghas MacAoidh: Tha Stòrlann Nàiseanta na Gàidhlig ag obrachadh còmhla ri na comhairlean agus còmhla ris an SQA stuthan a cruthachadh airson luchd-teagaisg a bhios air an cleachdadh anns na sgoiltean. Agus tha iad a' cruthachadh stuth a rèir feumalachdan nan comhairlean agus nan sgoiltean, agus 's e sin a' bhuidheann as motha a tha a' dèanamh gnothaich airson foghlam aig ìre nan sgoiltean. Agus tha iad cuideachd ag obrachadh air briathrachas gus am bi a' cheist mu choinneamh fiosaig is matamataig nas fhasa a freagairt ann am beagan bhliadhnaichean na bha i bho chionn dhà-na-trì bhliadhnaichean. Bho thaobh foghlam sgoile 's e Stòrlann a tha a' dèanamh sin.

Tha Sabhal Mòr Ostaig ag obrachadh gach cuid mar cholaiste stèidhichte air a' Ghàidhealtachd agus oileanaich a' tighinn thuca, ach tha a' cholaiste a tha sin cuideachd a' cruthachadh cùrsaichean a th' air an ruith air-loidhne. Agus tha daoine air na cùrsaichean sin a tha a' tighinn chan e a-mhàin à Alba ach gu h-eadar-nàiseanta—às a' Ghearmailt, à Canada, à Astràilia, à Ameireaga agus mar sin air adhart. Tha Sabhal Mòr Ostaig a' cruthachadh an t-seòrsa gnothaich tha sin ag obrachadh ann an co-bhoinn ri colaistean eile a tha mar phàirt dhe Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd agus nan Eilean.

Tha Sabhal Mòr Ostaig a' cluiche a' phàirt sin dha inbhich—mar gum biodh os cionn foghlam sgoile—agus tha Stòrlann a' cruthachadh stuth dha na sgoiltean.

A bheil sin a' freagairt ur ceist?

Following is the simultaneous interpretation:

Stòrlann Nàiseanta na Gàidhlig works, in regard to school education, with the councils and the SQA to create teaching materials to use in schools. It creates the materials according to the needs of the councils and the schools. Stòrlann is the biggest organisation that deals with materials for education. It is also working on terminology in order that questions on physics and mathematics will be easier to answer in a few years.

Students come to Sabhal Mòr Ostaig: the college is based in the Highlands, but it also creates courses that are run online. People who take those courses come from not only Scotland but from Germany, Canada, America and so on. Sabhal Mòr Ostaig has created the courses in conjunction with other colleges that are part of the University of the Highlands and Islands.

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig plays the main part in education for adults and Stòrlann creates materials for schools. Does that answer your question?

Liz Smith: Yes. I am glad to hear that mathematics and physics will become easier over time.

The Convener: Is that a guarantee, Liz?

Liz Smith: I hope so.

Jean Urquhart (Highlands and Islands) (SNP): I apologise for not being here at the start of the meeting. The weather delayed my arrival.

I want to ask about implementation of the Gaelic plan across Scotland. How will the bòrd measure the plan's success? How will you find evidence that it is working? What time and resource will you have to do that?

Iain Aonghas MacAoidh: 'S e a' phrìomh amas a th' anns a' phlana àrdachadh an àireamh chloinne a tha a' dol a-steach dhan bhun-sgoil sa chiad bliadhna, sin a dhùblachadh. Agus bidh againn ri coimhead bliadhna às dèidh bliadhna a bheil sin a' tachairt. Tha e a' ciallachadh àrdachadh de 15 sa cheud gach bliadhna bhon àireimh a th' againn an-dràsta, agus 's e pàirt dhen adhbhar gu bheil sinn a' cur fòcas làidir air an àireimh sin. Tha fios againn le bhith a' bruidhinn ri na h-ùghadarrasan foghlaim cia mheud clann a tha aca sna sgoiltean-àraich agus cia mheud a tha a' dol a-steach dhan bhun-sgoil. Agus ma tha sinn a' coimhead airson àireamhan cruaidh, sin an roghainn as cinntiche a th' againn gu bheil rudeigin a' tachairt.

Airson toirt air sin tachairt, tha againn ri bhith nas mothachail air dè tha a' tachairt nas tràithe. Feumaidh sinn dèanamh cinnteach gu bheil barrachd phàrantan a' faighinn taic gus an clann a chur a-steach gu buidhnean pàrant is pàiste, 's gu bheil na buidhnean pàrant is pàiste an uair sin a' cur clann a-steach do na sgoiltean-àraich, 's gu bheil na sgoiltean-àraich gan cur a-steach dhan bhun-sgoil. Agus air an adhbhar sin, tha sinne air fastadh sgioba luchd-obrach a tha gu bhith ag obair còmhla ri pàrantan, a' cruthachadh buidhnean pàrant is pàiste agus a' toirt taic dhan fheadhainn a th' ann gus am faigh sinn grèim nas fheàrr air na h-àireamhan a th' ann aig an ìre seo gus cuideachadh nan comhairlean gus na h-amasan aca fhèin a choileanadh.

Mar sin, a thaobh foghlaim, 's urrainn dhuinn a bhith nas cinntiche mu dheidhinn nan àireamh. Gnothaichean eile, chan eil iad cho furasta an tomhais. Tha sinn a' toirt taic dha buidheann a tha a' cruthachadh cùrsaichean luchd-ionnsachaidh agus tha clasaichean air a bheil an t-ainm ulpan a' ruith air feadh Alba. Tha amas aig a' bhuidhinn sin airson togail suas an àireamh a tha a' dol a-steach dha na clasaichean luchd-ionnsachaidh, bliadhna air bhliadhna, gus am bi fios againn an uair sin a bheil 3,000, 4,000 no cia mheud a tha mar luchd-ionnsachaidh an sàs ann an clasaichean. Agus leis na ceanglaichean a th' againn a-nis le na

colaistean a tha cuideachd a' dèanamh cùrsaichean, bidh e nas fhasa dhuinn tomhais sin.

Ach a thuilleadh air sin, 's urrainn dhuinn còmhla ri na comhairlean agus na buidhnean poblach a tha a' dèanamh planaichean Gàidhlig tomhais cia mheud dhen luchd-obrach aca aig an robh Gàidhlig nuair a thòisich iad agus cia mheud a th' aca sa chiad bhliadhna 's anns an dàrna bliadhna 's mar sin air adhart, agus cleachdadh na Gàidhlig.

Tha sin nan slatan-tomhais as urrainn dhuinn a chleachdadh co-cheangailte ri àireamhan, agus chì sibh gu bheil am plana ag ràdh "Fàs"—fàs ann an àireamhan—"agus Feabhas". Tha sinn a' coimhead ri gum bi feabhas anns a' chùis cuideachd. Tha e nas doirbhe feabhas a thomhais na tha e fàs a thomhais. Ach 's urrainn dhuinn coimhead ann am foghlam a-rithist, ri an àireamh chloinne a tha a' dol a-steach dhan àrd-sgoil agus a tha a' tighinn tron àrd-sgoil agus a' dèanamh deuchainnean anns a' chànan fhèin agus deuchainnean tro mheadhan a' chànan, biodh e ann am matamataig, fiosaig no ann an cuspairean eile. Agus 's urrainn dhuinn na rudan sin a thomhais.

Tha sinn a' coimhead ri sin ach cha deach sin a dhèanamh anns an dòigh seo cho cinnteach a-riamh ann an saoghal na Gàidhlig 's a tha sinn a' feuchainn ri dhèanamh a-nis. Mura biodh achd na Gàidhlig againn, cha b' urrainn dhuinn. Tha achd na Gàidhlig gar cur ann an suidheachadh far an urrainn dhuinn còmhradh nas cinntiche 's nas ciallaich a dhèanamh le buidhnean poblach, le buidhnean foghlaim agus le coimhearsnachdan agus tòiseachadh a' cruthachadh slatan-tomhais dhen t-seòrsa seo. Às aonais na h-achd, cha bhiodh sinn ann an suidheachadh far am biodh cumhachd sam bith aig Bòrd na Gàidhlig airson sin a dhèanamh, agus cha bhiodh misneachd aig buidheann Gàidhlig sam bith airson a dhèanamh. Bha achd na Gàidhlig bunaiteach, cudromach dhuinn airson freagairt na ceist sin.

Following is the simultaneous interpretation:

The key aim in the Gaelic plan is to double the number of children who go into Gaelic-medium education at primary 1. We will have to look at that year on year, to see whether it is happening. It will require an increase of 15 per cent each year from the numbers that we have at the moment. Part of the reason why we are focusing strongly on the numbers is that we know from talking to education authorities how many children they have in the nursery schools and how many are going into primary school. If we are looking for real numbers, that is the area where we can be most certain that things are happening.

In order to make those things happen, we have to be more aware of what is happening earlier. We

need to do more to ensure that parents get more support to send their children to playgroups and to take them to parent-and-child groups and then on to the nursery schools and primary schools. For that reason, Bòrd na Gàidhlig has employed a team that will work with parents and create parent-and-child groups, which will give us a better idea of the numbers at that stage and so help councils to fulfil their aims.

As far as education is concerned, we can be more certain about the numbers; other matters are not as easy to measure. We support a group that is running ulpan classes for learners throughout Scotland. The organisation's aim is to raise the number of people entering classes for learners, year on year. We will know whether 3,000, 4,000 or however many learners are involved in the classes. We have links with colleges that are also running courses, so it will be easier for us to measure the number of learners.

For the councils and public bodies that are using Gaelic plans, we can measure how many people in the workforce spoke Gaelic when they started and how many are using Gaelic in the first year and second year. Those are the criteria that we are using in relation to numbers.

As you see, the plan is about growth in numbers, but it is also about quality. Quality is important, but it is more difficult to measure quality than it is to measure growth. However, we can consider how many children are going into secondary school and coming through at the other end having taken exams in the language or having done mathematics, physics or whatever subject through the medium of Gaelic. We can measure such things.

We are looking at the issue, but there has never before been such measurement in the Gaelic world as we are now doing. If we did not have the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 we could not do it; the act puts us in a situation in which we can speak with more certainty with other public bodies, education bodies, communities and so on in creating criteria such as I have talked about. The 2005 act is important; without it Bòrd na Gàidhlig would not have the power to do that work and there would be no confidence to do it.

Jean Urquhart: I appreciate that Gaelic-medium education is the priority. However, how will the bòrd best use organisations' Gaelic development plans? Are such plans purely about raising awareness of the language? As you said, you are a small organisation. How will you influence the plans? In particular, will you spend time with local authorities that do not have Gaelic plans or will you put resources towards those that do? How will you ensure that you encourage development of the language elsewhere?

Iain Aonghas MacAoidh: Tha còir againn an dà rud a dhèanamh. Tha còir againn a bhith ag obair còmhla ris na buidhnean aig a bheil planaichean mar-thà. Anns na planaichean aca, tha iad ag innse dè tha iad an dùil a dhèanamh anns a' chiad bhliadhna 's anns an dàrna bliadhna 's mar sin air adhart, agus 's urrainn dhuinn tomhais a bheil sin a' tachairt no nach eil. Ma tha e a' tachairt, glè mhath. Mura h-eil e a' tachairt, 's urrainn dhuinn còmhradh riutha mu dheidhinn carson nach eil e a' tachairt—an e gu bheil cion taic orra no gu bheil rudeigin air a dhol ceàrr airson adhbhar air choreigin. Mar sin, tha sin againn ri dhèanamh mar phàirt dhen siostam.

A thaobh chomhairlean aig nach eil planaichean, tha an-dràsta 19 buidhnean poblach ann an Alba le planaichean agus tha sinn air fios a chur a-mach gu 25 eile a tha ag obair air planaichean. Mean air mhean thig sin a-mach air feadh Alba thairis air grunnan bhliadhnaichean. Mus tòisich buidhnean a' cruthachadh na planaichean gu foirmeil, feumaidh sinn tòrr obair a dhèanamh còmhla riutha dìreach a' mineachadh carson a tha seo 's cò mu dheidhinn a tha e, agus bruidhinn riutha a thaobh dè tha ciallach a bhith sa chiad phlana acasan. 'S e sin a' bhunait a bhios ann airson tomhais airson bliadhnaichean às dèidh sin dè mar a dh'obraich a' chùis no nach do dh'obraich.

Following is the simultaneous interpretation:

We ought to be doing both. We ought to be working with the groups that already have plans, which will tell us what they intend to do in the first year, the second year and so on. We can then measure whether that is happening. If it is, that is good, but if it is not, we can talk to them about the reasons. Is it because of lack of support? Has something gone wrong for some reason? We need to do that as part of our system.

On bodies that do not yet have plans, 19 public bodies have plans at present and we have sent out notices to another 25 that are working on plans. They will come out bit by bit in the next few years. Before bodies formally create their plans, we need to do a lot of work with them to explain why they need to do the work and what it means. Their first plan will be the basis on which we will work with them and, in the years to come, measure progress on whether the plan has worked or not.

Jean Urquhart: How much would it cost to implement your plan in full? Do you have the money to meet your ambitions?

Iain Aonghas MacAoidh: Chan eil e furasta sùim airgid a chur air sin. Tha fios againn dè an t-sùim airgid a th' againn mar bhuidheann sinn fhìn agus tha sinn an dòchas gur e sin an t-seòrsa sùim airgid a bhios againn anns na trì bliadhna a

tha romhainn. Ach tha e duilich a ràdh dè chosgais e a h-uile càil a tha seo a dhèanamh gus an obraich sinn a-mach ann am barrachd doimhneachd còmhla ri na buidhnean a dh'fheumas obrachadh còmhla rinn gus seo a chur air bhog dè chosgais e. Agus 's dòcha ann an tòrr de na suidheachaidhean anns a bheil sinn gu bhith ag obair, nach cosg e mòran a bharrachd no càil idir, a chionn 's dòcha gur e am modh-obrach eadar-dhealaichte a tha a dhith seach rudeigin ùr a chosg. Agus feumaidh sinn a-rèist le sin ann a bhith a' còmhradh ri na buidhnean a tha air an ainmeachadh anns a' phlana seo, agus nuair a bhios iadsan a' cur air dòigh na planaichean corporra aca fhèin, 's ann a chì sinn dè tha e a' ciallachadh dha na buidhnean sin.

Ann an roinn foghlaim, tha comhairlean, an Riaghaltas, an SQA agus Foghlam Alba air a bhith a' suidhe timcheall a' bhùird còmhla rinn, ag obrachadh na planaichean seo suas agus a' smaoinachadh gun gabh e a dhèanamh. 'S dòcha gun tèid cuideam a thighinn air buidseatan, chan ann am-bliadhna no an ath-bhliadhna ach tro thide, ma tha iarraidh a' tighinn airson sgoil Ghàidhlig a chruthachadh mar a thachair ann an Dùn Èideann. Tha sinn an dùil 's an dòchas gun tachair rudeigin dhen aon sheòrsa ann am Port Rìgh san Eilean Sgitheanach agus anns a' Ghearasdan ann an Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd. Bidh airgead calpa a dhith—'s dòcha nach ann am-bliadhna, 's dòcha nach ann an ath-bhliadhna, ach bidh e a dhith aig àm air choreigin—ach ma tha na h-àireamhan mòr gu leòr carson nach cosgar airgead airson gu leòr oileanaich a bhith a' dol tro fhoghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig an àite a bhith a' cosg airgead air sgoil ùr airson foghlam tro mheadhan na Beurla? Tachraidh sin, ach cha chreid mi gun tachair mòran dheth anns na trì bliadhna a tha romhainn.

Bidh againn ri coimhead dè a chosgais a bhios ma choinneamh ma tha sinn a' stèidheachadh cùrsaichean ùr airson trèanadh luchd-teagaisg. Ach gus am bi e soilleir dè an seòrsa cùrsaichean air a bheil sinn a' bruidhinn agus càite am bi iad stèidhichte, agus dè dhen bhuidseat a th' ann an-dràsta airson foghlam luchd-teagaisg a chur air adhart, cha bhi e soilleir dhuinn dè an t-airgead a bharrachd a bhios a dhith. Ach tha misneachd againn gun tèid againn air tòrr dhen seo a choileanadh le daoine a bhith a' dèanamh an obair ann an dòigh a tha rianail is dòigheil mar a tha am plana a' cur sìos.

Following is the simultaneous interpretation:

It is not easy to identify a sum. We know the amount of money that our organisation has and we reckon that we will have at least that in the years to come. However, it is difficult to say what implementation of the plan will cost until we work out the costs in greater depth with the

organisations that need to work with us to establish plans. In many of the areas in which we will be working, the work might not cost much more, because new provision will perhaps not be required. We will find out, in talking to the organisations that are named in the Gaelic plan, and when organisations create their corporate plans, what it will mean for them.

In education, the Government, the SQA, Education Scotland and so on are sitting round the table with us working on the Gaelic plan and on the way ahead. It may be that there will be pressure on the budget not this year or next year, but in time. For example, there was demand for the creation of a Gaelic school in Edinburgh, and we expect and hope that something similar will happen in Portree and in Fort William, in the Highland Council area, so capital will be needed at some point. If the numbers are big enough, it might be better to provide a Gaelic-medium school than to spend the money on a school in which teaching is done through English. That might happen, although I do not think that it will happen in the three years that are ahead of us.

We will also have to consider the cost of establishing new teacher training courses; until it is clear what courses we are talking about, where they will be based, and what budget is available for promoting teacher education, it is not clear what the sum will be. However, we are confident that we can fulfil a lot of the requirements through people working in sensible ways.

Jean Urquhart: Thank you.

11:00

Marco Biagi (Edinburgh Central) (SNP): The plan is certainly very ambitious and everything that you are saying is conveying that ambition. It seems that the board will do a lot of partnership working—we can list any organisation we care to think of. Do you, as things stand and looking ahead under the current spending plans, have the institutional capacity and resources to work with all those disparate groups, including the local authorities, other public bodies, teacher training institutions and big national events?

Iain Aonghas MacAoidh: Chan eil. Chan eil teagamh sam bith mu dheidhinn sin. Dh'ainmich mi gu bheil planaichean aig 19 buidhnean poblach agus gu bheil sinn sinn ag obair còmhla ri 25 buidheann eile. Tha dà oifigear againn a' dèiligeadh le sin agus chan eil sin gu leòr an taic a thoirt dha na buidhnean a tha a' cruthachadh am planaichean agus an fheadhainn a tha gan cur an gnìomh an dèidh an cruthachadh. Agus ma chumas sinn a' dol a' leudachadh a' chùis a-mach, feumaidh sinn oifigich a bharrachd airson sin a dhèanamh.

Tha sinn a' coimhead ri dòighean ciallach air obrachadh còmhla ri trì no ceithir de chomhairlean, agus oifigich nan comhairlean sin a' tighinn a-steach a choinneachadh ris an aon oifigear againne an àite sinn a bhith a' dol chun a h-uile h-aon air leth. Tha sinn a' dèanamh nas urrainn dhuinn airson dèiligeadh ris a' chùis mar sin, ach chan eil e gu leòr. Agus mar as motha a thig sinn air feadh Alba 's ann as doirbhe a bhios e sin a choileanadh.

A thaobh dèiligeadh ri buidhnean eile, tha sinn a' coimhead ri dè na modhan as fheàrr air dèiligeadh ri siostam an fhoghlaim, mar eisimpleir. Air sgàth gun robh e duilich dèiligeadh ris a h-uile buidheann air leth mar an SQA, Foghlam Alba, chruthaich sinn buidheann-stiùiridh nàiseanta a choinnich ceithir turais air a' bhliadhna a chaidh seachad, far an robh na colaistean 's na h-oilthighean, ùghdarrasan foghlaim aig ìre stiùirichean foghlaim, Foghlam Alba, an SQA, COSLA agus an Riaghaltas a' suidhe timcheall a' bhùird còmhla rinn. Tha sin na chuideachadh mòr ann an dealbhachadh a' phlana, ach tha e na chuideachadh mòr cuideachd ann an coimhead ri ciamar a tha gan cur an gnìomh anns na bliadhnaichean a tha romhainn.

Bidh sinn a' coimhead ri modhan dhen t-seòrsa sin a chruthachadh. Sin an t-adhbhar a tha co-bhanntachd againn le Alba Chruthachail airson coimhead ri raon farsaing nan ealan, agus tha sinn a' coimhead ri co-bhanntachd a stèidheachadh le MG Alba airson coimhead ri taic as urrainn dhuinn a thoirt dhan t-siostam craolaidh agus na 's urrainn dha a thoirt dha foghlam agus dha rudan eile a tha sinn a' dèanamh. Ach, 's e buidheann bheag a tha a' feuchainn ri obair mhòr a dhèanamh a th' ann am Bòrd na Gàidhlig aig a' cheann thall.

Following is the simultaneous interpretation:

No we do not. There is no doubt about that. I have mentioned that 19 public bodies already have plans and we are working with 25 others. We have two officers dealing with them and their plans, which is not enough to support the groups that are creating the plans and thereafter putting them into action.

If we wish to continue extending our work, we need more officers. Our work may mean working with three or four councils at the same time and the council officers coming in to meet the one officer we have. We are doing as much as we can to deal with the situation, but we do not have enough resources. The further we extend throughout Scotland, the more difficult it will become.

On dealing with other organisations, we are looking at the best recommendations that we can follow. As it is difficult to deal with each organisation separately, we created a national

management group that meets four times a year and which brings the colleges, universities, directors of education, Education Scotland, the SQA and others to sit around the table with us. That group has been a great help to us in devising the plan, and is a great help in working out how we are going to put the plan into action in the years ahead. We will look to create recommendations in that way.

We are also looking at the breadth of the arts. We are looking at creating a link with MG Alba and at giving support to the broadcasting system, which itself can help education. Bòrd na Gàidhlig is a small organisation that is trying to do a lot.

The Convener: That brings us to the end of this morning's meeting. I thank Mr MacKay for attending. The meeting has been interesting and helpful, and I am sure that the committee shares with me the desire that Bòrd na Gàidhlig do as much as it can. We all understand that it is a small organisation, but it certainly has big ambitions, so I wish you the best of luck with that.

Iain Aonghas MacAoidh: Tapadh leibhse.

The Convener: We agreed at the beginning of the meeting to move into private session for the rest of the agenda, so I close the public part of the meeting.

11:03

Meeting continued in private until 11:48.

Members who would like a printed copy of the *Official Report* to be forwarded to them should give notice to SPICe.

Members who wish to suggest corrections for the revised e-format edition should e-mail them to official.report@scottish.parliament.uk or send a marked-up printout to the Official Report, Room T2.20.

Available in e-format only. Printed Scottish Parliament documentation is published in Edinburgh by RR Donnelley and is available from:

All documents are available on
the Scottish Parliament website at:

www.scottish.parliament.uk

For details of documents available to
order in hard copy format, please contact:
APS Scottish Parliament Publications on 0131 629 9941.

For information on the Scottish Parliament contact
Public Information on:

Telephone: 0131 348 5000
Textphone: 0800 092 7100
Email: sp.info@scottish.parliament.uk

e-format first available
ISBN 978-1-4061-7945-3

Revised e-format available
ISBN 978-1-4061-7957-6

Printed in Scotland by APS Group Scotland
