

Consultation on The City of Edinburgh Council’s Draft Gaelic Language Plan 2023-27

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Executive Summary

Under the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005, the City of Edinburgh Council has a statutory obligation to support Gaelic through the development of a Gaelic Language Plan to help ensure that Gaelic continues to thrive. This is the Council's third plan, setting out the next phase of work to promote Gaelic and increase its learning and use in Edinburgh.

The plan builds on the extensive progress made in Edinburgh since 2012 when the first plan was published. Progress has included:

- improving the quality and provision of Gaelic Medium Education from early years to senior phase
- promoting and embedding the Gaelic language and culture within the Council and externally throughout the city through signage on key buildings and historic graveyards, a wide range of cultural events and the development of career opportunities
- strengthening partnership across the city through the Capital Gaelic project, led by the Council in partnership with the National Library of Scotland.

The draft third plan seeks to build on the progress made, focussing on:

- continuing to develop high quality Gaelic Medium education 0-18, aligned to national guidance, the aims and vision of Edinburgh Learns for Life and shaped by stakeholder participation
- embedding Gaelic language education in schools through the development of learning and teaching resources for all schools (in line with the Scottish Government's 1+2 Approach to language learning)
- extending engagement with Gaelic through opportunities for adult and family learning and cultural activity
- continuing to develop the cultural, social and employment opportunities which are needed for Gaelic to flourish beyond the classroom, supported by the Capital Gaelic network and wider partnership working

Foreword

The City of Edinburgh Council is committed to supporting and growing the use of Gaelic amongst our staff, our communities, in our schools and in our wider culture.

As Scotland's capital city, Edinburgh has a special responsibility to nurture and help cultivate the Gaelic language. Gaelic is an integral part of our shared heritage and national identity, a unique and essential feature of Scotland's rich cultural tapestry.

Our approach to Gaelic will continue to be progressed in keeping with the city's wider '2050 Edinburgh City Vision' which states that Edinburgh aspires to be a connected, inspired, fair and thriving city. The Gaelic language and Gaelic communities are an integral part of this vision.

Over the life of our last Gaelic Language Plan, the Council has continued to make strong steps towards a more vibrant and visible Gaelic language and culture. We have continued to deliver high-quality Gaelic Medium Education (GME) from early years, through primary and on to high school, meeting the challenges of Covid and then supporting staff teams, families and learners to move forward beyond the pandemic.

We have continued to work towards a sustainable future for Gaelic across the city and have benefitted greatly from a dedicated post, which was part funded by Bòrd na Gàidhlig, bringing knowledge, expertise and creativity to greatly boost the visibility of Gaelic in the city. This created the foundations for Capital Gaelic, a partnership with the National Library of Scotland, working together with partners across the city to embed Gaelic as a vibrant part of life in Edinburgh for the benefit of citizens and visitors.

This plan will be delivered with the leadership of elected members and the support and dedication of council staff. Importantly we will also look for every opportunity to increase the visibility and support for Gaelic in our wider communities.

While recognising that this plan will be implemented in a time of the widely documented challenge to public sector finances, over the next five years, we will work alongside our Gaelic communities and an increasingly diverse range of partners and organisations to deliver a vibrant and sustainable approach to Gaelic language and culture in the city.

Councillor Joan Griffiths, Chair of the Gaelic Implementation Group

Andrew Kerr, Chief Executive

Introduction

The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 was passed by the Scottish Parliament on 21st April 2005 with cross-party support, receiving Royal Assent on 1st June 2005.

Under the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005, the City of Edinburgh Council has a statutory obligation to support Gaelic through the development of a Gaelic Language Plan (GLP) to help ensure that Gaelic continues to thrive.

This is a draft of the City of Edinburgh Council's third Gaelic Language Plan. It sets out for comment the proposed high level aims and actions for the next four years, in line with the National Gaelic Language Plan, which aims to:

- Increase the use of Gaelic
- Increase the learning of Gaelic
- Promote a positive image of Gaelic

This draft GLP aligns with the key priorities of the [City of Edinburgh Council Business Plan](#), the aims and vision of [Edinburgh Learns for Life](#), and with the city's wider '2050 Edinburgh City Vision' which states that Edinburgh aspires to be a connected, inspired, fair and thriving city. The Gaelic language and Gaelic communities are an integral part of this vision.

Gaelic in Edinburgh

As Scotland's capital city, Edinburgh has a special responsibility to nurture and help cultivate the Gaelic language and culture. Gaelic is an integral part of our shared heritage and national identity and is a unique and essential feature of Scotland's rich cultural tapestry. Edinburgh has played a key role in Gaelic life for centuries with many place names having Gaelic origins. For example, Craigentenny comes from the Gaelic Creag an t-Sionnaich which means the rock of the fox. Further details of Gaelic in Edinburgh are available from [this link](#) to a page on the Forever Edinburgh website.

Strong foundations

This draft GLP sets out ambitions and plans for the next phase of embedding and promoting Gaelic in Edinburgh to ensure that it has a thriving future.

Its key aims are to have strong and effective Gaelic Language Education and importantly, the opportunity to use and learn about the language and culture beyond the classroom, so that Gaelic becomes more relevant, accessible and interesting for the whole population.

The plan continues to build on the progress made since 2012, when the first plan was published.

Progress made in Gaelic Medium Education (GME) includes:

- Improved and increased **early years GME** provision (for children aged 0-5 years) through Scottish Government funded Early Learning and Childcare, including engagement with partner providers to increase capacity and the creation of a

dedicated Development Officer post, part funded by Bòrd na Gàidhlig, to support improvement and alignment across early years services

- Improvement of the **learning estate** including the creation of additional capacity and enhancement to acoustics within the primary school building; transition to the GME base at the refurbished Darroch campus; the creation and recruitment to dedicated GME Deputy Head Teacher (DHT) post; and securing of additional Scottish Government capital funding for IT, science equipment and a nurture base
- Ongoing expansion of the **GME curriculum offer** across our provision, within the Broad General Education (from primary 1 to S3) and into the senior phase
- Provision of career-long **professional learning** opportunities for school teams
- Development of partnership work to enhance and extend **immersion for learners** and to maximise opportunities for meaningful engagement with Gaelic language and culture within and beyond the classroom.

Progress in promoting and embedding Gaelic language and culture within the Council and beyond includes:

- Continuing to **support Council staff and Elected Members** with the learning and use of Gaelic across the Council, including the language, history and culture
- **Increasing the visibility of Gaelic** in a range of ways, including external signs (e.g. historic graveyard sites, Meadowbank Sports Stadium and the new Castlebrae Community Campus), and bilingual names for stops on the Edinburgh Trams website
- Working with partner organisations (including the National Library of Scotland, National Galleries and Edinburgh Local Mòd) to deliver a **programme of Gaelic events and exhibitions**, involving the Gaelic community and GME pupils
- Continuing to promote **Gaelic in tourism**, working with Invisible Cities to develop a “Gaelic in Edinburgh” tour and with Visit Scotland as a member of their Gaelic Implementation Group
- Continuing to develop **career opportunities** for GME pupils, for example, the Young Female Leadership Programme, involving the National Library of Scotland, James Gillespie’s High School and supported by Baillie Gifford. In addition, we are developing Foundation Apprenticeships with Skills Development Scotland and other Capital Gaelic Network partners.

A major development has been the Capital Gaelic project, in partnership with the National Library of Scotland, and part funded by Bòrd na Gàidhlig. The project, initially funded for one year, started in late 2021, and aims to build partnership working across the public bodies in Edinburgh to meet the aims and ambitions of the Gaelic Language Act.

Further details are available in the Council's annual GLP progress reports to Bòrd na Gàidhlig. The most recent progress report is available [here](#).

The next phase – draft plan for 2023-27

The two key aims of the next phase of our Gaelic Language Plan for 2023-27 are:

- Continuing to develop high quality Gaelic Language Education for 0-18 years
- To develop the cultural, social and employment opportunities which are needed for Gaelic to flourish

High Quality Gaelic Language Education

Continuing to develop high quality Gaelic Language Education for 0-18 years will be supported by the Gaelic Medium Education (GME) Improvement Plan, which has clear links with Edinburgh Learns for Life and national guidance.

The future shape and location of GME provision in the city has been under consideration for a number of years, with an options appraisal for new secondary provision initially presented to parents in January 2020. The Education, Children and Families Committee in January 2022 decided to pause plans for statutory consultation on the proposed new GME provision so that officers could undertake further pre-consultation engagement with parents and partners. This activity is underway and will inform timescales for the actions to improve GME provision.

We plan an added emphasis on bilingualism and cultural capital, which will link with languages education across our schools, through the Scottish Government 1+2 Approach. Opportunities for learners to engage with Gaelic (through L3 and IDL models) will be developed and promoted in all schools. We will conduct a thematic review of Gaelic Language Learning provision for children, families and adults as a basis for planning and development of provision across the life of this plan.

Building cultural, social and employment opportunities

Education needs strong links with cultural, social and employment opportunities for Gaelic to flourish, which in turn need:

1. Meaningful opportunities for Gaelic to be used beyond classroom settings, particularly for young people. The development of youth employment opportunities for Gaelic speakers is crucial
2. Wider knowledge, understanding and respect for Gaelic among the general population
3. Increased engagement with Gaelic language and culture across generations and across communities

To support this ambition, the Council will continue to work with other public bodies across Edinburgh to build the foundations for "Capital Gaelic". By collaborating and sharing resources, the Capital Gaelic network aims to increase opportunities to learn about the

language and culture for as many people as possible, embedding Gaelic as a vibrant part of life in the city for the benefit of citizens and visitors.

Priorities for 2023-2027

Supporting the aims described above, the priorities for the next iteration of the Council's Gaelic Language Plan are summarised below. The actions to support these are described in the implementation plan, shown in the appendix.

1. Using Gaelic

- Ensure that children and young people in Gaelic Medium Education (GME) develop a strong sense of Gaelic culture and community, linked to the ethos, vision and aims of their schools
- Actively support the development of a Gaelic community centre, linked to GME provision, through close partnership with the Gaelic language community in the city

2. Learning Gaelic

- Continue to improve the quality of provision of Gaelic Medium Education from 0-18 in line with national guidance and shaped by stakeholder participation, which includes the voices of children and young people
- Undertake the duty under the Education (Scotland) Act 2016 to promote and support, as appropriate, the potential for Gaelic medium and Gaelic learner education to the CEC residents, including the opportunity that exists under this Act for parents to request the establishment of Gaelic Medium Education.

3. Promoting Gaelic

- Lead on developing the Capital Gaelic project and brand, building on its potential for coalescing the wider Gaelic cultural and linguistic community and the tourism sector, linked to and supporting developments in GME

Questions for consultation:

1. Are these the right priorities for the Council's next Gaelic Language Plan to focus on? [yes, no]
2. Are there any priorities which have not been included? [yes, no]
 - If yes, please tell us what these other priorities are
3. Are there any priorities listed which should not be included? [yes, no]
 - If yes, please tell us what these priorities are

The implementation plan, shown in the appendix, gives details of the actions which would support these aims.

Questions for consultation:

4. Are there other actions that we could take to support Gaelic development?
 - If yes, please tell us what these actions are
5. Do you have any other comments or suggestions about the draft City of Edinburgh Council's Gaelic Language Plan and its effectiveness in fulfilling the objectives of the National Gaelic Language Plan?
 - If yes, please tell us your suggestions

Resourcing the plan

Funding for Gaelic and GME comes from a variety of sources, and the actions set out in the plan are dependent on continued specific financial support from the Scottish Government:

- Education per capita funding for schools
- Rising rolls funding for schools
- Scottish Government Grant (annual)
- Additional capital funding from the Scottish Government
- Grants from Bòrd na Gàidhlig to support specific posts and projects

Implementation and monitoring


The implementation of the Gaelic Language Plan 2023-27 will be overseen by the Gaelic Implementation Group (GIG), which comprises Elected Members, Council officers and key stakeholders and representatives from the Gaelic community. It meets on a quarterly basis to consider progress and to identify priorities for further action.

Monitoring of GME is detailed in the Gaelic Medium Education Improvement Plan and is overseen by the Bòrd Ionnsachaidh na Gàidhlig (Gaelic Learning Board).

Appendix 1. Implementation Plan

High level aims	Actions	Lead
<p>1.1 Ensure that children and young people in Gaelic Medium Education (GME) develop a strong sense of Gaelic culture and community, linked to the ethos, vision and aims of their schools.</p>	<p>This will be taken forward in collaboration with partners, including Comunn na Gàidhlig</p> <p>As set out in our Gaelic Medium Education Improvement Plan:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In line with Edinburgh Learns for Life and national guidance, revisit and update school aims and vision in consultation with learners and families 2. Develop and enhance partnerships to support improvement in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaelic language skill and confidence (learners, staff, families) • Immersive pedagogy (staff) • Understanding of and engagement with Gaelic culture (learners, staff, families) • Curriculum – learner experience 3. Linked with the Capital Gaelic project, develop opportunities for rich language engagement for learners beyond the classroom, Gaelic groups in the community – choirs, adult learner groups, etc 4. Establish and strengthen supportive networks including partnerships with local authorities and national bodies and organisations. 	<p>Education, Communities and Families</p>

High level aims	Actions	Lead
<p>1.2 Actively support the Gaelic community in their efforts to develop a Gaelic community centre, linked to GME provision, through close partnership with the Gaelic language community in the city.</p>	<p>Support Ionad Gàidhlig Dhùn Èideann with their objective to develop plans for a Centre for Gaelic in Edinburgh e.g. through advice on Business Case development, linking with the Council's development of a Community Centre Strategy (where appropriate).</p> <p>Support our school settings to engage with the planning and development of the centre.</p>	<p>All Directorates</p>
<p>1.3 Continue to improve engagement with Gaelic communities to support greater involvement with GME schools</p>	<p>As set out in our Gaelic Medium Education Improvement Plan and linked to the Capital Gaelic project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and promote local and national Gaelic partnerships • Ensure our Gaelic partnerships are fully collaborative and effective (e.g. by using information gathered through schools partnership audit) • Improve learning together in the medium of Gaelic (Parental Engagement and Involvement) 	<p>Education, Communities and Families</p>
<p>1.4 Increase the use of bilingual signage in key Council sites</p>	<p>When signage is due to be replaced across the city, the council will include Gaelic translations where appropriate, including during any future corporate brand refresh.</p> <p>The Council will encourage all council ALEOs to consider Gaelic or bilingual signage/branding as and when new or refreshed signage/branding is introduced</p>	<p>All Directorates</p>

High level aims	Actions	Lead
1.5 Increase Gaelic content on the Council's website	Continue to explore opportunities to increase Gaelic content on the Council's website	All Directorates
1.6 Improve options for Gaelic speakers when contacting Council customer services.	Arrange Gaelic awareness courses for front line staff	Customer Services, supported by CGDO
1.7 Communications and key documents	Those communications which are directly relevant to the Gaelic speaking community will be made available in Gaelic.	Corporate Services
2.1 Continue to improve the quality of provision of Gaelic Medium Education from 0-18 in line with national guidance and shaped by stakeholder participation, which includes the voices of children and young people	<p>We are committed to improving provision of GME services from 0-18:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to strengthen our 0-3 Croileagan provision and extend reach across city 2. Improve cohesion of 0-5 provision, including with our partner provider and continuing to establish the role of the GME EY Development Officer. 3. Support strategic improvement and development of GME through stakeholder engagement in a Learner-led Consultation Programme. 4. As set out in our Gaelic Medium Education Improvement Plan, our main authority and school actions will develop provision across the key themes of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership and management of staff • The Curriculum • Transitions • Partnerships <p> GMEIP_HighLevel_2021.docx</p>	Education, Children and Families

High level aims	Actions	Lead
<p>2.2 Undertake the duty under the Education (Scotland) Act 2016 to promote and support, as appropriate, the potential for Gaelic medium and Gaelic learner education to the CEC residents, including the opportunity that exists under this Act for parents to request the establishment of Gaelic Medium Education.</p>	<p>1. Continue collaborative working with organisations that support early bilingualism and language learning</p>	<p>Education, Children and Families</p>
	<p>2. Carry out a thematic review of provision for Gaelic Learner Education for children in schools, families and adult learners</p>	<p>Education, Children and Families</p>
	<p>3. Create and promote teaching and learning materials for Gaelic Learner Education in line with the Scottish Government 1+2 Approach, including training for teachers and tutors.</p>	<p>Education, Children and Families</p>
	<p>4. Continue to support the Council workforce to develop Gaelic language skills to meet our commitments and ambitions</p>	<p>Corporate Services</p>
	<p>5. Continue to support opportunities for parents to improve their Gaelic speaking through working with the Council's Education and community learning and development teams including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signposting resources and external opportunities through school and council websites, social media comms, school communications, parent councils 	<p>Education, Children and Families</p>

High level aims	Actions	Lead
<p>3.0 Lead on developing the Capital Gaelic project and brand, building on its potential for coalescing the wider Gaelic cultural and linguistic community and the tourism sector, linked to and supporting developments in GME.</p>	<p>1. Continue to develop and sustain effective partnerships with a range of stakeholders, working together to deliver the aims of the Capital Gaelic Project</p>	<p>Corporate Services</p>
	<p>2. Work with partners to identify opportunities, share knowledge and expertise</p>	<p>Corporate Services</p>
	<p>3. Further develop a partnership approach for a programme of Gaelic Events</p>	<p>Corporate Services</p>
	<p>4. Strengthen connections between schools, the Gaelic community and partners through inter-generational activities and partnerships.</p>	<p>Corporate Services Education, Children and Families</p>
	<p>5. Promote opportunities to participate in Gaelic cultural or arts events such as the inaugural Seachdain na Gàidhlig and Edinburgh Local Mòd</p>	<p>Corporate Services</p>
	<p>6. Create and disseminate promotional video of GME provision to support community engagement and recruitment in schools</p>	<p>Education, Children and Families</p>

Appendix 2. Consultation Questions – Your Details

Your details

Are you responding as an:

- Individual [Yes, No]
- Organisation [Yes, No]

Individuals

1. Your name (so we can send you a summary of the findings)
2. Contact details (for any questions we might have)

Organisation

1. Name of organisation
2. Your name
3. Your role
4. Contact details (for any questions we might have)