

## Report on the outcome of the consultation of Scottish Borders Council's Gaelic Language Plan

### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 was passed by the Scottish Parliament with a view to securing the status of the Gaelic language as an official language of Scotland and commanding equal respect to the English language.
- 1.2 All Councils in Scotland have been asked by the Bòrd na Gàidhlig to prepare a statutory Gaelic Plan in accordance with the Gaelic language (Scotland) Act 2005.
- 1.3 Gaelic Language Plans are seen as a key part in delivering the National Gaelic Plan to secure the status of Gaelic in Scotland. This report is about the outcome of the public consultation. Thereafter the Gaelic Language Plan will be submitted to the Bòrd na Gàidhlig for approval and will include a copy of this report.

### **2. The draft Gaelic Language Plan**

- 2.1 There are 3 parts to the Gaelic Language Plan and these are as follows:
  - 2.1.1 Increasing the use of Gaelic within our organisation and encouraging more people to use Gaelic, more often when they interact with us
  - 2.1.2 Increasing the opportunity for people to learn Gaelic as part of our day-to-day operations
  - 2.1.3 Promoting a positive image of Gaelic whenever we can as part of our day-to-day operations as an organisation

### **3. The consultation on the draft Gaelic Language Plan**

- 3.1 The plan was prepared under Section 3 of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 and required public authorities to consult on their draft Gaelic Language Plan before submitting it to Bòrd na Gàidhlig.
- 3.2 The Council's Gaelic Language Plan was circulated for public consultation on 12<sup>th</sup> April to 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2021 and the results of the consultation are shown in the following table.

**Table showing results of public consultation**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Unsure</b>	<b>Not answered</b>
<b>Can you speak Gaelic?</b>	5	19		
<b>Can you read Gaelic?</b>	4	20		
<b>Can you understand Gaelic?</b>	5	19		
<b>Can you sing Gaelic?</b>	5	19		
<b>Can you write Gaelic?</b>	4	20		
<b>Do you think the Scottish Borders Gaelic Plan incorporates the 3 goals for Gaelic? -</b>	13	5	5	1
<b>Would you be interested in learning Gaelic?</b>	6	15	2	1
<b>Would you be interested in learning to sing in Gaelic?</b>	4	17	3	
<b>Would you be interested in attending Gaelic events?</b>	6	15	3	

3.3 Comments received as part of the consultation are as follows:

- *"If it is used in the Scottish Borders it will be used by very few people. As stated before to make Scottish Borders council develop a strategy is a shocking waste of time and resource."*
- *"It would be great to see more opportunities to learn Gaelic!"*
- *"It's a crass attempt by the SNP to indoctrinate the nation - Gaelic was never spoken in the Scottish Borders"*
- *"An irrelevance."*
- *"Gaelic has no history in the Borders, we should support the use of Scots. This is an invasive move on behalf of the west coast."*
- *"Gaelic has not been a language of the Borders for a long time, it remained in the Highlands long after it had began dying out in the Borders. I feel it is the language of the Highlands."*
- *"I would be far more enthusiastic to hear that SBC are adopting a strong policy for the retention, and teaching, of scots. This is, I feel, the language we are most at risk of losing. Young people don't use scots words, I do and I'm 38."*

- *"It was be a travesty to lose a language still in use, though seemingly declining, while promoting a language long since lost from our area of Scotland. I am fiercely Scottish, but I relate closer to Northumberland than I do to the Highlands"*
- *"Please don't waste my council tax money on trying to teach my children a little used language. Use it to teach them something more useful, like a modern European language or teaching them that there is an exciting world out there beyond Scotland."*
- *"Why bother? Gaelic has not historically been spoken in southern Scotland, but Doric and Northumbrian have. There is no scheme to promote these languages and neither should there be. What is the motivation and justification for promoting Gaelic at public expense? Those who wish to learn Gaelic will do so without council intervention."*

#### 4 **Conclusion**

The consultation is now completed and the draft Gaelic Language Plan will be submitted to the Bòrd na Gàidhlig for their consideration and approval. Thereafter, the plan will be translated into Gaelic and published on the Council's webpage, along with a copy of the plan in English.

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Sylvia Mendham	Senior Business Services Officer, 01835 826595
Janice Robertson	Strategic Planning & Policy Manager, 01835 824000