

Measadh air dreachd Plana Cànain Gàidhlig Comhairle  
Chrìochan na h-Alba 2023 - 2028

Assessment of Scottish Borders Council's Draft Gaelic  
Language Plan 2023 - 2028



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# Scottish Borders Council

## GAELIC LANGUAGE PLAN

**Timeframe of the plan 2023-2028**

This plan has been prepared under Section 3 of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 and was approved by Bòrd na Gàidhlig on [\[approval date\]](#)

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## Foreword

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*It is essential that steps are taken to create a sustainable future for Gaelic in Scotland. Scottish Borders Council recognises it has a duty to assist with this process under legislation enacted by the Scottish Government and to prepare a Gaelic Language Plans for the Region.*

*This is Scottish Borders first Gaelic Plan. It sets out the Council's aims for the next 5 years, from 2023 to 2028, with respect to the promotion of the Gaelic language.*

*The plan also supports implementation of the Scottish Government's National Outcome '**We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity**'. Our aim in doing so is to encourage the use of the Gaelic language and promoting opportunities for our communities to communicate in Gaelic in a proportionate way.*

*We will demonstrate equal respect for Gaelic and English regarding any bilingual services and resources.*

*The Council wants to make a positive contribution to supporting the Gaelic language. We also recognise however that the Scottish Borders is an extensive rural lowland region with a dispersed settlement pattern, no single large urban centre, and a range of small towns. The Scottish Borders does not have a tradition of Gaelic speaking, nor a strong indigenous Gaelic culture, and we are therefore starting from a low base in promoting the language in our local schools and communities.*

*Our commitments within this Plan set out what we will do to raise the status of Gaelic in the Scottish Borders and in doing so help meet the aspirations and objectives included in the National Gaelic Plan.*

Councillor Euan Jardine

David Robertson  
Chief Executive

## Summary

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 commanding equal respect to the English language.

One of the key features of the 2005 Act is the provision enabling Bòrd na Gàidhlig to require a public authority to prepare a Gaelic Language Plan. This provision was designed to ensure that the public sector in Scotland plays its part in creating a sustainable future for Gaelic by raising the status and profile of the language and creating practical opportunities for its use

Scottish Borders Council recognises that Gaelic is an integral part of Scottish heritage and the Council is committed to the objectives set out in the National Gaelic Language Plan. We will work toward putting in place the necessary structures and initiatives to ensure that Gaelic has a sustainable future in Scotland.

In partnership with colleagues at Ainmean Àite na h-Alba, Bòrd na Gàidhlig has produced a map of Gaelic place-names from across Scotland, highlighting the widespread influence of the language. This is shown at Appendix A.

## Structure of the Gaelic Plan

Scottish Borders Council supports the aim of the National Gaelic Language Plan 2023-28 that “Gaelic is used more often, by more people and in a wider range of situations.”

We are committed to achieving this aim by focussing our work, on these three headings:-

- Increasing the use of Gaelic within our organisation and encouraging more people to use Gaelic, more often when they interact with us
- Increasing the opportunity for people to learn Gaelic as part of our day-to-day operations
- Promoting a positive image of Gaelic whenever we can as part of our day-to-day operations as an organisation

The plan is set out as follows:

### **Introduction**

This section provides the background and context to the Council’s Gaelic Plan under the 2005 Act and provides some background to the history of Gaelic in the Scottish Borders.

### **Core Commitments**

This part sets out how the Council will use, and facilitate the use of, Gaelic in relation to the services we provide as a Council. This will also include areas such as corporate identity, signage, communication with the public and the use of Gaelic on our website.

### **Policy Implications for Gaelic: implementing the National Gaelic Language Plan**

This segment sets out how Scottish Borders Council will implement the National Gaelic Language Plan. It also shows how we intend to promote the use of Gaelic in the planning and delivery of our services, as appropriate.

### **Implementation and Monitoring**

This element sets out how the implementation of our Gaelic Language Plan will be delivered, and how implementation and outcomes will be monitored.

# 1. Introduction

## **Setting the Context for Developing Gaelic Language Plans**

The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 and the issuing of a notice:

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 commanding equal respect to the English language.

This document is Scottish Borders Councils' Gaelic Language Plan prepared within the framework of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005. It sets out how we will use Gaelic in the operation of our functions, how we will enable the use of Gaelic when communicating with the public and key partners, and how we will promote and develop Gaelic.

Scottish Borders Council's Gaelic Language Plan has been prepared in accordance with statutory criteria set out in the 2005 Act and having regard to the National Gaelic Language Plan and the Guidance on the Development of Gaelic Language Plans.

## **Consultation on a draft Gaelic Plan**

The 2005 Act requires public bodies to bring the preparation of its Gaelic Language Plan to the attention of all interested parties. Scottish Borders Council consulted on the draft of its Gaelic Language Plan from 12<sup>th</sup> April to 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2021 and has taken into account representations made to it during the consultation process.

## **Approval of Scottish Borders Council Gaelic Language Plan**

Scottish Borders Council's Gaelic Plan was approved by Bòrd na Gàidhlig on (date to be confirmed).

## 2. Scottish Borders

Gaelic is one of the Celtic group of languages and one of the oldest written languages in Europe, thought to have come to Scotland from Ireland around 500 AD, but may have arrived before then, when it would have been part of a number of different languages spoken in Scotland.

In the late 18th century, it was heavily suppressed during the infamous Highland Clearances, following the turbulent Jacobite uprisings. Although, speakers of the language were persecuted over the centuries.

Since the second half of the twentieth century, there has been a sustained effort to support and revitalise the Gaelic language, in which the advances made in Gaelic education at all levels, and the establishing of Gaelic radio and television stations have been important milestones, along with the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act of 2005. Major 20<sup>th</sup> century poets, such as Sorely MacLean and Iain Crichton Smith, writing in Gaelic and English, and contemporary groups such as Runrig and Capercaillie have increased awareness and appreciation of the language internationally, and the Arts in general are a particularly vibrant area in Gaelic culture today, drawing on a rich seam of poetry and music in Gaelic tradition.

Gaelic today is spoken in all walks of life, there are employment opportunities for young people within the language, and it is attracting new speakers from many different language communities, Gaelic is still spoken today by around 60,000 Scots.

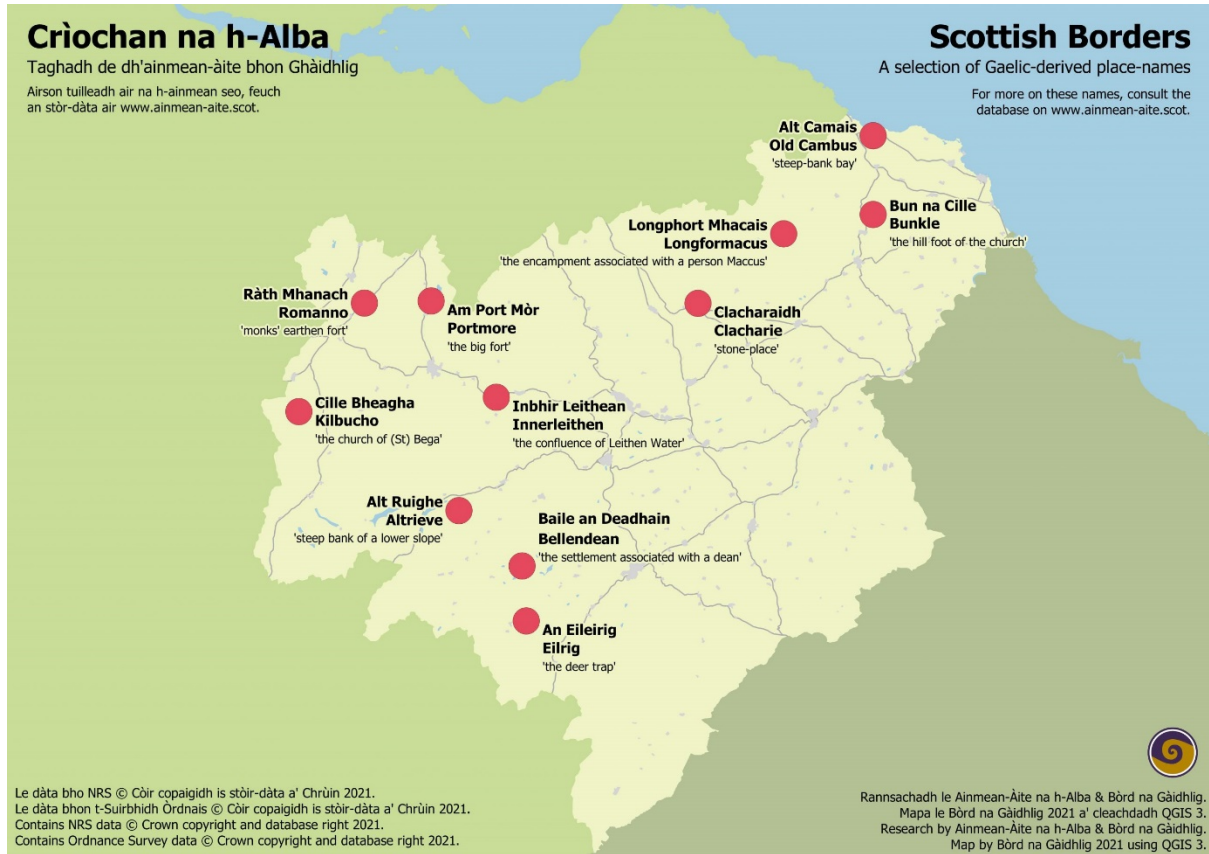
There are people in the Scottish Borders who speak Gaelic. Mostly these are people who have come to settle in Scottish Borders. A number of these Gaelic speakers are long-time residents of the Scottish Borders having come initially for work in the Textile Industry (connections with Harris Tweed) and in local hotels.

The total number of people recorded as being able to speak and/or read and/or write and/or understand Gaelic in the 2011 Census was 771 (0.7% of the Scottish Borders population, compared to 1.7% for the whole of Scotland). Of these, the total number of people who could speak Gaelic was 375 (0.34% of the Scottish Borders population compared to 1.1% of the Scottish population).

While the present population of Gaelic-speakers in the Borders is small, there is increasing interest in learning the language, a number of people resident in the Borders are taking advantage of on-line learning opportunities to an advanced level, and there is a wider community within the population of Border who are engaging with the language through its music and song.



Ainmean Àite na h-Alba and Bòrd na Gàidhlig have developed the following map of Gaelic place-names of the Scottish Borders area, highlighting the Gaelic heritage of the area.



### 3. The Scottish Borders Contribution

Three areas where a significant contribution can be made which relate to each other are:

#### 3.1 Information and Awareness

As an official language of Scotland and as a contribution to a better understanding of Scotland's history and identity, it is important that the population of the Scottish Borders is exposed to and given some awareness and understanding of the Gaelic language.

The main body promoting awareness of Gaelic in the Scottish Borders is the Gaelic singing group who perform across the region at music events, they have also run Gaelic song workshops which have attracted considerable interest. In addition to this, they organise a programme of meetings throughout the year to promote Gaelic language and culture. These events include lectures, musical and poetry recitals and ceilidhs events are publicised on Facebook

Scottish Borders Council has in the past sponsored some Gaelic events organised in the Borders to encourage a wider awareness of the language, and has funded events and classes for Gaelic learners. For example Gaelic workshops for children and singing performances

BBC Radio nan Gàidheal is a Scottish Gaelic language radio station owned and operated by the BBC. The station was launched in 1985 and broadcasts Gaelic-language programming with the simulcast of BBC Radio Scotland. In addition there is the digital TV channel BBC ALBA that broadcasts Gaelic programmes, which include, news, Scottish sport, music, factual and children's programmes daily

## 3.2 Education

Language and Literacy is a core curricular area within Curriculum for Excellence. Gaelic education should be a consideration for all schools as part of their curriculum planning from 3-18 and Scottish Borders Council Education Services are committed to supporting the development of Gaelic culture through this plan and any subsequent development plans.

### 3.2.1 Gaelic in an Education Setting

Scottish Borders Council recognises and values and importance of Gaelic language as part of strategic planning and development of language learning and of the rights of our young people to access education in Scotland's indigenous languages.

In terms of education, Gaelic is defined by two distinct approaches to development; Gaelic Medium Education (GME) and Gaelic Learners Education (GLE).

*“Gaelic Medium Education is high-quality learning through immersion. Alternative models lead to the dilution of standards and as such are non-compatible with the development of strong and sustained GME.”* Education Scotland Lead Inspector for GME, Joan Esson, June 2015

Nationally, GME is defined by Education Scotland as follows:

GME is based on the principle of language immersion. GME provision should encompass the four contexts of the curriculum within Curriculum for Excellence:

- the ethos and life of the school as a community
- curriculum areas and subjects
- interdisciplinary learning
- opportunities for personal achievement

Education Scotland strongly advises that GME is not merely language learning, it is also the delivery of subjects through the medium of Gàidhlig and Gàidhlig at the heart of the life, culture and ethos of the school.

The Education Scotland Act (2016) and Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education include three key proposals regarding GME:

1. Authorities have a duty to promote and support GME
2. Establishment of a statutory process for authorities to assess parental requests for GME
3. Development of statutory guidance arrangements for the delivery of Gaelic education in schools and by authorities

### 3.2.2 Gaelic Medium Education in Scottish Borders Council

Scottish Borders Council currently provides GME through a partnership arrangement with City of Edinburgh Council. Partnership arrangements support developing capacity and effective resourcing across the region and high-quality Gaelic Medium learning for children and young people. This provision will be planned and assessed by Scottish Borders Council and local partners with local demand being monitored as part of ongoing future planning. This provision is supported by Scottish Borders Council and available on application by parents. Support and communications for parents wishing their children to access Gaelic Medium Education has been identified as an aim of the Scottish Borders Gaelic Language Plan and is included in the actions listed below.

In 2022/2023 no Scottish Borders children and young people attended the City of Edinburgh GME provision at Parkside Primary / Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce), or the secondary GME provision at James Gillespie's High School.

Parents also have access to Gaelic Medium Playgroups in City of Edinburgh through partner providers and at a range of locations across the city. More information is available via Cròileagan Dhùn Èideann's website: <http://www.gaelicplaygroup.com/>

Scottish Borders Council Lead Officers support the ongoing development of effective partnership working across the South-East Improvement Collaborative (SEIC) and lead support for schools in developing Gaelic learning.

### 3.2.3 Gaelic Learners Education (GLE)

Gaelic Learners Education (GLE) refers to Gaelic learning as an additional language in an English Medium Education context.

According to the Education Scotland advice and guidance on GLE: "In English medium education, Gaelic language learning is part of children's and young people's entitlement to learning a language. Gaelic Learner Education is an overarching term which spans across 3-18 provision." ([Gaelic Education 3-18 in Language Learning in Scotland: A 1+2 Approach](#))

Gaelic Learner Education (GLE) provides young people with progressive opportunities to learn Gaelic language and experience Gaelic culture as part of the wider offer of languages across Scottish Borders Council schools. GLE is an area which is currently undeveloped in Scottish Borders schools, but is planned through the Gaelic Language Planning process. This will include seeking opportunities to promote the use of the Stòrlann 1+2 Languages website and resources, Go Gaelic (<https://go-gaelic.scot/>). This area is being developed in collaboration with key local and national partners including Bòrd na Gàidhlig, regional local authorities, higher and further education establishments, schools and parents.

A regional Gaelic Education Steering group has been established to support the strategic development of Gaelic language in schools and includes key local authority officers, primary and secondary teachers, parents and local partners. Key local partners include Newbattle Abbey College, which offers professional development and engagement opportunities for schools, parents and learners. Teachers who have experience or an interest in Gaelic learning will be identified and local training opportunities are being developed and offered.

Scottish Borders Council is working with schools in neighbouring areas where GLE is currently being delivered (James Gillespie's High School, City of Edinburgh) and offering opportunities through digital solutions to open up Gaelic learning to learners across the region.

Online learning in Gaelic can be accessed via a number of free websites including Learn Gaelic and Speak Gaelic. Opportunities to learn Gaelic online or in person are also available through Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, the national Gaelic college on the Isle of Skye. Regional courses for teachers have been developed and offered in partnership with a local provider, Togi Gaelic.

There are Also a number of online courses available to learn Gaelic, for instance, the Council's SB Learn programme, a Tessello Learning Management System which is designed to help Scottish Borders Council employees with a programme of online learning that include several languages including Gaelic and information about opportunities to learn Gaelic will be made available on the Council's webpage.

### 3.2.4 Gaelic in a non-education setting

Scottish Borders Council Library services are able to provide Bookbug bags in Gaelic at each of the following stages:

- Baby (gifted by the health visitor at around 6 weeks)
- Toddler (gifted by the health visitor at around 18 months)
- Explorer (gifted by nurseries at 3)
- Family Bag (gifted through schools in P1)

A limited stock of Gaelic language books is available at Library Headquarters and items are available in children's collections across Scottish Borders libraries. Requests for Gaelic items are infrequent; however, this may be due to a lack of awareness and has been identified as an area for development. Also no bookbug sessions in Gaelic are being run currently

In terms of community learning, the following is currently in place:

- There is a beginners Gaelic App, Go Gaelic which is now available and free and aimed at primary school children
- There is also Duolingo, a free App and another resource for people wishing to learn a language online
- There is also SpeakGaelic, an online resource that can also provide face to face classes for complete beginners or people less confident in speaking Gaelic. For more information #contact SpeakGaelic. Scot
- A Gaelic singing group Turas who receive a small grant from the council annually
- Gaelic Education events for adults, children and young people have been held in the Scottish Borders – these events are publicised on Facebook and the Council's Yammer page for staff. Peat and Diesel a 3 piece band from Stomoway, Western Isles are appearing at the Edge Fest at Lilliardsedge in September 2023
- Funding for Gaelic education provision which is specific grant supported and can be used for any Gaelic related activity as appropriate.
- Scottish Borders Council offers an interpretation and translation service
- Stòrlann have also developed their website for schools,

### 3.3 Culture and Arts

There is a strong Gaelic current in Scottish Folk music. Over the past decade the Scottish Borders has developed a strong folk music tradition amongst children, young people and adults and Gaelic music has been an important influence and medium within this.

Many folk music festivals and concerts held in the Scottish Borders have included Gaelic music artists which has increased awareness and interest in the Gaelic language and culture

1. Folk Music is a key way of increasing awareness of Gaelic culture
2. There are Gaelic poets and academics who stay in the Scottish Borders
3. Some of the Arts events in the Scottish Borders have included Highland plays reflecting aspects of Gaelic culture
4. Borders based music artists and film producers are benefiting from Gaelic TV and other media through exposure and contracts
5. The Melrose Book Festival presents an opportunity to raise the awareness of Gaelic books and language

## 4. Plan Commitments

### 4.1 Approved High Level Aims

<b>Increasing the Use of Gaelic</b>	
High-level Aim	Work with Fèisean nan Gàidheal (organisation that supports the development of community based art tuition festivals throughout Scotland) and other key partners in order to establish a Fèis (festival of music and dance) in the Scottish Borders Council area
Current position	The Council has not engaged with Fèisean nan Gàidheal or other key partners for the establishment of a Fèis
Desired Outcome / Indicator	Establishment of or plans for the establishment of a Fèis
Actions Required	Work in with collaboration with Fèisean nan Gàidheal and other key partners to develop plans for a Fèis and implement these plans.
Target Date	April 2026
Responsibility	Scottish Borders Council

High-level Aim	Work with An Comunn Gàidhealach (organisers of Royal National Mod) and other key partners in order to establish a Provincial Mòd (opportunities to take part in Gaelic events) within the Scottish Borders Council area
Current position	The Council has not engaged with An Comunn Gàidhealach for the establishment of a Provincial Mòd
Desired Outcome / Indicator	Establishment of or plans for the establishment of a Provincial Mòd
Actions Required	Work in with collaboration with An Comunn Gàidhealach and other key partners to develop plans for a Provincial Mòd and implement these plans.
Target Date	April 2026
Responsibility	Scottish Borders Council and Live Borders

High-level Aim	Undertake the duty outlined in the Education (Scotland) Act 2016 to promote, in such manner as it thinks appropriate, the potential provision for Gaelic medium and Gaelic learner education to Scottish Borders Council residents and the opportunity which exists under this Act for parents to request the establishment of Gaelic Medium Education
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Current position	<p><u>GME</u>  Gaelic medium education provision is currently delivered through partnership agreement with City of Edinburgh Council  Regional strategic steering group has been convened to support ongoing planning and development  GME learner data is being gathered  Contact with parents is underway to support collaborative planning</p> <p><u>GLE</u>  There is currently no GLE in Scottish Borders Council  Interested teachers to be identified  Teacher introduction to Gaelic courses took place during 2021/22  Exploring opportunities for interested teachers to attend Sabhal Mòr Ostaig courses  Language resources to support an introduction to primary Gaelic across the curriculum are in development with Newbattle Abbey College</p> <p>There is a full resource pack designed to support schools with developing Gaelic as an L3 (primary or secondary). This includes PPTs and audio files which introduce the language as well as aspects of Gaelic culture. These are available on Schoolhouse and have been shared with schools. The resources are designed to link to Go Gaelic, the national primary language learning website for primary schools. This is also linked in the same resource area as the Gaelic PPTs.</p>
Desired Outcome / Indicator	<p><u>GME</u>  Data on numbers of children attending GME  To support and sustain expand current provision arrangements  To ensure clear information is available regarding SBC GME provision in line with the Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education and the Education (Scotland) Act 2016  To increase uptake of GME in line with local and national plans</p> <p><u>GLE</u>  Increased numbers of schools and pupils engaging with GLE  Increased numbers of teachers taking up opportunities for development in Gaelic language  Locally developed Gaelic teaching resources available for teachers and schools</p>
Actions Required	<u>GME</u>

	<p>Track and monitor uptake of GME</p> <p>Evaluate council information regarding GME provision</p> <p>Promote GME through communications channels &amp; networks</p> <p>Work in partnership with City of Edinburgh to support and sustain current arrangements and to align planning around GME.</p> <p>Promote and support pre-school and school age GME through existing partnership provision</p> <p>Families: Support pack for families; review website information; engage with parents.</p> <p>The Council will undertake a feasibility study on establishing Gaelic Medium Education.</p> <p><u>GLE</u></p> <p>Support schools with planning and development of GLE through provision of learning and teaching resources and professional development for teachers</p> <p>Promote uptake of SQA accredited courses</p> <p>Develop Gaelic learner opportunities as part of 1+2 and via partners (Newbattle Abbey College, the E-Sgoil or schools in Edinburgh).</p> <p>To undertake an audit to establish a baseline of current Gaelic provision within 1+2 in order to effectively monitor increase</p> <p>Identify opportunities to promote use of the Stòrlann Go Gaelic website to support teacher development in basic Gaelic language skills</p>
Target Date	February 2024 – thereafter annually
Responsibility	SBC Quality Improvement Officer and the Gaelic Strategic Group

High-level Aim	Continue to support Gaelic language learning opportunities in the community, and seek to expand this where demand is evident.
Current position	One Gaelic class is currently is being offered. Partnership opportunities are available and are starting to be promoted locally
Desired Outcome / Indicator	Increased offer of local community Gaelic language learning opportunities Engagement with the Gaelic speaking local community
Actions Required	Identify and assess further opportunities for adult learning Work with local partners to provide and promote adult / community learning of Gaelic and promote SpeakGaelic



	Identify Gaelic speaking members of the community interested in the promotion and development of Gaelic language
Target Date	April 2025
Responsibility	SBC Quality Improvement Officer /Gaelic Strategic Group

High-level Aim	Investigate a potential partnership arrangement with Newbattle Abbey College, with the aim of identifying or developing Gaelic tutors for the Scottish Borders Council area.
Current position	Work has commenced but is subject to covid-19 restrictions
Desired Outcome / Indicator	Partnership arrangement with Newbattle Abbey College  Increased number of Gaelic language tutors and teachers in SBC area.
Actions Required	Liaise with Newbattle Abbey College to develop a plan Implement plan.
Target Date	April 2025
Responsibility	Scottish Borders Council

High-level Aim	Establish a dialogue with the Gaelic Learning in the Primary School (GLPS) consortium, with a view to establishing Gaelic learner education within the council area during the lifetime of the plan.
Current position	No current provision
Desired Outcome / Indicator	Gaelic learner education available in SBC schools
Actions Required	Liaise with GLPS with the aim of establishing GLE
Target Date	April 2025
Responsibility	Scottish Borders Council Quality Improvement Officer

High-level Aim	Support and encourage families and groups of families wishing to establish Gaelic early years and/or primary school provision within the Scottish Borders Council area
Current position	No current practice.
Desired Outcome / Indicator	Families with an interest in Gaelic education supported  Increase in Gaelic early years provision within the Council area
Actions Required	Support families with an interest in Gaelic education  Establish Gaelic early years education if demand is sufficient.( this will be monitored through information gathered at enrolment  Liaise with Gaelic early years groups

Target Date	April 2024 annually thereafter
Responsibility	Scottish Borders Council

<b>Promoting a Positive Image of Gaelic</b>	
High-level Aim	Work with Live Borders and other key partners to include a Gaelic drama and music element into the curriculum, in a relevant school cluster, as a pilot, with the aim of attracting more young people into learning about Gaelic language and culture
Current position	No current provision
Desired Outcome / Indicator	Pilot of Gaelic drama and music within the curriculum of school cluster carried out.
Actions Required	Identify relevant school cluster  Work with Live Borders and other key partners to include a Gaelic drama and music element into the curriculum  Feedback from children and teachers
Target Date	April 2024, annually thereafter
Responsibility	Scottish Borders Council

High-level Aim	Investigate the potential for partnership working with VisitScotland as part of the Gaelic tourism strategy development
Current position	No current provision
Desired Outcome / Indicator	Engagement with the Gaelic tourism strategy and VisitScotland  Increase in the Gaelic tourism sector in SBC.
Actions Required	Work with VisitScotland
Target Date	April 2025
Responsibility	Scottish Borders Council

<b>Training and Language Learning</b>	
<b>Current position</b>	No staff training is available in Gaelic current position module on Gaelic available on SB Learn Training is being developed for teachers to support learning & teaching in Gaelic in schools We offered and ran a course for teachers in partnership with Togi Gaelic in January - May 2022. Two teachers attended this course. We have since offered three more courses; 2 6-week courses for beginners and 1 standalone workshop day. This was

	<p>offered across Scottish Borders Council and the other South-East authorities however we had no uptake. This was despite our best efforts to promote the course but was consistent with what we were seeing in CLPL uptake elsewhere at the time.</p> <p>The council is happy to explore and offer regional online courses for teachers. The Gaelic Specific Grant could be used to support this.</p>
<b>Proposed Action</b>	Explore and assess demand for Gaelic learning for staff Identify possible training models and approaches (e.g. Gaelic awareness, language learning etc.) Work with local partners to promote Gaelic learning opportunities locally (e.g. Newbattle Abbey College),
<b>Proposed Outcome/ Indicator</b>	Improved staff engagement in and awareness of Gaelic language
<b>Lead service officer</b>	Organisational Development officers /Quality Improvement Officer and Gaelic Lanuage Plan Implementation and Monitoring Group
<b>Timescale</b>	April 2024

### **Adult Learning**

<b>Adult Learning</b>	
<b>Current position</b>	One Gaelic class is currently is being offered. Partnership opportunities are available and are starting to be promoted locally
<b>Proposed action</b>	Identify and assess further opportunities for adult learning Work with local partners to provide and promote adult / community learning of Gaelic Identify Gaelic speaking members of the community interested in the promotion and development of Gaelic language
<b>Proposed Outcome/ Indictor</b>	Increased offer of local community Gaelic language learning opportunities Engagement with the Gaelic speaking local community
<b>Lead service officer</b>	Gaelic Language Plan Implementation and Monitoring Group
<b>Timescale</b>	April 2025

### **Gaelic in Communities, Partnerships and networks**

<b>Gaelic in Communities, Partnerships and networks</b>	
<b>Current position</b>	Engagement and partnership working underway with local Gaelic language partners Partnership representation on the SBC Gaelic steering group SBC is represented by lead officers on national Gaelic networks e.g. Gaelic Language Network (GLAN)

<b>Proposed action</b>	Continue to engage with local and national partners to support the development of local Gaelic learning opportunities and GME provision Engage with the GLE consortia to evaluate opportunities for Gaelic language staff development. Identify key local partners (business, tourism etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to attend national network events, communicate opportunities and information relating to Gaelic language and promote staff development for example encouraging a Gaelic / Scots / English poetry reading at a Borders Book Festival – .</li> <li>• Continue to deliver Gaelic Bookbug sessions – (No requests to date for these session to be delivered in Gaelic)</li> </ul>
<b>Proposed Outcome/ Indicator</b>	Enhanced provision of Gaelic learning and development Increased engagement with and awareness of Gaelic language
<b>Lead service officer</b>	Scottish Borders Council Quality Improvement Officer and Gaelic Language Plan Implementation and monitoring Group
<b>Timescale</b>	April 2026

<b>Gaelic in the Arts</b>	
<b>Current position</b>	The Council has not made any provision for Gaelic in arts, heritage and recreation
<b>Proposed action</b>	The council's arts service will review its policies and make provision for Gaelic arts activities
<b>Proposed outcome/indicator</b>	The arts service's policies will make provision for Gaelic arts activities
<b>Lead service officer</b>	Service Manager Communities & Partnerships and Live Borders Manager
<b>Timescale</b>	April 2027

## 4.2 Staff Audit

As part of the Council's remit to consult staff, to determine what other languages staff could speak and to ask if any member of staff was interested in learning Gaelic, a form was pulled together and posted on Yammer for staff to access a copy of the consultation is attached at Appendix B

## 4.3 Gaelic Language Acquisition and Usage

Scottish Borders Council recognises that a sustainable future for Gaelic requires more people to learn the language and that attention requires to be focused on the

home, education and adult learning as the key means of achieving this. We will take the following steps to help create a supportive environment for growing the number of Gaelic speakers in Scottish Borders.

<b><u>Training and Language Learning</u></b>	
<b>Current position</b>	No staff training is available in Gaelic as there has been no demand for this to date.  Training is being developed for teachers to support learning & teaching in Gaelic in schools
<b>Proposed Action</b>	Explore and assess demand for Gaelic learning for staff Identify possible training models and approaches (e.g. Gaelic awareness, language learning etc.) Work with local partners to promote Gaelic learning opportunities locally (e.g. Newbattle Abbey College).
<b>Proposed Outcome/ Indicator</b>	Improved staff engagement in and awareness of Gaelic language
<b>Lead service officer</b>	Scottish Borders Council Quality Improvement Officer and Gaelic Language Plan Implementation and Monitoring Strategic Group
<b>Timescale</b>	April 2026

<b><u>Adult Learning</u></b>	
<b>Current position</b>	One Gaelic class is currently is being offered. Partnership opportunities are available and are starting to be promoted locally
<b>Proposed action</b>	Identify and assess further opportunities for adult learning Work with local partners to provide and promote adult / community learning of Gaelic Identify Gaelic speaking members of the community interested in the promotion and development of Gaelic language
<b>Proposed Outcome/ Indicator</b>	Increased offer of local community Gaelic language learning opportunities Engagement with the Gaelic speaking local community
<b>Lead service officer</b>	Scottish Borders Council Quality Improvement Officer and Gaelic Language Plan Implementation and Monitoring Strategic Group
<b>Timescale</b>	April 2026

<b><u>Gaelic in Communities, Partnerships and networks</u></b>
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<b>Current position</b>	Engagement and partnership working underway with local Gaelic language partners Partnership representation on the Council's Gaelic strategic group. Scottish Borders Council is represented by lead officers on national Gaelic networks e.g. Gaelic Language Network (GLAN)
<b>Proposed action</b>	Continue to engage with local and national partners to support the development of local Gaelic learning opportunities and GME provision Engage with the GLE consortia to evaluate opportunities for Gaelic language staff development. Identify key local partners (business, tourism etc.) Continue to attend national network events, communicate opportunities and information relating to Gaelic language and promote staff development for example encouraging a Gaelic / Scots / English poetry reading at a Borders Book Festival. Develop a page on the Council's website for Gaelic news and events etc.
<b>Proposed Outcome/ Indicator</b>	Enhanced provision of Gaelic learning and development Increased engagement with and awareness of Gaelic language
<b>Lead service officer</b>	Scottish Borders Council Quality Improvement Officer and Gaelic Language Plan Implementation and Monitoring Strategic Group
<b>Timescale</b>	April 2026

<b>Gaelic in the Arts</b>	
<b>Current position</b>	The Council has not made any provision for Gaelic in arts, heritage and recreation
<b>Proposed action</b>	The council's arts service will review its policies and where relevant make provision for Gaelic arts activities
<b>Proposed outcome/ indicator</b>	The arts service's policies will make provision for Gaelic arts activities
<b>Lead service officer</b>	Service Manager Connected Communities and Arts Manager
<b>Timescale</b>	April 2026

## 5. Consultation on the draft Gaelic Language Plan

5.1 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.

5.2 The Council's Gaelic Language Plan was circulated for public consultation from 12<sup>th</sup> April to 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2021 and the results of the consultation are shown in Appendix C

## 6. Monitoring the plan

Scottish Borders Council is committed to monitoring the Gaelic Language Plan and will compile an annual progress report that will be provided to Bòrd na Gàidhlig and made available to the public.

## 7. The Gaelic Language Plan in the public authority

### Overall responsibility for the plan

The Chief Executive will be responsible ultimately for ensuring that Scottish Borders Council delivers on the commitments set out in this Plan over the five-year period of 2023-2028. The senior officer with operational responsibility for overseeing preparation, delivery and monitoring of Scottish Borders Council Gaelic Language Plan is:

POSITION: Quality Improvement Officer  
DEPARTMENT: Education and Lifelong Learning  
NAME OF ORGANISATION: Scottish Borders Council  
ADDRESS: Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose TD6 0SA  
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 0300 100 1800  
E-MAIL ADDRESS: HQOperations@scotborders.gov.uk

### Day-to-day responsibility for the plan

The Senior Business Services Officer has day-to-day responsibility for the delivery and monitoring of Scottish Borders Council's Gaelic Language Plan. Queries regarding the day-to-day operation of the plan should be addressed to:

POSITION: Senior Business Support Officer  
DEPARTMENT: Corporate Transformation and Service Director  
NAME OF ORGANISATION: Scottish Borders Council  
ADDRESS: Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose TD6 0SA  
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 0300 100 1800  
E-MAIL ADDRESS: [research@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:research@scotborders.gov.uk)

## 8. Gaelic Language plan implementation and monitoring group

To ensure that the Gaelic Language Plan is embedded across the corporate structure of the public authority, Bòrd na Gàidhlig recommends the establishment of a Gaelic Language Plan implementation and monitoring group, consisting of staff

from across the public authority with responsibility for developing, implementing and monitoring different aspects of the plan.

The group will be responsible for monitoring the Gaelic Plan and ensuring the actions are implemented. The group will meet a minimum of twice a year (more if required).

## 9. Publication

### Internal

Scottish Borders Council's Gaelic Language Plan will be published in Gaelic and in English on our website. In addition, we will:-

- issue a bilingual press release announcing the plan
- publicise the plan through a variety of social media platforms
- make hard copies available on request

### External

The Council will also: -

- distribute copies to arms-length organisations and other third-party organisations, explaining their role in the delivery of the plan
- distribute copies of the plan to key stakeholders in the public, private and third sectors
- distribute copies of the plan to relevant Gaelic organisations and other interested bodies



# Appendix A



## Appendix B

### Staff Audit

#### Consultation for Scottish Borders Council Gaelic Language Plan

As part of the Council's remit to consult staff, to determine what other languages staff could speak and to ask if any member of staff was interested in learning Gaelic, a form was pulled together and posted on Yammer for staff to access and the post was as follows:

☞ **A bheil duine sam bith an seo aig a bheil Gàidhlig?** ☞

If you've been able to translate the sentence above, you'll know that we're looking to find out if there's anyone in SBC who speaks Gaelic. We're also interested in hearing from anyone who's looking to learn the language, or further develop their existing knowledge.

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.

As part of the Act, all Council's in Scotland have been asked by the Bòrd na Gàidhlig to prepare a statutory Gaelic Plan to include:

- increasing the use of Gaelic within our organisation and encouraging more people to use Gaelic more often when they interact with us
- increasing the opportunity for people to learn Gaelic as part of our day-to-day operations
- promoting a positive image of Gaelic whenever we can as part of our day-to-day operations as an organisation

#### **Take part in our survey**

We're undertaking a staff survey to see how many employees can either speak or understand Gaelic or who would be interested in learning more. If that's you, we really want to hear from you.

- The survey was made available 9<sup>th</sup> November 2021 online at: <https://forms.office.com/r/PFaFvR4DLv>
- The closing date was 21<sup>st</sup> December 2021

## Results

A total of 30 responses were received and the questions and responses are as follows:

No	Question	Yes	No	Comment
Q1	Can you understand/speak Gaelic	4	26	
Q2	Gaelic Speakers only			
	Understand Gaelic	3		
	Speak Gaelic	2		
	Read or write Gaelic	2		
	Sing Gaelic	2		
	Other	1		
Q3	How often do you use Gaelic			
	Daily	2		
	Weekly/monthly	0		
	Occasionally	2		
	Never	1		
Q4	Other than English can you speak another language	11	19	
Q5	Can you speak any of the following languages			
	French	7		
	Spanish	2		
	British Sign Language	2		
	Scots	3		
	Other	6		
Q6	What other language can you speak ?			
	German	3		
	Afrikaans	1		
	Nepali	1		
	Cantonese			
Q7	Would you be interested in learning or improving your Gaelic	24	5	
Q8	Would any of the following options interest you?			
	Gaelic awareness	16		
	Gaelic conversation	21		
	Join a Gaelic choir	8		

Respondents were asked what other Gaelic activities would interest you and the comments are included in the table below

Chance to pass on my knowledge to people at early stages of learning Gaelic
Learn to speak Gaelic
I have been learning for just under a year but my vocabulary and speaking opportunities are still limited. Any activity that allows me to increase both would be hugely beneficial.
Any lessons or language learning workshops or opportunities
Learning the language
Social events with Gaelic speakers or Gaelic learners; joint events with Gaelic speakers in other local authorities (i.e. Edinburgh, Midlothian, East Lothian)

Due to the interest in learning more about Gaelic and interest in Gaelic social events, the Council will ensure that these events are promoted and opportunities are made available for all residents of the Scottish Borders.

## Appendix C

### 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
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