

Use of Gaelic on Council Website

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 At the Short Life Working Group (SLWG) meeting held on 22nd October 2012 it was agreed that a report be prepared which looks at the possibility of increasing the use of Gaelic on the Councils website, and any associated financial implications.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the SLWG Members:

- 2.1 Note the contents of the report and the options that are available to the Council in terms of increasing the use of Gaelic on the Councils website.

3.0 DETAIL

3.1 Current Set Up/Website Capabilities

- 3.1.1 The Website Content Management System, Drupal, has a number of add-on modules that allow multilingual sites to be created. These modules do not offer any automated language translation but rather a simple way for users to switch the language on pages that have been manually translated. All additional modules for Drupal are open source and there is therefore no cost for software. The modules have been successfully tested on a development version of the website.

- 3.1.2 The creation of basic, text based pages on the website (regardless of language) is very simple and can be done by anyone with appropriate permissions. Training would be provided by the Web team. However, the council's Web Team do not speak or write Gaelic and are therefore unable to provide any translation of content or any quality control over content translated by third parties. The web team would continue to have the ability to provide support in all other aspects of maintaining the pages. Once content has been translated into Gaelic for the website, the same information can be sent to the Looking Local system for display on televisions and via mobile phone.

3.2 Gaelic Language Act Implementation Fund

- 3.2.1 Bòrd na Gàidhlig was established under the powers of The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005, which also outlines its key statutory functions, including the publication of a National Gaelic Language Plan and granting authority for the Bòrd to require relevant public authorities to produce a Gaelic Language Plan.

- 3.2.2 The Gaelic Language Act Implementation Fund (GLAIF) was established to help public authorities in the delivery of commitments in their Gaelic Plans, and in support of the National Gaelic Language Plan. Approximately £1.4M has been made available by the Scottish Government for the fund.
- 3.2.3 A working group was set up by the Council to develop the next Gaelic Plan for Argyll and Bute. A draft copy of the Plan was discussed at the Chief Executive’s DMT on 5 November, and is scheduled to go to the Community Services DMT and the SMT on 12 and 26 November respectively.
- 3.2.4 In line with the discussions held at the SLWG, where it was suggested that the use of Gaelic language on the website be increased, there is specific reference to this within the new Gaelic Plan as follows;

Outcome	Success Measures	Target/Timescale
Gaelic is audible and visible in our communities	Website and multi media platforms will have an increasing amount of Gaelic material	As platforms come on stream – at least 30 per cent in Gaelic

- 3.2.5 The Council could apply for funding through the GLAIF to help achieve this action. The GLAIF provides 80% of costs up to £25K, and supports a range of initiatives, including *“support for the enhanced visibility and status of Gaelic in the dissemination of public information”*.
- 3.2.6 The funding round for 2012/13 is almost complete, with limited funds available. On this basis, it would be beneficial to wait until the new financial year when funding for 2013/14 becomes available. No formal announcement has been made in regard to the funding programme for next year, but would expect further information to become available in March 2013.
- 3.2.7 Funding is typically provided on an annual basis, and there is no guarantee that projects successful in a particular funding round will automatically receive support beyond that financial year, and there is the potential that Council’s would be expected to pick up costs in future years from existing budgets.

3.3 Translation Services

- 3.3.1 In order for the Council to increase the use of Gaelic on the Website, translation services require to be used due to the absence of any in house resource. The Council currently utilise the services of a Gaelic translator based on Skye, which is arranged through Ionad Chaluim Chille Ìle (The Columba Centre, Islay). The rate is £105 per 1000 words and there is currently no corporate budget for translation requests.
- 3.3.2 To reduce the costs associated with using external translation services, it is proposed as part of the Gaelic Action Plan to undertake a skills audit to identify any employees who are fluent in Gaelic and have the ability to translate/proof read.
- 3.3.3 Highland Council has a Gaelic Translation Unit and there is the potential for the Council to use this service, but would have financial implications. Costs for this service have been requested from the relevant Officer at Highland Council but to date these have not been received.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

4.1 The Council website has the functionality to allow for multilingual sites to be created, however there is currently no internal resource available to provide translation/proof reading services. The main options available to the council in the short term to increase the use of Gaelic on the website is to apply for funding through the GLAIF, which is likely to be one off for a year, or to continue buying in translation services. In the longer term, there may be the opportunity to utilise the skills of Council employees who are fluent in Gaelic. This will be dependent on the results of any skills audit undertaken and the willingness of current employees to undertake this role.

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1	Policy	Compliance with Council's Gaelic Action Plan
5.2	Financial	£105 per 1000 words if translation service continues to be utilised
5.3	HR	None at present
5.4	Equalities Impact Assessment	None at present
5.5	Legal	None at present
5.6	Risk	None at present
5.7	Customer Service	Potential to increase visibility of Gaelic language in dissemination of public information

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