





**Comhairle Earra Ghàidheal agus Bhòid  
Plana Gàidhlig  
Argyll and Bute Council  
Gaelic Language Plan  
2022-2026**



*This plan has been prepared under Section 3 of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 and was approved by Bòrd na Gàidhlig on 16.12.2022*

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# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Our Council is forward looking and ambitious, continuously improving our relationship with our partners, customers and employees to ensure that we deliver the right services, by the best people, in the best way.
- 1.2 Our vision is ‘Choose Argyll, Love Argyll’ and this is underpinned by our Gaelic Language Plan 2022-2026 priorities, which are shared with the Scottish Government.
  - (a) Promoting a positive image of Gaelic
  - (b) Increasing the learning of Gaelic
  - (c) Increasing the use of Gaelic
- 1.3 We recognise the role Gaelic has played in the history of Argyll and Bute and we continue to promote the language and its culture to our communities and afford Gaelic equal respect.
- 1.4 We are committed to ensuring that the Council complies with its duties under the Gaelic Language Act and the Gaelic Education Act and, in order to do this, we will continue to make appropriate Gaelic services available to the public in the authority’s area.
- 1.5 We are proud to be one of the local authorities which regularly host The Royal National Mod. The very first Gaelic Mod was held in Oban in 1892 and has since grown to be a major annual festival attracting visitors from across Scotland and the world. The economic benefits realised from holding such a high profile event in Argyll and Bute are welcomed by our communities and continue to emphasise the strong relationship which Argyll and Bute has with the Gaelic language, culture and history.
- 1.6 We recognise the importance of Gaelic in our communities where Gaelic continues to be used.
- 1.7 This Gaelic Language Plan describes how the Council, together in partnership with other organisations, will meet our requirements to deliver on the Gaelic Language Act and ensure a long term future for Gaelic in Argyll and Bute.

**Councillor Robin Currie**  
**Council Leader**

**Pippa Milne**  
**Chief Executive**

## 2 Argyll and Bute Council

- 2.1 Argyll and Bute Council is one of 32 unitary local authorities in Scotland. It is responsible for a range of services including education, waste management, roads, piers, ferries and airports, planning and building control, economic growth, strategic housing, community planning, environmental health and many others.
- 2.2 Argyll and Bute Council is the second largest of Scotland's 32 councils but in terms of population, it ranks 27th. The population estimate from the 2011 census was 88166<sup>1</sup>. Argyll and Bute covers nearly 10% of the total area of Scotland but has less than 2% of the population. Over 80% of our population lives within 1km of the coast.
- 2.3 From Appin in the North, to Campbeltown in the South, Argyll and Bute stretches for over 100 miles and from Tiree in the West to Helensburgh in the East it stretches a further 80 miles. 23 of Argyll and Bute's islands are inhabited and 17.1% of its residents are islanders<sup>2</sup>. Islands account for a third of Argyll and Bute's total area.
- 2.4 In order to discharge its duties as a local authority, Argyll and Bute Council operates two departments: Customer Services and Development and Infrastructure plus the Chief Executive's Unit. The Council is also a core partner in the Integrated Joint Board for Health and Social Care in Argyll and Bute. The Council employs over 5000 staff who are based in over 150 different locations across the area.
- 2.5 There are four administrative areas within the Council: Mid Argyll, Kintyre and Islands, Oban, Lorn and the Isles, Bute and Cowal, Helensburgh and Lomond.
- 2.6 The Council's political management arrangements comprise:
- a) Full Council of 36 elected members covering 11 multi member wards
  - b) Area Committees for the 4 administrative areas within Argyll and Bute
  - c) Strategic Committees for Community Services, Economy, Development and Infrastructure, Policy and Resources, Planning, Protective Services and Licensing.
- 2.7 The Council also works closely with Community Planning partners to deliver the Argyll and Bute Outcome Improvement Plan.
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## 3 Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Issuing of a Notice

### 3.1 The Act

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.

This document is Argyll and Bute Council's 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.

Argyll and Bute 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.

Argyll and Bute's Gaelic Language Plan will be submitted to Bòrd na Gàidhlig for approval following consultation and by the end of April 2018.

#### Consultation on a draft Gaelic Language Plan

The 2005 Act requires public bodies to bring the preparation of its Gaelic Language Plan to the attention of all interested parties. Argyll and Bute Council consults publicly on its Gaelic Language Plan takes representations into account made to it during the consultation process.

#### Summary of Gaelic in Scotland

Argyll and Bute Council recognises that Gaelic is an integral part of Scotland's heritage, national identity and cultural life. Argyll and Bute Council is committed to the objectives set out in the *National Gaelic Language Plan* and has put in place the necessary structures and initiatives to ensure that Gaelic has a sustainable future in Scotland.

Argyll and Bute Council recognises that the position of Gaelic is extremely fragile and if Gaelic is to be revitalised as a living language in Scotland, a concerted effort on the part of government, the public and private sectors, community organisations and individual speakers is required to:

- Enhance the status of Gaelic;
- Promote the acquisition and learning of Gaelic;
- Encourage the increased use of Gaelic.

## **4.0 Gaelic in Argyll and Bute**

4.1 Historically, Argyll is the heartland of Scots Gaelic. The Gaelic language has been spoken in Argyll since around the 5<sup>th</sup> century and was the common language in the kingdom of Dal Riata from the time an Irish Gaelic colony established themselves as the first Scots and the kings were anointed at Dunadd Hill. Throughout our history the language has been a key element in developing many aspects of Scottish culture.

### **4.2 Use and Interest in Gaelic**

There are communities in Argyll and Bute where Gaelic is still very much a part of everyday life. On islands such as Tiree and Islay, the Gaelic language is spoken widely in the community and retains local dialects and vocabulary. Interest in learning Gaelic and the known benefits of bilingual education are widely recognised and interest in Gaelic music and culture has increased significantly, resulting in a renewed and growing interest in Gaelic music and cultural events, particularly amongst younger people. There has been an increase in interest in Gaelic medium education, which will have an impact on future census numbers. Gaelic overall, however, has been in decline across Argyll and Bute over the years and the data below illustrate the decline of Gaelic speakers between the census carried out in 1991 and the 2001 census. There are a number of reasons for this, including inward migration of non-Gaelic speakers and older Gaelic speakers declining in numbers.

### **4.3 Census Data 2011**

4.3.1 The following data is from the 2011 Census where the people of Scotland were asked 4 questions about the Gaelic language – whether they could understand spoken Gaelic, speak, read or write Gaelic.

4.3.2 In Argyll and Bute as in Scotland, more generally, the number of Gaelic speakers fell between 2001 and 2011. The number of Gaelic speakers in Argyll and Bute fell by over 15% in this period. We will be monitoring the results of the 2022 survey.

4.3.3 Of people aged 3 and over, almost 6% had some Gaelic language ability in 2011. Of these 4.3% said they could speak, read or write the language.

### **4.4 Gaelic in Employment**

4.4.1 Argyll and Bute Council has a number of posts where Gaelic is essential or desirable. The majority of these posts are within the Education service and specifically in our schools. Posts where Gaelic is essential as a skill include Gaelic Childcare and Education Worker, Gaelic Language Auxiliary, Teacher of Gaelic Medium, Principal Teacher of Gaelic Medium, Teacher of Gaelic (secondary schools), Education Officer – Gaelic. Posts for which Gaelic is desirable include Head Teacher of Gaelic Medium, Principal Teachers of Languages in Secondary School and Head Teachers of Secondary Schools. Additionally there are pre-five workers employed in Gaelic Medium pre-five units. Gaelic language classes are offered to the wider staff group to support their understanding of the language and to improve customer service where knowledge of Gaelic can be a benefit.



4.4.2 The Council has a Gaelic Centre in Oban called 'Furan'. The centre has an Administrator who is a fluent Gaelic speaker and is a Hub for learning the language as part of structured classes for adults, for parents and for children, but also as a drop in Centre for visitors to find out about the language and learn a few words and phrases. The Furan Centre delivers a number of Gaelic sessions which include:

- Bookbug - Approximately 16 families attend weekly.
- Fealla-dha Furan – A 45 minute family session with songs, rhymes and stories, hosted by Pidheid, the Gaelic-speaking parrot.
- Leugh Leabhar - Book club aimed at children in Gaelic medium education.
- Furan Conversation Group – A free and informal group for people of all levels and fluency in.
- Parant s'paiste – Gaelic parent/carer and toddler group
- Gaelic for Parents – Aimed at parents with children in Gaelic Medium Education to learn different words and phrases suitable for conversation with their children at home.
- Speaking our Language Group – A mix of relaxed and informal conversation with up to 5 adults, followed by more structured learning using the "Speaking our Language" resources.

There are also other Gaelic sessions delivered out-with the Centre by the Furan Administrator, these include:

- Support for schools – Works with the Gaelic teaching staff and pupils in the Gaelic Medium sector and where Gaelic is Language 2 and taught to English Medium pupils from P1.
- Lynn Court Cèilidh – Fortnightly Ceilidh provided to the senior citizens within the care home which proves to be very popular.
- There are also a number of Fèis events throughout the year.

The Centre has been shortlisted for National Gaelic Awards and is growing in success and influence.

## **4.5 Gaelic in our Schools**

4.5.1 There are currently six primary schools (Bowmore, Rockfield, Salen, Sandbank, Strath of Appin and Bunessan) in the local authority which offer the opportunity of Gaelic medium education. The pupil roll in the schools which offer Gaelic Medium is shown below.

### **Oban and Lorn**

Rockfield Primary School provides Gaelic Medium education from age 3. Oban High School has a Gaelic department that delivers a fluent speakers and learner's pathway. Strath of Appin Primary School delivers Gaelic Medium from P1-P7.

### **Dunoon**

Sandbank Primary School have a Gaelic Early Learning Centre (Sgoil Araisch). Dunoon Grammar School's Gaelic department has a pathway for fluent speakers.

### **Mull**

Salen Primary School provides Gaelic Medium education from age 3. Tobermory High School's Gaelic department has a fluent speaker's and learner's pathway. Bunessan Primary School provides Gaelic Medium education from P1-P7. Childcare and Education Worker delivers input bilingually to children in the Early Learning Centre at Bunessan.

### **Tiree**

Tiree Primary / High School provides Gaelic education from 3 – 18.

### **Islay**

Bowmore Primary School provides Gaelic Medium education from age 3. Islay High School has a learner's and fluent speaker's pathway.

- 4.5.2 There are 2121 pupils learning Gaelic as L2 or L3 in our primary and secondary schools. There are 58 children in Sgoiltean Araich, 243 in Gaelic Medium primary education and 98 Gaelic Medium students in secondary.
- 4.5.3 There are currently four secondary schools that offer Gaelic (Learners) and Gàidhlig to Advanced Higher level –Islay High, Oban High, Tobermory High and Tiree High. Dunoon Grammar School has a Gàidhlig (Fluent) Pathway from S1 to S6.
- 4.5.4 The number of FTE Gaelic Teachers within Argyll and Bute Council in Primary is 18.58. The number of FTE Gaelic Teachers in Secondary is 2.60. There are still vacancies to fill in Oban and Islay.

## **5.0 Internal Gaelic Capacity Audit**

Argyll and Bute Council conducted an assessment of existing internal Gaelic capacity as part of the preparation of this Gaelic Language Plan and wider employee engagement. The results of this audit were taken in to consideration when developing commitments in the Plan.

The following results were recorded:

- 13% of respondents to the survey said they can communicate in Gaelic.
- 48% of respondents felt that Gaelic could be increased within Argyll and Bute Council.
- 31% of respondents would like to learn Gaelic or improve their Gaelic.
- 3% are happy with their current level of fluency.
- 21% are interested to learn Gaelic greetings or simple phrases to use with customers
- 12% would like to gain spoken fluency or improve their confidence in conversational Gaelic
- 10% would like to learn or improve reading and writing in Gaelic.

The Provision of language learning classes has been made available to Council employees. The class participants are throughout all Council Departments and locations. Throughout the life of the Plan we will continue to engage with staff about their learning and adapt to their requests. Individual Officers and Elected Members where appropriate have bi-lingual email addresses and business cards.

Argyll and Bute Council's position on all external signage is to replace these in bi-lingual. We take advice from Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba (AÀA).

The Council holds a Gaelic Policy Lead Group quarterly and Gaelic is reported on to the Community Services Committee on a regular basis.

The Council uses external providers for translation services.

## **6 Gaelic Language Policy**

### **6.1 Scope**

- a) This plan applies to all employees and elected members of Argyll and Bute Council. The overall intention is to create a working environment where the Gaelic language and culture is visible and promoted both inside the council and externally throughout our communities. The Plan builds on the work that the Council has undertaken in the past in implementing our previous Gaelic Language Plans, promoting Gaelic Education and recognises the benefits of bilingual learning.

### **6.2 Policy Statement**

- b) Argyll and Bute Council's policy is to promote the range of Gaelic services and resources which are available to our service users.
- c) We will also ensure that the principle, introduced by the National Gaelic Language Plan that the Gaelic and English languages will be accorded equal respect, will be implemented across all of our services.
- d) We are committed to the promotion of Gaelic education, language, cultural and economic activities through continued awareness raising and language learning opportunities for children, employees and our communities.
- e) We aim to increase the number of Gaelic learners in Argyll and Bute and to promote the visibility of Gaelic in Argyll and Bute.
- f) We will work with parents and carers of children in Gaelic schools to meet the requirements of the National Plan.
- g) We will ensure that the formation, renewal and monitoring of policies will be in line with the Gaelic Language Plan.

### **6.3 Mainstreaming Gaelic**

Argyll and Bute Council recognises that the various priority areas identified in the National Gaelic Language Plan will be primarily implemented through our Gaelic Language Plan but that opportunities will arise to promote and develop the language through existing policy measures. Argyll and Bute Council will seek to identify policy areas where Gaelic can be pro-actively incorporated and the priorities of the National Gaelic Language Plan.

The Action Plan highlights the activities that the Council has already mainstreamed in terms of the use of Gaelic. We see this development as corresponding to the normalisation principle which aims to include Gaelic as an everyday part of life in Scotland.

## **7.0 The National Gaelic Language Plan**

The National Gaelic Language Plan has two main aims:

- Increasing the Use of Gaelic
- Increasing the learning of Gaelic

Argyll and Bute Council is committed to supporting the delivery of the National Plan and in this section we set out how we will achieve that aim.

### **Home and Early Years**

#### **Rationale:**

Argyll and Bute Council recognises that a sustainable future for Gaelic requires more people to learn the language and that attention requires to be focused on 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 Scotland.

- Raising awareness of the importance for acquiring Gaelic and encouraging parents to choose Gaelic education for their children
- Ensuring practical support, resources and advice are available for passing Gaelic on to children in the home and in Gaelic early years education
- Enabling links to be strengthened between the use of Gaelic in the home and Gaelic early years provision

### **Education**

#### **Rationale:**

Argyll and Bute Council recognises that creating a sustainable future for Gaelic requires not only increasing the number of people able to speak the language, but increasing actual usage. We recognise the importance of enabling more people to use Gaelic as their preferred and normal mode of communication in an increasingly wide range of daily activities.

- Carrying out initiatives to promote, establish and expand both GME and GLE at primary and secondary levels
- Ensuring adequate attention is given to the recruitment, retention, education, support and development of GME and GLE teachers
- Providing a range of opportunities for young people in both GME and GLE to engage in activities that enhance their Gaelic skills through greater use
- Ensuring that all steps are taken to secure the quality of both GME and GLE through National Guidance and other means.
- Supporting access to, and participation in, a range of Gaelic learning opportunities for adults
- Accessing resources to support adults learning Gaelic

## Community

### Rationale:

Argyll and Bute Council] recognises that the status of a language is affected by its presence in the daily environment and the extent to which it is used, valued and perceived to be valued by those institutions which play an important role in our daily lives.

- Encouraging support for initiatives that promote the use of Gaelic among all kinds of communities of speakers
- Encouraging support for increased situations in which Gaelic can be used informally by young people and adult learners.

## The Workplace

### Rationale:

Argyll and Bute Council recognises the need to strengthen the relevance and consistency of Gaelic and the importance of facilitating translation.

- Supporting a positive attitude to Gaelic in the workplace through awareness-raising and signage
- Accessing funding to enable opportunities for staff to learn Gaelic and for speakers to develop their language skills

## Media & Arts; Heritage & Tourism

### Rationale:

Argyll and Bute Council recognises the need to strengthen the relevance and consistency of Gaelic.

- Encouraging the promotion of the visibility and audibility of Gaelic as a unique part of Scotland's heritage
- Encouraging an increase in the use of Gaelic in heritage and tourism sectors.

- Encouraging appropriate recognition of Gaelic and its use in places of special interest and in promoting national events.

## Corpus

### Rationale:

Argyll and Bute Council recognises the need to strengthen the relevance and consistency of Gaelic and the importance of facilitating translation services.

- Co-ordination of a range of language related initiatives through supporting the Gaelic Policy Lead Group
- Ensuring appropriate access to translation and interpretation
- Ensuring that information and resources on Gaelic are available to employees.

## 8.0 Scottish Government National Priorities

Bòrd na Gàidhlig is committed to achieving the Strategic Objectives as established by The Scottish Government, and has identified the ways in which the National Gaelic Language Plan aims to address the Scotland's National Outcomes.

Development Area	#	National Outcome Statement
<b>Home &amp; Early Years Education Corpus</b>	5	Our children have the best chance in life and are ready to succeed.
	4	Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.
	3	We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation.
<b>Communities Workplace</b>	11	We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.
	2	We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people.
	6	We live longer, healthier lives
<b>Arts &amp; Media Heritage &amp; Tourism</b>	13	We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity

<b>The whole plan</b>	16	Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people’s needs
	7	We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scotland’s society

## 9.0 Local Government Priorities

Argyll and Bute Council works closely in partnership with the Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership to deliver on the overall ABOIP objective:

Argyll and Bute’s Economic Success is Built on a Growing Population

There are six joint outcomes, which are also shared in the Council’s Corporate Plan:

- The economy is diverse and thriving
- We have infrastructure that supports sustainable growth
- Education, skills and training maximises opportunities for all
- Children and young people have the best possible start
- People live active, healthier and independent lives
- People live in safer and stronger communities

The Gaelic Language Plan directly aligns to delivery on these outcomes. The ABOIP will be reviewed in 2024.

## 10 Review and Monitoring

The plan will be monitored regularly by the Community Services Committee. It is important to acknowledge that the language plan remains adaptable and flexible to the priorities set out by the Council, particularly when circumstances may change.

### 10.1 The Gaelic Language Plan in the Corporate Structure

This plan is the policy of Argyll and Bute Council and has been endorsed both by our senior management team and Council members.

#### Position with operational responsibility over the Plan

The senior officer with operational responsibility for overseeing preparation and monitoring of Argyll and Bute Council’s Gaelic Language Plan is:

Jane Fowler  
Head of Customer Support Services

Argyll and Bute Council  
Kilmory  
Lochgilphead  
PA31 8RT

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- 10.1.1 Overall responsibility for the plan lies with the Chief Executive and the Policy Lead for Communities, Housing, Islands and Gaelic.
- 10.1.2 The senior officer with operational responsibility for overseeing preparation and monitoring of the plan is the Head of Customer Support Services. Delivery of the individual actions in the plan is the responsibility of the designated officer.
- 10.1.3 Any queries about the day-to-day operation of the Plan should be communicated to [gaelic@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:gaelic@argyll-bute.gov.uk) and will be co-ordinated by the Head of Customer Support Services.

## **11 Delivery of the Plan and Resourcing**

- 11.1 Customer Support Services leads on the preparation and monitoring of the Gaelic Language Plan. Officers from across Council services are responsible for the delivery of their own actions.
- 11.2 Lead officers will provide regular update reports to the Head of Customer Support Services, the Policy Lead and the Community Services Committee through the monitoring of the plan.
- 11.3 The plan will be implemented by using existing resources, noting the current challenging financial position facing the Council. The Council will continue to seek external financial support from Bòrd na Gaidhlig and Scottish Government to invest resources in Gaelic education, language, the economy and culture to deliver the plan,
- 11.4 The Council accepts that a strong working relationship with other organisations operating in Argyll and Bute which deliver services and activities through Gaelic are pivotal to sustaining growth in Gaelic in Argyll and Bute and will support effective implementation of our language plan, thus creating more opportunities for Gaelic to be used.

## **12 Promotion of the Plan**

- 12.1 The plan will be promoted to all employees and elected members through the use of the website, 'The Hub' - which is the staff intranet, Cascade and newsletters.
- 12.2 Externally, the plan will be promoted through the website, the use of social media sites e.g. Facebook, Twitter and the 'Furan' Gaelic Centre in Oban.



- 12.3 The Council will retain and continue to host and facilitate the online Gaelic forum. This will be a key mechanism for promoting the plan to community planning partners and Gaelic organisations and individuals operating across and out-with Argyll and Bute.

## **13 Responsibility for the Plan**

- 13.1 Overall responsibility for the Plan lies with the Chief Executive and the Policy Lead for Education and Gaelic.
- 13.2 The senior officer with operational responsibility for overseeing preparation and monitoring of the plan is the Head of Customer Support Services.
- 13.3 Any queries about the day-to-day operation of the Plan should be communicated to [gaelic@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:gaelic@argyll-bute.gov.uk) and will be co-ordinated by Customer Support Services.