



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Gaelic Language Plan: 2023-2028

1 June 2023

Reference: SPCB (2023) Paper 40

Executive summary

1. This paper updates the SPCB with the final version of the proposed Gaelic Language Plan 2023-2028 and builds on the previously agreed approach approved by the SPCB on 2 February 2023. It also includes the latest Annual Report required by Bòrd na Gàidhlig (BnG) for publication.
2. Following the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 coming into force, the SPCB agreed its first Gaelic Language Plan (GLP) for April 2007 to March 2013. This first plan established some basic service levels for the public, staff and MSPs. The second Plan ran until March 2018 and focused on our communications and workplace training. The third iteration of our Plan runs until June 2023 and has the following 3 overarching aims:
 - a. Use Gaelic where appropriate to reach out to communities across Scotland and ensure communities can reach out to us in Gaelic (by facilitating interactions with the Parliament in Gaelic).
 - b. Support our MSPs and staff in developing confidence around using Gaelic in their work (by providing and promoting support and opportunities for them to do this).
 - c. Integrate Gaelic into the fabric of the Parliament's thinking (by ensuring work is delivered alongside and within existing programmes as well as having activities specifically for raising the profile of Gaelic).
3. The SPCB agreed when officials were preparing the public consultation of our fourth plan (GLP4) that our approach should continue and grow from our work initiated in GLP3.
4. The development of the 4th iteration of our plan involved a two-step internal and external consultation:

- a. Internal - Meetings were held with every office of the Parliament to discuss what this could look like in their area. This resulted in the draft we then consulted the public on.
 - b. External - The public consultation on GLP4 took place from 20 February to 3 April 2023, generating 700 page views on our website and 124 responses (a high level). The results of that consultation are contained in detail in Annex 1 of this paper, including 2 modifications based on this feedback.
5. SPCB is asked to agree the resulting GLP4 Plan in Annex 2 and the latest Annual Report in Annex 3.

Resource Implications

6. As the Plan proposes building Gaelic considerations into the start of projects, active consideration of the cost / benefits of the Gaelic aspects of any project alongside the wider objectives may influence the scope, timescales and targets of projects. This helps offices ensure any Gaelic work is delivered within existing resources over the next five years.

Governance issues

7. The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 requires the SPCB to publish a GLP every 5 years. The focus of a GLP is to set out how a body will use and enable the use of Gaelic within its functions. Three guiding principles from the Act which should underpin GLPs are:
 - a. to secure the status of Gaelic as an official language of Scotland commanding *equal respect* to English.
 - b. to support organisations in delivering *reasonable and proportionate* Gaelic services according to their individual circumstances
 - c. for organisations to have a long-term vision for Gaelic that will grow Gaelic provision over time through *incremental growth*.
8. During the life of our Gaelic Language Plans, we provide public updates annually to BnG (as per Annex 3), and quarterly to Leadership Team members on progress.

Publication Scheme

9. Once approved by the SPCB, a final version of the Plan will be published and submitted to BnG. This will result in the GLP4 being placed on our

website and becoming a national record with National Archives of Scotland.

Communications

10. A comprehensive communications plan which will use a variety of techniques and approaches to reach those who may be interested in the Plan is being developed. This will build on the successful approach to the GLP consultation which sought to engage and target Gaelic speakers / learners and those with an interest in the language.
11. This will include internal communications (such as promotion to MSPs and their staff) and external communications (including website content, social media and email marketing). This year around half of all consultation respondents wanted to keep in touch with us, up from a third for our last plan.

Next steps

12. Following SPCB feedback, the Plan will be published on our website and submitted to BnG by 6 June. They will respond to it in due course and expect us to deliver to the Plan during the interim.

Decision

13. SPCB is invited to:
 - note the results of the public consultation of our GLP4 in Annex 1.
 - approve the 4th iteration of our GLP as set out in Annex 2.
 - approve the annual report for GLP3 in 2021-2022 as set out in Annex 3.

Public Engagement Services Office

May 2023