



## North Ayrshire Council Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

### **North Ayrshire Council Gaelic Language Plan 2019-2024 Consultation**

#### **Gaelic Language Plan Public Consultation 2019-2024**

In advance of the opening of our consultation on the draft of our Gaelic language plan, each of our Locality Partnerships were given an opportunity to discuss it. These meetings took place on

*Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> March at Ardrossan Civic Centre, Ardrossan with 20 attending.*

Gaelic Language Plan 2019-2024 Rhona Arthur provided an update on the forthcoming consultation around the North Ayrshire Gaelic Language Plan. The background to the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 and the work which was undertaken in the first plan (2014-2019) was provided. A consultation exercise will take place around the new plan in April and May. Discussion took place around the impact of the plan on the provision of sign language education and the Gaelic language workshops at Stevenston Library which were well received.

*Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> March at Bridgend Community Centre, Kilbirnie with 18 attending.*

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*Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March at Nethermains Community Centre, Kilwinning with 14 attending.*

Gaelic Language Plan Rhona Arthur advised the Draft Gaelic Language Plan is now on the North Ayrshire Council website for consultation. Noted.

*Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March at Largs Campus, Largs with 20 attending.*

Gaelic Language Plan 2019-2024 The Lead Officer provided a verbal update on consultation commencing in April to refresh the Council's Gaelic Language Plan and on the work done to maximise available funding in this area to allow, for example, the introduction of Gaelic signage to new buildings. The Partnership discussed:-

- the proportion of the population of North Ayrshire which speaks Gaelic;
- whether, following a question from a member of the public in attendance, any Council funding was available to allow the translation into Gaelic of a visitor leaflet; and
- the potential for participatory budgeting funding to allow for the teaching of basic Gaelic in schools.

*Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> March at Woodlands Centre, Irvine, Largs with 25 attending.*

Gaelic Language Plan 2019-24 Forthcoming consultation on the Gaelic Language Plan 2019-24. The Partnership agreed that this be circulated to Members of the Partnership and anyone interested give a response to the consultation.

North Ayrshire Council published the draft of the North Ayrshire Gaelic Language Plan in both Gaelic and English on Shaping North Ayrshire, which is an interactive participatory tool using the Consul platform on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2019 and the discussion closed on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2019. A link was available from the Council website's Gaelic pages. We continued promoting engagement through the Shaping North Ayrshire platform through social media and press releases to the local press. This was picked up by The Ardrossan and Saltcoats Herald and Irvine Times and this attracted wider comment.

As a result, a total 439 comments were reviewed.

- *I think the plan is just right for the communities of North Ayrshire. It promotes the use of the language in a range of settings in a proportionate and creative way.*
- *Great to see NAC moving forward with Gaelic. There are huge benefits to being bilingual, including improved English, improved learning of further languages, arithmetic, problem solving, creative thinking, multitasking, and focusing abilities are improved, and we even see enhanced empathy. There are also health benefits such as enhanced recovery from brain injury such as stroke and as we age delay to symptoms of neuro-degenerative diseases like Alzheimer's. We sometimes forget in Britain that it is the norm worldwide to be bilingual. There are no known disadvantages. This is a great thing that is happening.*
- *I agree that supporting Gaelic for historic and cultural reasons is a good thing but we should remember that new concepts will be introduced in the dominate language, in our situation English, so it is important that Scottish children will be using Gaelic as a second language so that they don't become conceptually challenged and can participate in the exciting future of intellectual research and debate.*
- *Our Early Years Class at St Bridget's have been learning Gaelic now for 10 years, the children enjoy it*
- *Yes !!!! I love this! Gaelic is our culture and heritage and it should not be just the Highlands and Islands that are the only ones who use it. We should be proud of it!*

The discussions were focused on the principle of Gaelic provision rather than any detail in the draft plan. The consultation did not indicate that the Council would need to alter the draft in the light of comments. The Council had one internal comment concerning whether the Gaelic Medium Education should be changed, however it was agreed that this was still at an early stage, so no alteration was made and our discussion about Gaelic Medium Education are progressing.

Following the consultation, the Council's Gaelic webpages were updated.

Rhona Arthur

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