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## NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

11 June 2019

### Cabinet

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**Title:** Gaelic Language Plan

**Purpose:** To seek approval for the second edition of North Ayrshire Council's Gaelic Language Plan.

**Recommendation:** It is proposed that Cabinet:

- a) Approves the second edition of North Ayrshire's Gaelic Language Plan; and
- b) Remits officers to continue to work with Bòrd na Gàidhlig and partners on the development of Gaelic.

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### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 A Gaelic Language Plan (GLP) is a statutory requirement for local authorities. The fundamental principles are based on increasing visibility of Gaelic and equal respect. The 2005 Act requires the Bòrd to secure the status of Gaelic as an official language of Scotland commanding equal respect, not necessarily treatment, to English. North Ayrshire Council's first GLP was approved in June 2014. A second edition of the GLP has been developed and widespread consultation carried out, along with an audit of current provision. Throughout the process the Council has worked closely with Bòrd na Gàidhlig.
- 1.2 Key features of the GLP are Gaelic Medium Education (GME) and Gaelic Learner Education. The GLP also affects all Council services and requires a description of how the authority will use Gaelic in relation to its internal processes, such as corporate identity, communications, publications and staff matters and how Gaelic will be used in any of the services the authority delivers.
- 1.3 The Bòrd commended the progress that the Council has made and recognised good practice in its third GLP Annual Monitoring Report in June 2017.
- 1.4 A set of 'high-level aims' was agreed by Cabinet in January 2019. Bòrd na Gàidhlig have passed these to Scottish Ministers and they form part of the assessment of the GLP.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 North Ayrshire Council has been actively involved in supporting the Gaelic language and culture for over 20 years. As a local authority which serves a diverse range of cultures, we are committed to developing and supporting our Gaelic learners. There were 560 Gaelic speakers identified as living in North Ayrshire at the time of the 2011 Census.
- 2.2 Currently Gaelic Medium Education is provided in partnership with neighbouring authorities and a formal request for Gaelic Medium Education is currently progressing through the agreed process. North Ayrshire has made considerable progress over the years in developing Gaelic Awareness and language acquisition skills. Along with the Ayrshire Gaelic Forum it is committed to providing community language classes. There are currently 110 registered for Gaelic language classes.
- 2.3 Many more residents are involved Gaelic cultural events such as the annual feis, clarsach, accordion and fiddle playing, poetry, Celtic art, singing and story-telling, bilingual history events, in-school, nursery provision, community centres and libraries. North Ayrshire Libraries have invested in a collection of Gaelic books. They are currently hosted at Irvine and Beith Libraries but are available for request and collection at the nearest Council library. Gaelic language courses are also available to borrow from local libraries. Around six hundred items are borrowed each year.
- 2.4 The Council received a Gaelic Grant of £67,000 from Scottish Government to support activities in 2018/19.
- 2.5 North Ayrshire Council's second edition GLP continues to take a reasonable and proportionate approach which is respectful of the fact that these measures contribute to the National Gaelic Language Plan.
- 2.6 Progress includes a bi-lingual version of the Council logo, increasing use of Gaelic in Council buildings, website, road signs and email signatures. Much has been accomplished in education where GME is delivered in partnership with neighbouring authorities and work through 1+ 2 languages has resulted in wider use of Gaelic on a project basis in primary schools. An audit of Gaelic language staff skills took place in July 2017 which confirms that second edition GLP is in line with staff capacity. The Bòrd acknowledges the progress that has been made with community learning and cultural events.
- 2.8 A cross-Council Gaelic Language Plan Development Group continues to monitor progress and has been involved in the development of the second edition GLP which is attached in Appendix I.

### 3. Proposals

3.1 It is proposed that Cabinet:

- a) Approves the second edition of North Ayrshire Council's Gaelic Language Plan; and
- b) Remits officers to continue to work with Bòrd na Gàidhlig and partners on the development of Gaelic.

### 4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

<b>Financial:</b>	It is anticipated that any additional Gaelic project costs will be met by external funding.
<b>Human Resources:</b>	N/A
<b>Legal:</b>	The Gaelic Language Plan is a statutory responsibility of local authorities.
<b>Equality/Socio-economic Duty:</b>	Research reveals positive impacts of bilingualism on outcomes for people throughout life, including social advantages, access to two or more cultures, more tolerance towards and interest in other cultures and enabling people to be more employable in a range of settings.
<b>Children and Young People:</b>	Providing the opportunity for young people to learn Gaelic and to learn in Gaelic is considered within the report. There are a number of current opportunities for early years, primary and secondary Gaelic Learner Education and there are a number of partnership opportunities which include the use of the Gaelic language.
<b>Environmental &amp; Sustainability:</b>	There are no environmental and sustainability implications contained within the present report.
<b>Key Priorities:</b>	The proposal contained within the report supports the North Ayrshire Council Plan priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Active and strong communities</li><li>• Inclusive, growing and enterprising local economy</li><li>• People enjoy good life-long health and well-being.</li></ul>
<b>Community Benefits:</b>	The Gaelic Learners' Forum has built capacity within its learners and partners and now provides a range of opportunities in North Ayrshire for individuals and groups to benefit from learning and self-actualisation. The educational benefits of learning a second language are proven, for all ages. The social benefits enable people to come together and share a common culture, both in linguistic and heritage contexts.

### 5. Consultation

5.1 The development of the high level aims and plan was achieved across North Ayrshire Council and its partners. The draft second edition Gaelic Language Plan 2019-2024

was made available on Consul for six weeks from April 2019 and promoted through the six Locality Partnerships and social media, with print copies available in public libraries.

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For further information please contact **Audrey Sutton, Head of Service (Connected Communities)**, on (01294) 324308.

### **Background Papers**

Appendix 1: Gaelic Language Plan Consultation