

Analysis Report on the Consultation of Historic Scotland's Gaelic Language Plan

1. Acknowledgements:

Historic Scotland would like to thank all those who responded to the consultation on our Gaelic Language Plan by providing written comments.

2. Introduction:

On the 21st March 2011 Historic Scotland launched a consultation on our draft Gaelic Language Plan (GLP), inviting comments on the commitments laid out by us in relation to Gaelic. The GLP covered four main areas for Gaelic provision: Identity, Communications, Publications and Staffing. Respondents provided valuable feedback on the plan, and raised some recommendations for consideration. Overall the feedback was positive, welcoming Historic Scotland's Gaelic Language Plan.

This document is the 'Analysis Report' which fulfils the Scottish Government's good practice guide on consultation. It analyses and summarises the responses to the consultation on the Gaelic Language Plan. It does not set out Scottish Ministers' comments or responses to these suggestions. The inclusion of a comment or suggestion in the report does not imply that any contribution is accepted as accurately characterising the actual policy position or what may be taken forward into the final document.

3. Background:

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 public bodies to prepare Gaelic Language Plans. This provision was designed to ensure that the public sector in Scotland plays its part in creating a sustainable future for Gaelic by raising its status and profile and creating practical opportunities for its use. Historic Scotland was approached by Bòrd na Gàidhlig to prepare a Gaelic Language Plan, and it is a statutory requirement that this is completed by 31st March 2012.

The 2005 Act requires public bodies to bring the preparation of their Gaelic Language Plans to the attention of all interested parties. Historic Scotland therefore consulted publicly on the draft of its Gaelic Language Plan and will take into account representations made to it during the consultation process.

4. Responses:

The consultation document was published on 21st March 2011 and the closing date for responses was 10th June 2011. The document was sent to 66 organisations and individuals. There were thirteen responses, three of which were from individuals. These respondents are listed in Annex A, and also publicised on the Historic Scotland website and a breakdown of responses is provided below. Responses from consultees who agreed their submissions could be made available to the public are available at the following web address – <http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/index/about/consultations/closedconsultations.htm>

| Respondant Type | Number | % of all respondants |
|------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| Private Individual | 3 | 23 |
| Local Authority | 3 | 23 |
| Heritage Body | 2 | 15 |
| Public Body | 1 | 8 |
| Education Sector | 4 | 31 |
| TOTAL | 13 | 100 |

5. Findings:

The Gaelic Language Plan was welcomed by almost all respondents, who recognised and praised the efforts already being made by Historic Scotland to support the language. The main issues raised are summarised below:

- Some consultees felt that aspects of the plan are not specific enough, for example using phrases such as ‘increase’ without giving an indication of the level of increase, and phrases such as ‘where appropriate’.
- Some consultees felt there should be more detail on how HS plans to engage with the Gaelic Medium Education sector, and that it should take a more proactive role in this.
- One respondent was not in favour of money being spent on the Gaelic Language.

Responses to specific areas of the Gaelic Language Plan are outlined below:

Identity:

- Nine respondents were content with the commitments in Historic Scotland’s GLP regarding identity. Three did not answer the questions in the format provided, and one was discontent.
- Some provided suggestions for improvement, mainly that the actions regarding signage should be more specific, and that equal status should be given to both English and Gaelic.

Communications:

- Nine respondents were content with the commitments regarding communications. Again, three did not answer in the format provided, and one was discontent.
- Some points were raised such as requesting increased clarity regarding how visitors would have access to a Gaelic speaking member of staff, and being more pro-active in encouraging people to use Gaelic.

Publications:

- Generally respondents were content with commitments and actions regarding publications.

- There was a view that HS should be more clear on its Gaelic Publications Policy.
- It was suggested by some that HS creates a list of terminology or glossary for consistency in translations.
- Both City of Edinburgh Council and Ainmean Aite na h-Alba said they would welcome the opportunity to work in close partnership with Historic Scotland on aspects of the GLP.

Staffing:

- Respondents were generally content with the commitments regarding staffing, particularly with regards to the employment of Gaelic Learning Officers in Lewis and Edinburgh Castle, and with regards to the plans to employ a Gaelic Language Officer.
- Some respondents recommended that Gaelic language classes be made available to all HS staff.

General:

Some of the responses highlighted some general views on the plan, including the following:

- To have Gaelic-speaking staff work more closely with Gaelic provision in schools to develop more virtual experiences across a greater number of sites
- To give more prominence to promotion of the language by making the Gaelic language visible for visitors to the country, given that for many, language is an essential component of culture.
- To be more specific, giving numeric targets, and be more precise about how these targets will be met. Also to be clear about how the plan will be monitored.

6. Next Steps

These responses are being taken into consideration and the Gaelic Language Plan is being revised accordingly. The plan will be ready to be approved by Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Scottish Ministers in December 2011. The final version of the Historic Scotland Gaelic Language Plan will then be officially launched early in 2012.

Annex A

Ainmean Aite na h-Alba

Argyll and Bute Council

East Ayrshire Council

Forestry Commission Scotland

Individual – Guy Puzey

Individual – Steve Harper

Individual – Wilson MacLeod

Learning and Teaching Scotland

Sabhal Mor Ostaig

Saltire Society

Scottish Qualifications Authority

Stirling Council

University of the Highlands and Islands