

19 March 2007



A Strategy for Scotland's Languages  
Scottish Executive Education Department  
Cultural Policy Division  
Area 1-A North  
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Dear Sir or Madam

**A STRATEGY FOR SCOTLAND'S LANGUAGES**

Scottish Water welcomes the opportunity to comment on the aforementioned consultation paper.

In light of the range and complexity of issues covered by the consultation Scottish Water's response is detailed in the attached document.

Yours faithfully

**Brian McGrath**  
**Regulatory Operations & Reporting Manager**

## **A Strategy for Scotland's Languages**

### General Comments

Scottish Water broadly supports the principles of the consultation paper '*A Strategy for Scotland's Languages*' which introduces a national language strategy to guide the development of Scotland's languages; including Gaelic, Scots, British Sign Language and other minority languages.

Scottish Water acknowledges the existence of the diverse linguistic society in Scotland and believes that we actively promote, through our daily communication tools with our customers, our activity to respect all languages spoken.

As a public body, Scottish Water currently provides a variety of services which make provisions for individuals with additional requirements. Examples of these include:

- the production of a variety of documents and literature, to both customers and the general public, which state that the material can be produced (free of charge) in alternative languages;
- the recent production of the Scottish Water Code of Practice with an introductory section translated into seven different languages to promote and encourage minority involvement;
- the provision of statutory emergency materials in various minority languages which are distributed, as and when necessary, to concentrated areas featuring multicultural populations;
- the provision of a textphone service to customers with hearing difficulties and ongoing sign language training to Scottish Water front line staff; and
- the creation of a Disability Equality Scheme to meet Scottish Water's duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005.

In light of these activities, Scottish Water believes that we already encompass many of the principles of this consultation paper.

Scottish Water has previously responded to Bòrd na Gàidhlig's consultation on '*Draft National Plan for Gaelic and Draft Guidance on Gaelic Language Plans*', which proposed measures to encourage the use and promote the development of Gaelic and its culture across home and community life. In our response to that consultation paper we highlighted concerns regarding Scottish Water's financing for any new requirements; this concern is reflected in the impact of any additional requirements from the '*Strategy for Scotland's Languages*' consultation also.

Scottish Water is financed by a regulatory settlement as determined by the Water Industry Commission (WIC). The Strategic Review of Charges has been agreed, and delivery is now underway for the period 2006-10. The Strategic Review of Charges 2010-14 is currently undergoing consultation. We would therefore have concerns that financing any additional actions associated with this consultation may only be possible by passing those costs directly onto Scottish Water customers. As such,

this matter would be required to be discussed with Scottish Water's regulator the WIC as part of the consultation process for the Strategic Review of Charges 2010-14.

Therefore, whilst we support this initiative, Scottish Water would ask that the benefits achieved from any proposed actions are balanced with the practicality and feasibility of their implementation.

Specific Comments

1	<i>Do you agree with the reasons given for promoting and learning languages on pages 4 and 5, and that these are the main reasons for supporting current language initiatives in Scotland? If not, why not?</i>
Scottish Water agrees with the reasons stated within the consultation paper for promoting and learning languages.	
2	<i>Do you agree that the language initiatives described on pages 6 – 12 and elsewhere are the key areas for language promotion in Scotland? If not, why not?</i>
Scottish Water agrees that the language initiative described within the consultation paper are the key areas for language promotion in Scotland.	
3	<i>Do you agree that the key principles listed on pages 14 and 15 should shape language activity in Scotland? If not, why not?</i>
Scottish Water agrees and supports with the key principles highlighted within the consultation.	
4	<i>Are there any other comments you would like to offer on this strategy in relation to the promotion of languages in Scotland?</i>
Please see comments provided above in the 'General Comments' section.	
5	<i>If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, how do you think you may be able to contribute to the success of the strategy?</i>
Please see comments provided above in the 'General Comments' section.	