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A Strategy for Scotland's Languages
Scottish Executive Education Department
Cultural Policy Division
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Corporate Services

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Dear Sir/Madam

A Strategy for Scotland's Languages Consultation: Response form Stirling Council

Stirling Council is grateful for the opportunity to comment on the draft version of A Strategy for Scotland's Languages. Our responses to the consultation questions are set out below:

1. 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?

The reasons given for the development of a strategy for Scotland's languages are very well articulated on page 4 and 5. It is essential for the continuing prosperity of Scotland that the flow of people from one country to another is encouraged and the value of other languages is recognised.

The comment that the strategy "*is therefore intended as a guide to policy makers... not designed as a framework for specific resource allocation*" does cause some disquiet. It is recognised that funding is allocated for specific areas of language development e.g. Gaelic Specific Grant, Additional Money for Modern Languages. The manner in which the money is given to Local Authorities makes it very difficult to plan coherently or progressively to improve access to languages, as they are given for a certain length of time and there is no commitment on the part of the Executive that they will continue. The development of languages would be enhanced through funding which is more secure.

2. 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?

We agree with the language initiatives described on pages 6-12. However, if languages are to be seriously promoted then consistency of funding is of paramount importance.

Director: Bob Jack

3. Do you agree that the key principles listed on pages 14 and 15 should shape language activity in Scotland? If not, why not?

The principles are commendable.

4. Are there any other comments you would like to offer on this strategy in relation to the promotion of languages in Scotland?

The strategy overall is to be welcomed and the principle that it is a framework and guide rather than a statement of precise output targets to be achieved by specific interventions allows Local Authorities the scope to provide individual programmes of language learning according to the needs of the population within their area.

The strategy builds on various initiatives already in place and fulfils some of their legal obligations e.g. Race Relations Act, The Disability Discrimination Act and the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005.

There is however a need to continue to fund language learning particularly within the education and community sectors.

5. 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?

Stirling Council are well able to contribute to the success of this strategy. The schools in Stirling actively promote the learning and teaching of languages other than English. All secondary schools offer French at S1 and most offer Spanish as modules in the fifth and sixth years. Over the last few years secondary schools have been able to diversify and offer a wider range of languages. One secondary school also offers a limited amount of Gaelic medium and Gaelic as a language.

All primary schools offer French at P6 and P7 stages and some of the smaller schools at earlier stages. Gaelic as a language is taught in 9 of the primary schools, and there is a thriving Gaelic Medium Provision in one of the primary schools.

The use of the Scots language is encouraged and one school has produced a Scots dictionary of commonly used words. The Scots language has been encouraged through schools inviting authors and poets into schools to talk to and work with the children.


Children with English as an additional Language are supported in schools through a specialist teacher and an annual audit of these children is conducted to ascertain the needs of the school population. Parents/carers are also supported through the availability of the translation service and information regarding the ASL Act and Parental Involvement Act have been translated into Polish. Regular parents meetings are held for parents with EAL to support them.

At corporate level in the Council a steering group has been established to draft an action plan for the implementation of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act. Community Services provide adult Gaelic classes and work in partnership with Children's Services to provide support for parents with children at the Gaelic medium provision. Community Services in 2006 was able through a grant from Bord na Gaidhlig to complete research on extent of Gaelic in the community. The results of the research will inform future developments in community and education sectors.

Through the above Stirling already provides support for the principles and will continue to support the development of other languages as the need arises within the community.

Yours faithfully

Fiona Macleod.



Fiona Macleod
Head of Strategy and Governance