

QUESTIONS

Glasgow will be staging the Commonwealth Games in 2014. Two years before then, London will be staging the Olympic and Paralympic Games. We, the Scottish Government, want to ensure that Scotland and the people of Scotland secure the maximum benefits from these Games and that we leave a lasting legacy from them.

We would like to invite you to give us your thoughts and ideas on how we can do this. Opposite are a few questions we hope will help form your response.

Preamble from Bord na Gaidhlig

By way of a general background to Bord na Gaidhlig's Executive NDPB status, we'd like to offer the following synopsis. Providing a sustainable future for Gaelic in Scotland is a stated policy aim of the Scottish Ministers. Significant progress has been made in recent years to enhance the status of Gaelic, to expand the provision of Gaelic-medium education and to establish a Gaelic digital television service. Census figures demonstrate very clearly, however, that there is no room for complacency and that the position of Gaelic in Scotland remains fragile.

A key milestone in Gaelic development was reached when the Scottish Parliament passed the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005. The 2005 Act established Bòrd na Gàidhlig as a statutory body charged with securing the status of Gaelic as an official language of Scotland commanding equal respect to English. The Bòrd has specific statutory functions to promote, and to provide advice to Ministers and public bodies on matters relating to, the Gaelic language, Gaelic culture and Gaelic education. The Bòrd is required to exercise these functions with a view to increasing the number of users of Gaelic, and with a view to encouraging and enabling increased access to and understanding of Gaelic.

Under the terms of the 2005 Act, the Bòrd is required to produce a National Plan for Gaelic. This key policy document was published on 26 March 2007 and can be obtained from www.bord-na-gaidhlig.org.uk The National Plan's purpose is to provide a blueprint for the future development of Gaelic and it makes recommendations for how to support Gaelic in the home, community, workplace and place of learning. Successful implementation of the priorities identified in the National Plan will require the proactive engagement of government, public bodies, local authorities and the private and voluntary sectors. The 2005 Act also provides for the Bòrd to require Scottish public authorities to develop statutory Gaelic Language Plans setting out how they will use and enable the use of Gaelic in connection with the exercise of their functions. The development of these plans will be a key instrument in normalising the use of Gaelic.

QUESTION 1: ARE THE BENEFITS YOU WOULD LIKE FROM THE GAMES COVERED IN THIS PAPER?

Bòrd na Gàidhlig considers that the Gaelic language could be more clearly highlighted in the Commonwealth Games 2014 legacy plans.

Glasgow has the largest number of Gaelic speakers outwith more traditional areas such as the Western Isles and has a long and rich Gaelic and Highlands & Islands heritage. Not only would the inclusion of Gaelic, for example by way of web presence, bilingual signposting and literature as well as information about the language being provided to participants and spectators, raise the profile of the language on an international scale, it would also provide a 'sense of place' and a unique selling point for visitors to the city.

QUESTION 2: IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE WE SHOULD BE DOING?

In order to ensure that the full range of Government aspirations are captured within the Games infrastructure, we would be keen to meet with the organisers of the Commonwealth Games 2014 to discuss the inclusion of Gaelic and, in turn, what support Bòrd na Gàidhlig, and other Gaelic partners, might offer. There might be opportunities to raise the profile of Gaelic by including it in many diverse areas from marketing and PR material to set-piece Ministerial speeches. There may also be opportunities, in partnership with the new Gaelic digital television service, to broadcast the Games in Gaelic.

QUESTION 3: HOW CAN WE, INDIVIDUALLY OR COLLECTIVELY, BEST ACHIEVE THESE AIMS?

In 2009, Glasgow City Council, along with a range of other public bodies in Scotland, will be preparing a statutory Gaelic Language Plan. This will impact on how the Council deals with Gaelic in its delivery of services, education, signage etc. It would seem appropriate in that context to ensure that the place of Gaelic in the 2014 legacy plan is considered from the outset.

QUESTION 4: DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER COMMENTS TO OFFER ON WHAT SHOULD FEATURE IN THE FINAL GAMES BENEFITS AND LEGACY PLAN?

We would hope to see a significantly heightened profile nationally and internationally for Gaelic with the possibility of a consequential increase in the number of people wanting to learn the language. We would also envisage that the use of Gaelic within the Games would provide Glasgow, and Games visitors, a sense of uniqueness and a sense of being in a country proud of its cultural heritage.

In terms of specific areas of the legacy plan where Gaelic might feature:

- on page 18, one of the actions is to 'position Scotland as an attractive place to visit' with the intention that 'athletes, spectators at the Games and viewers at home have a good experience of Scotland's culture'. The legacy plan could be clearer in identifying in the section on 'how we could do it' the contribution that Gaelic can make to that experience as a distinctive aspect of Scottish culture.
- a similar contribution can be made in relation to the action to 'position Scotland as an attractive place to work and study' on page 20, with the intention that 'we take pride in our national identity'. Again, the role of Gaelic as an integral part of Scotland's national identity could be more clearly identified in the 'how we could do it' section.