

**THE DRAFT NATIONAL PLAN FOR GAELIC
THE DRAFT GUIDANCE ON GAELIC LANGUAGE PLANS
HISTORIC SCOTLAND RESPONSE**

A: THE DRAFT NATIONAL PLAN FOR GAELIC

Is the vision of the draft Plan one in which you can share?

1. Yes.

In the light of your response to the above question, are the proposed sectoral projects essential to the meeting of the action area aims for 2012? If not, why not?

2. Yes, in terms of reinforcing language prestige, selling Scotland's sense of place and promoting the appreciation of Gaelic heritage. However, while one means of achieving these aims is to develop Gaelic-medium heritage materials, we would caution an across-the-board approach of developing 'bilingual interpretation' in terms of interpretive provision i.e. guidebooks, signage etc.. Arguably, there is a danger of creating linguistic barriers this way (i.e. with each language community reading their own materials, with little room to increase interest in Gaelic on the part of the English-speaking community). Alternative approaches are suggested in paragraphs 18-22 below.

Status/Awareness p.22.

3. We suggest an additional priority as follows: "Promote awareness of Gaelic as it currently exists and is used by the population – e.g. place names, land forms".

Education (page 24 onwards)

4. If the aim is as stated to 'expand provision and uptake of Gaelic education at all levels' then the high level sectoral project statement on p.25 would seem to be in line with this – although it is not clear why only dedicated Gaelic schools are quoted as having an 'enhanced education experience'. Should it not be an aim to enhance the education experience for all Gaelic-medium education?

5. The Background information on p.6 states that '*It will require a more intensive Gaelic medium education experience both within and outwith the classroom*'. However there is no specific mention in the education section of education *outwith the classroom* or of the contribution that education programmes and resources developed by heritage organisations, working in partnership with those identified as '*Primary Players*', can make to Gaelic-medium education. We would have thought that this could have been embedded into the plan as a 'priority' at least in *Education Resources* p.29.

6. There is a significant opportunity for Primary Players, such as Learning and Teaching Scotland, Comunn na Gaidhlig and Feisean nan Gaidheal, to work with heritage organisations in a formalised partnership structure through the Heritage Education Officers Group (HEOG) to progressively expand what is already being provided in an ad-hoc way. Historic Scotland Education Unit currently works with all of these organisations in an attempt to service Gaelic-medium education – albeit in a very small way at present.

7. The National Gaelic Education Strategy details a commitment to promoting '*Gaelic-medium and Gaelic related cultural activities through the education system*' p.51, but

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experience with the Cultural Co-ordinators in Scottish Schools (CCiSS) programme has shown that unless culture is defined explicitly to include heritage then culture is too often equated as being purely about the arts. (This comment applies across the board and is not just an issue for Gaelic). It is significant that the Scottish Arts Council is identified as being a Provider and Facilitator on p.51 but there is no representation from the heritage sector.

Culture/Introduction p.30.

8. The introductory section fails to adequately recognise (and communicate) the absorption of Gaelic language and culture into Scottish heritage. The text and its bilingual emphasis sets up Gaelic as an ‘other’ from Scottishness – this is not so. Gaelic language and culture is integrated into modern Scottish identity. Perhaps the Plan might promote this more obviously.

Culture/Cultural activity p.32. Priorities.

9. The priorities set out under cultural activity are very vague and do not create a sense of what the priorities are directed to achieving and how they will do this. We suggest that Bòrd na Gàidhlig consider revising the wording of the priorities in this section.

Culture/Heritage p.34. Priorities.

10. ‘Increase Gaelic-medium heritage materials and activities through strategic marketing and promotion’. We are not sure what this means. Strategic marketing and promotion will not inherently, or by themselves, increase Gaelic-medium heritage materials. We suspect two separate points about increasing provision and marketing have been merged here; they need to be separate to make sense.

11. ‘Promote the use of Gaelic in heritage interpretation in general’. This statement is ambiguous. Does this mean ‘in general’ or where geographically appropriate? Or, following the earlier priority, does this mean as an integral as opposed to a distinctive part of Scottish heritage. If not the latter there does need to be a balancing priority such as: ‘Promote the use of Gaelic as an integral part of heritage interpretation, where appropriate’.

12. ‘Ensure the quality and reliability of Gaelic heritage interpretation’. We are not sure what this means. Does it reflect a presumption that Gaelic can only be promoted where historically relevant/appropriate? Or, does it identify the need to establish systems (and resources) to ensure the accuracy and reliability of Gaelic provision? Some additional words might clarify the meaning of this priority.

Culture/Heritage – Primary Players p.34.

13. There is no mention of heritage education here. Given that sections on The Arts and Sport & Recreation include reference to the education system, we would suggest that such a mention is included here also. Historic Scotland should be identified as a key player.

14. Whilst notionally a UK-wide organisation, the Association of Heritage Interpretation (AHI) mainly represents the interests of interpretation in England. It would be much more appropriate to identify Interpret Scotland (of which Historic Scotland is a founding member).

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We note also that there is no mention of the Heritage Lottery Fund which might ultimately be a funding partner for community cultural heritage initiatives and programmes under its various local heritage funds.

Culture/Sport & Recreation p.35. Primary Players.

15. Neither Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) nor Forestry Commission Scotland are mentioned here yet they are key providers of recreational opportunities throughout Scotland, particularly the highlands and islands, and SNH are responsible for the Outdoor Access Code.

Communications/Print media p.38. Priorities.

16. We suggest an additional priority as follows: ‘Promote confidence in the use and integration of Gaelic words and place names within English text and media, as appropriate’.

Are the outcomes for the twenty themes and the priorities for tackling them correctly outlined and prioritised? If not, why not?

17. Yes, broadly speaking, but please note all comments above.

In the light of your response to the above question, what projects do you view as being essential to implementing these priorities (some examples are offered in Appendix I)?

18. Historic Scotland’s Interpretation Unit is actively pursuing the following three approaches:

- Using appropriate Gaelic words in publications, with English translations alongside;
- Commissioning Gaelic poetry for publications such as guidebooks to foster a sense of place and promote Gaelic themes. Again, English translations of poetry is provided alongside
- Providing Gaelic language tours of PICs through the new Story Explorer initiative and steward guiding skills training within Gaelic speaking areas as appropriate to provide audible experiences of Gaelic language and culture.

19. Additional projects to further Gaelic language and heritage awareness would be:

- Developing publication materials – particularly websites – which Historic Scotland can offer in Gaelic as well as English;
- Increasingly identifying Gaelic themes and heritage in the interpretation of properties, both on-site and in publications such as guidebooks and area guides, as well as in materials designed for the internet.

20. In terms of promoting a greater awareness and understanding of Gaelic culture we believe that there is an over-emphasis on bilingual interpretation in this section of the draft Plan. Various heritage organisations, including Historic Scotland, already provide a great deal of Gaelic interpretation. The emphasis here has been not to provide bilingual interpretation but, more reflective of community and visitor needs, to integrate Gaelic into interpretation generally – providing clear opportunities to experience Gaelic text and language (visually and audibly) where most appropriate and to afford maximum opportunities

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to experience, comprehend and assimilate it into existing English language knowledge speaking and writing skills. A really good example is Historic Scotland's 'Story Explorer' programme where we provide Gaelic language tours of Historic Scotland properties, and the integration of Gaelic text and poetry in the new guidebooks. These have provided opportunities to introduce Gaelic language interpretation without large (and unsustainable) resource implications, which is responsive to local dialects and cultural differences and has achieved increased awareness and skills as well as supporting Scotland's Gaelic cultural identity.

21. Under *Education Resources*, p.58, it might be helpful to mention a project which explores the potential of the heritage sector to support Gaelic Medium Education through the production of resources in partnership with Learning and Teaching Scotland and other Key Players in Gaelic Medium Education.

22. Under *Heritage*, p.59, a project which illustrates the significant contribution heritage education can make to Gaelic Medium Education might be fruitful.

And are the right organisations identified as being the primary players in implementing these priorities?

23. Historic Scotland can contribute to the implementation on the plan as part of the SE but should be identified specifically throughout the section on culture and especially at the section on heritage on page 34.

24. The Agency's Education Unit already works in partnership with Learning and Teaching Scotland, Comunn na Gaidhlig and Feisean nan Gaidheal to provide a small measure of support for Gaelic Medium Education and it is in partnership that we hope to increase our provision in the future. We are hesitant to be considered a Key Player as we would envisage any progression in Historic Scotland support for Gaelic Medium Education to be through partnerships with the Key Players already identified. However, we do think that Historic Scotland should be specifically mentioned as a Provider and Facilitator within the National Gaelic Education Strategy on p.51 in the Ethos Action Area, and possibly in Resources on p.54.

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, how do you see yourselves contributing to the success of the National Plan?

25. Through partnership activity as described above and by implementing the approaches and projects outlined in paragraphs 18-22 above.

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General Comment

26. On page 5 of the draft Guidance document it is stated that "Bilingual corporate identity, bilingual signage and a Gaelic presence on the web are all basic steps". If the Agency were to consider a fully bilingual corporate identity and the introduction of bilingual signage throughout the our Properties in Care estate this would have massive resource implications for Historic Scotland and could not, in our view, be described as 'basic steps'.

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As it stands the statement could give rise to wholly unrealistic expectations. It is misleading and open to interpretation and we strongly recommend that it is removed from the final Guidance notes.

Are you satisfied with the interpretation of equal respect on page 8?

27. Yes, but please also note comments set out in paragraph 8 above.

Are the issues concerning the level of provision on pages 9-10 adequately tackled?

28. The Draft Plan doesn't specify the sort of guidance which the voluntary or private sectors could use in developing their own measures to promote Gaelic linguistic and cultural identity. Perhaps the Guidance notes should address this issue.

Is the advice in each section clear and helpful?

29. Yes.

Are the suggestions from page 14 for the content of a Gaelic language plan comprehensive enough and appropriate to the requirements of Gaelic development?

30. Please refer to our comments set out in paragraphs 8 and 18-22 above - which highlight that the promotion of Gaelic through heritage interpretation should not solely be about the bilingual presentation of material.

Are the percentages proposed on pages 18-19 and page 22 for the triggering of various policy provision and employment requirements, realistic and appropriate?

31. We suggest these are reviewed. There is a considerable difference in the percentages being applied to providing Gaelic medium interpretation of and access to presentation of heritage, culture and art on offer and to examples where there are a more overt employment (and on-going revenue) implications.

32. With regard to 'heritage' and the activities of Historic Scotland Properties in Care, the costs of interpretation provision across the Historic Scotland estate will be considerable and on-going in respect of ongoing maintenance and updating (fixed and print provision). In addition, we would suggest that the 5% figure being applied to 'Gaelic-medium interpretation of and access to presentation of heritage, culture and art on offer' is out of proportion with the 40% figure being suggested for 'all reception staff' and 'all guides, wardens and recreation staff' (and indeed the 25% figure being applied to nursing and care cover). Not only do these percentages fail to reflect the oral nature of Gaelic language and culture, the percentages could be subject to investigation with regard to priority setting and relative importance. More specifically, these percentages fail to reflect Historic Scotland's emphasis on World Class Visitor Services and Welcome which place emphasis on local employment opportunities, our staff and people-based interpretation provision.

33. Whilst we embrace the opportunity to increase 'access to the presentation of heritage' through signage (i.e. b/w road signs) and orientation (i.e. site welcome panels), we would suggest that further investigation is required beyond this. We would therefore recommend

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that the percentages on p.18-19 and 22 were reviewed to enable a more balanced provision reflecting the needs of communities, the aspirations of the Plan and the resources of the heritage sector and its organisations.

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, would the draft Guidance adequately assist in drawing up a Gaelic language plan?

34. Yes, bearing in mind our comments at paragraphs 2, 18-22 and 31-33 above.

**HISTORIC SCOTLAND
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