

Bòrd na Gàidhlig

draft NATIONAL PLAN FOR GAELIC and draft GUIDANCE ON GAELIC LANGUAGE PLANS

REPORT ON PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROCESS

Kenneth MacKinnon
Chrissie MacRae
John Galloway

The public consultation process

The draft National Plan for Gaelic and draft Guidance on Gaelic Language Plans were published on 14 August with a three-month consultation period extending to 10 November. Bòrd na Gàidhlig received 202 submissions of observations on the plan, and 49 upon the guidance (251 observations in total), during this period or shortly thereafter. During the early weeks of the consultation period the Bòrd held 26 open public meetings, and made 10 presentations to specific organisations and bodies.

All 251 observations received over this period were read by the principal reviewer and purposively sampled selections (chosen for their typicality or for their unique subject matter) were also read by the other reviewers. Of this total some 54% were from private individuals, 18% from language-based groups, 7% from community organisations, 7% from local authorities, 13% from national public boards. Almost a third (29%) of the observations were submitted in Gaelic. (See Tables in Appendix.)

The geographical spread was quite impressive: from Alaska to Kazakhstan. Some 28% of the observations originated from within the Highlands and Islands (including organisations covering the Highlands and Islands as a whole). Some 61% were from the rest of Scotland or from Scotland-wide organisations, and the remainder – 11% – were from elsewhere (or unspecified). See Tables in Appendix.

This report attempts to provide a summary of these consultations, and will attempt to provide a rationale of a varied and disparate range of opinions and responses generated by this process, but which will do justice to the volume and quality of the material to be reviewed.

Methodology

A 'Grounded Theory' approach (Glaser and Strauss 1967, Denscombe 1998/2003) was adopted as best making sense of this mass of data, since this method:

- avoids pre-conceived ideas and theories,
- is rooted in practicality and the reality of the situation,
- seeks to identify categories and concepts which make sense to the lay subjects,
- samples the data purposively and exhaustively,

- roots its theories in the empirical data,
- provides explanations recognisable to the subjects of the exercise, and
- frames theories to meet the needs of the situation.

Division of tasks

The principal reviewer read all the material submitted. In this task he was assisted by two further readers and reviewers, Chrissie MacRae and John Galloway. These were directed to read purposive 'theoretical' samples selected on the basis of themes, specific issues, and arguments of principle amongst the submissions received. The reviewers were asked to identify codes and categories within the material which were to be used to form the main sections and structure of the report.

The samples included a representative range of submission from the interested Gaelic public, as well as all the items received from local authorities, enterprise bodies and other public boards and companies, and expert individuals.

Procedure in practice

The reviewers were required to make brief notes on:

- whether the approach is generally supportive or critical of the plan and/or guidance,
- key words and concepts covered,
- arguments used relating to issues in the plan and/or guidance,
- any specifically memorable phrases or terminology,
- examples of typical phraseology used by many respondents.

Analysis of data

From the notes on all of the submissions received, categories were developed. In reviewing the notes which were made, approaches were categorised, and concepts identified. These were aggregated and quantified. Additionally, any unique or outstanding individual approaches, and any other valuable individual perspectives, were identified.

Narratives were framed which provided an overview or synopsis of the data. These were developed into accounts of what should be done to amend or extend the plan and guidance documents.

Narratives were also developed which argue what should be done in practice in Scottish society in general and the Gaelic community in particular.

Themes and concepts arising out of the consultation

The reviewers have had to systematise these into some order for presentational purposes, so their importance is to some extent as has been identified by the reviewers. The order of presentation reflects the collective judgement of the reviewers, since the individuals and bodies submitting their observations naturally gave salience to the particular issues which

motivated them to write. However, all of these issues are important, and undue significance should not be given to the precise order as listed.

It was decided to adopt a structure of presentation which mirrored the thematic structure of the draft Plan itself, under the main theme headings of:

1. Vitality

- 1.1 home and individual
- 1.2 Gaelic in the community
- 1.3 corpus planning, dictionaries and academy

2. Status

- 2.1 Gaelic plans and guidance
- 2.2 concerns with officialdom
- 2.3 awards schemes, promotions and prizes
- 2.4 recognition of Gaelic as a national language

3. Education

- 3.1 language acquisition, fluency of learners
- 3.2 Gaelic in education
- 3.3 teacher supply and training

4. Culture

- 4.1 culture and heritage

5. Communications

- 5.1 Gaelic in communications and media

6. Other issues arising in the plan and/or guidance

- 6.1 register and/or style of language used
- 6.2 targets
- 6.3 trigger percentages
- 6.4 census reference person

7. Wider concerns

- 7.1 research
- 7.2 finance and resources
- 7.3 priorities

8. Governmental concerns

- 8.1 Education Committee of the Scottish Parliament
- 8.2 Scottish Executive

Frequently cited concepts and ideas

Amongst the frequently occurring points made by many respondents were the following examples of concepts, ideas, and typical phraseology used by many respondents:

General

- need to simplify and shorten the document
- don't ignore the importance of Gaelic in traditional employment and/or activities (crofting, fishing, church)
- but bring it to a wider and/or new audience also

Home and Community

- Gaelic in the home and community of paramount importance
- resources vital for development in home, community, education and workplace
- home visiting scheme and/or workers – important
- encourage existing Gaelic speakers to see its value
- support and encouragement for parents to bring about intergenerational transmission
- support for parents of children in Gaelic-medium education

Resources

- concerns about resource implications
- need for sufficient lead in time to develop plans and implement services
- resources vital for development in the home, community, education and workplace
- resources for the language are of primary importance

Targets and outcomes and statistics

- need for more specific timescales
- need for more quantifiable targets
- need for rationale for targets
- need for explanation of how targets are to be achieved
- more long-term aims and targets needed
- lack of baseline figures
- be wary of over reliance on census data
- targets for 2011 unrealistic – concern they will not be met
- should contain targets up to 2020 and beyond
- need for clarity – in register of language and/or aims and/or outcomes
- longer term vision needed
- importance of consideration of the actual numbers of Gaelic speakers in an area as opposed to a percentage of the population of an area

Research agus Marketing

- research as a foundation for the plan
- learn from other minority-language countries
- urgent need for Gaelic language-use survey
- Scotland-wide marketing of the value and importance of the language – very important
- promote the economic benefits of Gaelic
- promotion of Gaelic as a national asset
- say more about the relation between Gaelic and economic development
- links between Gaelic and business
- not clear how bringing about attitudinal change will be addressed

Education

- teaching of Scottish culture (with Gaelic as a main element) in school curriculum
- make use of educational statistics
- need for further clarity in the education strategy
- section on education and then a separate education strategy – confusing for readers
- Gaelic Learners in the Primary School (GLPS) – its contribution is over rated – danger it will be relied on rather than Gaelic-medium education
- teacher education and/or recruitment – needs further address
- support and encouragement for parents to bring about intergenerational transmission
- support for parents of children in Gaelic-medium education
- initiatives needed for bringing learners to fluency
- importance of wrap around Gaelic childcare
- Gaelic-medium education – vital but cannot be the sole focus for the revitalisation and survival of the language

THEME 1: VITALITY

1.1 Home and individual

The importance of language transmission in the family was frequently mentioned. Many respondents saw an active home-support structure for couples to bring up their children through Gaelic as essential – especially outwith the Gàidhealtachd. Other views included assistance for the promotion of Gaelic in the home, which was seen as vital for the promotion of Gaelic in everyday life. The Plan in fact made Gaelic within the home and family one of its priorities (which in some cases was not fully appreciated). If this was not achieved, other strategies would be a waste of time. The home was seen as the heart of our culture (beyond crofting, church or fishing), and the link between language and the traditional way of life needs to be maintained rather than the view from the cities.

Midwives and other health professionals were seen as having a crucial role for the promotion of Gaelic in upbringing, and health authorities seen as principal providers. Clì Gàidhlig drew attention to the importance of influencing parents as well as children, and also drew attention to individual learners' needs. One commentator specifically drew attention to the individual Gaelic speaker as the most needed asset. Ignoring 'Mr and Mrs Gaelic Speaker' would frustrate the success of the plan. Another urged that Gaelic speakers be more greatly valued, and that ways be found to enable them to communicate the language and its culture to a new generation – especially in areas where the language had weakened locally. Several mentioned personal or individual language plans.

1.2 Gaelic in the community

Many commentators mentioned the need for local Gaelic language officers, liaison staff, outreach officers and community mentors. One commentator cited the Welsh example of Mentrau Iaith, and another a Gaelic 'one-stop shop' – possibly also on-line.

There was a clear need for Gaelic-dominant initiatives and enterprises such as small-scale businesses run through Gaelic. One commentator mentioned a grants scheme to assist young Gaelic business graduates to take over small businesses in Gaelic communities.

1.3 Corpus planning, dictionaries and academy

Various bodies and private individuals drew attention to corpus planning and lexicographical needs. There may have been some evidence of concerted approaches on these questions. University departments and lexicographical organisations very strongly advocated support for the historical dictionary project, Faclair na Gàidhlig, and felt that Bòrd na Gàidhlig should provide resources for this initiative. These respondents generally supported the idea of a Gaelic language academy, and the desirability of a Gaelic thesaurus was also mentioned. Experts were essential to corpus planning, and should be linked to a Gaelic academy.

One respondent floated the idea of a national bureau to correct Gaelic on official signage and in public usage. Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba commended its project to produce a national Gaelic gazetteer. This has implications for status, public signage and presence of Gaelic throughout Scotland.

An on-line service for the Gaelic language could be run under the aegis of a Gaelic academy.

THEME 2: STATUS

2.1 Gaelic plans and guidance

National bodies should take on board a Gaelic image which is maintained throughout Scotland. Language plans should acknowledge the equal respect principle.

The emphasis in legislation and hence the present Plan is on official bodies, especially those which are responsible to the Scottish Executive. Numbers of respondents (both individuals and public authorities) referred to the need to involve the private, voluntary and commercial sectors, as these had important interfaces with the public.

The section on language planning acknowledges the Welsh model. References throughout the documents to reversing language shift also imply an underlying model of language planning due to Joshua Fishman.

The importance was well recognised of language planning in private, voluntary and commercial spheres, as was also the need for local mini-plans.

2.2 Concern with officialdom

Some commentators felt that there was still hostility towards Gaelic amongst higher-level administrators in the public sector, and amongst higher management in commercial life.

One commentator criticised Bòrd na Gàidhlig for spending too much on bureaucracy rather than on the language, and could not see a rationale in its grants to projects.

2.3 Awards schemes, promotion and prizes

One or two submissions drew attention to the desirability of incentivising communities and individuals in raising the profile of Gaelic and using the language in public life. The Glasgow City Council submission suggested an annual newsletter identifying best practice and an awards scheme. This was also suggested by others, including public recognition and an official welcome for learners achieving fluency, and the institution of an annual 'Gaelic day'.

An Comunn Gàidhealach put forward proposals for a learner of the year award, and annual commendations for commercial, private and public bodies, and local authorities who had most advanced the cause of Gaelic in community development.

2.4 Recognition of Gaelic as a national language

The place of Gaelic in contemporary Scottish society was variously understood by respondents. There were three principal points of view. Those who saw the need to define a 'Gàidhealtachd' (e.g. from Arran to Lewis and western coastal areas) were very much a minority – only about two or three did so. One commentator favoured three zones of varying intensity of provision and support for the language from an all-Gaelic *Sgìre Ghàidhealach*, in addition to provisions in the rest of Scotland.

Many more saw the need to provide support for Gaelic throughout Scotland – not 'hidden away' in the Highlands and Islands. This ranged from bilingual signage in key places to national organisations providing support for the language Scotland-wide. Others favoured a graded approach according to local linguistic realities. There was discussion whether this should depend on percentage 'triggers' or absolute numbers, which could be quite large in Gaelic terms in city areas with low Gaelic percentages.

The City of Edinburgh Council rejected the Welsh model of language planning as it saw language realities in Scotland as a 'vastly different linguistic heritage'. [Whether this was because of the much smaller numbers of speakers resulting from historical processes, or the loss of a sense of connection between language and nationhood resulting from political processes, was not specified – Scotland may need to be reminded that Gaelic was the first language of the Scots, and for many centuries was the majority language of Scotland. KM.] There might also be a need to tell people why Gaelic should be supported. The question was raised of how best to embed Gaelic in today's national identity and more contemporary lifestyles. North Lanarkshire Council urged that Gaelic be 'established as a key element of Scottishness'.

Quite a few commentators raised the issue of Gaelic as a 'national' as well as an official language. Some felt that legislation had insufficiently defined the status of the language in these respects – and that the Gaelic Act had left the matter deliberately vague. One or two suggested that Bòrd na Gàidhlig should engage in a campaign to win 'hearts and minds' throughout Scotland, and to draw attention to the centrality of Gaelic to the image of Scottish

nationality. One commentator called for an end to tolerance of 'racist' attitudes towards Gaelic. A national campaign to influence attitudes would call for robust programmes of promotion and marketing. There might otherwise be a danger of Gaelic being stereotyped as relevant only to the Highlands and Hebrides. Other contributors suggested a campaign to raise language awareness amongst the general population, and Scottish Studies with a strong Gaelic language and culture element to feature in curricula for all Scottish schools. There was also a need for language-planning in the voluntary, commercial and non-statutory sectors.

THEME 3: EDUCATION

3.1 Language acquisition and fluency of “learners”

Many commentators stressed the need for a marketing programme for adult learners. There was frequent mention of the proposed Ùlpan course and of a nationally concerted scheme for language acquisition.

Parents of Gaelic-medium children were seen by some as the most immediate prospects for a campaign to increase new Gaelic speakers.

One Gaelic group recommended the establishment of a Central Belt Gaelic college to cater for growing needs of learners, immersion facilities and support for the lowland, urban, new Gaelic community of learners and speakers, and Gaelic in schools.

Others drew attention to opportunities amongst 'understanders only' and native Gaelic speakers lacking confidence to regard themselves as fully fluent, or lacking literacy skills. Supporters of Gaelic were important in enabling activities such as mòds, fèisean, etc, to be organised. Although these were not enumerated within the Gaelic community they were important to the cause. Many commentators observed on the need to bring learners to fluency, and mentioned such means as Ùlpan courses, and wraparound care involving childcare to enable learners – especially young parents – to meet. Many also stressed the importance of adult learners as the most immediate way of increasing numbers of Gaelic speakers.

Some councils were reported as financing students to participate in Sabhal Mòr Ostaig's distance-learning course, An Cùrsa Inntigidh – whilst others did not.

3.2 Gaelic in education

Very many commentators raised the problems of teacher recruitment for Gaelic as a subject and Gaelic-medium education. Demand for Gaelic was often locally highly buoyant but impeded chiefly through lack of supply of suitably qualified teachers. Immersion schemes were seen by many as the most effective and immediate way of increasing the number of adult Gaelic speakers.

Very many commented on the lack of continuity and provision in the secondary sector. Many parents of Gaelic-medium pupils raised this issue, and felt that lack of continuity

undid all the language development which their children had gained in their primary experience.

Many saw adult education and the further education sector as lacking adequate attention, with problems unaddressed by the plan. More support and facilities were needed for adult learners whom they saw as being generally neglected. There were few real Gaelic communities left, but schools provided the opportunity to learn Gaelic and to create a kind of new Gaelic community. Various commentators observed on the need to provide Gaelic-medium education universally throughout the Highlands and Hebrides and elsewhere where there were still sufficient concentrations of Gaelic speakers locally.

Some drew attention to present-day numbers in Gaelic-medium education as being insufficient for language revival. One commentator suggested Gaelic high schools with boarding facilities (on the lines of Plockton in the traditional music field, and other music schools.)

Stòrlann Nàiseanta na Gàidhlig felt that Learning and Teaching Scotland should produce a Gaelic plan. And it wished to be included in the field of continuing professional development.

Many felt that Gaelic education needed its own curriculum – not just a Gaelic version of the English-medium curriculum. Gaelic has its own culture and heritage which should be recognised. This would need development of specific educational materials.

Fears were expressed (e.g. by An Comunn Gàidhealach) that Gaelic Learners in the Primary School (GLPS) might compromise Gaelic-medium education – especially outwith the Highlands and Islands.

Early years were seen as a crucial area by parents of Gaelic-medium pupils and by Comann nam Pàrant, many of whose groups responded to the consultation. Demand for Gaelic-medium pre-school far outstripped the provisions in the cities. There were special needs for both pupils and staff. Children learning English as an additional language (EAL) were generally enabled to have full-time nursery provision whereas Gaelic-medium children were often lucky to get part-time – even though the nursery was often their only exposure to the language (and EAL children had English all around them.)

Difficulties of registering for Gaelic-medium education were reported, especially where the demand was spread across several education authority areas (as in central Scotland) and authorities were not helpful in enabling parents to make their needs known. The request measure of demand for Gaelic-medium education needed to be challenged. There were no council officers actually researching needs and demand in this area.

3.3 Teacher supply and training

Several commentators urged that potential Gaelic-medium teachers should be identified amongst existing Gaelic-speaking teaching staff. Also, non-Gaelic teachers who wished to become fluent and teach through Gaelic could be incentivised by secondment to an in-service Gaelic acquisition scheme.

Many saw the need for the training of tutors in adult education.

THEME 4: CULTURE

4.1 Culture and Heritage

Relatively few observations were made on Gaelic arts, theatre and drama. Fèisean were more frequently mentioned. The Board of Celtic Studies mentioned the importance of Gaelic prose, song and poetry. This could be linked to other calls for Gaelic writers and the expansion of Gaelic print media.

Scottish Natural Heritage saw itself as a primary player under cultural heritage. Specific arts and cultural bodies made particular points about their own area of work. The Gaelic oral tradition in storytelling was also mentioned.

THEME 5: COMMUNICATIONS

5.1 Gaelic in communications and media

There was widespread support for improvements in radio and television provision for Gaelic. Some commentators had concerns over the implementation of new digital services. Another felt that earlier new electronic technologies had been taken up effectively for Gaelic and urged that the new wave of advanced electronic technology should be vigorously exploited for the language (e.g. podcasting, MP3s, iPods, DVDs, etc). The importance of radio was acknowledged, being free and more pervasive than television and able to be more readily responsive to the needs of the Gaelic community.

The importance of Gaelic on television was mentioned by several commentators. This provided a contact with the language for the general viewer – especially in that programmes were generally subtitled in English. *Eòrpa* was especially commended. If all such programmes were taken off mainstream stations the visibility of Gaelic would suffer. If subtitling were removed, a great benefit to Gaelic learners would be lost.

THEME 6: OTHER ISSUES ARISING FROM THE PLAN AND GUIDANCE

6.1 Register of language used in the plan and guidance

Many respondents observed on difficulties of reading the plan and guidance documents. Difficulties in fully understanding their structure were often cited. The need for summary leaflets and simplified versions were frequently mentioned. At least one respondent felt that the English version was the primary text and that the Gaelic version was a translation, citing a mistake ('activity' for 'ability' on page 30) being reproduced in the Gaelic version. One commentator recommended that if the original text had been in Gaelic its style would have been simpler and more direct, and the English translation easier to read as a result. Another view suggested a 'plainer Gaelic' service on the lines of the Plain English Campaign.

One suggestion (made by Fèisean nan Gàidheal) was to put the structure of the plan into diagrammatic or pictorial form (with an illustration supplied). Another advocated short executive summaries.

6.2 Targets

There was widespread comment upon the various targets. These included points on feasibility, practicability, timescale, and whether they had been devised to appear deceptively simple. Translated into actual numbers the targets could be quite daunting if based upon census results in 2011 only four years away. There needed to be a systematic research base or rationale behind the targets.

Some made the point of a strategy based over a 25-year period, with targets in series of five-year plans. One commentator also mentioned qualitatively measured targeting.

6.3 Trigger percentages

There was much discussion of the principle for critical proportions to trigger action on provisions for Gaelic locally. Generally the idea of critical percentages was not favoured, and many questioned them and the means of deciding their values. They were often seen to be arbitrary. The idea of the civil parish was not always understood. This (and other terminology) could well feature in a glossary.

6.4 Census reference person

This term was used in the 2001 census report on Gaelic, and signifies the person who filled in the census form for the household. A few respondents observed on the difficulty of assessing Gaelic-speaking children solely with respect to a Gaelic-speaking census reference person. This would ignore cases where another adult was Gaelic-speaking and had transmitted the language to children within the household. There would need to be dialogue with General Register Office (Scotland) Census Department to ensure that this was picked up in their future analysis and presentation of census data. (In 2001, 54.8% of children in families with a Gaelic-speaking adult were returned as Gaelic-speaking in the Western Isles, 62.3% in Skye & Lochalsh, and 24.2% in the rest of Scotland. The national proportion was 34.4%.) Several commentators observed that to increase this to 50% over the next four years seemed highly unrealistic, and some felt that this target should more realistically be phased over the next two census periods.

THEME 7: WIDER CONCERNS

7.1 Research

Research was seen by some as a prerequisite for language planning, and suggested a conspicuous place for research in the plan. Glasgow City Council identified a need for straightforward census analysis in the plan. There was an ongoing need to liaise with census over questions, analysis and presentation in published tables and reports. Scottish

Natural Heritage would have liked to have seen a geographical distribution of Gaelic speakers in connection with language planning and guidance.

There was a widespread call for Bòrd na Gàidhlig to develop an overall research policy in support of its work and the plan. There was acute need for research into motivation to speak, use and pass-on the language in the family. In the short-term, questions could be included in national social surveys. But the experience in other countries (Ireland, Wales and Catalunya) was the need for language agencies to develop their own statistical and research units. With the virtual cessation of Lèirsinn, there was now no national centre for Gaelic-oriented research and there was a conspicuous need of one – especially if the Bòrd were to develop as the one-stop shop for all language development questions. Language-planning theory (e.g. Fishman's graded intergenerational disruption scale, reversing language shift, etc) was also cited.

Education and educational policy were widely seen as research priorities. One respondent suggested that there should be collaboration with internationally recognised research units in Scotland such as the Human Communication Research Centre, Edinburgh and Glasgow; The International Association for Languages and Intercultural Communication; and the International Commission on Second Language Acquisition, Heriot-Watt. [The Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research at Stirling could also be added. KM.]

Local and corporate research was also needed. Local authorities in particular needed to quantify demand for Gaelic services in their areas.

There was a need, too, for monitoring implementation of the European Charter, and the development of more indicative measures of the effects of language policies.

Several commentators observed on the need for motivational research into public attitudes towards the language, and why Gaelic speakers may abandon it.

7.2 Finance and resources

Gaelic bodies, and parent groups particularly, drew attention to the needs of maintenance of facilities and continuity of funding, rather than intermittent and never-ending resubmission of bidding sapping the will of smaller-scale voluntary bodies. Continuity of support was seen as essential for the success of the plan and its projects. With new developments it was important to ensure that continuity of successful existing schemes was not jeopardised.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig needs also to ensure that its projects are adequately managed and co-ordinated. A further point frequently made was that the plan would not succeed unless adequately resourced.

Also frequently observed was the issue of delivery mechanisms and resourcing. The co-ordination of projects and the organisations undertaking them was seen as a potential key problem, as was the problem of resources. Without adequate resources and continuity of funding for key players the plan would not succeed. The point was made that constant bidding, especially amongst smaller and voluntarily organised bodies, detracted from efficiency of delivery. Several commentators saw the need for a cadre of local Gaelic officers working within the community, and amongst local authorities and Gaelic

organisations to bring the objectives of the plan into reality and to assist with preparation of bids.

7.3 Priorities

HIE drew attention to the documents containing some 120 priorities, and further identified 85 projects. For many this seemed too much and they felt that such a range was beyond the resources of Bòrd na Gàidhlig to deliver or effectively to manage. There was a need to prioritise them and to rank them as short-term, medium-term and longer-term prospects.

Many of the respondents identified the use of Gaelic in the home and family and intergenerational transmission as the first priority, closely followed by community and workplace. The importance of Gaelic in education both at school level and amongst adult learners was widely felt. The attainment of fluency was seen as a key objective in this and implied delivery of results not just provision of courses. Many also drew attention to the need to retain a living Gaelic community in its last 'strongholds'.

THEME 8: GOVERNMENTAL CONCERNS

Bòrd na Gàidhlig gave a presentation to the Education Committee of the Scottish Parliament on 13 September, and received a letter on the plan and guidance from the Scottish Executive on 3 November. These are especially important to the consultation process, and are therefore here addressed separately.

8.1 Concerns of the Education Committee of the Scottish Parliament

The Committee considered the outlines of the plan, its vision, aims, action areas and targets, its four themes, primary players, providers and facilitators. The committee noted the programme of public bodies which will be required to produce language plans under the Act. The committee raised the following ten points of concern:

1. The plan needed to be more specific concerning timescales, and the identification of the organisations with primary responsibility for carrying out the strategy. The plan needed to be strategic re their existing plans and capabilities.
2. Bòrd na Gàidhlig to set out its role at the end of its second full year in terms of what it sees as its own role for the medium-term 3-5 years,
3. There needs to be an explanation of how Bòrd na Gàidhlig selected the organisations required to produce plans.
4. There were widely differing linguistic realities across the 32 local authority areas in Scotland. Bòrd na Gàidhlig would need to undertake a graduated or layered approach.
5. How will Bòrd na Gàidhlig identify potential Gaelic usage? There will need to be focus in the guidance in areas of low Gaelic usage, and consideration of what steps

can be taken to encourage demand for Gaelic services. Gaelic was in a fragile state and there was a need for immediate action in Gaelic areas.

6. The plan to be strengthened to stress further the economic benefits and economic role of Gaelic.
7. The plan needs to provide more detail on how and by whom the priorities for training, recruitment and support of Gaelic teachers can be achieved.
8. There was concern regarding the target for education (of 1.2% of 15-24 year-olds able to speak Gaelic by 2011) as to this timescale and the organisations responsible for achieving it.
9. The committee communicated the concern of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar when potential Gaelic-medium pupils were not enrolled in Gaelic-medium education in order to maintain the viability of their own local school.
10. The plan needed more detail and a more urgent tone.

8.2 Concerns of the Scottish Executive

Bòrd na Gàidhlig received a draft letter from the Scottish Executive on 3 November concerning the publication of the National Gaelic Language Plan and the Guidance for Gaelic Language Plans. The letter sought more specific consideration of the immediate implementation of this measure. It raised four specific questions:

1. What does Bòrd na Gàidhlig consider to be the next steps and immediate priorities ?
2. How and by whom could these priorities be delivered ?
3. How does Bòrd na Gàidhlig see its own role being strengthened in identifying specific commitments to be achieved in the life of this Plan ?
4. Does the guidance clearly explain the Act, and do public bodies have access to practical advice on language plans ?

Conclusion

The process of reading 251 submissions from corporate bodies and private individuals was an illuminating task. It gave a privileged perspective on the contemporary range of ideas and attitudes towards Gaelic and the problems of language development. There were very few negative submissions – only some two or three or so. Even the relatively small number which were at all severely critical had plenty of positive things to say as well, and made their points constructively. The negative submissions were representing what is now an extremely dated image of language in society – a hangover from the nineteenth century – but it is valuable to be reminded that such out-dated attitudes still do exist and still have to be addressed. One public body referred to provision of interpreters for those who could only speak Gaelic. Clearly there are still considerable needs for raising public awareness and information on the language and its community of speakers.

The observations received in this consultation comprised an indicative sample of what the motivated Gaelic public thinks about its language. The database is well worth retaining as an archive or database for further research – and worth developing into an ongoing consultation by Bòrd na Gàidhlig of its public.

Many individuals and organisations took the opportunity to list the many and various activities in which they engaged in support of the language and its community of speakers. Many also took the opportunity to outline their own ideas on Gaelic development and language planning, in some cases as 'wish-lists'. This review has been remitted to produce a summarisation of comments and observations on the plan and guidance *as such*, which implies that much of this information has had to be put on the 'back burner'. This report has been unable to do justice to it, but it would be a pity if it were lost. This report concludes with a strong plea for it to be retained, and if possible for it to be associated with other recent consultations. These will all comprise an invaluable historic 'snapshot' as to what the Gaelic public thought about its language during a crucial period of policy reformulation.

Ken MacKinnon

27th November 2006 (revised 25th January 2007)

Research Consultant for Language Strategy

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NATIONAL PLAN AND GUIDANCE STATISTICS

1. GEOGRAPHICAL SPREAD

Area	Plan	Guidance	Total
Western Isles	8	1	9
Highland	35	5	40
Argyll & Bute	12	1	13
Highland regional organisations	5	4	9
<i>Total: Highlands & Hebrides</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>71</i>
Northern Isles	0	0	0
North East	7	2	9
Central Scotland	13	1	14
Edinburgh & Lothians	30	10	40
Glasgow & West	25	6	31
Southern Scotland	6	1	7
Scottish national organisations	37	14	51
<i>Total: Scotland</i>	<i>178</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>223</i>
Rest of Britain & Ireland	9	3	12
Overseas	13	0	13
Unknown location	2	0	2
<i>Total: furth of Scotland</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>27</i>
Grand total	20	48	250

2. SOURCE AND LANGUAGE OF COMMUNICATION

Type of organisation	Plan or Guidance	Total	Number in Gaelic	Gaelic as %	
Language bodies	Plan	42	24	57.1	} 28.8%
	Guidance	6	3	50.0	
Local & regional bodies	Plan	13	2	15.4	
	Guidance	5	1	20.0	
Local authorities	Plan	12	2	16.7	
	Guidance	6	1	16.7	
National public boards	Plan	22	2	9.1	
	Guidance	12	0	0.0	
<i>Total bodies</i>	<i>Plan</i>	<i>89</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>33.7</i>	
	<i>Guidance</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>17.2</i>	
Private individuals	Plan	113	32	28.3	
	Guidance	19	5	26.3	
Total	Plan	202	62	30.7	
	Guidance	48	10	20.8	