

Comments on Draft National Plan for Gaelic

The aims and general content of the plan seem admirable. However, the document would be much improved if it were shortened. Currently it is wordy and repetitive, and full of 'management' jargon. This sort of language may or may not impress other organisations, but it is off-putting to the ordinary public. A clearer and simplified document would be acceptable to both government bodies and voluntary organisations.

To take just one page at random (p.15). Outcome (I suppose an Outcome is the same thing as an Aim or Objective, but it is a mysterious word). "The increase in younger Gaelic speakers maintained among 16-24 year-olds". This is incomprehensible. Are the 16-24 yr-olds the younger Gaelic speakers? Or are you looking for an increase, or the same number, amongst this older group? "..as an indication of community vibrancy". This is a non-sequitur, and not part of the 'outcome'. It could be added as a separate sentence, such as "This would indicate community vibrancy". It might do so, but it might be the result of all sorts of other things. What, anyway, is community vibrancy? A community that plays games, or holds dances and plays, is vibrant; but that may have nothing to do with the Gaelic language. Lower down the page, we have "Invest in emergent forms of Gaelic-medium community". Again, this means little to me. Does 'invest' refer to finance, or to any kind of encouragement? And what are emergent forms of Gaelic-medium community? Does the sentence just mean "Encourage new groups to use Gaelic in the community"?

Another problem is that the document looks glossy, wasteful and expensive. On many pages only about a third of the space is used for words. A document can look attractive without wasting so much space. The current document gives the impression that Bòrd na Gàidhlig has infinite funds to spend on paper and postage. To my mind there are better ways of spending limited funds.

I hope the Bord will go through the document with an ordinary member of the public, and then shorten and clarify it. It should be possible to reduce the bulk of the document by half - and increase the number of people that actually read it.

Dr Helen E. Ross