

NATIONAL PLAN FOR GAELIC GUIDANCE ON LANGUAGE PLANS

The vision expressed in the proposed National Plan has been translated into practical activity in the *Guidance on Gaelic Language Plans*.

It has now to become an exercise in winning hearts and minds - not only of the relevant agencies mentioned here - but of the people in the communities.

I would like to make one recommendation:

In putting your Plans into action, aim to begin to identify a *Gaidhealteachd* in Scotland.

This *Gaidhealteachd* could be a north-south entity - from Arran to Lewis, including the western seaboard.

This would be the most obvious area for developing the Plan for Gaelic than Scotland as a whole being persuaded to adopt a language and culture for which most of it has had no attachment for hundreds of years - or maybe never.

A defined *Gaidhealteachd* has many incentives for drawing together communities that have much in common but are at present divided among different east-west local authorities - Highland; Western Isles; Argyll.

Gaelic would be the main language for business, education, worship, entertainment;

English would always be available but as a sub-text.

Gaelic speakers who wanted to use their language constantly and in all circumstances would be able to do so.

Visitors and tourists would really sample a Gaelic place.

The Sleat peninsula of Skye, for example, has been moving in this direction in recent years.

Wales and Eire have identified Welsh- and Gaelic -predominant areas.

I agree completely with Mrs Mairi Bremner, recently retired from Bord na Gaidhlig, who was contending for a Gaelic community to enable the language to survive in a friendly environment.

I acknowledge that Gaelic is to be found elsewhere in Scotland - place-names; road-signs; schools; ceilidhs/mods; native speakers - but it always exists within an English environment.

If this Plan is going to be fully implemented, it will require a totally new way of looking at Scotland!

Gur math a theid leibh,