

A STRATEGY FOR SCOTLAND'S LANGUAGES

Draft version for Consultation

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FOREWORD

In 2003 the Scottish Executive made a commitment to introduce a national language strategy to guide the development and support of Scotland's languages, including British Sign Language and other minority languages. Our aim is to celebrate and promote the rich diversity of languages spoken in Scotland, to raise the profile of Scotland's languages, to ensure that this rich heritage is recognised as a national resource and to encourage people living in Scotland to learn languages other than their own.

We recognise that many language initiatives are already in place and that a number of authorities and public bodies are dealing with language issues in Scotland. We also recognise that the needs and profiles of the many languages spoken in Scotland vary. This strategy will seek to provide a coherent approach that can guide the development of languages in Scotland and complement and encourage the progress that has been made. In this paper we will encourage bodies to consider the development of language plans based on the principles listed in this strategy and, where appropriate, having regard to the initiatives which are in place.

Scotland is a multilingual country. We live in a world where we often encounter different nationalities, cultures and languages, in our daily lives. This should shape our vision for Scotland. We need to accept cultural and linguistic diversity within Scotland and encourage the languages spoken and learnt in Scotland in order to increase our ability to communicate with other countries. The ability to communicate and to welcome different cultures and languages will not only raise the quality of Scottish cultural life but can raise the profile and success of Scotland across the world.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Strategy for Scotland's Languages highlights the key areas of language policy that are currently being promoted by the Scottish Executive. These include a wide range of language activity from language learning in schools to training British Sign Language interpreters. This document contains discussion of these and other key areas of language activity, describing the initiatives that are in place and the direction of current policy. This document also offers the opportunity to bring together in one place the Scottish Executive's reasons for promoting this wide range of language activity. These reasons are described in the text and have been identified as:

- Celebrating cultural diversity
- Promoting respect and confidence
- Encouraging mobility and communication
- Facilitating access and inclusion
- Increasing economic opportunity
- Enriching education.

This document also offers a number of guiding principles to shape the development of language provision in Scotland. These guiding principles are largely derived from the language activity that is currently being promoted. These principles will seek to ensure that:

- As many people in Scotland as possible will be equipped with fluent English language skills
- That there will be fair and equal linguistic access to information and services
- That linguistic diversity will be celebrated and multilingualism will be valued
- That language learning and acquisition will be promoted
- That respect for the languages spoken in Scotland will be promoted
- That the Gaelic language will be protected and promoted
- That the Scots language will be treated with respect and pride.

The aim of this strategy is to celebrate and promote the rich diversity of languages spoken in Scotland; to raise the profile of these languages; to ensure that this rich heritage is recognised as a national resource; and to encourage people living in Scotland to learn languages other than their own.

INTRODUCTION

It is estimated that about 150 languages in addition to English are in use in Scotland, although many of these will have only a few speakers. The profiles of these languages vary considerably but these languages can be grouped together to help understand the needs of languages communities and for the purposes of developing public policy. In Scotland the main language groups are English, Gaelic, Scots, British Sign Language (BSL) and minority/community languages. There is of course overlap between the groups with some people comfortably belonging to more than one group.

By custom and usage English is the main language of Scotland. It is important to ensure that there are opportunities to develop a capacity for fluent communication in English for those for whom English is not their first language, as this facilitates access to most aspects of Scottish life. It is vital that all the residents of Scotland should be afforded every opportunity to participate fully in Scotland's economic and cultural life.

Scotland has a particular responsibility as a custodian of Gaelic and Scots. These languages are closely linked to our cultural heritage and make significant contributions to our arts and culture today. We have a duty to protect these languages and celebrate their contribution to Scotland and the world. No-one outside Scotland bears the same responsibility for protecting these languages.

BSL is also a real, full and living language and is an important element of our rich cultural heritage. It has its own vocabulary, structure and grammar, which is different from English, and like spoken languages in Scotland, has its own regional variations and dialects.

Increasingly there are many languages other than English that are spoken in Scotland. Some of them have been spoken here for many years, some in what are now well established and significant communities while others are more recent and spoken only by a handful of people. We do not bear the same responsibility for the development of other world languages which are used by communities with their roots now in Scotland. Those languages will continue to derive their main support from communities outside Scotland.

At the same time we cannot overlook the wide range of European languages and cultures on our doorstep. We must seek to ensure that Scots are fully equipped with the languages skills necessary for employment, study and travel throughout the European Union and beyond. We need an outward looking society with a knowledge and understanding of the world and Scotland's place in it.

This strategy is therefore intended as a guide to policy makers and sets out the Executive's goals in this area. The strategy acknowledges that there is significant funding in place in a number of areas of language activity. This strategy is, therefore, not designed as a framework for specific resource allocation or as a statement of precise output targets to be achieved by specific interventions. Rather, it is put forward as the Executive's suggested approach to achieving a consensus around the outcomes which public policies should aim to secure.

RATIONALE

Our aims in seeking to guide and support the development of Scotland's languages include celebrating cultural diversity, promoting respect and confidence, encouraging mobility and communication, facilitating access and inclusion, increasing economic opportunity and enriching education. These are qualities that should characterise Scotland in the 21st century and languages – both Scotland's and those of other countries – have a key part to play in achieving these aims.

Celebrating cultural diversity

The Scottish Executive welcomes the diversity of cultures and languages in Scotland and is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all who live, work or study in Scotland. To thrive in the modern world it is important that we recognise and celebrate the valuable contributions that other cultures have made to our society over the centuries and respect and value the richness and diversity of culture and language in Scotland.

Scotland has a distinctive culture and identity which has long had a positive influence on the world. But we also have a long tradition of welcoming new migrants and refugees from around the world with their own cultures and this diversity has ensured the vibrancy of Scottish life today.

Promoting respect and confidence

The languages that are used in Scotland should be valued and respected. This is a measure of the respect that should be given to all residents in Scotland and to the languages which they use. This respect should result in increasing opportunities for people to use their languages and be confident in using them.

Encouraging mobility and communication

People travel for reasons of employment, education, culture and tourism. Mobility within Europe and beyond is an obvious aspect of modern life. Scotland is increasingly becoming connected with all parts of the world, through the economy, through education, through aid and through travel. In Scotland we want to benefit from the opportunities which this brings, whether economic opportunities overseas, enhanced enjoyment of travel or welcoming and supporting speakers of other languages to Scotland as tourists or immigrants. The acquisition of additional languages clearly has an important part to play in our success at communicating internationally and our success in attracting tourism and other forms of inward investment to Scotland.

Facilitating access and inclusion

The Scottish Executive is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and social justice for all those who live in Scotland. This means tackling discrimination and prejudice and challenging the behaviour and attitudes that cause or sustain them, even where it is unwitting or unintentional. In order for all people living in or visiting Scotland to be treated equally, ensuring fair and equal access to employment, services and information is vital. Language provision has a key part to play in this and we must ensure that language does not become a

barrier and thus contribute to inequality. Public bodies have statutory duties to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote race equality and disability equality, and by ensuring access to information and services they provide a key part of compliance with these duties.

Increasing economic opportunity

New and settled minority ethnic communities make an important and valuable contribution to our economy, society and culture. Among other things, a wide language base is a valuable resource for the Scottish economy. In the ever changing global economy we need people in Scotland that can not only communicate with people in countries where we do business, but who understand their cultures as well. We must therefore recognise our bilingual and multilingual speakers, who may have language, family and/or cultural links to other countries, as a valuable resource that can help us to open new markets for our exports and can help attract investment to Scotland. We must also encourage people living in Scotland to learn languages other than their own for the long-term benefit of the Scottish economy and society.

With our *Fresh Talent* initiative we are working hard to attract bright, talented and hard-working people to come to live, learn and work in Scotland. In order that speakers of other languages may contribute to the best of their potential, it is important to enable their acquisition or improvement of English language as required. Programmes have been established and there is funding in place to assist with this. In some cases this will include specialist language provision for those requiring a certain level of professional and technical English within particular professions. It is essential that a lack of English does not act as a barrier to employment. The private sector has a role to play in tackling this and to ensure that language does not limit employment opportunities and contribute to inequality.

Enriching education

Language education carries the potential to enrich education at all levels, whether in school or in the work place. Traditionally, language learning offered the ability to communicate in another language and have access to other cultures. These reasons can be supplemented by other benefits that offer personal and wider social advantages such as cultural diversity and economic opportunity. As this document will demonstrate there are a range of contexts in which language acquisition is promoted in Scotland. This includes schools, further and higher education institutions, community education classes and in the workplace. Also, in the various language initiatives promoted in Scotland there is encouragement to learn European languages, other major world languages and Scotland's indigenous languages.

POLICIES

The aim of this section is to offer some discussion of the initiatives that are in place and to indicate the direction of current policy and support for languages and language learning.

English

We need to recognise that English is the main language in Scotland and that the great majority of services are offered in English. The importance of supporting the acquisition of English language skills - whether for English speakers, for those for whom English is not their first language or for those who are unable to acquire English language skills because of a disability - is at the core of participation and equality in our society. Without adequate English language skills, people can neither fully participate in their local and national communities nor are they given the opportunity to meet their full potential.

Without acquiring a sound basis of knowledge and skills in literacy, children will not be able to benefit fully from school education and will face serious difficulties in reaching their full potential. This is recognised in the first of the five national priorities in education - to raise standards of educational attainment for all in schools, especially in the core skills of literacy and numeracy, and to achieve better levels in national measures of achievement including examination results.

We have a number of ongoing initiatives to improve attainment in literacy such as the Home Reading Initiative and Scotland Reads. In addition, Development Officers in Learning and Teaching Scotland work closely with the Local Authority Literacy Coordinators Network to share information and professional expertise.

The Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland (ALNIS) report was published in 2001 and sets out the strategy for adult literacy and numeracy in Scotland which articulates a vision of a modern vibrant Scotland where all people living, working or studying in Scotland are equipped to reach their goals in life. Improving literacy skills can provide the first steps to learning other languages, promoting understanding in a multi-cultural society and accessing a whole range of life opportunities.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

The provision of high quality, accessible and affordable English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) supports the Scottish Executive's ambitions for growing the economy and encouraging active citizenship in a diverse and pluralistic society. We have therefore developed an adult ESOL strategy for Scotland, which we plan to launch shortly. Our vision is that all Scottish residents for whom English is not a first language have the opportunity to access high quality English language provision so that they can acquire the language skills to enable them to participate in Scottish life: in the workplace, family, further study, and in the wider community, society and economy of Scotland. ESOL also has an important part to play in supporting other initiatives like *Fresh Talent*, and as mentioned previously, can enable in-migrants to contribute to the best of their potential to the Scottish economy and society.

These language skills are central to giving people a democratic voice and supporting them to contribute to the society in which they live. The ESOL strategy seeks to provide a blueprint for the direction and structure of ESOL provision in Scotland and support for the ESOL teaching community in its delivery of, and further professionalisation for, ESOL in the 21st century. Coherent provision and consistent high quality will benefit all ESOL learners, and in the short to medium term has the potential to reduce the demand for the provision of public services in other languages, as more learners become proficient speakers of English. The strategy therefore encourages the recognition and sharing of good practice.

English as an Additional Language

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 requires education authorities to identify, meet and keep under review the additional support needs of school pupils for whose education they are responsible. The Act introduces a new framework within which all types of additional support needs may be met, with collaboration between different agencies and with the emphasis on the needs of the individual child.

The Scottish Executive commissioned the Centre for Education for Racial Equality in Scotland (CERES) to work with the Scottish Executive's English as an Additional Language Co-ordinating Committee to prepare guidance on good practice which aims to assist all staff in education establishments understand better the strengths and development needs of bilingual learners.

Gaelic

Gaelic has been spoken in Scotland for over 1500 years. Over this period, Gaelic has been the language of court and government, learning and the arts, education and devotion and the home and the community. Although its use has declined over the centuries, it is still alive and an official language of Scotland, as well as a valuable part of our nation's living, diverse culture. Gaelic is a key part of Scotland's cultural identity and especially that of the people of the Highlands and Islands.

The 2001 Census recorded 65,674 people aged three or over as being able to speak, read, or write Gaelic - 1.3 per cent of the Scottish population. The number of people aged two or over who could speak, read, write or understand Gaelic was recorded for the first time and found to be 92,396, or 1.9 per cent of the population. The largest concentrations of Gaelic speakers live in the Western Isles, the Highlands, and Argyll and Bute, but there are many more speakers to be found throughout the country, with the largest single concentration in Glasgow.

We have been working hard since 1999 to strengthen the position of Gaelic in Scotland. In particular, we have introduced the Gaelic Language Act and invested record levels in Gaelic-medium education. The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 received Royal Assent in June 2005 and commenced in February 2006. The purpose of the Act is to ensure a sustainable future for the Gaelic language by providing direction to Gaelic development activities and taking a more strategic approach to how the public sector engages with the language.

Under the Act, the newly-established Gaelic Language Board, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, is required to advise on matters relating to the Gaelic language, culture and education and to develop a National Gaelic Language Plan which sets out its strategies and priorities for the future

development of the Gaelic language, culture and education. Bòrd na Gàidhlig will also be able to request Scottish public authorities to develop local Gaelic language plans which will set out how those bodies may promote the use of the Gaelic language.

We have taken a number of important steps to extend and strengthen Gaelic medium education. Gaelic is now available at all levels of education with much improved resources and materials. In addition to core education funding, we provide significant additional resources to local authorities to assist them with the delivery of Gaelic education.

We have sought to address the shortage of Gaelic teachers. A Gaelic Teachers' Action Group was established and made recommendations on the recruitment and retention of Gaelic teachers. Another working group is focusing on IT delivery and subject development, particularly at the secondary level. This group is working to expand Gaelic secondary provision and is considering new methods for delivering Gaelic medium education where teachers may not be available or where demand may be limited. And we have sought to develop new routes into Gaelic teaching, to provide support for Teachers and Pupils.

We have made progress in raising the profile of Gaelic in public life. There are more Gaelic officers working for public bodies, more Gaelic plans and policies being developed and more Gaelic signs on roads and buildings. We expect that the provisions of the Act and the work of Bòrd na Gàidhlig will add to this. The Gaelic arts also have a high profile in Scotland and are an important feature of Scottish cultural life. And Gaelic is also supported by local authorities, the Scottish Arts Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and a number of other public bodies.

We have also made good progress in strengthening the consistency and relevance of Gaelic. For example, the Scottish Qualifications Authority published the Gaelic Orthographic Conventions, a Gaelic Spellchecker is available from Learning and Teaching Scotland and the *Fosglan* Unit in Lews Castle College is working to bring greater consistency to the work of Gaelic translation.

Scots

The Scots language is an important part of Scotland's cultural heritage. It is a living language and is still widely spoken across Scotland today in a variety of forms such as Scots, Doric and Lallans. Unlike Gaelic, Scots is not an endangered language and has considerable overlap with Scottish Standard English. However, it is important that we recognise, respect and celebrate the Scots language as an integral part of our cultural heritage. We must also ensure a familiarity with the language so that we continue to understand not only our literature and our historical record but also our contemporary arts as well.

We are aware that there are many people in Scotland who do not regard Scots as a separate language. Scots, however, was once recognised as a language of government, business, academia and everyday life in Scotland. Scots, like English, German, Dutch, Norwegian and Danish, is a Germanic language. It is important for the confidence of Scots speakers that we recognise and respect it as a distinct language. We should not assume that speaking Scots is an indication of poor competence in English. Instead, we should celebrate the contribution that Scots has made to the modern English vocabulary as well as the influence that Scots speakers have had on the modern world – in disciplines such as science, literature, economics, politics, philosophy and the arts.

People in Scotland who are not from Scots-speaking families or communities — should also be encouraged to celebrate Scots as an important part of our diverse cultural heritage. Familiarity with Scots allows us to enjoy not only the great literature of the past but contemporary arts and culture as well.

The Executive's National Guidelines on English Language 5-14 advocate the inclusion of Scots in the school curriculum where appropriate. The Guidelines advocate the inclusion of Scots literature in the curriculum, and Learning and Teaching Scotland produces teaching materials in support of this inclusive policy. This allows pupils to be confident and creative in language and to develop notions of language diversity, within which they can appreciate the range of accents, dialects and forms of expression they encounter. This helps children value the Scots they may use at home or with their peers.

In addition, there are a range of groups supporting and promoting Scots, including the Scots Language Society, the Scots Language Resource Centre, Scottish Language Dictionaries, Dictionary of the Scottish Tongue, and the Association for Scottish Literary Studies. These groups have made important contributions towards raising the profile of Scots and thus enriching Scotland's cultural life.

British Sign Language

British Sign Language (BSL) is a real, full and living language that is part of our rich cultural heritage. It has its own vocabulary, structure and grammar, which is different from English, and like spoken languages in Scotland, has its own regional variations and dialects.

Although there are no precise figures, it is estimated that BSL is the first or preferred language of approximately 6,000 deaf people in Scotland. This figure does not take account of other users of BSL such as hearing family members or other people in Scotland with a range of hearing loss who may have acquired BSL as an additional language¹.

BSL was officially recognised as a minority language by the United Kingdom Government in March 2003. In the same year the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe also recognised sign languages as the expression of Europe's cultural wealth and a feature of Europe's linguistic and cultural heritage.

In Scotland the Executive is committed to developing a strategic approach to raising awareness of BSL issues and the development of communication strategies with deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing people. Due to the shortage of registered BSL interpreters in Scotland, Scottish Ministers made a commitment to look at plans to double the number of BSL/English interpreters in Scotland.

To support this commitment we provided significant funding to the Scottish Association of Sign Language Interpreters to work in partnership with Heriot-Watt University to develop and deliver a Graduate Diploma in Teaching British Sign Language Tutors. This groundbreaking course will increase the number of highly qualified tutors available to teach

¹ *Translating, Interpreting and Communication Support: A Review of Provision in Scotland* Scottish Executive Social Research 2006 - Figures: Scottish Council on Deafness

BSL to Deaf and hearing learners. It will also help to support linguists able to conduct research and develop learning and teaching resources.

To help us consider the issues at the heart of linguistic access for Deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing people we established a BSL and Linguistic Access Working Group in 2000. In May 2005 we published a research report entitled *Investigation of Access to Public Services in Scotland Using British Sign Language*, which aimed to assess the extent of access to public services in Scotland in sign language by Deaf people. The working group is considering this research along with the Scottish Training Strategy Group's report *Creating Linguistic Access for Deaf and Deafblind People: A Strategy for Scotland* to help inform and prioritise their future work programme and provide specific practical recommendations on improving the linguistic access of individuals.

We intend to continue to focus on increasing the number of registered British Sign Language/English interpreters in Scotland. To help us to do this we have appointed a BSL and Linguistic Access Project Manager to work with our BSL and Linguistic Access Working Group to develop a detailed plan for improving linguistic access for Deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing people in Scotland. and developing a work programme with our BSL and Linguistic Access Working Group to address priorities identified.

Other Minority/Community languages

We must ensure that existing minority ethnic communities as well as new migrants and refugees are able to access public services in their own languages where necessary. People living, working or studying in Scotland who do not understand English have the same rights to access public sector services as English speakers. We also want to create a supportive environment so that speakers of languages other than English are able to continue to develop their skills in their first language along with English.

We need to recognise that recent immigrants and speakers of community languages who are learning English have the potential to become bilingual – which is good for Scotland. We need to ensure we support communities, families and individuals who wish to achieve proficiency in their own language and that our methods for teaching English do not undermine these efforts.

We are working to attract new and talented people to come to live and work in Scotland and languages clearly have an important part to play in our success in attracting fresh talent to Scotland. It is important for in-migrants to be able to settle into their new lives including accessing language provision where required.

Several thousand asylum seekers and refugees currently live in Scotland; the vast majority are accommodated in Glasgow. Around £1.5 million has been provided by the Scottish Executive for integration projects since 2003-04. Communities Scotland has also allocated funding to improve local services and promote community development and integration in communities under stress as a result of the National Asylum Support Services dispersal system. Resources were used to benefit the wider community as well as asylum seekers and refugees. Significant funding has been awarded since the start of the programme in September 2001 which has been spent on a variety of projects addressing language development, childcare, community integration, and advice and information.

The Scottish Executive has prepared an Education Guide for asylum seekers and refugees. The guide is available in all the main languages of asylum seekers based in Scotland and provides information on how the school education system works here. We have also initiated research looking at the education experiences of asylum seekers and we will expect to see issues around languages appear in the final report.

The Scottish Executive is committed to the provision of high quality translation, interpreting and communication support (TICS) services. We have commissioned a research project to provide a national picture of the public translation, interpreting and communication services that are currently available. This report was published in February 2006 and we are considering the recommendations and the best way to take them forward.

It is important that existing minority ethnic communities as well as new migrants and refugees are able to celebrate their language and traditions and to participate fully in the cultural life of their own community and of Scotland. Scotland is becoming more culturally diverse; and thanks to the enriching impact this has had on many aspects of every day life in communities across Scotland – not to mention its positive contributions to areas such as the Scottish arts, literature and sport scenes as well - we now have a better awareness of diversity. With this has come the growing belief that our communities – established and ‘new’ – have all the ingredients necessary to produce the innovative, smart and successful nation we all aspire to be. “One Scotland Many Cultures” is something Scotland should be proud of and we will continue to promote and celebrate Scotland’s cultural diversity.

Our cultural public bodies also have an important role in supporting cultural diversity in Scotland. For example, the Scottish Museums Council is working in partnership with the Black Environment Network to develop access to museums and galleries for black and minority ethnic groups. And the Scottish Arts Council’s *Cultural Diversity Strategy 2002-07* sets out their strategy for making cultural diversity an integral element of the arts funding system in Scotland. The long-term aim is to increase the number and range of practising artists from culturally diverse communities; to improve access to a wide spectrum of arts and cultural activities for minority ethnic communities and the wider population; and to improve employment opportunities in the arts and culture for those from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Language Learning

56% of citizens in EU member states are able to hold a conversation in a language in addition to their first language and 28% speak two additional languages well enough to hold a conversation. In the UK 62% of people admit not knowing any language other than their first language¹. This means that, as well as missing out on the personal and societal attributes that can develop from language learning, Scottish young people could be at a disadvantage compared to their bilingual counterparts in today’s global economy.

We therefore need to ensure that people in Scotland are aware of the important economic, educational, social and cultural benefits that may be derived from learning the languages of their neighbours in Europe and beyond, and that they have adequate opportunities throughout their lives to learn a wide range of modern languages, in keeping with Scotland’s growing profile around the world.

¹ Special Eurobarometer 243: Europeans and their languages, February 2006.

In September 2001, the Scottish Executive announced its response to *Citizens of a Multilingual World*, the report from the Ministerial Action Group on Languages. This report forms the basis of the Scottish Executive's current policy on teaching modern languages in schools. In May 2003 *A Partnership for a Better Scotland* contained the commitment to guarantee the opportunity to learn a modern European language starting in primary school.

A great deal of support has been provided to support language learning and teaching in Scotland's schools, with over £22.5 million committed to languages since 2001. This has been used to train more language teachers, to enhance learning and teaching resources, to provide foreign language assistants, to provide links in other countries and to teach languages to nursery pupils and those with additional support needs. This has had a positive impact, with very high percentages of pupils studying foreign languages in upper primary and the first four years of secondary school.

Through the Languages Fund authorities have been encouraged to widen the range of languages they provide, in particular looking towards providing more language skills that may be important in the global economy and to help pupils develop an understanding of other cultures. In offering language funding for 2006-07 the Executive asked authorities to have regard to the following priorities; to ensure that they have:

- Sufficient numbers of well trained Primary languages teachers,
- A diversified range of languages for young people in schools,
- High numbers studying languages in S3/S4 and improvements in uptake in S5/S6,
- Innovative approaches to languages teaching in their schools,

Along with languages funding for local authorities, the Scottish Executive provides core funding to the Scottish Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research (SCILT) and through Learning Teaching Scotland has developed the Modern Foreign Languages Environment website (<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/mfle/>) for the purpose of supporting languages teachers. In addition there have been a number of interesting projects developed which look at immersion techniques and the use of on-line learning to support languages.

The 3-18 curriculum review, *A Curriculum for Excellence*, aspires to ensure that all children develop their capacities as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society. Language learning can clearly contribute to this aspiration. *A Curriculum for Excellence* recognises that Scotland has a rich diversity of language, including the different languages of Scotland and the growing number of community languages such as Urdu, Punjabi and Polish, and that this diversity offers rich opportunities for learning.

Guidance to be produced as a result of this review will cover experiences and outcomes in both the language the child or young person needs in order to engage fully in society and in learning (English, Gàidhlig or, for children or young people who need additional support, the form of language which enables them to communicate most effectively) and additional modern and classical languages. The guidance will encourage schools to support children and young people in maintaining their own first language.

LANGUAGE PROVISION

Advice from Scottish Ministers has already gone to Scottish public authorities in connection with service provision for speakers of languages other than English. Ministers have asked authorities and public bodies to develop appropriate language plans for the communities which they serve. Public bodies in Scotland have duties to ensure access to services and they have been asked to take account of language and communication issues in this context.

Public bodies have been asked to put plans in place for race equality and disability equality and some bodies will have Gaelic plans in place. A language plan could draw on these and should also seek to give expression to the principles below. We have, therefore, set out these guiding principles as an aid to bodies and to help shape the provision of services.

Language Plans

A language plan is simply a statement of an organisation's commitment to the most prominent languages which can be found within the area of that organisation's operation. It will list what users of the services of a particular body can expect in terms of their language community. A language plan could contain a statement of the functions of the body, a description of the principal languages in area of the body's operation, a statement of how a body could assist different language groups both in its internal processes and in the delivery of services and plans for monitoring and evaluating the language plan.

In terms of the content of a language plan a public body could consider the use of languages in the areas of corporate identity, communications, staff appointments, delivery of services, translation and staff training. A language plan which covered the areas above would form the basis of a commitment to different language groups and it would enable language groups to know what services were available in different languages from a public body. It would be for different bodies and authorities to consider what would be appropriate for their area and at what level.

Principles

At the start of this document, it was noted that this Strategy would guide the development of Scotland's languages. A number of guiding principles are listed overleaf for this purpose. We acknowledged there were good reasons for promoting language initiatives. These included celebrating cultural diversity, promoting respect and confidence, encouraging mobility and communication, facilitating access and inclusion, increasing economic opportunity and enriching education. We are confident that the approach adopted in this strategy will contribute to these ends.

As many people in Scotland as possible will be equipped with fluent English language skills.

By custom and usage English is the main language of Scotland. It is important for public bodies to ensure that there are opportunities for everybody to express themselves in English, as this facilitates access to most aspects of Scottish life. The policies which bodies have in place should seek to ensure that for those for whom English is not their first language that there are adequate resources for improving English language skills. Scottish businesses could also give consideration to the provision of specialist English language provision for those requiring a certain level of professional and technical English within particular professions.

The Gaelic language will be protected and promoted.

There is now a general commitment to ensure that the Gaelic language thrives within Scotland. In support of this the teaching of Gaelic by authorities is being encouraged and its use in daily life, particularly in those parts of Scotland with a large concentration of speakers. The Executive will encourage authorities to extend Gaelic medium education and to increase the profile of Gaelic in public life in Scotland in line with the provisions of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005.

The Scots language will be treated with respect and pride.

It is important for Scottish public bodies to ensure that Scots is recognised as a valid means of communication and cultural expression. The use of Scots should be encouraged in the school curriculum and its valuable role in promoting self-confidence and pride amongst those who speak it. The Executive will continue to support policies which encourage the promotion of Scots culture and of Scots language and literature in schools where appropriate. Public bodies will also be encouraged to explore opportunities to promote and develop the Scots language.

There will be fair and equal linguistic access to information and services.

There are policies in place which seek to ensure that all Scottish residents for whom English or Gaelic is not a first language should have access to alternative language provision where necessary in order to enable them to access services and provide opportunities for them to participate in Scottish life. Scottish public bodies should seek to provide access to high quality translation, interpretation and communication support (tics) services in order to ensure fair and accessible services for everyone. It is also important that communication strategies are developed for people with communication support needs. Language should not act as a barrier to awareness of, or access to, services and opportunities by considering the needs of the target audience and ensuring that information and publicity material is available in a range of languages and formats.

Linguistic diversity will be celebrated and multilingualism will be valued.

Scottish public bodies should seek to ensure that adequate recognition is given to first language skills other than English and that these languages are recognised as a valuable national resource. A wide language base is a valuable resource for the Scottish economy and the ability to communicate with people in countries where we do business and to understand their cultures will be valued. We must all, therefore, recognise our bilingual and multilingual speakers as a valuable national resource. There are also other benefits that result from linguistic diversity and we will seek to maximise the appreciation of the cultural and educational benefits that can result.

Language learning and acquisition will be promoted.

All people living in Scotland should be encouraged to learn languages other than their own as a means of improving opportunities for employment, study and travel abroad. Language education carries the potential to enrich education at all levels, whether in school or in the work place. Language learning also offers the ability to communicate in another language, to have access to other cultures and economic opportunities. In support of this the Scottish Executive expects all Scottish schools to offer modern language teaching between the years P6 to S4, providing a range of languages and encouraging uptake at National Qualification level.

Respect for the languages spoken in Scotland will be promoted.

Our communities are composed of people from many different backgrounds and identities. Language is often a key component of these identities and merits our respect for the important contributions that have been made to Scottish society. It is important that public bodies seek to address the concerns of those who feel that there has been insufficient recognition of their language and the needs of their community. We will encourage local authorities and public bodies to develop appropriate language plans for the communities they serve.

Throughout this document we have also acknowledged that there are many good language initiatives in place and bodies are active in supporting and promoting languages as they are engaged in the delivery of their services. This section provides the opportunity for bodies to adopt a coherent approach to guide the development of languages in Scotland and complement and encourage the progress that many have made. The approach recommended is the development of language plans based on the above guiding principles and, where appropriate, having regard to the following related initiatives.

RELATED INITIATIVES

1. There are a number of legal obligations and initiatives that have an important contribution to make towards or impact on the profile of languages in Scotland. These are briefly described below.

Race Relations Act

2. Under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, public authorities in Scotland have a duty to promote equal opportunities for people of different racial groups, which encompasses ensuring equal access to information and services they provide. Key public authorities must set out their arrangements around access to information and services in their Race Equality Schemes.

Disability Discrimination Act

3. Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 all service providers have a duty to provide a 'reasonable adjustment' to enable a disabled person to access their services such as making changes to the physical features of the premises or changing the way they provide their service. For example they could consider providing their leaflets or publication in alternative formats such as British Sign Language, large print, Braille and audio tape or providing a BSL interpreter or other form of communication support.

4. The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 places a duty on public authorities in Scotland to promote equality for disabled people from December 2006. Scottish Ministers are committed to this duty and expect Scottish public authorities to respond to this duty in a positive way. Most public authorities will have to produce disability equality schemes – will include involving disabled people as a key element – as part of their response to this legislation.

Council of Europe Charter for Regional and Minority Languages

5. The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages was drawn up in 1992 by the Council of Europe to help protect and promote Europe's lesser used languages. The UK Government signed the Charter in 2000 and ratified it in 2001 in respect of Welsh in Wales, Scots and Gaelic in Scotland and Ulster Scots and Irish in Northern Ireland. Manx Gaelic and Cornish were subsequently added.

One Scotland – Many Cultures

6. The Scottish Executive is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and social justice for all those who live in Scotland. Among other things this means tackling discrimination and prejudice and challenging the systems, behaviour and attitudes that cause or sustain them. The Executive's One Scotland Many Cultures Campaign¹ aims to raise awareness of the negative impact racist attitudes and behaviour have on individuals and society more generally but it also celebrates the cultural diversity of Scotland. The Campaign is supported by a number of national awareness raising projects including those run by

¹ www.infoscotland.com/noplace

Heartstone, and Show Racism the Red Card. The Campaign is just one part of the Executive's overall strategy to tackle racism and promote race equality in Scotland.

Language learning in the European Union

7. The European Commission believes that languages have a vital role to play in building a 'common home' in which 450 million Europeans can live, work and trade together. Learning other languages contributes to its goal of becoming 'the most competitive knowledge-based economy in the world' by the end of the decade. The purpose of the language competence indicator requested by the Barcelona European Council is to measure and stimulate progress towards the objective of improving language learning in the European Union, and in particular of encouraging all EU citizens to speak and understand at least two languages in addition to their first language.

Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005

8. The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 received Royal Assent in June 2005 and its provisions were commenced in February 2006. The 2005 Act has a number of key provisions:

- it establishes a statutory body, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, as advisers to Ministers, public bodies and others on matters relating to the Gaelic language;
- it provides for the creation of a National Gaelic Language Plan (to be approved by Ministers), which we expect to be a blueprint for future Gaelic development setting out short, medium and long-term goals;
- it provides for Bòrd na Gàidhlig to request Scottish public authorities to prepare a local language plan setting out how they will use the Gaelic language in connection with the exercise of their functions.

9. The purpose of the 2005 Act is to help ensure a sustainable future for the Gaelic language by providing some direction to Gaelic development activities generally and specifically by taking a more strategic approach to how the public sector engages with the language.

Language entitlement in schools

10. Since 2001 all pupils in Scotland have been entitled to an experience of learning a modern language which: begins no later than Primary 6; builds on their prior experience of first and other language development, learning and use; is continuous and progressive in the same language; and covers a minimum of six years of study or its equivalent of approximately 500 hours. In May 2003 *A Partnership for a Better Scotland* reiterated the commitment to guarantee the opportunity to learn a modern European language starting in Primary school.

International Education and Language Learning

11. In September 2001, the Executive published its international education strategy: *An International Outlook: Educating Young Scots About the World*. The document seeks to address the important issue of how to develop in our young people a genuine international outlook for the 21st century. Today's school pupils will spend their entire working lives as European citizens in an increasingly international world and the ongoing curriculum review, *A Curriculum for Excellence*, recognises that school education must prepare them for that. Many schemes exist to help schools deliver this aim from those that encourage transnational ICT links and joint curriculum projects between educational establishments to those that directly fund visits and exchanges. The British Council Scotland (BCS) (<http://www.britishcouncil.org/scotland.htm>) deliver many of these opportunities, including the Language Assistantship scheme which facilitates students or graduates from abroad to spend a year in Scotland assisting languages teachers in the classroom. BCS recently introduced Chinese language assistants to Scotland in cognisance of the fact that Chinese is the most spoken first language in the world and as China grows in economic, political and cultural influence it will become increasingly important that our people are able to learn about Chinese language and culture.

12. The Executive has signed a number of Cooperation Agreements with other countries and European regions which seek to consolidate and forge new educational links between pupils, teachers and policymakers. For example, the Action Plan of the Cooperation Agreement with France recently witnessed French and Scottish Higher Education Institutions agreeing to provide 4 week placements in each other's institutions as part of the BED for Modern Languages. The Cooperation agreement with China aims to develop a knowledge and understanding of Chinese language and culture in Scottish schools with 200 young people taking national qualifications in Chinese by 2010. Education agreements with European regions such as Bavaria and Catalonia also encourage educational exchange and language learning through a variety of EU and Executive funded schemes.

13. The recent launch of the Scottish Continuing International Professional Development (SCIPD) programme (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2006/12/15120945>) will ensure more funding for Scottish teachers to embark on international study visits as well as ensure better integration of their learning into their teaching practice. LTS are also to appoint a dedicated officer to promote SCIPD and the benefits of international education in schools, and teachers will be encouraged to contact LTS direct for information on international visit opportunities which often encourage and inspire language learning.

Scottish Executive Education Department
January 2007

Public Consultation

This draft version *A Strategy for Scotland's Languages* has been made available for public consultation on the Scottish Executive's website: **[insert link to SE website]**. Hard copies, translations, audio and Braille versions can be provided upon request from [Barry Matthews](#) (telephone: 0131 244 0326).

The consultation period will run from **5 February - 19 March 2007**. Responses from individuals or organisations or ad hoc groupings of either are invited by e-mail and letter. The consultation period will close at **5 pm on 19 March 2007**. Scottish Ministers will take account of all responses received before publishing the final version of the strategy.

Please send your response to the Scottish Executive by e-mail to: scotlandslanguagestrategy@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

or send your written response to the address below:

A Strategy for Scotland's Languages
Scottish Executive Education Department
Cultural Policy Division
Area 1-A North
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh
EH6 6QQ

Copies of all responses received will be placed in the Scottish Executive's library and will be available to the general public. Responses will also be made available to the public on the Scottish Executive's website. The views expressed by respondents may also be quoted or referred to in any future review of responses.

If you do not wish your responses to be made public, please ensure that you indicate clearly that all or part of your response is to be treated as confidential. Confidentiality will be strictly respected. We will count confidential responses in any statistical analysis and confidential views will be taken into account along with non-confidential responses.

Your response is welcome on any aspect of the draft strategy. The following questions may assist you or your organisation in developing your response, but your submission need not be directed by these.

Questions

1. Do you agree with the reasons given for promoting and learning languages on pages 4 and 5, and that these are the main reasons for supporting current language initiatives in Scotland? If not, why not?
2. Do you agree that the language initiatives described on pages 6 – 12 and elsewhere are the key areas for language promotion in Scotland? If not, why not?
3. Do you agree that the key principles listed on pages 14 and 15 should shape language activity in Scotland? If not, why not?

4. Are there any other comments you would like to offer on this strategy in relation to the promotion of languages in Scotland?

5. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, how do you think you may be able to contribute to the success of the strategy?

Cultural Policy Division
Scottish Executive Education Department
January 2007

