

Midlothian Council Gaelic Language Plan 2019 - 2024

Report by: Dr Grace Vickers, Chief Executive

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to present Midlothian Council's Gaelic Language Plan 2019 – 2024.

2. Background

- 2.1** The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 established a new national agency, Bòrd na Gàidhlig to prepare a national Gaelic Language Plan and gave it authority to request public authorities (including local authorities) to prepare and publish Gaelic Language Plans.
- 2.2** Midlothian Council was one of the last four councils to be asked to prepare a plan. The Chief Executive received notification from Bòrd na Gàidhlig in July 2018, that the council has to prepare and publish a plan by November 2019 (an extension to December has been agreed with Bòrd na Gàidhlig). The notification set out the high level aims that the Plan should meet.
- 2.3** Midlothian Council's draft Gaelic Language Plan (Appendix 1) was prepared in accordance with statutory criteria set out in the 2005 Act, and having regard to the National Gaelic Language Plan and the Guidance on the Development of Gaelic Language Plans produced by Bòrd na Gàidhlig.
- 2.4** The plan sets out how the council will use Gaelic in the operation of its functions, how it will enable the use of Gaelic when communicating with the public and key partners, and how it proposes to promote and develop Gaelic.
- 2.5** The key components of the Gaelic Language Plan are:

Chapter 1 – Introduction

This chapter provides the background and context relating to the preparation of Gaelic Language Plans under the 2005 Act and the structure of Midlothian Council's main areas of operation. It also provides some background information on the use of the Gaelic language in Midlothian.

Chapter 2 – Commitments

This chapter sets out how Midlothian Council will use, and enable the use of, Gaelic in relation to our main business functions. It covers key areas of operation such as corporate identity, signage, communication with the public and the use of Gaelic on our website. This chapter sets out the level of Gaelic language provision to which we are committed to providing in the lifetime of the Plan.

Chapter 3 – Implementation and Monitoring

This chapter sets out how the implementation of our Gaelic Language Plan will be taken forward, and how implementation and outcomes will be monitored.

- 2.6** Following consideration by CMT at their meeting on 4 September 2019 the draft plan was put out to public consultation from 23 September until 1 November. The consultation sought responses to the following statements and provided an opportunity for an open text response:

1. It is important that the council promotes Gaelic in Midlothian
2. Our plan reflects the right priorities for Gaelic in Midlothian
3. Our plan covers the issues I'm interested in
4. Awareness of the Gaelic Language in Midlothian is increasing
5. If you have any general comments please let us know

A summary of the consultation responses and comments are available in Appendix 2.

- 2.7** Overall 51 consultation responses were received via the online form and 31 of those provided further commentary via the open text option.
- 2.8** The majority of respondents (70% +) strongly disagreed or disagreed with the requirement for the Council to promote Gaelic in Midlothian and many were critical of the requirement to use resources for Gaelic rather than using resources to focus on other priorities. The positive comments tended to refer to Gaelic as it relates to schools and education. Whilst noting the general responses in response to the draft plan, the only specific comment in terms of content related to a correction being required regarding the omission of an existing beginner's class via Lifelong Learning which has now been included.
- 2.8** The draft plan is presented to Council for noting. Following Council the Plan will be submitted for approval to Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

3 Report Implications

3.1 Resource

There is no ring-fenced funding associated with the production of the Gaelic Language Plan 2019 – 2024. Expenditure such as for the consultation exercise or Plan translation will be met from Council mainstream budget.

3.2 Risk

The Council has a duty to comply with the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005.

3.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

Themes addressed in this report:

- ☐ Community safety
- ☐ Adult health, care and housing
- ☐ Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- ☐ Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- ☐ Sustainable growth
- ☐ Business transformation and Best Value
- ☐ None of the above

3.4 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

Midlothian Council and its Community Planning Partners have made a commitment to treat the following areas as key priorities under the Single Midlothian Plan:

- Reducing inequalities in learning outcomes
- Reducing inequalities in health outcomes
- Reducing inequalities in economic circumstance

Gaelic language and culture is an equality, educational and cultural issue. Equality, diversity and human rights underpin all three priorities.

3.5 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

Completion of actions and the meeting of outcomes within the plan will enhance equality, diversity, human rights, and educational performance and outcomes.

3.6 Adopting a Preventative Approach

By adopting a pro-active approach to equality, diversity, human rights, educational and cultural issues a preventative approach will be engendered.

3.7 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

As noted within the report Midlothian Council is required to consult on the draft plan for a minimum period of six weeks and the consultation exercise closed on Friday 1 November 2019.

3.8 Ensuring Equalities

An Integrated Impact Assessment is ongoing with regards to the Gaelic Language Plan.

3.9 Supporting Sustainable Development

The content of this report contributes to a sustainable approach to the continuous improvement of Gaelic language and culture within Midlothian Council and its communities.

3.10 IT Issues

There are no IT issues arising from this report.

4 Summary

The Council recognises the need to deliver services that meet the needs of the diverse communities of Midlothian whilst ensuring legislative compliance. Development and implementation of the Gaelic Language Plan responds to the needs to support diversity and to comply with legislation put in place..

5 Recommendations

Council are asked to:

- (i) Note Midlothian Council's Gaelic Plan 2019 – 2024 and the intention to forward the plan to Bòrd na Gàidhlig for approval.

Appendices:

1. Midlothian Council Gaelic Language Plan 2019 – 2024
2. Summary of Consultation on the Draft Gaelic Language Plan 2019 - 2024

Date: 19 November 2019

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Background Papers: None

DRAFT

**MIDLOTHIAN COUNCIL
GAELIC LANGUAGE PLAN
2019 – 2024**

Plana na Gàidhlig

This plan has been prepared under Section 3 of the
Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005

FOREWORD

A Foreword from the Chief Executive

This is Midlothian Council's first Gaelic Language Plan, and sets out our ambitions for Gaelic over the next five years, to 2024.

Our aim is to contribute to the Scottish Government's vision of safeguarding the future sustainability of the Gaelic language by enhancing the profile of the language and providing more opportunities for our communities to communicate in Gaelic. The plan will also support implementation of the Scottish Government's National Outcome 'We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity'.

We see this first iteration of our Gaelic Language Plan as a starting point for developing and improving our current Gaelic provision. Our commitments within the Plan set out what we will do to raise the status of Gaelic in a proportionate way. We will however encourage our services to exceed these commitments. This underlines Midlothian Council's commitment to the aspirations and objectives included in the National Gaelic Language Plan and the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005.

Dr Grace Vickers
Chief Executive

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Summary

Midlothian Council recognises that Gaelic is an integral part of Scotland's heritage, national identity and cultural life. Midlothian Council is committed to the objectives set out in the *National Gaelic Language Plan* and has put in place the necessary structures and initiatives to ensure that Gaelic has a sustainable future in Scotland.

Midlothian Council recognises that the position of Gaelic is extremely fragile and if Gaelic is to be revitalised as a living language in Scotland, a concerted effort on the part of government, the public and private sectors, community organisations and individual speakers is required to:

- enhance the status of Gaelic;
- promote the acquisition and learning of Gaelic;
- encourage the increased use of Gaelic

This document is Midlothian Council's Gaelic Language Plan prepared within the framework of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005. It sets out how we will use Gaelic in the operation of our functions, how we will enable the use of Gaelic when communicating with the public and key partners, and how we will promote and develop Gaelic.

This Gaelic Language Plan has been prepared in accordance with statutory criteria set out in the 2005 Act, and having regard to the *National Gaelic Language Plan* and the *Guidance on the Development of Gaelic Language Plans*.

The key components of our Gaelic Language Plan are:

Chapter 1 – Introduction

This chapter provides the background and context relating to the preparation of Gaelic Language Plans under the 2005 Act and the structure of Midlothian Council's main areas of operation. It also provides a summary of the use of the Gaelic language in Midlothian.

It shows how we intend promoting the use of Gaelic in service planning and delivery and how we will take account of Gaelic and our Gaelic Language Plan when drafting new policies and considering new strategies.

Chapter 2 – Commitments

This chapter sets out how Midlothian Council will use, and enable the use of Gaelic in relation to our main business functions. It covers key areas of operation such as corporate identity, signage, communication with the public and the use of Gaelic on our website. This chapter sets out the level of Gaelic language provision to which we are committed to providing during the lifetime of the Plan.

Chapter 3 – Implementation and Monitoring

This chapter sets out how the implementation of our Gaelic Language Plan will be taken forward, and how implementation and outcomes will be monitored.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Gaelic Language Plan

The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 (The Act) seeks to secure the status of the Gaelic language as an official language of Scotland commanding equal respect to the English language.

The Act builds on and sits beside other measures to support the rights of minority languages, including: the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992); and, the Council of Europe's European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1992).

The Act established Bòrd na Gàidhlig as an executive non-departmental public body, responsible through Ministers to the Scottish Parliament with responsibility for promoting Gaelic development and providing advice to the Scottish Ministers on Gaelic issues. The Act requires Bòrd na Gàidhlig to prepare a National Gaelic Language Plan and gives it the power to request that public authorities, including local authorities, prepare and publish Gaelic Language Plans. This provision was designed to ensure that the public sector in Scotland plays its part in creating a sustainable future for Gaelic by raising its status and profile and creating practical opportunities for its use.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig provides public authorities with official notification of when they must prepare their Plan and details of the high level aims which should be met by the Plan. Midlothian Council received official notification from Bòrd na Gàidhlig in July 2018 that it has to prepare a statutory Gaelic Language Plan under the framework of the Act. The notification set out the corporate service aims and seven high level aims the Plan should meet under three headings.

Using Gaelic – support existing and new Gaelic language and culture groups in Midlothian to help grow the profile and use of Gaelic.

Promoting Gaelic – undertake the duty outlined in the Education (Scotland) Act 2016 to promote, in such manner as it thinks appropriate, the potential provision for Gaelic medium and Gaelic learner education to Midlothian residents, including the opportunity that exists under this Act for parents to request the establishment of Gaelic medium education.

Once approved by Bòrd na Gàidhlig, promote the plan and its key commitments to residents of the council area.

Include aspects of Gaelic language and culture to pupils' education by Midlothian Council, with the aim of attracting more young people to learn and use Gaelic.

Learning Gaelic – Establishing a dialogue with the Gaelic Learning in the Primary School (GPS) consortium, with a view to establishing Gaelic learner education within the council area during the lifetime of the plan.

Support families and groups of families within the Council area to access opportunities for Gaelic early years and/ or primary school provision.

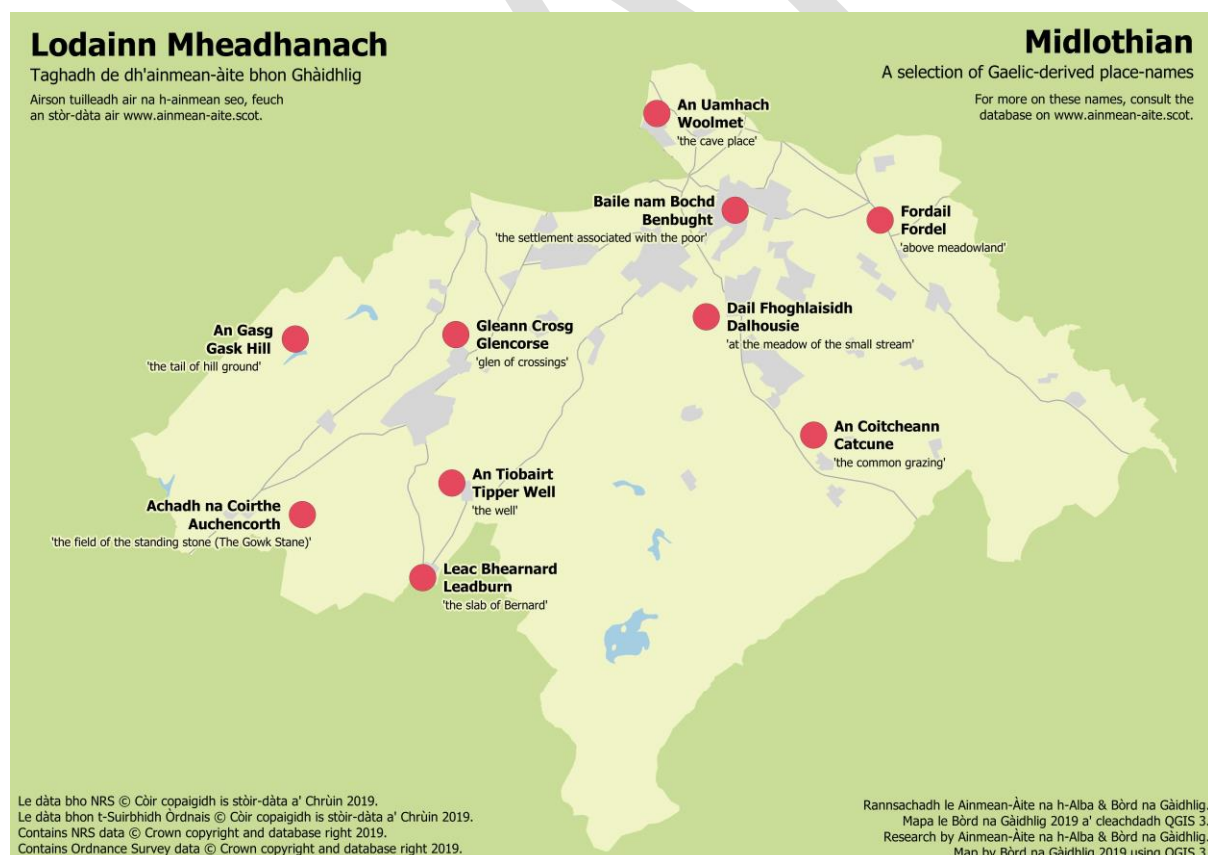
Support and encourage Gaelic learning opportunities for adults in Midlothian Council area, including an active and on-going dialogue with Newbattle Abbey College.

The Act requires public bodies to bring the preparation of their Gaelic Language Plan to the attention of interested parties. Midlothian Council has consulted publicly on the draft of its Gaelic Language Plan and has taken into account representations made during the consultation process.

Midlothian Council's Gaelic Plan will also be submitted to Bòrd na Gàidhlig for approval.

1.2 Midlothian Council

Midlothian is a historic county and although one of the smallest council areas in Scotland, it is one of the fastest growing areas in Scotland. Midlothian lies in the east-central lowlands bordering the City of Edinburgh, East Lothian and the Scottish Borders. The county extends to 353.7km², and contains the towns of Dalkeith, Bonnyrigg and Penicuik as well as a portion of the Pentland Hills Regional Park, Rosslyn Chapel and Dalkeith Palace.



Midlothian has a population of around 90,090 (2017).

Midlothian Council is committed to working together with its partners and the people and communities of Midlothian to achieve the vision Midlothian – A Great Place to Grow.

Midlothian Council is responsible for a number of public services including education, adult social work, children's services, community housing, environmental health, leisure, planning, building control, waste management, roads maintenance, civil registrations, burial grounds, licensing services and economic development.

Midlothian Council and its Community Planning Partners have made a commitment to treat the following areas as key priorities under the Single Midlothian Plan:

- Reducing inequalities in learning outcomes
- Reducing inequalities in health outcomes
- Reducing inequalities in economic circumstance

Midlothian Council employs around 3,707 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employees (c.3,192 permanent, 514 fixed term and 1 casual). Over 1,068 fte (28.82% of the total) are employed in the education service as permanent/fixed term teachers.

Midlothian Council operates from three main offices: Midlothian House, Fairfield House and Buccleuch House all located in Dalkeith. The Council has over 100 operational properties which include: an Arts Centre, Care & Children's Homes, Community and Community Education Centres, High Schools and Primary Schools with Nursery Provision, Hostels, Hubs, Leisure Centres with and without pools, Libraries, and Social Work Centres.

1.3 Gaelic in Midlothian

Within Midlothian there are a number of people who understand, speak, read and write Gaelic. The 2011 census records the following:

	All people aged 3 and over	Understands but does not speak, read or write Gaelic	Speaks, reads and writes Gaelic
Midlothian			
	80,280	185	167
Bonnyrigg	15,545	28	47
Dalkeith	11,297	29	16
Midlothian East	13,684	42	20
Midlothian South	12,771	19	23
Midlothian West	13,582	39	32
Penicuik	13,401	28	29

Gaelic in an education setting

Midlothian Council recognises and values the importance of Gaelic language as part of strategic planning and development of language learning and of the rights of our young people to access education in Scotland's indigenous languages.

In terms of education, Gaelic is defined by two distinct approaches to development; Gaelic Medium Education (GME) and Gaelic Learners Education (GLE).

GME provision – the current national definition

“Gaelic Medium Education” is high-quality learning through immersion. Alternative models lead to the dilution of standards and as such are non-compatible with the development of strong and sustained GME.” Education Scotland Lead Inspector for GME, Joan Esson, June 2015

Nationally, GME is defined by Education Scotland as follows: GME is based on the principle of language immersion. GME provision should encompass the four contexts of the curriculum within CfE:

- the ethos and life of the school as a community
- curriculum areas and subjects
- interdisciplinary learning
- opportunities for personal achievement

Education Scotland strongly advises that GME is not merely language learning, it is also the delivery of subjects through the medium of Gàidhlig and Gàidhlig at the heart of the life, culture and ethos of the school.

The Education Scotland Act (2016) and Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education include three key proposals regarding GME:

1. Authorities have a duty to promote and support GME
2. Establishment of a statutory process for authorities to assess parental requests for GME
3. Development of statutory guidance arrangements for the delivery of Gaelic education in schools and by authorities

Gaelic Medium Education (GME) in Midlothian Council

GME is currently provided by Midlothian Council through a partnership arrangement with City of Edinburgh Council. Partnership arrangements support developing capacity and effective resourcing across the region and high-quality Gaelic Medium learning for children and young people. This provision will be planned and assessed by Midlothian Council and local partners with local demand being assessed and monitored as part of ongoing future planning. This provision is supported by Midlothian Council and available on application by parents. Support and communications for parents wishing their children to access Gaelic Medium Education has been identified as an aim of the Midlothian Gaelic Language Plan and is included in the actions listed below.

An overview of numbers of MLC learners attended GME provision in session 2018/19 is provided below:

Primary: 10

Secondary: 2

These numbers will be tracked as part of ongoing development of GME and in line with the Gaelic Language Plan high level aims.

Parents also have access to Gaelic Medium Playgroups in City of Edinburgh through partner providers and at a range of locations across the city. More information is available via Cròileagan Dhùn Èideann's website here <http://www.gaelicplaygroup.com/>

Midlothian Council lead officers support the ongoing development of effective partnership working across the South-East region and lead support for schools in developing Gaelic learning

Gaelic Learners Education (GLE)

Gaelic Learners Education (GLE) refers to Gaelic learning as an additional language in an English Medium Education (EME) context.

According to the Education Scotland advice and guidance on GLE: "In English medium education, Gaelic language learning is part of children's and young people's entitlement to learning a language. Gaelic Learner Education is an overarching term which spans across 3-18 provision." ([Gaelic Education 3-18 in Language Learning in Scotland: A 1+2 Approach](#))

Gaelic Learner Education (GLE) provides young people with progressive opportunities to learn Gaelic language and experience Gaelic culture as part of the wider offer of languages across Midlothian Council schools. GLE is an area which is currently undeveloped in Midlothian schools, but is planned through the Gaelic Language Planning process. This area is being developed in collaboration with key local and national partners including Bòrd na Gàidhlig, regional local authorities, higher and further education establishments, schools and parents.

An East and Midlothian Gaelic Education Steering group has been convened to support the strategic development of Gaelic language in schools and includes key local authority officers, primary and secondary teachers, parents and local partners. Key local partners include Newbattle Abbey College, which offers professional development and engagement opportunities for schools, parents and learners. Teachers who have experience or an interest in Gaelic learning have been identified through email requests and local training opportunities are being developed and offered.

Other partners and areas of interest with links to Gaelic language are being identified including local place name mapping work and identification of local tourist attractions with a link to Gaelic language.

Midlothian Council is working with other local schools where GLE is currently being delivered (James Gillespie's High School, City of Edinburgh) and offering opportunities through digital solutions to open up Gaelic learning to learners across the region.

Gaelic in a non-education setting

Library services provide Bookbug bags in Gaelic at each of the following stages:

- Baby (gifted by the health visitor at around 6 weeks)
- Toddler (gifted by the health visitor at around 18 months)
- Explorer (gifted by nurseries at 3)
- Family Bag (gifted through schools in P1)

A small stock of Gaelic language books are available including a very limited number of items available in children's collections mostly held at Library HQ. Requests for Gaelic items are infrequent; however this may be due to a lack of awareness and so has been identified as an area for development in the Gaelic Language Plan.

In terms of community learning, there are no current classes for adults though the Midlothian Community Learning programmes, however courses and events are currently offered by Newbattle Abbey College. Community Learning & Development in considering the plan will look to identify opportunities to offer Gaelic language in their learning programmes.

Gaelic within Midlothian Council

The council currently has no data on the number of Gaelic speakers or Gaelic learners amongst its staff. However, it is considering when and how this information can be gathered.

1.4 Implementing the National Gaelic Language Plan

Midlothian Council recognises that the various priority areas identified in the National Gaelic Language Plan will be primarily implemented through our Gaelic Language Plan but that opportunities will arise to promote and develop the language through existing policy measures. Midlothian Council will examine policy commitments to identify areas where Gaelic can be pro-actively incorporated and the priorities of the National Gaelic Language Plan initiated through additional methods. We see this development as corresponding to the normalisation principle which aims to include Gaelic as an everyday part of life in Scotland.

2. COMMITMENTS

In its statutory Guidance on the Development of Gaelic Language Plans, Bòrd na Gàidhlig notes that creating the right environment for the use of Gaelic in public life is one of the key components of language regeneration. The Bòrd has identified four core areas of service delivery that it wishes public bodies to address when preparing Gaelic Language Plans:

This Plan also identifies the actions Midlothian Council will take to meet its commitment to the objectives of the National Gaelic Language Plan for Gaelic in relation to:

Identity and Status including, corporate identity and signage and expanding visibility, audibility, recognition and respect for Gaelic

Communications, including, reception, telephone, mail and e-mail, forms and complaints procedures

Publications, including, public relations and media, printed material and websites

Staffing, including, recruitment and training.

Gaelic Language Acquisition and Usage: enabling people to develop speaking, reading and writing skills in Gaelic and enabling the use of Gaelic in a range of social, formal and work settings. The Council will adhere to the most recent Gaelic Orthographic conventions and place-names advised by The Gaelic Place-names Scotland.

Midlothian Council recognises that action in each of these areas can help raise the visibility and profile of Gaelic and bring greater opportunity for Gaelic speakers to use the language,

However, Midlothian has relatively few Gaelic users, and has had little demand for information or communication in Gaelic. Within the current economic situation it does not have any additional resources to deliver any major initiatives to expand Gaelic language provision, Gaelic language training or overhaul its corporate identity to incorporate Gaelic.

The lack of demand could be connected to lack of promotion, as identified above under library services. Bòrd na Gàidhlig is aware of the impact of the current economic situation however, a lot can be done for Gaelic when services are included on a renewal / replacement basis, including through recruitment processes and the identification of Gaelic skills as an essential or desirable skill.

2.1 Identity and Status

The presence of Gaelic in the corporate identity and signs of a public authority greatly enhances the visibility of the language, increases its status and makes an important statement about how Gaelic is valued and how it is given recognition. Developing the use of Gaelic through signage can also enrich the vocabulary of Gaelic users, raise public awareness of the language and contribute to its development. Midlothian Council recognises the importance of raising the visibility of Gaelic, increasing its status and creating a positive image of the language.

Function	Current Position	Proposed Action	Proposed Outcome/ Indicator	Lead Service/ Officer	Timescale
Corporate Identity	Midlothian Council's corporate identify does not include any Gaelic language elements	We will review the Council's corporate identity and engage with stakeholders including employees, communities and citizens to identify how Gaelic language should be reflected in the Council's corporate identity and 'Brand' guidelines. This will include consideration of whether Gaelic could be incorporated in the Council logo, signage in and on council buildings and into email sign offs	The Council's 'Brand' guidelines will incorporate guidelines for the use of Gaelic language in the Council's corporate identity	Communications Manager	April 2022
Signage	Very little bilingual signage exists in Midlothian	Current provision of signage will be audited to identify 'Welcome to Midlothian' road signs which should include Gaelic when they are renewed	Welcome signs at the main entry points into Midlothian will include Gaelic, demonstrating equal respect for Gaelic and English	Communications Manager and Road Services Manager	April 2024

2.2 Communications

The use of Gaelic in interactions with the authority by mail, e-mail and by telephone is important in creating practical opportunities for the use of the language, and in contributing to the sense that its use is possible and welcome. The presence of Gaelic in a wide range of bilingual forms and Gaelic only forms can also greatly enhance the visibility and prestige of the language. The preparation of Gaelic versions of forms, applications and similar documents, can also assist in expanding the range of Gaelic terminology and the awareness of the Gaelic-speaking public of such terminology, thus helping the development of the language itself.

Midlothian Council recognises the importance of creating opportunities for the practical use of Gaelic in communications with its citizens and will increase its level of provision on an incremental basis.

Function	Current Position	Proposed Action	Proposed Outcome/ Indicator	Lead Service/ Officer	Timescale
Reception	Although the Council currently does not have any specific Gaelic provision in reception areas, the Council's Translation and Interpretation services includes provision of Gaelic	<p>A review of the Council's Translation and Interpretation services will ensure the provision of Gaelic when requested</p> <p>Training for reception staff in how to meet customer needs and ensuring that the needs of people who speak languages other than English, including Gaelic</p> <p>Customers who speak Gaelic will be able to request translation in the Gaelic language</p>	<p>Customers coming into reception areas in Council offices will be engaged with appropriately no matter what language they speak</p> <p>All customer services / contact centre staff will be aware of how to access support for communicating in Gaelic</p>	<p>Review – Equalities Officer and Customer Services</p> <p>Customer Service Manager</p>	Oct - Dec 2020

Function	Current Position	Proposed Action	Proposed Outcome/ Indicator	Lead Service/ Officer	Timescale
Telephone	The Council currently does not have any provision for telephone call handling in Gaelic	<p>A review of the Council's Translation and Interpretation services will ensure the provision of Gaelic</p> <p>Training for customer services/ contact centre staff in how to meet customer needs and ensuring that the needs of people who speak languages other than English, including Gaelic</p> <p>Customers who speak Gaelic will be able to request translation in the Gaelic language</p>	<p>Customers contacting the Council by telephone will be engaged with appropriately no matter what language they speak</p> <p>All customer services / contact centre staff will be aware of how to access support for communicating in Gaelic</p>	<p>Review – Equalities Officer and Customer Services</p> <p>Customer Service Manager</p>	Oct - Dec 2020
Mail and E:Mail	The Council currently does not have an agreed policy on how to respond to Gaelic mail and e:mail	<p>A review of the Council's Translation and Interpretation services will ensure the provision of Gaelic</p> <p>Any mail or e:mail received in Gaelic will be translated and responses will be provided in Gaelic in an acceptable timescale</p>	All staff will be made aware of the provision to translate mail and e:mail from and into Gaelic	Communications Manager and Customer Services Manager	Oct - Dec 2020

Function	Current Position	Proposed Action	Proposed Outcome/ Indicator	Lead Service/ Officer	Timescale
Forms (including complaints procedure and handling of complaints)	The Council currently does not have any forms in Gaelic	<p>A review of the Council's Translation and Interpretation services will ensure the provision of Gaelic</p> <p>The Council's website includes an accessibility and translation facility that includes Gaelic</p> <p>All forms and document such as the Council's complaints procedure, that are put in the website can be translated into languages including Gaelic</p> <p>Forms or complaints submitted in languages other than English, including Gaelic, will be dealt with appropriately and if requested in the relevant language</p>	All staff will be made aware of the website facility that allows all on-line forms to be translated into Gaelic	Customer Services Manager	Oct - Dec 2020

2.3 Publications

The use of Gaelic in a range of printed material can assist Gaelic development in a variety of ways. It helps increase the visibility of the language, it enhances Gaelic's status by being used in high profile publications, and it can help develop new and enhance existing terminology. The use of Gaelic in the media helps demonstrate a public authority's commitment to making important information available through the medium of Gaelic, as well as enhancing the visibility and status of the language. As more people access information about public authorities through their websites, making provision for the use of Gaelic can significantly enhance the status and visibility of the language.

Midlothian Council is committed to increasing the use of Gaelic in areas where the subject matter is of most interest to the general public or relates specifically to Gaelic issues.

Function	Current Position	Proposed Action	Proposed Outcome/ Indicator	Lead Service/ Officer	Timescale
Website	The Council website has an accessibility and translation facility that enables the site and all documents on the site to be translated into Gaelic	Review the use of the translation facility Ensure that any documents and forms that should be available in Gaelic are on the website thereby allowing them to be translated	All documents and forms that should be available in Gaelic are on the website thereby allowing them to be translated	Communications Manager	December 2019
Public Relations and Social Media	The Council does not have guidelines relating to the use of Gaelic in press releases and social media	Review the use of languages other than English, including Gaelic in press releases and social media	All press releases on the Council website will be translatable into Gaelic	Communications Manager	April 2020

Function	Current Position	Proposed Action	Proposed Outcome/ Indicator	Lead Service/ Officer	Timescale
Printed material – Council documents and papers	The Council does not have a policy relating to the use of Gaelic in printed material	Review the use of languages other than English, including Gaelic in printed material	All printed material that should be available in Gaelic are on the website thereby allowing them to be translated	Communications Manager	December 2019
Printed material in libraries	There are few books or other printed resources in Gaelic in Council libraries	The Library service will review its book purchasing policy and practice and source relevant books and printed resources in Gaelic	The Library service will hold a stock of printed and digital resources in Gaelic	Customer Service Manager	April 2021
Public Exhibitions and Heritage	The Council has not made any provision for Gaelic in any exhibitions it holds	The Council will review their exhibitions policies and where relevant will make provision for Gaelic in exhibitions	The Council exhibitions policies will make provision for Gaelic in exhibitions	Customer Service Manager	April 2021

2.4 Staffing

In order to deliver services through the medium of Gaelic, it is necessary to develop the requisite job skills and language skills of staff. The provision of language learning for staff helps promote adult Gaelic learning and promotes Gaelic as a useful skill in the workplace. The identification of jobs in which Gaelic is a designated skill will contribute greatly to the status of the language and to identifying it as a positive skill to acquire.

The use of Gaelic in advertising also helps recognise that Gaelic should be used in public life and that Gaelic users have an important role to play within a public authority. Whatever the level of Gaelic skills required it is important that authorities ensure that Gaelic is a genuine occupational requirement.

Midlothian Council recognises the importance of seeing Gaelic as an important job skill and of identifying situations in which its use is essential or desirable and we recognise the importance of enabling staff to develop their Gaelic skills if they can and want to deploy them in support of the Council's Gaelic Language Plan.

Function	Current Position	Proposed Action	Proposed Outcome/ Indicator	Lead Service/ Officer	Timescale
Recruitment	All council jobs are advertised on the myjobscotland website which does not have a language translation function	If a job has Gaelic as a requirement, the job advertisement will be both in Gaelic and English COSLA (the body which has responsibility for the myjobscotland website) will be approached to consider adding a language translation facility to the website and application forms	Bilingual adverts for posts requiring Gaelic will appear on myjobscotland	HR Manager	Apr – Jun 2020
Training and Language Learning	No staff training is available in Gaelic as there has been no demand for this to date. Training is being developed for	Explore & assess demand for Gaelic learning for staff Identify possible training models & approaches (e.g. Gaelic awareness, members' briefings, language learning etc.)	Improved staff engagement in and awareness of Gaelic language	TBC	April 2024

Function	Current Position	Proposed Action	Proposed Outcome/ Indicator	Lead Service/ Officer	Timescale
	teachers to support learning & teaching in Gaelic in schools	Work with local partners to promote Gaelic learning opportunities locally (e.g. Newbattle Abbey College)			

2.5 Gaelic Language Acquisition and Usage

Midlothian Council recognises that a sustainable future for Gaelic requires more people to learn the language and that attention requires to be focused on the home, education and adult learning as the key means of achieving this. We will take the following steps to help create a supportive environment for growing the number of Gaelic speakers in Midlothian.

Function	Current Position	Proposed Action	Proposed Outcome/ Indicator	Lead Service/ Officer	Timescale
Gaelic Medium Education	Currently delivered through partnership agreement with City of Edinburgh Council Local strategic steering group has been convened to support ongoing planning and development GME learner data is	Track and monitor uptake of GME Evaluate council information regarding GME provision Promote GME through communications channels & networks Work in partnership with City of Edinburgh to support and sustain current arrangements	Data on numbers of pupils attending GME To support and sustain current provision arrangements To ensure clear information is available regarding MLC GME provision	MLC lead officers Gaelic Strategic group	April 2024

Function	Current Position	Proposed Action	Proposed Outcome/ Indicator	Lead Service/ Officer	Timescale
	<p>being gathered</p> <p>Contact with parents is underway to support collaborative planning</p>	<p>and to align planning around GME.</p> <p>Promote / support pre-school and school age GME – mainly through existing partnership provision</p> <p>Families – support pack for families, review website info., share opps</p> <p>Engage with parents</p>	<p>To increase uptake of GME in line with local and national plans</p>		
GLE	<p>There is currently no GLE in MLC</p> <p>Teacher interested in or with language skills in Gaelic have been identified through school networks and liaison.</p> <p>A teacher's introduction to Gaelic course took place in May 2019</p>	<p>Support schools with planning and development of GLE through provision of learning and teaching resources and professional development for teachers</p> <p>Promote uptake of regional SQA accredited courses</p> <p>Develop Gaelic learner opportunities as part of 1+2 and via partners (e.g. Newbattle, the E-Sgoil or schools in Edinburgh)</p>	<p>Increased numbers of schools and pupils engaging with GLE</p> <p>Increased numbers of teachers taking up opportunities for development in Gaelic language</p> <p>Locally developed Gaelic teaching resources available for teachers and schools</p>	<p>MLC lead officers (education)</p> <p>Gaelic Steering Group</p>	<p>April 2024</p>

Function	Current Position	Proposed Action	Proposed Outcome/ Indicator	Lead Service/ Officer	Timescale
	<p>Partnership development of language resources in Gaelic is being planned with Newbattle Abbey College</p> <p>A Gaelic education steering group has been convened and key actions and areas for development have been identified.</p>	<p>Develop Gaelic learner opportunities as part of 1+2 and via partners (for us that would be Newbattle, the E-Sgoil or schools in Edinburgh)</p>			
Adult learning	<p>A Beginners Gaelic Language Class has been offered at Beeslack High School as part of Lifelong Learning.</p> <p>Partnership opportunities are available and starting to be promoted locally</p>	<p>Identify and assess opportunities for adult learning</p> <p>Work with local partners to provide and promote adult / community learning of Gaelic</p> <p>Identify Gaelic speaking member of the community interested in the promotion and development of Gaelic language</p>	<p>Increased offer of local community Gaelic language learning opportunities</p> <p>Engagement with the Gaelic speaking local community</p>	<p>MLC lead officers</p> <p>Gaelic language strategic implementation group</p>	April 2024

Function	Current Position	Proposed Action	Proposed Outcome/ Indicator	Lead Service/ Officer	Timescale
Partnerships and networks	<p>Engagement and partnership working underway with local Gaelic language partners</p> <p>Partnership representation on the MLC Gaelic steering group</p> <p>MLC is represented by lead officers on national Gaelic networks e.g. Gaelic Language Network (GLAN)</p>	<p>Continue to engage with local and national partners to support the development of local Gaelic learning opportunities and GME provision</p> <p>Engage with the GLE consortia to evaluate opportunities for Gaelic language staff development.</p> <p>Identify key local partners (business, tourism etc.)</p> <p>Continue to attend national network events, communicate opportunities and information relating to Gaelic language and promote staff development</p>	<p>Enhanced provision of Gaelic learning and development</p> <p>Increased engagement with and awareness of Gaelic language</p>	<p>MLC lead officers</p> <p>Gaelic language strategic implementation group</p>	April 2024

3. IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

Midlothian Council's Gaelic Language Plan will be published bilingually on our website and copies will be made available on request. In addition, we shall make the plan known to employees via our Intranet.

This plan is the policy of Midlothian Council and has been endorsed both by our Council Management Team and Council members.

The Chief Executive will be responsible ultimately for ensuring that the Council delivers on the commitments set out in this Plan.

Individual responsibility for various actions set out in Chapter 2 of the Plan has been assigned to relevant staff members and we have set out the individual target dates for when we expect to implement specific commitments.

The council will monitor the implementation of the Gaelic Language Plan through a bi-annual update on progress in implementing the actions set out on Chapter 2. These monitoring reports will be submitted to Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

Contact details

The senior officer with operational responsibility for overseeing preparation, delivery and monitoring of Midlothian Council's Gaelic Language Plan is:

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Queries about the day-to-day operation of the plan should be addressed to:

Lesley Crozier
Corporate Equality, Diversity & Human Rights Officer
Midlothian Council, Midlothian House, Buccleuch Street, DALKEITH, EH22 1DN
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Appendix 2 – Summary of Consultation on the Draft Gaelic Plan 2019-2024

The draft GLP (with the facility to translate into Gaelic) was available on the Councils consultation page for the statutory six week consultation period from 23 September – 1 November 2019.

Distribution - The draft GLP and online response form appeared on the council's website and was also promoted via social media. In addition the consultation exercise was also highlighted to a range of partners including Community Councils, Community Planning Working Group members, MVA third sector, Midlothian Youth Platform, Midlothian Peoples Equality Group and the Faith Communities Partnership to support wider engagement.

Responses - Below is a table of the 51 responses received. Responses were both negative and positive with the free text comments provided tending to express negative comments around the concern for the cost, use of resources and the view that as Gaelic wasn't spoken in Midlothian the resource should therefore be focusing on other priorities, and the positive comments tending to relate to Gaelic in schools.

51 responses received during the consultation period

	Statement	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
1.	It is important that the council promotes Gaelic in Midlothian	14 (27%)	37 (73%)
2.	Our plan reflects the right priorities for Gaelic in Midlothian	14 (27%)	37 (73%)
3.	Our plan covers the issues I'm interested in	15 (29%)	36 (71%)
4.	Awareness of the Gaelic Language in Midlothian is increasing	13 (25%)	38 (75%)

	General Comments Received from 31 respondents (61%)
1.	Personally I feel languages should evolve naturally over time. Some die out and some flourish. I am against ploughing resources into keeping a dead language alive. Its just tokenism. Hardly anyone speaks it and encouraging them too is looking backwards not forwards. You would be better spending money on more widely spoken languages minority languages like Urdu, Arabic, Polish or Manadarin.
2.	No clarity has been offered on young people choosing to attend a Gaelic school in Edinburgh. What happens about transport etc?
3.	For goodness sake - stop wasting time and money on an effectively dead language. There are no benefits to be gained from bringing this back from the dead. Let it go. Spend the money on care for the elderly, music tuition, free garden waste uplifts, teaching the kids modern languages, etc. You know - important things. And why Gaelic? Why not Pictish which was the original language of Scotland? What justification is there in choosing one dead language over another?
4.	Incredulous that money can be found for this when so little available to support asn in mainstream and beyond
5.	I can't believe this is one of the key priorities for Midlothian DC. I would really like to know why this is suddenly an issue and hope it is not just pandering to some misplaced nationalist agenda.
6.	Why on earth waste a single penny on a useless language when our education & local health services continue to under perform
7.	Gaelic has never been spoken in this part of Scotland
8.	Vast majority of people in Midlothian will have no desire to learn Gaelic, and learning it nothing more than a light hobby. With no practical use in modern society, this is nothing more than a waste of time, effort and money. Music and Sport tuition is reducing and you want to teach Gaelic???
9.	It is utterly absurd to even think about spending money on dual language signage when there is such a shortage of funding. According to your plan, there are less than 200 people that speak or understand Gaelic - spending public money on this is completely indefensible.
10.	This is not relevant to our community or Learners. The promotion of Gaelic should not be a priority.
11.	Money should be invested in supporting current education provision specifically supporting children with additional support needs. Why are Midlothian council wasting money on a language which isn't spoken by the majority of Scotland and hasn't for many many years and is of no use to the future economy.
12.	I support investment in gaelic for regions where it represents a statistically significant historical presence and not just as an arbitrary support for a misguided government policy.
13.	This is an insane waste of money at a time when serious services are being drastically cut. The whole plan represents a gross misallocation of funds and should be scrapped immediately.
14.	I have been saying for a few years now that I think Gaelic should be taught in schools or people should at least get the chance to learn it,

15.	The lowlands of Scotland have never historically spoken Gaelic and based on the information that is in your plan that under 400 people in the constituency either speak or write in the language I believe that the money could be invested to more benefit elsewhere. As so little people in the world speak what is essential a dying language if the funding needs to go towards language it could be better used to provide Mandarin or Spanish language lessons or information to the public as these are the growing languages beside English. Midlothian's gardens and public grounds are overgrowing, our services cut, our kids music tuition and school transport at risk and someone in an office thinks that Gaelic is a priority!
16.	What a load of rubbish and a waste of time, effort and resources for so little return, more people speak Latin than Gaelic!
17.	I think this is a massive waste of already stretched resources for a language that will never become mainstream, the majority of the world speak the English language. Perhaps the resources/council tax revenue should be spent on desperately needed services
18.	I've always hoped Scotland would teach Gaelic in schools as a first language - just as Wales and Ireland do with their native language. I'm beyond delighted that this is becoming a plan. Well done Midlothian, thoroughly behind you.
19.	It would be nice to be able to promote our national identity and language, but given the tiny proportion of gaelic speakers or gaelic awareness in Midlothian, I feel this is a waste of resources. I would rather see increased spending on essential services such as education (no operational whiteboard in my childrens' classroom, for example) and social services (desperately poor availability of cares and care home places). Gaelic can wait until we are communicating effectively in the majority first language.
20.	We strongly disagree with our hard earned community charge money being wasted on another SNP vanity project. Vital services are being decimated throughout Midlothian. Staffing levels are continually reviewed, leading to cuts in critical areas. I would much prefer my money being spent to ensure our children have their basic educational needs met and that our elderly residents are receiving the care they deserve. I do not agree with my money being used to necessitate a service which only assists 0.2% of the population. Utter indulgence!
21.	In a climate where people in frontline positions working in communities have lost their jobs, this just seems like throwing money away. This is too little too late for the Gaelic language. In the Highlands of Scotland where I visit regularly, and where Gaelic is taught in schools, the majority of the Gaelic speaking community have it as their first language. Midlothian will struggle to do likewise! An ageing and diverse population is not going to learn Gaelic. School children, on the other hand, will soak it up like a sponge - but won't be able to communicate with parents who have no interest!

22.	<p>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Scottish_council_areas_by_number_of_Scottish_Gaelic_speakers - given there are only 244 speakers according to the latest data, and given the Council's finances, I honestly hope this doesn't become a waste of money. The action plan looks like a lot of work and preparation, but there seems to be very little evidence of demand. The plan mentions demand at a few points, and notes at a few points there has been a lack of demand (e.g. for training). I hope that after carrying out some demand analysis the plan is adjusted accordingly. A good question to ask would be, has the Council ever even received a complaint in Gaelic?</p> <p>I understand there are a place names in Gaelic around the Lothians, but you have to go very far back into history to find evidence of any reasonable number of Gaelic speakers in the Lothians. The Lothians were part of the Kingdom of Northumbria from around 7 AD until the eventual formation of the Kingdom of Scotland.</p> <p>I think the plan does not reflect the actual history of Midlothian, and presents an imagined/invented history. You have to wonder if the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 had political motivations in its implementation rather than noble ones.</p>
23.	<p>This is a complete waste of money. Gaelic can hardly be compared to foreign languages where the speakers need help with English. Gaelic was never spoken in this part of the country - Welsh lessons anyone? Gaelic was never 'the language of Scotland'. Of what use would Gaelic be to pupils going out into the world to obtain international work. Airline pilots don't use Gaelic!! Please spend the money on filling in potholes and improving services.</p>
24.	<p>Given the current financial, economic and social issues in Midlothian this is a complete waste of time and resource. Midlothian Council should be dealing with bigger issues and not supporting the SNP agenda.</p>
25.	<p>Is there anyone who only speaks Gaelic and not English (or some other language more common than Gaelic)? Is there anyone in Midlothian who understands Gaelic better than English? Gaelic is a distraction from more urgent needs for Midlothian residents. Putting Gaelic on signs and Police vehicles makes it harder to read the English version.</p>
26.	<p>Council is already in debt so should not waste money on promoting Gaelic. People should be sign-posted to existing Gaelic provision such as classes at Newbattle Abbey if they are interested in language. Phone translation services are available if requested. Promotion of Gaelic language can be done by voluntary groups and is not an essential service.</p>
27.	<p>This is surely a waste of resources, time, and money for less than 200 people in Midlothian. Is Midlothian a traditional Gaelic speaking area?</p>
28.	<p>At 0.017% Gaelic speakers in Midlothian it does not seem appropriate to promote this.</p>
29.	<p>Your draft language plan is incorrect in that there is currently a Beginners Gaelic Language Class being offered at Beeslack High School as part of Lifelong Learning. This has been set up by myself and advertised by myself and Beeslack High. As the census has identified Gaelic speakers in Midlothian why doesn't the Council ask for Gaelic champions to come forward in each community where Gaelic speakers are living in order to promote the language and introduction to Gaelic events could be organised. If awareness of the Gaelic language in Midlothian is increasing it is because of BBC Alba.</p>

30.	<p>The Midlothian Gaelic plan is a long time coming. It is disheartening, to say the least, that consultation with families who are already using GME services in neighbouring Edinburgh Council area have yet to begin. Local pre-school and primary GME provision is not only desirable, it would also attract families to live and work in the area. Not providing a service because it was not historically requested is undemocratic and anything but dynamic. Edinburgh's only GME primary school is on the north of the city - meaning an unacceptably long journey, and a very long day for primary-level children, even from the nearest north boundary of Midlothian council area. We can be quite sure that families who might choose GME for their children are patiently waiting for these educational rights to be provided in their own council area. A GME unit could be seen as an asset, not a drain on resources. It could even maintain a school roll where otherwise the numbers would fall below the threshold of sustainability. It's time to think outside the box!</p>
31.	<p>The Gaelic language is being forced into areas of Scotland that never historically used it as a means to politicise a language by a political party. Historic place names are a good sign of this. Money shouldn't be wasted on this vanity project when other valuable assets and educational projects are lost</p>