



Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Iomairt na Gàidhealtachd 's nan Eilean

A Gaelic Plan

for Highlands and Islands Enterprise, 2009-12



It gives me enormous pleasure to introduce this, the first Gaelic Plan for Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE).

The people and place names of the area within which HIE operates, stretching from the Shetland Islands south to Argyll and from the Hebrides east to the ancient lands of Moray, testify to the rich Nordic-Gaelic heritage that has defined this region for centuries. It is one of the great pleasures of living in the Highlands and Islands to experience those rich and varied parts of our heritage as living elements of daily cultural life, and to hear Scottish Gaelic still spoken naturally amongst the people of the region.

HIE, and its predecessor the Highlands and Islands Development Board, has long recognised the opportunities that Gaelic and its associated culture and traditions present for the development of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. We are proud of our long and sustained support for Gaelic as a key asset for our region, and we are determined to play a major part in its further regeneration.

The passing of the Gaelic Language Act (Scotland) 2005, the creation of Bòrd na Gàidhlig the National Plan for Gaelic and the requirement for Gaelic Plans for public bodies brings a new drive and focus for

the development of the language. *The Gaelic Plan for Highlands and Islands Enterprise, 2009-12*, sets out a series of measures based on, and building on, parity of esteem for the language and its speakers; celebrating and mainstreaming the language within HIE and ensuring we are in a position to deliver services in Gaelic to the Gaelic community.

There remains enormous development potential for Gaelic and HIE will work in partnership to ensure that the Highlands and Islands fully realises the benefits of the regrowth of Gaelic in Scotland. HIE will look to fully realise the community and economic development benefits of the Gaelic language, its culture and its heritage, and will help ensure that we secure a truly sustainable future for the Gaelic communities of the Highlands and Hebrides.

Though challenges remain, this is a genuinely exciting time for Gaelic and the Gàidhealtachd. HIE is committed to ensuring that the Gaelic language and culture this generation is so fortunate to enjoy remains in place and in good health for the future.

Sandy Cumming
Chief Executive

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1 Introduction

The Gaelic Plan for Highland and Islands Enterprise (HIE) has been prepared as a statutory document for submission to Bòrd na Gàidhlig in response to the Formal Notice of Requirement to prepare a Gaelic Language Plan and with regard to the requirements as set out in Section 3 of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005. This Gaelic Plan for HIE covers a three-year period from 2009 to 2012.

The notion of fairness and of equity lies at the heart of the Gaelic Language Act. The legislation sets out that Scottish Gaelic is, 'an official language of Scotland commanding equal respect to the English language.' The application of this principle, alongside the mainstreaming of knowledge and awareness of Gaelic across Scotland's population, will counter the sense of marginalisation felt by Gaels in Scotland, and will play an important part in securing a sustainable, long-term future for the language. The implementation of this Gaelic Plan for HIE will ensure that the agency exercises its functions in a manner consistent with the spirit of the Act.

HIE will implement an ambitious but pragmatic Gaelic Plan for the agency based on the principles of:

- **Respect** – applying the principle of equal respect for the Gaelic and English languages and their speakers
- **Normalisation** – mainstreaming knowledge and awareness of the region's Gaelic identity, and embedding Gaelic audibly and visually in the day to day operation of HIE
- **Opportunity** – seizing new opportunities for the language's growth and renewal; capitalising fully on opportunities in the spheres of economic and community development.

Key to the success of the Gaelic Plan is ensuring Gaels have access to services in their language of choice. The core commitments of the Plan give priority to the delivery of services in Gaelic and developing capacity in Gaelic skills towards enabling staff to deliver these services on a basis of equity with English, particularly at offices servicing the main Gaelic communities. A key aim of the Plan is to normalise Gaelic as an element of daily working life in HIE offices, complementing its evolution as a growing component of daily life in a bilingual Highlands and Islands.

As a measure of the success of this Plan, HIE commits to having achieved the following outcomes by the end of 2012. HIE will:

- project itself visually and audibly as a bilingual organisation at points of contact with the public, showing equal respect to English and Gaelic languages and speakers
- process enquiries and applications made in Gaelic, making a pro-active offer of services in Gaelic for clients in Gaelic-speaking areas¹
- promote careers in Gaelic within the organisation and actively promote Gaelic as a key skill amongst staff
- ensure that all HIE staff and board members will have attended Gaelic Awareness training.

¹Gaelic-speaking areas are defined as those census output areas where 40% or more of population had Gaelic skills at 2001 UK census

2 The 2005 Act and the issuing of a notice

Section 3(5) of the Gaelic Language Act (Scotland) 2005 specifies that, in addition to the Bòrd na Gàidhlig Guidance on the Development of Gaelic Language Plans and any guidance issued by Scottish Ministers, a public authority must have regard to a number of statutory criteria when preparing its Gaelic Language Plan:

(i) The National Plan for Gaelic

The National Plan sets out a comprehensive range of actions that touch on the home, community, workplace, public life and the education sector, which are necessary to ensure Gaelic has a sustainable future. The National Plan makes clear that all relevant public bodies in Scotland have a role to play in its implementation.

The preparation of the Gaelic Plan for HIE has been guided by the four principles of language regeneration, outlined in the National Plan for Gaelic, as a means of achieving long-term language growth and sustainability:

- Language acquisition – increasing the number of Gaelic speakers by ensuring language transmission and ensuring effective opportunities for learning Gaelic
- Language usage – encouraging greater use of Gaelic, to provide much greater and wider opportunities to use the language and to promote access to Gaelic forms of expression
- Language status – increasing its visible and audible presence, to enhance its recognition and create a positive image for Gaelic in Scottish public life
- Language corpus – strengthening the relevance and consistency of Gaelic and to promote research into the language.

Appendix 1 outlines the long-term targets of the National Plan for Gaelic.

(ii) The extent to which the Gaelic language is used by persons in a public authority's area of operation and potential for a public authority to develop the use of Gaelic

Section 4 below considers levels of Gaelic skills across the HIE region, with regard also to the potential for further developing the use of Gaelic.

(iii) Representations made to the public authority

This final submission to Bòrd na Gàidhlig of a Gaelic Language Plan for HIE includes a summary of the submissions on the draft Plan as part of a public consultation running from 7 August to 5 September 2007. HIE has actively consulted both internally and externally and has taken into account representations made by persons in relation to its use of Gaelic appearing to them to have an interest in the development of their Gaelic Language Plan, as required under Section 3(6) of the 2005 Act.

HIE will work with other organisations towards ensuring a consistent approach to increasing and enhancing the delivery of Gaelic services, sharing resources amongst partner bodies.

3 Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Gaelic in securing sustainable growth

HIE is a Non-Departmental Public Body funded by and answerable to the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Government. The Agency was created by Act of Parliament in 1990 with the function of 'preparing, concerting, promoting, assisting and undertaking measures for the economic and social development of the Highlands and Islands'. The Body works as a multi-functional regional development agency serving the population of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland and is set the task of improving the area's economy and social well-being.

HIE organisational structure and functions

HIE operates as a single organisation with its functions dispersed and delivered across the eight local areas that make up the region as a whole. Central support functions are primarily located in Inverness, Dingwall and Benbecula, but discrete elements (including a number of senior management positions) are located at other offices around the region.

HIE local offices are located in: Stornoway, Inverness, Dingwall, Invergordon, Aviemore, Buckie, Golspie, Thurso, Forres, Kirkwall, Lerwick, Fort William, Lochgilphead, Lionacleit and Portree. The HIE Auchtertyre office also hosts a number of staff in the HIE Community Land Unit

The organisation and its staffing is structured within the following six groups and departments:

Regional Competitiveness – with remit for inward investment, international trade, international affairs, external marketing, transport and telecommunications, key growth sectors, business R&D and innovation, learning infrastructure, workforce development, leadership and management and population growth

Strengthening Communities – community land, community energy, social enterprise, the Third sector, culture and heritage, including Gaelic, through the Growth at the Edge/Fàs aig an Oir initiative

Operations – remit for all operational front line service delivery throughout HIE's area offices, and for management of HIE's equity investment and property interests as well as HIE's property development activities

Strategic Planning – planning and economics, communications and executive office

Audit and Compliance – providing services relating to internal controls and guidance

Finance and Corporate Services – corporate services across the HIE network including finance, human resources, legal, information systems, procurement and facilities management.

HIE remit and activity

HIE investment and activity is fully aligned to the Government Economic Strategy, published by the Scottish Government in November 2007. The overall purpose of which is,

'to focus the Government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth'.

Towards the above, HIE investment and activity is focused on the following priority areas:

- Supporting and attracting high-growth businesses and sectors, so raising sustainable growth rates in the Highlands and Islands
- Creating the infrastructure and conditions to improve regional competitiveness
- Strengthening communities, especially in the fragile parts of the area.

Whilst HIE recognises the legislative imperative for the implementation of this Gaelic Plan, the creation of the Plan provides the agency with a new opportunity to further develop and enhance the role of the our Gaelic identity and culture, defined and maintained by the language, towards the end of sustainable economic growth.

HIE maintains that the promotion of a bilingual Highlands and Islands, and the associated benefits of increased self-confidence and self-esteem amongst individuals, communities and our young people; of increasing the region's sense of cultural and creative vibrancy and distinctiveness; of boosting skills, academic achievement and innovation, and promoting fairness and equity for different peoples and cultures, can play a key role in promoting an ambitious, empowered and vibrant Highlands and Islands society as a model for sustainable economic growth in the 21st century.

Within the above framework, HIE's Gaelic development will look to achieve the following outcomes, to:

- attract new people, new ideas and new investment
- create confident, cohesive and sustainable communities of the future
- ensure a competitive region in a competitive Scotland

Attracting new people, new ideas and new investment

'In an increasingly competitive and interdependent global economy, knowledge plays a critical role for those economies seeking to grow and develop more rapidly. Government at all levels still has a key role to play, with a particular focus on the human capital that generates and uses knowledge'. 'By making Scotland a more prosperous place to live and work we are more likely to attract highly skilled people... (and) can increase the attractiveness of Scotland in a world where mobile businesses look to invest in successful places with a critical mass of knowledge, skills and connectivity.'²

A vibrant Gaelic language, maintaining a vital and authentic cultural scene and way of life, can enhance the region's reputation as a meeting point for different cultures. This can stimulate creative thought and innovation, developing human resources and growing further a knowledge-based economy in the region. We are already witnessing the growth of creative, knowledge-based industries through the Fàs Centre based at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig in Skye, feeding from the unique linguistic environment present amongst students and researchers based on campus.

'Creativity draws on the roots of cultural tradition, but flourishes in contact with other cultures,'³

An increasingly bilingual Highlands and Islands can support and promote increasing diversity, welcoming new in-migrants of different cultures. HIE can ensure that the Highlands and Islands offers high-quality human capital and an unparalleled setting for attracting highly-skilled and creative individuals, giving the area a competitive advantage within the global economic context. By making the Highlands and Islands a more culturally interesting and more prosperous place to live, we can attract new investment and skilled in-migrants.

While the arts and cultural scene help drive community development by promoting community interaction and cohesion and improving quality of life, culture, arts and creativity can also be a key driver of the wealth economy. We have recently seen products from the Gaelic arts and music scene, Gaelic literature and Gaelic feature films penetrate the mainstream arts and cultural scene in Scotland and beyond.

Creating confident, cohesive and sustainable communities of the future

'Identity and a sense of belonging are fundamental to personal wellbeing, and the achievements of a flourishing and cohesive society.'⁴

As the use of Gaelic as a community language has been driven to the outer edges of the country (see Appendix 2), HIE note the significant overlap between the current Gaelic-speaking areas and HIE's 'Area challenges' (Appendix 3). Various communities based within these fragile areas have already recognised that the retention and strengthening of Gaelic and traditional Gàidhealach culture can play a role in empowering communities; breeding individually and collectively the confidence and the ambition to drive forward development towards a sustainable future.

The landscape and way of life of the more remote and rural parts of the Highlands and Islands already attracts in-migrants, HIE asserts that the traditional culture through community events and Fèisean can help aid social cohesion within these communities. New arrivals are often keen to engage with indigenous culture and bilingual education already attracts a sizeable percentage of children from non-Scottish parentage. Being from a particular ethnic background is not a prerequisite to learning and valuing the linguistic and cultural heritage of the region. Continuing migration into the Gàidhealtachd with the fresh creative input of newcomers can help realize a new Highland identity.

A competitive region in a competitive Scotland

'Delivering sustainable growth with opportunities for all is at the heart of the Government's Purpose. Our three "golden rules" of growth – solidarity, cohesion and sustainability – reflect the intrinsic importance of social equity, regional balance and respect for the environment among Scotland's diverse people. However, as well as being a desirable outcome and characteristic of growth, addressing social, regional and particularly inter-generational equity is also a key driver of economic growth.'⁵

Language and identity have had a role to play in the economic success of other countries of comparable or smaller population sizes across Northern Europe. Amongst the various Scandinavian countries, while the education systems ensure fluency in English as a global language, all retain separate national languages (alongside various minority languages) as the spoken vernacular within the separate countries. These languages provide these relatively small populations with a defining element of their identity and help foster confidence and self-reliance amongst the population.

²Government Economic Strategy, The Scottish Government, November 2007, p.6

³Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity', UNESCO 2002

⁴National Curriculum, *Identity and Cultural Diversity*, <http://curriculum.qca.org.uk/cross-curriculum-dimensions/culturaldiversity/identity/index.aspx>

⁵Government Economic Strategy, The Scottish Government, November 2007 p.36

4 Gaelic in HIE's area of operation

The Highlands and Islands of Scotland have historically enjoyed a rich and diverse culture of languages, dialects and people. The distribution and origin of the region's placenames alone; with the Nordic placenames of the North Highlands and Islands, the Gaelic names of places and natural features across the region, and the Pictish, Scots or English language names, testify to a history of peoples and language communities who have interacted and co-existed over the course of centuries.

The Scots dialects of Orkney, Shetland, Moray and Caithness, alongside the Gaelic dialects of the North-West Highlands, Lochaber, Argyll and the myriad dialects of the Hebridean Isles, ensures that Highlands and Islands continues to enjoy a rich linguistic and dialectical diversity.

Whilst in numerical terms, the number of Gaelic speakers now residing outwith the HIE area is comparable with that living within the traditional Gàidhealtachd, in percentage terms the levels of Gaelic knowledge within the HIE area are significantly higher. Against a national average of 1.8%, the last census showed that those with Gaelic skills made up over 10% of the population in the Highlands and Islands.

HIE recognises the rich Gaelic heritage and potential for development that exists across most of the region, but also that the HIE Gaelic Plan should allow for some geographical flexibility. The Guidance on Gaelic Language Plans looks to 'enable the development of Gaelic Language Plans that are reasonable and proportionate according to the particular circumstances of individual public authorities.'

Areas such as the Western Isles or Skye are obvious candidates for a more intensive application of the HIE Gaelic Plan. Sutherland and Lochaber have pockets with relatively high levels of Gaelic skills, Argyll and its Islands have also retained a number of such areas. The Inner Moray Firth area includes considerable numbers of Gaelic speakers (the 2001 census recorded over 5,000 with Gaelic skills in the Inverness area) within conurbations with significant numbers of pupils in Gaelic-medium education. These areas present particular opportunities for the growth and renewal of Gaelic. Caithness also now hosts a Gaelic playgroup and prospective Gaelic-medium education unit in Thurso and we have recently seen the first Fèis Ghallaibh take place. As well as this, the first Fèis Mhoireibh has stimulated greater interest in the Gaelic heritage and culture.

The Gaelic Plan for Highlands and Islands Enterprise is in no way meant to diminish the importance and indeed the future sustainability of other elements of Scotland's linguistic and cultural heritage. The heritage of the former Norn and Scots-speaking peoples of the region enhances the Highlands and Islands and adds to a sense of cultural diversity and vibrancy not to mention that these linguistic influences on Gaelic have helped distinguish and define the language as one which is distinctly Scottish.

5 Core commitments of the HIE Plan

The Guidance on Gaelic Language Plans for public bodies sets out that Gaelic Plans for Public Bodies should 'encourage people to use Gaelic when dealing with them'. HIE will seek to establish a principle of an 'active offer' of services in Gaelic, using whichever language best suits the needs and wishes of the client.

There is no doubt that achieving bilingualism as the norm in the daily life of the agency will take some time and while the long-term ambition might be for HIE to deliver all services bilingually across the Highlands and Hebrides, the current position of Gaelic in Scotland inevitably affects both the demand and supply of such services

HIE will work closely with partner organisations to maximise efficiency savings and the effectiveness of public sector activity. HIE will seek opportunities for joint working and shared services and identify projects and initiatives where there is potential collaboration amongst public sector bodies, ensuring effective Government. HIE will seek to incorporate targets relating to the plan within Single Outcome Agreements with local authorities.

Areas with low levels of Gaelic

The HIE Gaelic Plan has been drafted with all parts of the Highlands and Hebrides in mind, reflecting the generosity of spirit and goodwill towards Gaelic that exists across HIE offices and staff. This Plan includes areas with lower levels of Gaelic skills such as Moray, recognising the area's strong Gaelic heritage, and Caithness, again recognising the area's Gaelic heritage, the growth of Gaelic education locally and its position as a service centre to the population of Sutherland, though there may be some flexibility in the application of the Plan in such areas.

Outwith obligations on responses to written communication in Gaelic and the bilingual logo, staff based in Shetland and Orkney are exempt from commitments outlined below for the lifetime of this plan.

5.1 Identity and communications

Promoting a bilingual identity for the agency affects public perception of HIE and can play a role in normalising Gaelic as a core element of HIE's identity amongst staff. As well as the obvious changes in ensuring the visible normalisation of Gaelic in the agency's logo, signage, publications and marketing products, HIE recognises the importance of normalising Gaelic as an audible language in daily life in HIE offices.

Allowing for the delivery of services through Gaelic is key to achieving equal status for the language and is fundamental to the genuine application of the principle of equal respect for the language and its speakers.

Priorities, actions and dates of completion:

Identity	2009	2010	2011
HIE will be known as Highlands & Islands Enterprise / Iomairt na Gàidhealtachd 's nan Eilean and will adopt this bilingual identity for all of its forms of physical and digital communication	✓		
Automated voices (such as lifts or answering machines) or electronic content with highest usage (welcome/login screens, intranet pages, electronic signatures) will incorporate Gaelic prominently.	✓		
HIE will ensure that all office signs, including new, updated or temporary signs, will be bilingual		✓	

Communications	2009	2010	2011
HIE staff with the ability to communicate in Gaelic will be identified through a symbol on the staff badges and a dedicated telephone line for enquiries in Gaelic will be advertised		✓	
HIE staff will participate in meetings in Gaelic (with translation if necessary*) whenever Gaelic is the language of choice of 40% of those attending the meeting and/or has been agreed as the language of the meeting.	✓		
HIE internal policies and contracts with third-party organisations delivering services on behalf of HIE will refer to the HIE Gaelic Plan and encourage compliance with the principles of the HIE Gaelic Plan	✓		
HIE will advertise an active offer of services through Gaelic, and will welcome and process all applications and correspondence in Gaelic wherever Gaelic is the client's language of choice. Response times will correspond to those for equivalent English language correspondence			✓

* requires week's prior notice to Gaelic Policy Manager

5.2 Publications and staffing

Providing HIE staff with a knowledge and understanding of Gaelic, its place in Scotland and in a bilingual Highlands and Islands is an essential element in breeding a progressive culture of awareness, appreciation and respect towards Gaels and their language.

In order, likewise, to achieve on the commitments outlined in the HIE Gaelic Plan, it is important that HIE creates and maintains a capacity to deliver services through the medium of Gaelic. HIE will introduce new accelerated methods of learning Gaelic, with a focus on the staff resource that exists amongst individuals who already possess skills in the language. HIE will promote careers based within offices based in Gaelic-speaking areas.

Priorities, actions and dates of completion:

Publications	2009	2010	2011
HIE will expand the use of Gaelic in its operations and activities to cover descriptions, place names, etc		✓	
All HIE press releases relating to Gaelic and/or to Gaelic-speaking areas will be produced bilingually			✓
There will be a presumption that all HIE marketing, stationery, events, exhibitions and public meetings will incorporate Gaelic prominently (over and above the use of the bilingual logo).			✓
All main HIE corporate publications will be produced bilingually with both languages incorporated within single publication, whenever practicable		✓	
80% of written web-page content on HIE website will be available bilingually		✓	

Staffing	2009	2010	2011
HIE will provide an introduction to Gaelic pack and Gaelic awareness sessions for all staff and board members		✓	
HIE will ensure that staff are confident in the use of a range of forms of expression as part of language normalisation			✓
HIE will enter Gaelic as a desirable element in all recruitment processes with a presumption that all posts will be advertised on this basis	✓		
HIE will offer financial and other support to all members of staff wishing to raise their Gaelic skills		✓	
HIE staff will have access to language resources, in physical and electronic form and access to services such as translation and proofing		✓	
HIE staff able, or potentially able, to conduct business in Gaelic will be given extended training and paid an annual premium for maintaining their fluency skills			✓

6 A Gaelic Development Plan for HIE

HIE maintains that Gaelic has an important role to play in securing sustainable economic growth in the Highlands and Islands and Scotland. Through investment and research, HIE activity can unlock the potential of our Gaelic identity and the Gaelic community in growing a competitive and sustainable economy; empowering and strengthening communities and creating a vibrant, vital and attractive Highlands and Islands.

The creation of Bòrd na Gàidhlig, the National Plan for Gaelic and of a Gaelic Plan for HIE bring with them an opportunity to review, refocus and set out a clear development strategy which will help achieve against specific priorities and objectives set out in the Government Economic Strategy.

HIE will encourage a culture of innovation and enterprise amongst Gaelic projects, initiatives and organisations funded by the agency will actively seek opportunities to stimulate Gaelic development activity amongst social enterprises and the private sector. It is HIE's ambition that Gaelic will play a key role in achieving against the following strategic challenges highlighted in the current Government Economic Strategy:

- **Economic Growth** – creating a confident and ambitious population taking forward the region's development
- **Productivity** – within a culture of innovation and enterprise amongst a highly-skilled workforce
- **Participation** – ensuring engagement with an indigenous minority language community on indigenous terms
- **Population** – making the Highlands and Islands a linguistically and culturally exciting and attractive place to live and work
- **Solidarity, cohesion and sustainability** – ensuring parity and equity in dealing with the native Gaelic and English speaking populations of Scotland, breeding intercultural awareness and social cohesion.

HIE will seek to create dynamic funding partnerships with organisations including Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Creative Scotland, Scottish Enterprise and local authorities towards delivery on the targets of the National Plan for Gaelic and the Government Economic Strategy. Current or previous HIE funding agreements relating to the development of Gaelic language or Gàidhealach culture is no guarantee of continuing assistance.

HIE activity and support for Gaelic development will focus on growing the role of Gaelic towards achieving the following key objectives:

- **Sustainable economic growth in the Highlands and Islands**
- **Growing sustainable cohesive communities**
- **Gaelic in the life of Scotland**

6.1 Gaelic and sustainable economic growth in the Highlands and Islands

The Gaelic language and associated culture, its heritage and traditions provide some important drivers for economic growth in the region. Alongside the development and mainstreaming of Gaelic arts and idioms of cultural expression within wider Scottish culture, we are also witnessing the growth of the Gaelic-service sector, providing services such as translation, Gaelic learning, graphic design, website development, etc. in response to growing demand. HIE will work to grow the Gaelic sector, Gaelic industries and Gaelic labour market and will work in partnership with agencies, such as Skills Development Scotland, to address skills shortages and the growth of the Gaelic labour market.

HIE will capitalise on new opportunities and explore the developmental and creative potential of bringing together individuals from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. HIE will work to develop the above sectors, further realising the potential of facilities such as the Fàs creative hub and HIE's links with Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) through DistanceLab which offer a focus for research, development and innovation.

Although the exploitation of the unique Gaelic identity of Scotland is regularly and widely cited as a means by which the Highlands and Islands might enhance the visitor experience, the potential of Gaelic in adding value to the tourism sector has remained largely untapped. HIE will work with partners, such as VisitScotland, to strengthen the Gaelic/bilingual branding of the area as means of utilising and advertising the uniqueness of the area.

Actions:

- HIE will establish a group of business leaders to advise on expanding the economic contribution of Gaelic
- HIE will promote the business benefits of greater use of Gaelic in product marketing and promotion
- HIE will support the sustainable growth of the creative industries and goods and services which are based on Gaelic
- HIE will work with the tourism sector to capitalise better on Gaelic as a vital asset in the area's attractiveness
- HIE will encourage private sector businesses and third sector organisations to adopt Gaelic and bilingual signs
- HIE will actively encourage its clients to consider how Gaelic can most effectively be applied to their operations in support of the National Plan for Gaelic and in a way that creates new opportunities and benefits

6.2 Gaelic in growing sustainable, cohesive communities

The Gaelic language and the cultural heritage and traditions associated with it, provide a significant resource for the further community and economic development of the Highlands and Islands. In order to maintain Gaelic as a vibrant language with a vital and authentic culture, it is important that a new generation of young people in the Highlands and Islands have the opportunity to grow up as speakers of Gaelic confidently, fluently and as their mother tongue.

HIE activity through its community development remit will focus on the parts of the Highlands and Islands which face particular challenges characterised by the weakening of communities through population loss, low incomes, limited employment opportunities poor infrastructure and remoteness (see HIE Area challenges map)..

HIE activity will look to identify opportunities to use Gaelic as an income generator for groups operating at a community level. Gaelic learning, tuition or arts festivals, and an increasing interest in heritage and genealogy all provide significant opportunities for groups operating within Gaelic-speaking communities or in communities with a strong Gaelic heritage. Initiatives will bring a particular focus on development in communities within priority areas, and those areas supported through investment and activity by bodies such as the Highlands and Islands Community Energy Company or Community Land Unit.

Actions:

- Work with communities to identify economic opportunities generated through Gaelic and traditional culture and heritage projects within communities with a particular focus on cultural tourism initiatives
- HIE will support the growth of Gaelic activities and the regeneration of Gaelic as a spoken community language through its Strengthening Communities programmes and incorporate local Gaelic development as a key part of its Growth at the Edge activities

6.3 Gaelic in the life of Scotland

In order to further take forward the contribution of Gaelic to the social and economic development of the Highlands and Islands and Scotland, it is important that further research is undertaken on the contribution of Gaelic to community and particularly economic development regionally and nationally.

HIE will look to build a compelling case for securing the future of Gaelic on the grounds that the development of the language plays an important role in economic and community development. HIE will through partnerships with other key development and research bodies develop a programme of high-quality research targeted at areas of particular pertinence.

HIE's unique links at a governmental, inter-agency and a community planning level, make the organisation a particularly important and influential organisation on both regional and national basis. HIE will emphasise and promote the value of Gaelic to the continued development of the HIE region, the strengthening of peripheral communities and the potential for development nationally, and as a key tool driving sustainable economic growth.

Actions:

- HIE will work with Gaelic organisations to raise the profile of, and support for, Gaelic across Scotland
- HIE will work with Gaelic organisations to expand the use of Gaelic forms of expression in daily life, as a key part of normalisation within Scotland
- HIE will create a body of research informing the further development of Gaelic as a means of achieving sustainable economic growth
- HIE will work to foster a spirit of innovation and enterprise amongst Gaelic development bodies, encouraging the growth of social and commercial enterprises operating nationally, regionally and on a local basis.

7 Monitoring implementation of the plan

All of the above commitments will be progressed in the first instance by the HIE Gaelic Policy Manager. The postholder will draft implementation plans detailing key personnel and timetables for progress for each project and activity.

The drafting of this Plan has been preceded by a baseline study considering levels of Gaelic awareness and all current activity and investment relating to Gaelic. This will inform the implementation of the Plan and will allow HIE to measure progress against the targets outlined above. HIE will carry out regular language skills audits looking at levels of spoken, written and/or reading skills in Gaelic. HIE will undertake a detailed audit determining which posts should be designated as Gaelic essential posts, taking into account relevant legislation. HIE will maintain a list of all bilingual documents produced by the agency.

Progress against the above targets will be monitored on an ongoing basis by an internal Gaelic Plan Monitoring Group: 'Am Buidheann Measaidh'. This group will consist of a core of representatives from various areas, as well as representation from HIE groups and from legal, audit and HR teams. The group will regularly to consider progress and address issues relating to progress against targets. This group will seek advice from Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

Am Buidheann Measaidh will submit an annual report for consideration by the HIE board and by Bòrd na Gàidhlig. HIE will conduct a language impact assessment, considering all aspects of the work of HIE, within the lifetime of this Plan. This language impact assessment will be forwarded for information to Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

HIE progress in implementing the Plan will be subject to an external evaluation every three years. This evaluation will be scrutinised by an external advisory group who will make recommendations for the future implementation of the Plan.

HIE will also conduct periodic public opinion surveys to consult Gaelic speakers regarding standards of service in Gaelic and will publicise the corresponding complaints procedure.

8 Authority contacts

The chief accountable officer for the HIE Gaelic Language Plan will be the HIE Chief Executive.

The current post-holder is:

Sandy Cumming
executive.office@hient.co.uk
01463-244204

The primary contact and officer with responsibility for the preparation, delivery and monitoring of the plan will be the HIE Gaelic Policy Manager.

The current post-holder is:

Alasdair MacLeòid
alasdair.macleoid@hient.co.uk
01463-244519

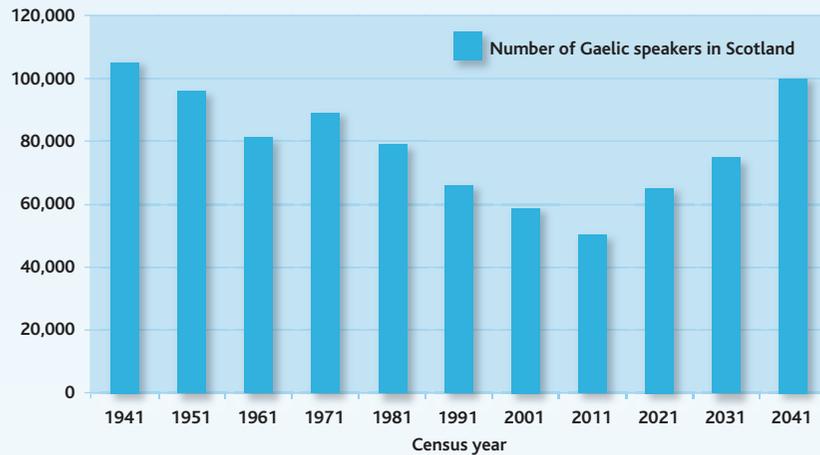
Other useful contacts include:

Dr John Watt, Director of Strengthening Communities Group. HIE
john.watt@hient.co.uk
01463-244276

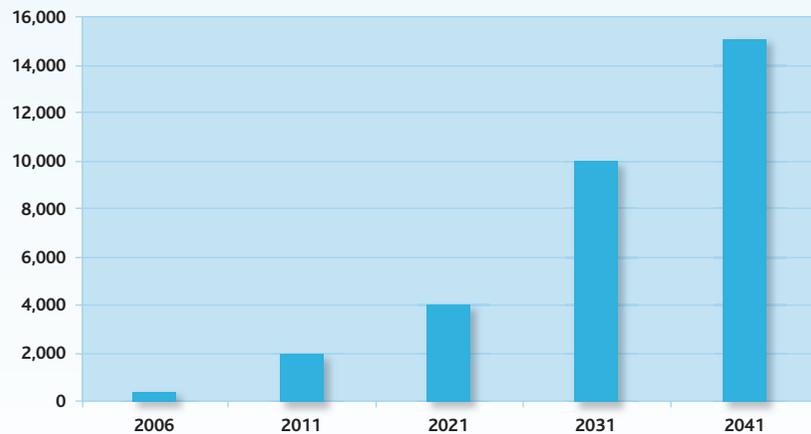
Appendix 1 National Plan for Gaelic

The National Plan for Gaelic aims to almost double the numbers of Gaelic speakers over the next 35 years, from 58,000 in 2001 to 100,000 by 2041.

In order to achieve this growth, the National Plan sets out the following targets as a means of ensuring increased language acquisition through growth in bilingual education, increasing numbers entering the Gaelic-medium education system to 4,000 in 2021, 10,000 in 2031, and to 15,000 in 2041 (the figure for 2006/07 was 313).

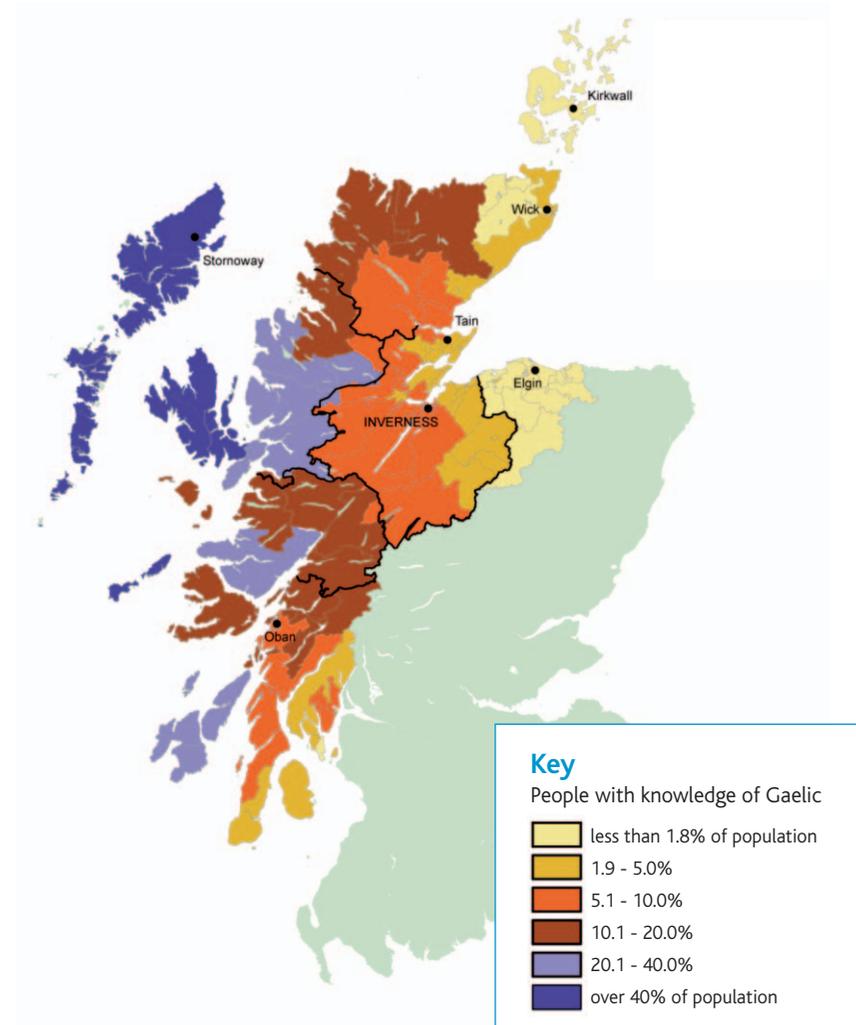


The following shows the targeted growth in the Gaelic-medium education system:



Appendix 2 Gaelic language skills within local areas, 2001

Gaelic Language Skills within The Highlands and Islands Enterprise Area

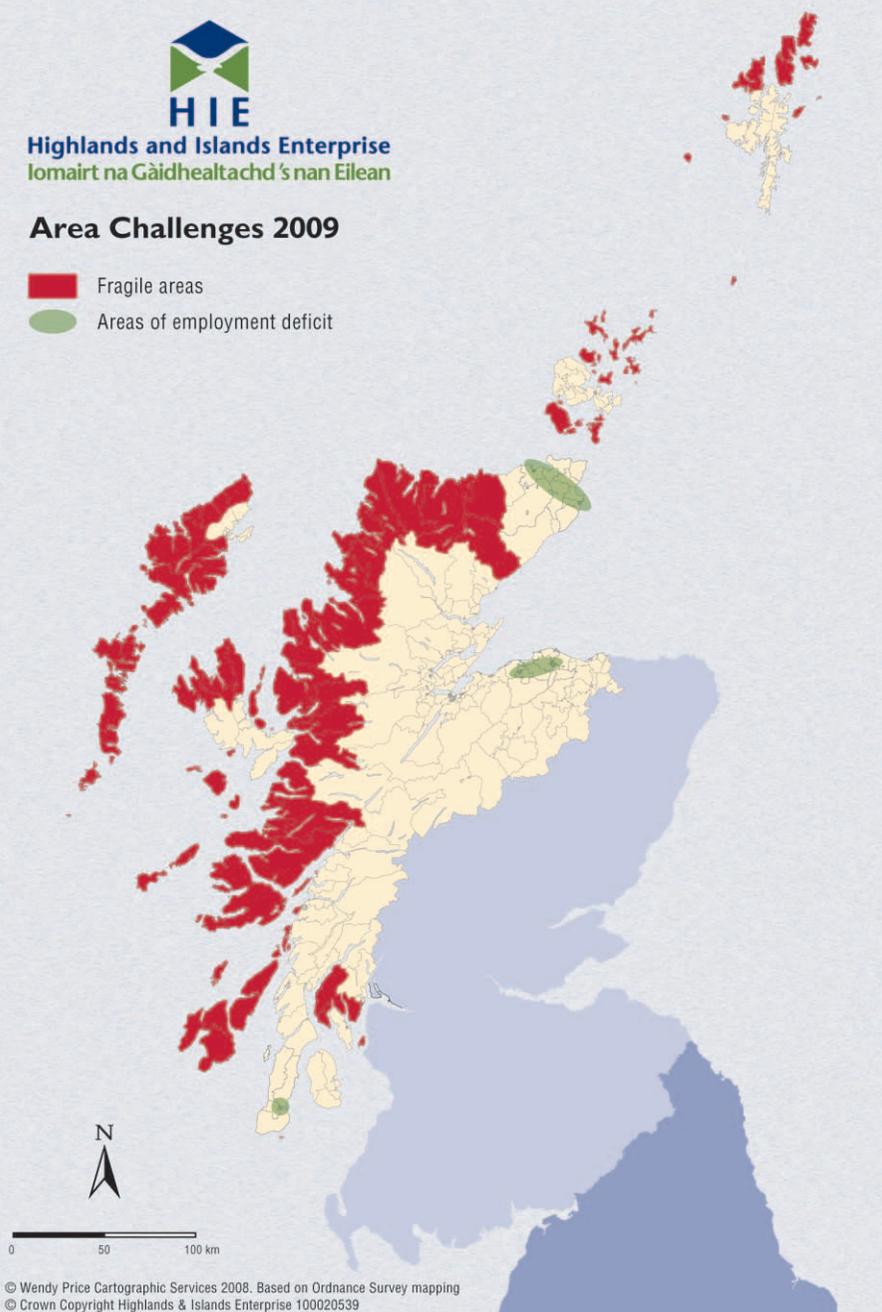




Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Iomairt na Gàidhealtachd 's nan Eilean

Area Challenges 2009

-  Fragile areas
-  Areas of employment deficit



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