Consultation on The Scottish
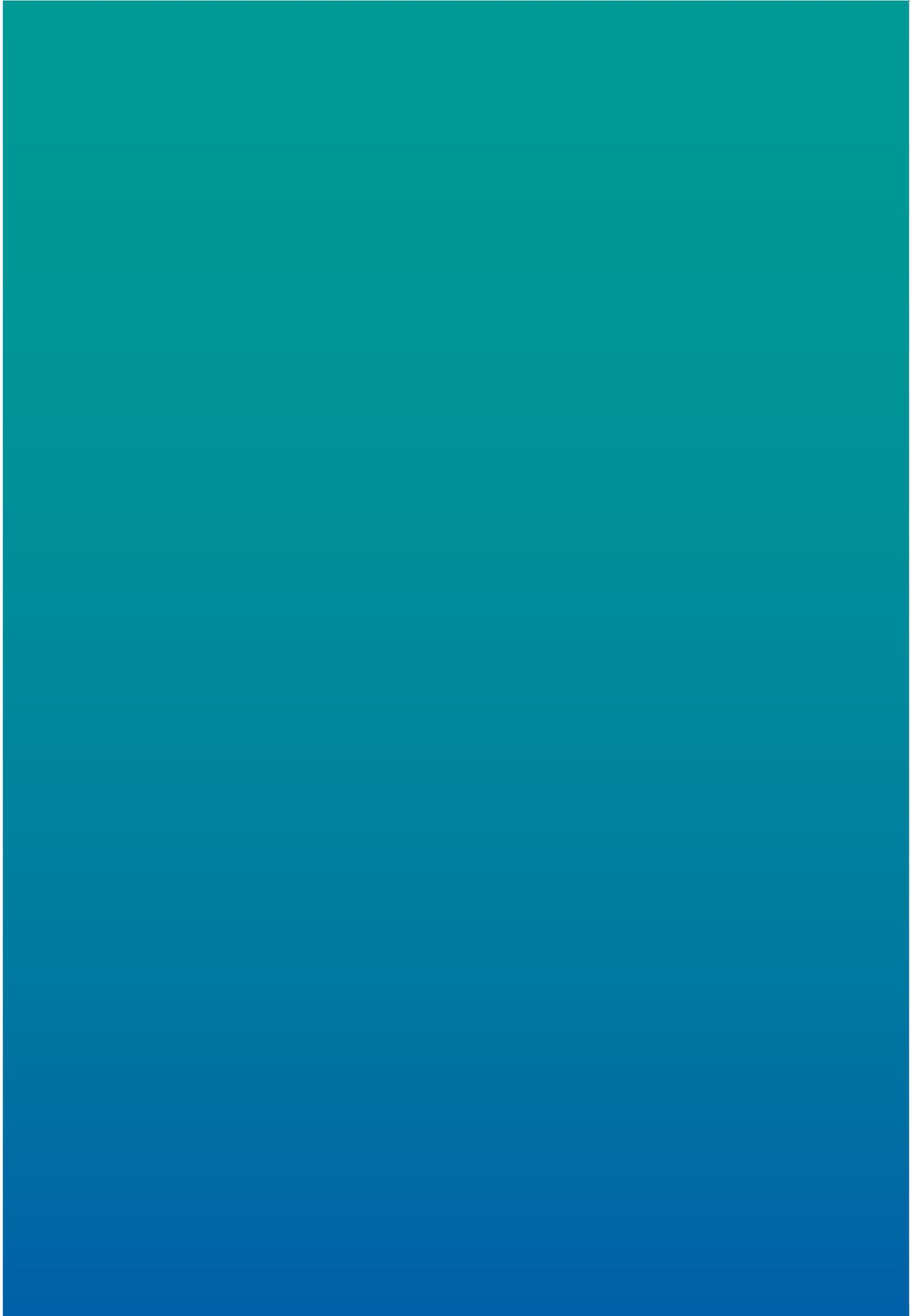
Contents

Ministerial Foreword

Consultation Paper on Scottish Government Commitments to Gaelic and Scots and a Scottish Languages Bill

The Scottish Government has made a number

Introduction

The Scottish Government has an ambitious and wide-ranging set of commitments to the Gaelic and Scots languages. This consultation exercise and the views received will assist with the progress that we will make with these commitments.

Scottish Government Commitments

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Growth and Progress of GME
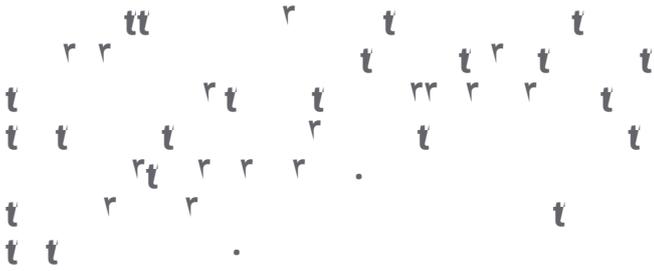
Over recent years there have been reports
on GME and GME consultation response6 (a)340 (n G)⁴ℂN jrN&″ 2%tá⅋fᵢℤⅹⁿⱥYAej4ﬁﬀ.UℲⱡáɋu)Ụ¡ɶ⁊

These areas above are listed as broad headings but each could contain further detailed issues. For example under the heading of access, we are aware many parents have had issues with gaining a GME place where there is limited or no provision. This may also be the case where demand is outstripping places available. Some parents can be disadvantaged or unable to take up a place where transport issues are dependent on catchment arrangements and by the locally established policies around transport. Again, under the broad category of subject choice there may be concern about GME subject provision in the senior phase. Each of the points listed above can be subdivided into other more detailed and specific examples.

The aim of any new strategic approach to Gaelic medium education will be to support growth and development and ensure that GME delivers a good quality educational experience for all the young people in GME. In order to achieve this every effort must be made to bring improvements where a particular issue is identified as a barrier to growth. Therefore we ask you to consider what steps, in your view, need to be taken to make progress or provide solutions. For example solutions may involve:

A review and changes to the duties on local authorities with regard to GME,

Clarification of the nature of the 3-18 GME experience and of what parents can expect from it,

Further measures to support GME teacher recruitment and professional development,

Ensuring that GME early years provision is in place and supported,

Establishing how national bodies and agencies can better work together to support GME.

Solutions identified as part of the new strategic approach to Gaelic medium education may be delivered through the current legislation, amendments to it and an update of the guidance on GME. It is also necessary to ensure that account is taken of the wider education reform agenda across Scottish education and the inclusion of GME at that heart of that reform. Where you identifyu 0 0 12 36 (o(e)188 Tm(r)10.5 (10.5 5.2 /F

Gàidhealtachd

This section will consider whether the Gàidhealtachd commitment should have a principal focus on location and how it is defined or on Gaelic speakers wherever they are and how they are supported.

The Gaeltacht Act 2012 provides the statutory footing for language planning process. Under the process, Gaeltacht communities in addition to communities in Gaeltacht Service Towns and Irish Language Networks are being afforded the opportunity

Others considered that the focus should be on providing support for those learning and speaking the language and in the networks and communities they belong to, wherever they are. These options are not mutually exclusive and consideration may need to be given to how all can be better supported. In addition to this, we must keep in mind the importance of on-line, digital resources that Gaelic speakers and learners have access to and the communities that result from this.

Gàidhealtachd Options

For the purpose of this consultation exercise, this section will include a focus on geographical areas where there is a significant proportion of Gaelic speakers and where there is significant Gaelic activity.

Where there is a focus on a significant proportion of Gaelic speakers there would be the challenge of how to define such an area and to ask what percentage of the population would need to be Gaelic speakers for an area to be defined as Gàidhealtachd. The question to follow would be what Gaelic measures should be secured in this area – for example should:

GME be available in all schools?

bodies adopt a bilingual approach?

An option for making progress with this commitment could be by means of a review of the Guidance on Gaelic Language Plans produced by Bòrd na Gàidhlig. For example, the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 and associated Guidance encourages a proportionate application of Gaelic plans. There are powers under the 2005 Act for regulations to be made which make further provisions for what certain Gaelic Language Plans should contain. In other words, commitments should be stronger where there are more Gaelic speakers. In addition, there have been commitments in the National Plans for Gaelic that certain things should happen in areas with a higher percentage of Gaelic speakers. The policy approach of the National Islands Plan with its Island Communities Impact Assessment is also relevant here as is the potential to create local community Plans.

On-line and Digital

Gaelic on-line activity would have to be seen as an essential element of any attempt to look at the best way to support Gaelic speakers. Gaelic on-line activity is central to all attempts to support Gaelic whether in towns and cities or in areas of low population.

Regulation and Enforcement

The question of how requirements in any Gàidhealtachd area could be implemented and monitored is also an important part of this commitment. This was another theme that emerged clearly in Scottish Government's informal consultation work, where questions were asked about the powers which Bòrd na Gàidhlig had to monitor and enforce requirements set out in Gaelic Language Plans or in their Guidance. The question of monitoring and enforcement and where this function should sit, overlaps with the commitment on the review of the functions of Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

Consultation Questions

Bòrd na Gàidhlig

This section will discuss the commitment to review the functions and structures of Bòrd na Gàidhlig to ensure Scotland has an effective leadership body and network of organisations for the promotion of Gaelic.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig was established under

Opinions have been expressed about whether Bòrd na Gàidhlig should be closer to the Scottish Government and at the same time that it should be closer to the community and to Gaelic organisations. There have been comments about regulation and enforcement and about the corporate and administrative pressures on a small public body and how this can be addressed or alleviated.

There is an awareness that the other Scottish Government commitments may have implications for the structure and functions of Bòrd na Gàidhlig but mainly there is an acknowledgement that, given Bòrd na Gàidhlig was established over seventeen years ago, the time is right to review how it is performing and assess whether the functions it was established with in 2005 are still suitable for what Gaelic requires of it at this point in time.

Some consultees may comment on the detailed operation of the current Bòrd na Gàidhlig functions, including their own experiences of how those operate in practice. Others may wish to reflect and comment on the structure of the body, including where it sits in the public body landscape.

Questions of how Gaelic plans should be regulated and monitored have also featured in informal consultations, and while responses on that may be offered in the context of exploring a Gàidhealtachd we would welcome any suggestions as to how the Gaelic Plans System could be amended to make stronger, faster progress for Gaelic.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig Functions

Bòrd na Gàidhlig has as its founding legislation the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005. It also has a Framework Document which sets out its relationship with Government together with respective roles and responsibilities.

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The 2005 Act provides that the functions conferred on Bòrd na Gàidhlig should be exercised with a view to securing the status of the Gaelic language as an official language of Scotland commanding equal respect to the English language through increasing the number of persons who are able to use and understand the Gaelic language.

Consultation Questions

Do you have any views on the current duties of Bòrd na Gàidhlig and any suggestions of how these could operate more effectively or efficiently?

Do you have any views on structural changes at Bòrd na Gàidhlig which could strengthen the promotion of and support for Gaelic in Scotland?

Are there any further points you would like to make about the review of the functions and structure of Bòrd na Gàidhlig which seeks to ensure Scotland
has the most effective leadership body and network of organisations for the promotion of Gaelic?

Scots Language

We will bring forward a new Scottish Languages Bill which takes further steps to support Gaelic, acts on the Scots language and recognises that Scotland is a multilingual society.

The Scots Language Awards is an annual
event and different from the Scottish
Qualification Authority awards. These awards
were first established in 2019 to celebrate

Scots Hoose

Scots Hoose is the leading provider of free online Scots language education resources for schools. In 2022/23, the Scottish

Consultation Questions

Thinking of the work of the key Scots bodies as referred to in the paper – What are your views on the work of the Scots bodies? How would you strengthen and add to the work of these bodies?

What are your views on the next steps that should be taken to support the Scots language?

Are there any further points you would like to make about the commitment to support the Scots language?

Consultation arrangements – Responding to this Consultation

The Scottish Government is seeking views on its commitments towards Gaelic and Scots and a Scottish Languages Bill.

Please respond to this consultation using the Scottish Government's consultation hub, Citizen Space. Access and respond to this consultation online at https://consult.gov.scot/education-reform/gaelic-and-scots-scottish-languages-bill

You can save and return to your responses while the consultation is still open. Please ensure that consultation responses are submitted before the closing date of Thursday 17th November 2022.

If you are unable to respond using our consultation hub, please complete the Respondent Information Form and send to: GaelicAndScotsConsultation@gov.scot

Handling your response

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Scottish Government consultation process.

Consultation is an essential part of the policymaking process. It gives us the opportunity to consider your opinion and expertise on a proposed area of work. You can find all our consultations online: http://consult.gov.scot Each consultation details the issues under consideration, as well as a way for you to give us your views, either online, by email or by post.

Responses will be analysed and used as part of the decision making process, along with a range of other available information and evidence. We will publish a report of this analysis for every consultation. Depending on the nature of the consultation exercise the responses received may:

indicate the need for policy development or review;

inform the development of a particular policy;

help decisions to be made between

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