

QUESTION 1 - The structure for the Plan consists of an aim, priority areas and commitments. Do you have any comments on how we have structured the Plan and the overall aim we have selected?

Structure of the Plan

The structure of the Plan is not immediately obvious and could be more explicit in terms of the terminology used to refer to each section throughout the document and to demonstrate more clearly how sections relate to each other.

For example, one main aim is referred to on page 6 and then broken down into 3 points referred to as 'headings.' It is not made clear that these 3 headings are in fact three important objective areas that are referred to throughout the plan which relate directly to the priority areas, key commitments and partnerships.

It would help if the significance of these objective areas was clearer from the outset.

An alternative layout for page 6 at least could be:

Our Aim:

- To increase the number of people speaking, using and learning Gaelic in Scotland and the number of situations in which it is used.

Our Objectives:

- Promoting a positive image of Gaelic
- Increasing the Learning of Gaelic
- Increasing the use of Gaelic

Priority Areas for:

- Promoting Gaelic
- Learning Gaelic
- Using Gaelic

Commitment Areas for:

- Promoting Gaelic
- Learning Gaelic
- Using Gaelic

Key Partnerships for:

- Promoting Gaelic
- Learning Gaelic
- Using Gaelic

Main Aim - *To increase the number of people speaking, using and learning Gaelic in Scotland and the number of situations in which it is used.*

The main aim of the plan is reasonable and is a good reflection of what Gaelic in Scotland needs and what should underpin all Gaelic-related work, initiatives and efforts.

QUESTION 2 - We believe that the promotion of a positive image for Gaelic is essential and we think that the areas above are the key areas that can make a contribution to this. Do you have any comments on the areas we have selected or alternative suggestions?

The University of Glasgow fully agrees that a positive image for Gaelic is essential.

We agree that the priority areas set out in this section are some of the most effective ways to ensure a positive image for Gaelic going forward and in particular, we agree with the need to secure political support for Gaelic.

The use of Gaelic Language Plans is also critical here. We would suggest that guidance on the preparation of Gaelic Plans should encourage public bodies to develop unique and creative policies which are relevant to their sector. If a more flexible and creative approach to the development of Gaelic Plans was adopted and encouraged, it would greatly assist in securing more support amongst public body organisations, their staff members & stakeholders and allow Gaelic to develop in new ways across a range of sectors.

“Promoting a positive image of Gaelic and raising awareness through: Gaelic media” – We fully support this area but believe that a positive image and awareness of Gaelic should be raised in Scottish media as a whole and not just in ‘Gaelic’ media. Efforts should be made to develop positive relationships with all media outlets to ensure more positive coverage of Gaelic rather than the existing approach which feels quite ‘reactionary.’ It is important to respond to negative and inaccurate coverage but more positive coverage could be secured by the Gaelic community with the right approach and relationships.

In the first paragraph in this section (Page 7), the word ‘defended’ is used which could be perceived to be quite negative. Alternatives such as; safeguarded, maintained, secured could be considered here.

*“Ensuring a positive image of Gaelic is promoted and **secured** depends on a number of initiatives.”*

QUESTION 3 - We believe education and Gaelic learning are central to this Plan. We have also listed the priority areas that we believe should be a focus for ongoing activity. Do you have any comments on this emphasis and on the priority areas selected for learning Gaelic?

We fully agree that increasing the number of people learning Gaelic needs to be a fundamental part of the National Plan for Gaelic.

Broadly speaking, we agree with the priority areas listed but would suggest that ‘Further & Higher Education’ and ‘Adult Gaelic Learning’ should be listed as stand-alone priority areas. Both these sectors are crucial to this aspect of the plan, but they are also very distinct in terms of what they currently contribute and the potential contributions they will make going forward.

The term ‘post-school education’ is somewhat vague and does not reflect the important role that colleges and universities have in the teaching of Gaelic across the country.

QUESTION 4 - We believe the areas selected are important for promoting the increased use of Gaelic. Do you have any comments or suggestions you would like to make in relation to promoting the increased use of Gaelic?

We agree with the proposals in relation to the promotion of Gaelic usage in various sectors. Given the success of existing initiatives such as; Gàidhlig @ Oilthigh Ghlaschu & the development officers working around secondary schools via Comunn na Gàidhlig (Nicolson & Glasgow Gaelic School), we would suggest including an additional priority area:

Initiatives that utilise the communities within educational hubs for example, universities & schools, to promote the use of Gaelic beyond the formal teaching environment.

QUESTION 5 - In questions 2, 3 & 4, you were asked about your views on the priority areas identified. In this question, we would like to hear any views or suggestions you may have on the key commitments we have identified and views on any key commitments you think should be included in order to make progress with the aim of increasing the number of people speaking, using and learning Gaelic in Scotland and the number of situations in which it is used.

The commitment areas listed in relation to each priority area are all reasonable and we believe they will greatly contribute to the successful development of Gaelic nationally.

We would suggest the following amends / additions:

Learning Gaelic

“Develop the existing resources for adult learners and ensure that gaps in support and provision are identified and addressed.” – We would suggest that Gaelic adult learning (continuing adult education) across the country is inconsistent with a lack of provision beyond the beginner’s stages. With this in mind, we would suggest that a stronger commitment to adult learning is required here. A national strategy is required to address Gaelic adult learning. To ensure the successful development and implementation of such a strategy, the full support and engagement of providers including local authorities, is critical to develop high quality provision at a variety of levels, the development of appropriate resources and tutor training. *(We are aware that a strategy on this area was recently developed but it doesn’t seem to be publically available or even referred to.)*

Using Gaelic

As referred to in Q4, we would suggest reference here to utilising audiences and communities around educational hubs within schools, colleges and universities. This could be included within ‘Communities in Towns and Cities.’

The key commitment areas are very broad and high-level without reference to any specific projects or initiatives for understandable reasons. Therefore, it is somewhat confusing as to why a very tangible example is then suddenly used in Gaelic Arts with reference to the new education and arts centre in South Uist.

QUESTION 6 - The earlier consultation questions have been fairly specific. If there are any other points you would like to make and feel you have not had the opportunity to do so, please write them below.

Broadly speaking, we welcome this draft of the National Plan for Gaelic and believe that it addresses the key challenges currently facing the language.

Gaelic in Scotland (Page12-15)

In this section, we would like to draw attention to the contribution that universities make to Gaelic in Scotland which is somewhat underestimated here.

Surprisingly, no reference is made to universities under Language Planning and Research on page 12. This is despite that some of Scotland's most prestigious institutions are producing leading research on language planning, minority language sociolinguistics and Gaelic language & literature, all of which inform and shape policies such as the National Plan for Gaelic.

In terms of Gaelic Education in Scotland, universities play a larger role here than a contribution to the promotion, support and growth of Gaelic education (page 13). Universities across Scotland are delivering a wide-range of Gaelic-related programmes which includes both Gaelic medium and Gaelic learner provision. They also contribute hugely to Gaelic education in terms of historical and contextual education for Gaelic to Gaelic speakers, learners and non-Gaelic speakers. This contributes significantly to the increased awareness of Gaelic amongst students from all over the world both from a historical perspective and a present day context.

Page 14 – Post-school Gaelic Learning – It should be noted here that the University of Glasgow offers a range of higher education courses through the medium of Gaelic as part of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. This section raises another point on the use of appropriate terminology which is outlined in the **Terminology** paragraph below.

As organisations, universities place a strong emphasis on the development of graduate attributes and similar to schools, they play a significant role in preparing young people for professional roles.

In reference to *International Links* on page 17, it should be noted that universities have some of the strongest international links in place of any other sector in Scotland through their internationalisation agendas. The international work and partnerships of Celtic and Gaelic specialists in universities should not be overlooked in this section.

Terminology

We would like to emphasise an earlier point that some of the terminology used in the policy could be clearer in order to accurately reflect the important role of key sectors for example, '*Post-school Education*' should be broken down further with explicit reference made to Further & Higher Education and Adult Learning as two separate sectors.

Similarly, some terminology requires further clarification for example, '*Young People*' – it is important to be clear what age range is meant here. Development priorities for young people aged between 16 and 18 years would be quite different to development approaches adopted for young people aged 18 to 25 or 25 to 30 years old but arguably, they are all 'young people' and all critical to Gaelic in Scotland.

On page 14, there is a need for clarification on the use of the terms 'programmes' and 'courses.' The University of Glasgow offers a range of 'courses' through the medium of Gaelic as part of postgraduate and undergraduate programmes. Sabhal Mòr Ostaig offers undergraduate and postgraduate programmes through the medium of Gaelic. This section is worded in such a way as to imply that SMO is the only institution in Scotland delivering Gaelic medium provision within Scottish higher education which is not the case.

This response on behalf of the University of Glasgow has been prepared by the University's Gaelic Language Committee which oversees the implementation of the University's Gaelic Plan and comprises of representatives from across the institution.