

<p>Co-chomhairle air Cùmhnant Seirbheisean Aiseig Chluaidh agus Innse Gall</p> <p>Freagairt bho Bhòrd na Gàidhlig</p> <p>04 Màrt 2024</p>	<p>Clyde & Hebrides Ferry Services Contract Consultation</p> <p>Response by Bòrd na Gàidhlig</p> <p>04 March 2024</p>
<p><u>Ro-ràdh</u></p> <p>Tha Bòrd na Gàidhlig a’ cur fàilte air a’ chothrom freagairt a thoirt don cho-chomhairle seo. ’S e Bòrd na Gàidhlig a’ phrìomh bhuidheann phoblach ann an Alba le uallach airson leasachadh na Gàidhlig a chur air adhart, a’ gabhail a-steach comhairle a thoirt do Mhinistearan na h-Alba air cùisean Gàidhlig.</p> <p>Tha Achd na Gàidhlig (Alba) 2005 ag iarraidh air Bòrd na Gàidhlig Plana Cànan Nàiseanta Gàidhlig ullachadh agus a chur a-steach. Bu chòir molaidhean a bhith ann a thaobh cleachdadh agus adhartachadh na Gàidhlig le fòcas air feumalachdan agus prìomhachasan na Gàidhlig airson luchd-labhairt, luchd-ionnsachaidh agus luchd-taic na Gàidhlig.</p> <p>Ged a tha an Achd ag iarraidh air Bòrd na Gàidhlig am Plana ullachadh, tha an t-uallach airson adhartas a dhèanamh leis na h-amasan is targaidean a th’ ann air grunn ùghdarrasan, bhuidhnean agus choimhearsnachdan.</p> <p>Is e Lèirsinn Plana Cànan Nàiseanta Gàidhlig 2023-28¹ “Àrdachadh a ghabhas tomhas anns na h-àireamhan de dhaoine a’ bruidhinn, ag ionnsachadh, a’ cleachdadh agus a’ toirt taic don Ghàidhlig”. Tha prìomhachasan agus targaidean ann a bhuineas ris an dachaigh, a’ choimhearsnachd, na gnìomhachasan cruthachail, gnothach agus an eaconamaidh, foghlam, ionnsachadh às dèidh na sgoile agus beatha phoblach na h-Alba san fharsaingeachd.</p>	<p><u>Introduction</u></p> <p>Bòrd na Gàidhlig welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation. It is the principal public body in Scotland responsible for promoting Gaelic development, including providing advice to Scottish Ministers on Gaelic issues.</p> <p>The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 requires Bòrd na Gàidhlig to prepare and submit a National Gaelic Language Plan. That should contain proposals relating to the use and promotion of Gaelic with a focus on the needs and priorities of the Gaelic language for its speakers, learners, and supporters.</p> <p>While the Act requires Bòrd na Gàidhlig to prepare the Plan, the responsibility for making progress with its aims and targets sits with a number of authorities, organisations, and communities.</p> <p>The Vision of the National Gaelic Language Plan 2023-28¹¹ is “A measurable increase in the numbers of people speaking, learning, using and supporting Gaelic”. The Plan includes priorities and targets relating to home, community, creative industries, business and economy, education, post-school learning and Scottish public life generally.</p>

¹ https://www.gaidhlig.scot/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/FINAL_BnG_National_Gaelic_Language_Plan_ENGLISH.pdf

¹¹ https://www.gaidhlig.scot/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/FINAL_BnG_National_Gaelic_Language_Plan_ENGLISH.pdf

Chaidh dreachd Bhile nan Cànanan Albannach² fhoillseachadh san t-Samhain 2023. Tha e ag ràdh gu bheil “inbhe oifigeil aig a’ Ghàidhlig ann an Alba”. Bu chòir na gnìomhan a tha an dreachd Bhile a' toirt do Bhòrd na Gàidhlig “a choileanadh le sùil ri dèanamh cinnteach gum faigh a’ Ghàidhlig an aon spèis ris a’ Bheurla”.

Bheir an dreachd Bhile “a-steach comas Sgìrean Cudromach a thaobh Cànan a stèidheachadh gus libhrigeadh iomchaidh a thoirt gu buil”³. Seo sgìrean far a bheil sgilean Gàidhlig aig co-dhiù 20% den t-sluagh, no sgìrean far a bheil a’ Ghàidhlig ga cleachdadh ann an dòigh shònraichte eile.

Tha a’ Ghàidhlig na cànan nàiseanta a tha ga bruidhinn air feadh na h-Alba. Ann an Cunntas-sluaigh 2011 bha comas air choreigin sa Ghàidhlig aig 87,100 neach ann an Alba (mu 1.7% den t-sluagh), agus bha 57,600 dhiubh sin nan luchd-labhairt na Gàidhlig.

Tha timcheall air 50% de luchd-labhairt na Gàidhlig a’ fuireach air a’ Ghàidhealtachd is na h-Eileanan agus càch sa chòrr de dh’Alba. 'S iad na h-Eileanan Siar, a' Ghàidhealtachd agus Earra-Ghàidheal is Bòd na pàirtean de dh'Alba far as treasa a' Ghàidhlig sa choimhearsnachd.

Tha Foghlam tro Mheadhan na Gàidhlig a’ leudachadh air feadh na h-Alba. Tha e a-nis ri fhaighinn ann an dàrna leth nan 32 Ùghdarrasan Ionadail ann an Alba. Thòisich FMG ann an 1985 le 14 sgoilearan bun-sgoile. Tha a-nis còrr is 5,600 sgoilear san roinn thar foghlam Bun-sgoile agus Àrd-sgoile.

Tha iarrtas a’ sìor fhàs airson cànan is cultar na Gàidhlig le buannachdan foghlaim, eaconamach is sòisealta co-cheangailte riutha.

Mar a tha am Plana Cànan Nàiseanta Gàidhlig ag ràdh “Tha gnìomhachd na Gàidhlig ri lorg a-nis ann an iomadh roinn leithid foghlam sgoile, foghlam adhartach is àrd-ìre, anns na meadhanan agus craoladh, ann an turasachd, ann

The draft Scottish Languages Bill¹² was published in November 2023. It states that “the Gaelic language has official status within Scotland”. The functions conferred on Bòrd na Gàidhlig by the draft Bill “are to be exercised with a view to ensuring that the Gaelic language is treated with equal respect to the English language”.

The draft Bill will “introduce the possibility of Areas of Linguistic Significance to allow for proportionate delivery”¹³. These are areas where at least 20% of its population has Gaelic language skills, or ones where there are other specific uses of Gaelic.

Gaelic is a national language which is spoken across Scotland. At the 2011 Census 87,100 people in Scotland had Gaelic skills (around 1.7% of the population), of which 57,600 were Gaelic speakers.

Around 50% of Gaelic speakers live in the Highlands and Islands with the remainder in the rest of Scotland. The Outer Hebrides, Highland and Argyll & Bute are the parts of Scotland where Gaelic retains the greatest community presence.

Gaelic Medium Education is expanding across Scotland. It is now available in half of Scotland’s 32 local authorities. Gaelic Medium Education began in 1985 with 14 primary pupils. There are now around 5,600 pupils in the sector across Primary and Secondary education.

There is a growing demand for Gaelic language and culture with related educational, economic, and social benefits.

As the National Gaelic Language Plan states “Gaelic activity can now be found in many sectors such as school education, further and higher education, in media and broadcasting, in

² <https://www.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/s6-bills/scottish-languages-bill/introduced/bill-as-introduced.pdf>

³ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-languages-bill-island-communities-impact-assessment/>

¹² <https://www.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/s6-bills/scottish-languages-bill/introduced/bill-as-introduced.pdf>

¹³ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-languages-bill-island-communities-impact-assessment/>



am foillseachadh, ann an dualchas, anns na h-ealain agus ann an ionnsachadh inbheach is coimhearsnachd. Tha iad sin deatamach don chànan agus a' cruthachadh chothroman airson Gàidhlig a chleachdadh".

Tha an t-**iarrtas airson Gàidhlig ionnsachadh** follaiseach anns na h-àireamhan anabarrach mòr de dhaoine a tha a' gabhail ris an app/làrach ionnsachadh cànan Duolingo. Tha mu 1.8 millean neach air tòiseachadh ag ionnsachadh na Gàidhlig bho chaidh an cùrsa a chur air bhog o chionn ceithir bliadhna, le 500,000 ag obair air an-dràsta. Tha sin a' riochdachadh fàs de 17% sa bhliadhna a dh'fhalbh, às dèidh fàs 12% sa bhliadhna ro sin.

Tha cur air bhog SpeakGaelic san t-Sultain 2021 cuideachd air cur gu mòr ri goireasan do inbhich a tha airson a dhol an sàs sa Ghàidhlig agus a h-ionnsachadh. Tha timcheall air 400,000 neach-ionnsachaidh air a chleachdadh bho chaidh a chur air bhog.

Lorg "Suirbhidh Beachdan Sòisealta na h-Alba 2021: Beachdan a' Phobail a thaobh na Gàidhlig ann an Alba⁴ gu bheil:

- Gàidhlig a' cur ri sunnd, le 70% de dh'inbhich ag ràdh gu bheil ionnsachadh na Gàidhlig a' toirt dhaibh faireachdainn gu bheil iad air rudeigin a choileanadh.
- Dhùblaich an àireamh de dh'Albannaich as urrainn beagan Gàidhlig a bhruidhinn anns na deich bliadhna a dh'fhalbh.
- Tha 79% de dhaoine den bheachd gu bheil a' Ghàidhlig glè chudromach no meadhanach cudromach do dhualchas cultarail na h-Alba.

Freagairt

Tha a' cho-chomhairle seo a' tighinn aig àm cudromach don Ghàidhlig le foillseachadh Plana Nàiseanta na Gàidhlig ùr agus Bile Chànanan na h-Alba o chionn ghoirid.

Tha Bòrd na Gàidhlig a' freagairt na co-chomhairle seo gu cuideam a chur air cho fìor chudromach 's a tha

tourism, in publishing, in heritage, in arts and in adult and community learning. These are vital for the language and create opportunities for the use of Gaelic".

The **demand for learning Gaelic** is evident in the huge uptake of the Duolingo language learning app. Some 1.8 million people have started learning Gaelic since the course launched four years ago, with 500,000 people working on it at the present time. That represents growth in numbers of 17% in the last year, following 12% growth in the previous year.

The launch of SpeakGaelic in September 2021 has also greatly contributed to resources for adults who want to engage with and learn the language. It has seen around 400,000 learners since its launch.

The "Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2021: Public Attitudes to Gaelic in Scotland"¹⁴ found that:

- Gaelic contributes to wellbeing, with 70% of adults stating that learning Gaelic gives someone a sense of achievement.
- The number of Scots who can speak some Gaelic doubled in the previous decade.
- Some 79% of people think Gaelic is either very or fairly important to Scotland's cultural heritage.

Response

This consultation comes at an important time for Gaelic with the recent publication of the new National Gaelic Language Plan and the Scottish Languages Bill.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig are responding to this consultation to highlight the great importance

⁴ <https://www.gaidhlig.scot/en/news/SSAS/>

¹⁴ <https://www.gaidhlig.scot/en/news/SSAS/>



aiseagan mar phàirt den bhun-structar a bheir taic do sheasmhachd nan coimhearsnachdan Gàidhlig agus na Gàidhlig fhèin.

Tha na seirbheisean aiseig deatamach do sheasmhachd nan eilean is nan sgìrean a thathar a' frithealadh. Tha sin a thaobh an t-siubhail a nì daoine fa leth airson adhbharan pearsanta is malairteach agus gluasad bathar ghnòthachasan agus chustamairean.

Tha sinn a' cur fàilte air mar a tha sgrìobhainn na co-chomhairle a' dèanamh iomradh air earbsachd agus seasmhachd sheirbheisean. **Tha iad seo air a bhith a dhìth sna beagan bhliadhnaichean mu dheireadh, rud a tha air droch bhuaidh a thoirt air na coimhearsnachdan is gnothachasan a bhios a' cleachdadh nan aiseagan.** Tha a' chùis seo mar chomharradh air aois, staid agus àireamh nan soithichean sa chabhlach, còmhla ri dìth comais aig amannan àraidh airson freagairt ri iarrtas. Fhuair an aithisg Neptune air na coimhearsnachdan gum b' e "dìth earbsachd agus comais am prìomh adhbhar a tha a' bacadh muinntir nan Eilean bho shiubhal"⁵.

Tha Plana Nàiseanta na Gàidhlig a' toirt fa-near gun do rinneadh "beagan adhartais ro-chudromach ann a bhith ag aithneachadh cho cudromach 's a tha cùisean eaconamach agus bun-structair dhan Ghàidhlig". **Tha eaconamaidh fhallain, gu h-àraid ann an coimhearsnachdan eileanach agus dùthchail far a bheil a' Ghàidhlig ga bruidhinn, riatanach don àm ri teachd airson na Gàidhlig.**

Tha aithisg na *Buidhne-obrach Gèarr-ùine air Cothroman Eaconamach agus Sòisealta airson na Gàidhlig* a' dèanamh na puinge a leanas:⁶

"A thaobh cleachdadh a' chanain ann am Prìomh-Sgìrean na Gàidhlig, 's iomadh dùbhlann a tha co-cheangailte ri tàladh agus cumail àireamh-shluaigh. Gun bhun-structar leithid taigheadas freagarrach agus *ceanglaichean siubhail earbsach* (cuideam air a chur ris) ... chan

of ferries as a part of the infrastructure that supports the sustainability of Gaelic communities and the Gaelic language.

The ferry services are crucial to the sustainability of the islands and areas served. That is in terms of individuals' personal and business travel and the movement of businesses' customers and goods.

We welcome the consultation document's reference to the reliability and resilience of services. **These have generally been lacking in recent years with negative impacts for the communities and businesses that use the ferries.** The issue reflects the age, condition, and number of vessels in the fleet along with inadequate capacity at certain times to cope with demand. The Neptune Community report found that "the major factor preventing islanders travelling is the lack of reliability and capacity"¹⁵.

The National Gaelic Language Plan notes that "there has also been some essential progress in recognising the importance of economic and infrastructural factors for Gaelic". **A healthy economy, particularly in the island and rural Gaelic-speaking communities, is vital to the future of the language.**

The report of the *Short Life Working Group on Economic and Social Opportunities for Gaelic*¹⁶ highlights that:

"Many of the challenges facing language use in Key Gaelic Communities are related to population attraction and retention. Without infrastructure such as adequate housing and *reliable transport links* (emphasis added) ...

⁵ <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/project-neptune-communities-report-on-future-management-of-ferries/>

⁶ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/short-life-working-group-economic-social-opportunities-gaelic-report-cabinet-secretary-finance-economy/documents/>

¹⁵ <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/project-neptune-communities-report-on-future-management-of-ferries/>

¹⁶ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/short-life-working-group-economic-social-opportunities-gaelic-report-cabinet-secretary-finance-economy/documents/>



urrainnear àireamhan-sluaigh fhàs no a chumail. Tha ion-obrachadh nan coimhearsnachdan sin ann an cunnart agus, le sin, a' Ghàidhlig mar chànan coimhearsnachd".

A bharrachd air sin, tha an aithisg Neptune air na coimhearsnachdan a' cur an cèill: "Anns cha mhòr a h-uile eilean, bha eisimpleirean ann de dhaoine a' fàgail a bhathar a' cur às leth nan droch sheirbheisean aiseig".

Mar a tha na h-Eileanan a' cur ris a' Ghàidhlig

Ann an Cunntas-sluaigh 2011, bha sluaigh iomlan de mu 58,000 neach a bha 3 bliadhna a dh'aois no nas sine sna 31 eileanan fa leth ann an sgìrean na Gàidhealtachd, Earra-Ghàidheal is Bòd, Siorrachd Àir a Tuath agus na h-Eileanan Siar. Bha sgilean Gàidhlig aig mu 22,000 (39%) aca - fada nas àirde na ìre chuibheasach na h-Alba de 1.7%.

Gu h-iomlan, tha na h-eileanan seo air a' chosta an iar a' dèanamh suas c1% de shluaigh na h-Alba a tha 3 bliadhna a dh'aois no nas sine ach barrachd air cairteal (26%) de luchd-còmhnaidh na h-Alba aig a bheil sgilean Gàidhlig. Mar sin, chan e a-mhàin gu bheil a' Ghàidhlig cudromach do na h-eileanan seo ach gu bheil seasmhachd nan eileanan deatamach airson seasmhachd agus fàs leantainneach na Gàidhlig.

Tha Plana nan Eilean aig Riaghaltas na h-Alba⁷ ag aithneachadh gu bheil a' Ghàidhlig cudromach do dh'iomadh coimhearsnachd eileanach agus tha i am measg mòran de na h-amasan ro-innleachdail sa phlana. Tha e ag ràdh "Taobh a-staigh a' Phlana, tha Riaghaltas na h-Alba ag aithneachadh cho cudromach 's a tha a' Ghàidhlig do dh'iomadh coimhearsnachd eileanach, agus cho cudromach 's a tha na coimhearsnachdan eileanach far a bheil Gàidhlig air a bruidhinn do sheasmhachd na Gàidhlig ann an Alba".

Tha seirbheisean aiseig a tha ùr-nodha, seasmhach, earbsach, le comas gu leòr agus faraidhean aig prìs reusanta, fìor-chudromach gus coimhearsnachdan

populations cannot be grown or retained. The viability of those communities is threatened and, with that, Gaelic as a community language".

Further, the Neptune Community Report states that "Almost every island had examples of people leaving directly attributed to poor ferry services".

Contribution of The Islands to the Gaelic Language

At the 2011 Census the 31 individual islands in Highland, Argyll and Bute, North Ayrshire and the Outer Hebrides had a total population of around 58,000 aged 3 years or above. Of these around 22,000 (39%) had some skills in Gaelic - vastly above the Scottish average of 1.7%.

Overall, these west coast islands account for c1% of the Scottish population aged 3 years or above but for more one quarter (26%) of Scottish residents with some Gaelic skills. Therefore, the Gaelic language is not only important to these islands, but these islands' sustainability is essential to the continued sustainability and growth of the language.

Scottish Government's National Islands Plan¹⁷ recognises that Gaelic is important to many of the island communities and is included in many of the Plan's Strategic Objectives. It states that "Within the Plan, the Scottish Government recognises the importance of the Gaelic language to many island communities, and the importance of the Gaelic speaking island communities to the survival and sustainability of Gaelic in Scotland".

Modern, sustainable, reliable ferry services with sufficient capacity and affordable fares are of utmost importance in sustaining the island

⁷ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-plan-scotlands-islands/documents/>

¹⁷ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-plan-scotlands-islands/documents/>



eileanach na Gàidhlig a chumail agus, mar sin, gus a' Ghàidhlig a chumail agus toirt fàs air a' chànan.

Cumail agus Tàladh na h-Òigridh

Tha Plana Nàiseanta nan Eilean ag ràdh gur e “a’ chùis as cudromaiche do sgìrean beag-shluaghach an àireamh bheag de chlann agus òigridh”. Tha an aon phuing ga dèanamh san aithisg aig Comataidh Neoni Lom, Lùtha agus Còmhdhail ⁸. Tha sin ag ràdh: “Tha feum ann air daoine òga a chumail agus a thàladh gu beatha nan eilean, agus bhathar a’ togail na cùise sin ann an còmhradh air a’ bhuidhe a th’ air a bhith aig seirbheisean aiseig a thaobh dì-dhaoineachadh.”

Tha an aithisg Neptune air na coimhearsnachdan ag ràdh: “Tha aiseagan a’ cluiche pàirt dheamach ann am beatha dhaoine òga agus an teaghlachan” agus gu bheil iad a’ cluiche “pàirt chudromach sna co-dhùnaidhean aca a thaobh an cùm iad orra a’ fuireach air eilean”. A bharrachd air sin, “Tha cosgais cudromach do dhaoine òga agus ... thathar ga mheas mì-chothromach agus leth-bhreitheach gu bheil sochair ann a leigeas leothasan fo aois 22 siubhal an-asgaidh air a’ bhus ach chan ann air an aiseag”.

Tha òigridh sna h-eileanan agus sna coimhearsnachdan traidiseanta a’ smaointinn air aiseagan san aon dòigh a bhios daoine air tìr-mòr a’ smaointinn air busaichean.

’S e na h-Eileanan Siar an sgìre aig a bheil a’ cho-chruinne as treasa de dhaoine aig a bheil sgilean Gàidhlig. Aig a’ chunntas-sluaigh 2011, bha sgilean Gàidhlig aig beagan a bharrachd air an dàrna leth de dhaoine aois 16-24 sna h-Eileanan Siar. Tha sin an coimeas ri cuibheas Albannach de dìreach 2%.

Eadar na cunntasan-sluaigh ann an 2011 agus 2022, thuit àireamh-sluaigh nan Eileanan Siar bho mu 27,700 duine gu 26,200. B’ e sin crìonadh barrachd is 5%. Mar iomsgaradh, dh’fhàs àireamh-sluaigh na h-Alba 2.7%, agus bha àireamh-sluaigh sgìre na Gàidhealtachd cha mhòr gun atharrachadh.

communities of Gaelic speakers, and thus in sustaining and growing the Gaelic language.

Retention and Attraction of Young People

The National Islands Plan states that “The key demographic issue for sparsely populated areas is ...the relatively small number of children and young people”. This point is also made in the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee report¹⁸. It states that “The need to both retain and attract young people to island living was highlighted as an issue in discussions on the impact of ferry services on depopulation.”

The Neptune Community Report states that “Ferries play a crucial part in young people’s and their family’s lives” and play “a significant part in their decisions whether to continue to live on an island”. Further, “Cost is important to young people and...the under 22 benefit for bus travel not including ferries is seen as unfair and discriminatory”.

Young people in the islands and in the traditional communities think of the ferries the same as mainland people think of the buses.

The Outer Hebrides is the area with the strongest concentration of those with Gaelic skills. At the 2011 Census just over half of people aged 16-24 in the Outer Hebrides had some Gaelic skills. That compares to a Scottish average of just 2%.

Between the 2011 and 2022 Censuses the Outer Hebrides population fell from around 27,700 people to 26,200. That is, a decline of more than 5%. In contrast, the Scottish population grew by 2.7% while the Highlands and Islands population was virtually unchanged.

⁸ <https://digitalpublications.parliament.scot/Committees/Report/NZET/2023/6/26/d7d24afd-4bca-47ac-8bdd-f745434ecde2>

¹⁸ <https://digitalpublications.parliament.scot/Committees/Report/NZET/2023/6/26/d7d24afd-4bca-47ac-8bdd-f745434ecde2>



Tha an crìonadh san àireamh de dhaoine òga sna h-Eileanan Siar glè fhollaiseach:

- 0-14 bliadhna a dh'aois: crìonadh mu 14%, an coimeas ri nas lugha na 3% ann an Alba agus cha mhòr 10% airson na Gàidhealtachd 's nan Eilean.
- 15-24 bliadhna a dh'aois: crìonadh barrachd is 25%, an coimeas ri mu 8% ann an Alba agus 15% airson na Gàidhealtachd 's nan Eilean.

Bheir na treandaichean neo-dheimhinneach seo buaidh air seasmhachd choimhearsnachdan àraid sna h-Eileanan Siar agus, le sin, air seasmhachd na Gàidhlig.

Tha grunn adhbharan a' toirt buaidh air àireamh na h-òigridh a tha a' fuireach sna h-eileanan. Ach, tha rannsachadh airson Iomairt na Gàidhealtachd 's ⁹ nan Eilean mu bheachdan agus miannan dhaoine aois 15-30 a' nochdadh cho cudromach 's a tha còmhhdail mar nì a bhios a' toirt buaidh air tarraingeachd na sgìre. A rèir aithisg sgìreil nan Eileanan Siar: "A dh'aindeoin faraidhean aiseig Cosgais Co-ionann ri Rathad (RET)... tha cosgaisean-siubhail taobh a-muigh nan eilean fhathast na chùis chudromach"

Fhuair i a-mach cuideachd gun robh feum aig barrachd air trì cairteal de dhaoine òga sna h-Eileanan Siar gabhail ri solar còmhhdail mar cho-rèiteachadh airson bith-beò a dhèanamh sna h-eileanan. Chaidh *còmhhdail aig prìs reusanta, earbsach agus le deagh chlàr-ama* ainmeachadh le barrachd is an dàrna leth mar rud a bha deatamach gus a' Ghàidhealtachd agus na h-Eileanan a bhith na àite tarraingeach airson fuireach, obair agus oideachadh.

Tha faotainneachd agus càileachd còmhhdail - agus gu h-àraid seirbheisean aiseig – mar fhactar glè chudromach sa cho-dhùnadh a nì daoine òga a thaobh an cùm iad orra a' fuireach sa choimhearsnachd aca. **Sna h-Eileanan Siar agus ann an sgìrean eile a tha cudromach don chànan, bidh na co-dhùnaidhean a nì daoine òga a' toirt buaidh mhòr air na tha fa-near don Ghàidhlig.**

The decline in the number of young people in the Outer Hebrides is stark:

- 0-14 years: a fall of around 14% compared to less than 3% in Scotland and almost 10% in the Highlands and Islands.
- 15-24 years: a fall of more than 25% compared to around 8% in Scotland and 15% in the Highlands and Islands.

These negative trends will have affected the sustainability of particular communities in the Outer Hebrides and with this the sustainability of the Gaelic language.

A range of factors affect the number of young people living in the islands. However, research for Highlands and Islands Enterprise¹⁹ into the attitudes and aspirations of people aged between 15 and 30, highlights the importance of transport as a factor affecting the region's attractiveness. The area report for the Outer Hebrides states that: "Despite Road Equivalent Tariff (RET) ferry fares... the cost of off-island travel remains a significant issue".

It also found that more than three quarters of young people in the Outer Hebrides have had to accept transport provision as a compromise they had to make to live in the islands. *Affordable, reliable, and well-scheduled transport* was cited by more than half as a factor required to make the Highlands and Islands an attractive place to live, work and study.

The availability and quality of transport - and notably ferry services - are a very important factor in young people's decision whether to remain in their community. **In the Outer Hebrides and other Areas of Linguistic Significance the decisions made by young people will significantly affect the prospects for the Gaelic language.**

⁹ <https://www.hie.co.uk/research-and-reports/our-reports/2018/may/31/yp-research/>

¹⁹ <https://www.hie.co.uk/research-and-reports/our-reports/2018/may/31/yp-research/>



ICIA (Co-chomhairle air Measadh Buaidh Coimhearsnachdan Eileanach)

Thathar air grunn ICIA a dhèanamh nach do rinn iomradh sam bith air Gàidhlig. Tha seo air tachairt a dh'aindeoin stiùireadh Riaghaltas na h-Alba¹⁰ a tha ag ràdh: “A thaobh nam poileasaidhean, ro-innleachdan agus seirbheisean agaibh am b' urrainn dhuibh a dhèanamh soilleir san ICIA agaibh dè a' bhuidh a bhios ann air a' Ghàidhlig ann an coimhearsnachdan eileanach, ma tha gin ann, an taca ri sgìrean eile (a' gabhail a-steach coimhearsnachdan eileanach eile)”

Tha e deatamach gum bi an ICIA airson cùmhnant ùr nan aiseagan a' toirt fa-near gu h-ìomchaidh a' bhuidh a dh'fhaodadh a bhith ann air a' Ghàidhlig. Mar sin, feumaidh e leantainn ri *Measadh Buaidh air Coimhearsnachdan Eileanach: Comhairle agus Stiùireadh a dh'fhoillsich Riaghaltas na h-Alba.*

Dh'fhaodte gum faicear a' bhuidh as motha air a' Ghàidhlig bho sheirbheisean aiseig san àm ri teachd sna sgìrean ris an canar “Sgìrean Cànan Sònraichte” fo Bhile nan Cànanan Albannach. Seo sgìrean far a bheil sgìlean Gàidhlig aig co-dhiù 20% den t-sluagh, no sgìrean far a bheil a' Ghàidhlig ga cleachdadh ann an dòigh shònraichte eile.

Dh'fhaodadh gum biodh call sluaigh - gu h-àraid call dhaoine òga - sna sgìrean seo air sàilleibh droch sheirbheisean aiseig a' toirt droch bhuidh chudromach air a' chànan. Ma nì luchd-cleachdaidh na Gàidhlig imrich gu àiteachan eile, bhiodh dà bhuidh aig seo. Sa chiad àite, bhiodh lùghdachadh san àireimh de luchd-labhairt na Gàidhlig san sgìre air an robh buaidh. San dàrna àite, faodaidh teaghlachan air an robh buaidh gluasad gu sgìre far nach eil a' Ghàidhlig ga cleachdadh mòran, agus thar ùine is dòcha nach bi iad a' cleachdadh a' chànan gu cunbhalach tuilleadh – no dh'fhaodadh iad a call gu tur.

Mar thoradh air seo, dh'fhaodadh gum bithear ag adhbharachadh crìonadh mòr ann an cleachdadh na Gàidhlig sna sgìrean seo agus ann an Alba air fad. Sin ri

ICIA (Island Communities Impact Assessment)

A number of ICIA that have been produced make no mention of Gaelic at all. That is despite Scottish Government Guidance²⁰ which states that “With reference to your policies, strategies and services could you make clear in your ICIA what the impact is on the Gaelic language in island communities, if any, compared to other areas (including other island communities)”.

It is essential that the ICIA for the new ferries contract takes sufficient account of the potential impacts on the Gaelic language. Thus, it must adhere to *Scottish Government's Island Communities Impact Assessments: Guidance and Toolkit.*

The greatest impact on Gaelic from future ferry provision could be in what the draft Scottish Languages Bill terms “Areas of Linguistic Significance”. These are areas where at least 20% of its population has Gaelic language skills, or ones where there are other specific uses of Gaelic.

Loss of population in these areas - and young people in particular - due to inadequate ferry provision could have a significant negative impact on the language. If Gaelic users move elsewhere this would have two impacts. First, a reduction in the number of Gaelic speakers in the affected area. Second, affected households may move to an area where Gaelic is much less used and, over time, they may no longer regularly use the language - or may lose it altogether.

The outcome could be a significant reduction in the use of Gaelic in the affected areas and Scotland as a whole. That is, the impact would

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/island-communities-impact-assessments-guidance-toolkit-2/>

²⁰ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/island-communities-impact-assessments-guidance-toolkit-2/>



ràdh, bhiodh a’ bhuidh diofaraichte bhon bhuidh a gheibhear ann an eileanan far a bheil ìrean na Gàidhlig nas lugha no far nach eil a’ Ghàidhlig ann.

Tha sinn a’ cur fàilte air gum bi Còmhdhail Alba ag obair ann an dlùth chonaltradh le prìomh luchd-ùidhe agus riochdairean bho bhuidhnean air am bi buaidh. Bu chòir gum bi iad seo a’ gabhail a-steach:

- buidhnean Gàidhlig, nam measg Bòrd na Gàidhlig; agus
- aig a’ char as lugha, Sgìrean Cànain Sònraichte mar a thathar gam mineachadh ann am Bile nan Cànanan Albannach.

Bhiomaid an dùil gum bithear a’ dèanamh an ICIA air stèidh nan coimhearsnachdan fa leth seach air stèidh na sgìre air fad a tha lìonra nan aiseagan ChalMac a’ frithealadh. Bidh seo a’ leigeil le daoine cùisean sònraichte airson choimhearsnachdan fa leth a chomharrachadh agus mar a dh’fhaodadh a’ bhuidh a bhith ag atharrachadh:

- Eadar na h-eileanan a bhios lìonra nan aiseagan ChalMac a’ frithealadh; agus cuideachd
- Eadar na h-eileanan agus sgìrean tìr-mòr a tha lìonra nan aiseagan ChalMac a’ frithealadh.

6. Am bu chòir riatanas a bhith ann àiteachan a ghlèidheadh air deic nan carbadan air slighean trang do luchd-còmhnaidh nan eilean agus do prìomh luchd-obrach a dh’fheumas siubhal gun rabhadh?

Bu chòir – ach bu chòir deuchainn a dhèanamh de seo mus tèid a thoirt a-steach gus am faicear a bheil buil sam bith ann air nach robhar an dùil.

11. Am bu chòir guth nas treasa a bhith aig coimhearsnachdan ann an cruthachadh clàran-ama, gus am bi iad a’ freagairt air feumalachdan luchd-cleachdaidh nan aiseagan?

Bu chòir. Mar thoradh air seo, bhiodh clàran-ama nas fhreagarraiche do fheumalachdan dhaoine is

be different from that in islands with lower or no levels of Gaelic activity.

We very much welcome that Transport Scotland will work in close consultation with key stakeholders and representatives of groups likely to be affected. These should include:

- Gaelic organisations, including Bòrd na Gàidhlig; and
- At the very least, Areas of Linguistic Significance as defined in the draft Scottish Languages Bill.

We would expect that the ICIA will be carried out on the basis of individual communities rather than simply the whole area served by the CalMac ferry network. This will allow the identification of specific issues for individual communities and highlight how the impacts could vary:

- Between the islands served by the CalMac network; and also
- Between the islands and the mainland locations served by the CalMac network.

6. Should Operators be required to hold dedicated vehicle deck spaces on busy routes for the use of island residents and key worker personnel required to travel at short notice?

Yes - but trial this before full introduction to see what, if any, unintended consequences arise.

11. Should communities have greater say in the development of timetables, so they suit the needs of ferry users?

Yes. It will result in timetables more attuned to the needs of individuals and businesses in the communities that are served.



ghnothachasan sna coimhearsnachdan a thathar a' frithealadh.



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