

Meeting: Policy and Resources Committee
Date/Time: 20 November 2025 at 09:30
Location: Microsoft Teams

Minutes - Open Session

1. Opening Items

1.1. Welcome and Apologies

Committee Members Present:

Seonaidh Charity (Chair) [SC]
John MacDonald [JND]
Mary MacInnes [MTMI]
Michelle Macleod [MNL]

In Attendance:

Ealasaid MacDonald Ceannard/Accountable Officer [ED]
Stuart Dunmore, Planning and Statutory Functions Manager [SD]
Iain Macmillan, Director of Development [IMM]
Steven Kellow, Funding & Projects Officer [SK]
Nicola Pearson, Head of Finance & Corporate Affairs [NP]
Calum Munro, Head of Education, and Plans [CM]

Minutes:

Nicola NicThòmais, Lasair Ltd

Apologies

All members present.

1.2. Declaration of Interests

None.

1.3. Any Other Competent Business (AOCB)

Disclosure Scotland process

2. Finance

2.1. Finance Report

NP delivered a verbal report on the financial position.

As of the end of October, transactions are 2% behind budget with £48,000 in the bank that must be spent before the end of the financial year. It is expected that this will be balanced during the course of the year. A written report will be sent to members after the meeting.

Decision

Members noted the verbal financial report.

3. Usage

3.1. Development Report

IMM spoke about the Development Report.

Progress can be seen in the ways in which the groups are working together in the communities and this should result in meaningful impact.

Gaelic Officers Scheme

The Gaelic Officer Scheme is proceeding well and only three organisations are still seeking to recruit for a Gaelic Officer post. A Member raised the issue that the pay rate for Gaelic Officers differs between different organisations, but it was stated that this is not the Bòrd's responsibility, as they are not the employers. Officers will have different responsibilities depending on the level of the job and the sector/community in which they are working.

Gaelic officers network

More Officers are now attending these sessions which contain useful training and content for them, in addition to better communication and strengthened relationships.

Community Gaelic Plans

The Uist plan is making progress. It was felt that the Community Plans will be useful and that there is already a greater interest in Gaelic. For example, Members were encouraged to see so many children from Uist taking part in the National Mòd.

Group Governance

There was a gathering of Delivery Group leaders in Glasgow earlier this month, where a useful session on Strengthening Governance was held with Lasair. The groups were very grateful for the opportunity to come together. A small sum is available to be used for the collaboration of Delivery Groups, and ideas are being sought on how to take this forward.

Questions were raised regarding impact, how it is measured, and opinions were voiced regarding the Scottish Language Act and how this will affect the work of all organisations and how it will affect communities.

IMM and SK were thanked for their work.

Decision:

Members noted the encouraging Development Report.

4. Gaelic Language Plans

4.1 Statutory Plans

IM and SD spoke about the paper for information.

The full team now has of 3 Officers and a Manager, providing a great opportunity to meet up with more groups.

By the end of the 2025-26 financial year, it is hoped that 12 more statutory plans will go before the Policy and Resources Committee.

Some explanation was given regarding the process if a group refused to prepare a Plan. Groups generally acknowledge that the team at Bòrd na Gàidhlig is supportive. Although the Act includes new powers, the aim is to encourage good communication rather than to impose authority on the organisations.

Decision

Members noted the Report on Strategic Gaelic Plans.

4.2 Bringing new organisations into the statutory process

As a result of the Education Act 2025, *Education Scotland* and *His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education* (HMIE) are now separate groups.

As a result of the Education Act, the *Scottish Qualifications Authority* (SQA) will cease to exist and will be replaced by a new group, *Qualifications Scotland*.

Social Security Scotland is a new group and has approached the Bòrd to discuss the preparation of a Plan.

A Member raised a question about whether there would be an opportunity to compel reserved public bodies under the control of the UK Government to prepare Gaelic plans. The DVLA was cited as a good example in raising the profile of the Welsh language through their bilingual policy. There may be an opportunity to bring more groups in through the Areas of Linguistic Significance.

Decision

Members agreed to bring these three groups into the statutory plans process.

4.3 Gaelic Language Plan – UHI North, West and Hebrides

The Plan was discussed, highlighting its strengths and weaknesses. It was noted that the responsibility should not lie solely with Gaelic teaching staff but that the entire institution should recognise the value of Gaelic in the various communities, and participate accordingly. It was determined that there would be an opportunity to address weaknesses at the team level, through the monitoring process.

It is clear that there is goodwill, however, between the Officers and the organization itself and that this should be built on through good communication.

Decision

The members agreed the UHI North, West and Hebrides Gaelic Language Plan.

5. Regulation

Policy & Resources Committee Work Plan

The committees new work plan was noted. Thanks were given for the flexibility in changing the date of this meeting itself (which was initially due to have taken place in September).

Decision

Members approved the work plan.

6. AOCB

6.1 Disclosure Scotland Process

Groups have reported that this process is having an impact on communities due to the length of time it takes to obtain disclosure checks and renewal of disclosure checks through Disclosure Scotland. While it is an extremely important process it is clear that it had hindered some events during the year.

Decision

The Ceannard agreed to request a meeting with Disclosure Scotland to raise these concerns.

The Chair thanked the Members and the Officers for the detailed information they had provided.

The meeting was brought to a close at 10.51am.

Date of next meeting: 26/02/10

Meeting closed