



# Donegal Local Authorities Scheme 2010-2013

under the  
Official Languages Act 2003



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# **Donegal Local Authorities Scheme**

## **2010-2013**

### **under the**

## **Official Languages Act 2003**

## **Section 1: Background**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This is the second scheme prepared by Donegal Local Authorities under Section 11 of the Official Languages Act 2003.

The primary objective of the Act is to ensure better availability and a higher standard of public services through Irish.

### **1.2 Preparation of the Scheme**

This scheme has been drawn up in accordance with the Guidelines under Section 12 of the Official Languages Act 2003 issued by the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs in September 2004.

Donegal County Council, in conjunction with the Ballyshannon, Letterkenny, Bundoran and Buncrana Town Authorities, published a notice under Section 13 in May 2008 inviting submissions in relation to the preparation of the draft scheme from any interested parties. All submissions made are available on the Council's website at [www.donegal.ie](http://www.donegal.ie)

For the purposes of this document, all the above local authorities shall be referred to collectively as "The Authorities" or "Donegal Local Authorities" or "The Council" save as otherwise stated.

The Scheme seeks to support and build upon the commitments made in our first Scheme, which commenced in 2005.

The scheme builds on the extent to which services are currently available through Irish as a starting base. Areas for future enhancement of the service provided by Donegal Local Authorities are identified in the body of the scheme.

The scheme takes account of the process of decentralisation undertaken by Donegal County Council, including the differing levels of demand and the differing contexts within which each of

our Public Service Centres operates. Particular attention is focussed on the further development of services through the Irish language provided by those Centres that serve Gaeltacht communities. However, Donegal Local Authorities also recognise the development of Irish speaking communities outside the Gaeltacht, particularly the development of Gaelscoileanna and other Irish-medium educational communities.

The scheme also includes a commitment to assess on an ongoing basis the level of demand for services through Irish and to ensure that the Council continues to meet this demand in a planned, coherent and accessible way. The Council will gauge the level of demand for its services in the Irish language by carrying out regular and timed audits through a system of counting/measuring the level of queries/requests for services through Irish in a defined period.

### **1.3 Commencement Date of Scheme**

This scheme has been confirmed by the Minister for Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs. The scheme is commenced with effect from 1st July 2010 and shall remain in force for a period of 3 years from this date or until a new scheme has been confirmed by the Minister pursuant to Section 15 of the Act, whichever is the earlier.

### **1.4 Customers and Clients of Donegal Local Authorities**

Communities throughout County Donegal, including Gaeltacht communities

Applicants for services under various schemes

Government Departments

State Agencies

Business

Other local authorities and regional authorities

County Development Board structures

Social Partners and sectoral interests

Local Development Agencies

Local and National Media

### **1.5 Functional Areas of Donegal Local Authorities**

Housing, Social and Building Services

Roads and Transportation Services

Water, Environment and Emergency Services

Corporate Services

Planning and Economic Development

Community, Enterprise and Cultural Services

Finance

## **1.6 Offices covered by this Scheme**

All Donegal County Council Offices throughout County Donegal

Ballyshannon Town Council Offices

Bundoran Town Council Offices

Letterkenny Town Council Offices

Buncrana Town Council Offices

## **1.7 Language Scheme Background**

The Official Languages Act provides for the preparation by public bodies of a statutory scheme detailing the services they will provide

- through the medium of Irish
- through the medium of English, and
- through the medium of Irish and English

and the measures to be adopted to ensure that any service not provided by the body through the medium of the Irish language will be so provided within an agreed timeframe.

*Section 13* of the Official Languages Act 2003 provides that public bodies have a duty to ensure that

- an adequate number of its staff are competent in the Irish language
- the particular Irish language requirements associated with the provision of services in Gaeltacht areas are met
- the Irish language becomes the *working language in Gaeltacht offices* within a timeframe to be agreed with the Minister

## **1.8 Review of Progress under the First Scheme**

Significant progress has been made over the lifetime of the first scheme and this provides a solid foundation on which we can deliver further improvements during the lifetime of this, and further, schemes. The second scheme is predicated on all of the commitments in the first scheme being implemented. In the event of commitments within that scheme not having been fully implemented to date, this matter is being dealt with by the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga. The objective of this second Scheme is to continue the delivery of these commitments and build on the progress achieved across the Council over the period of the last Scheme. It sets out a commitment on behalf of the Council and staff to develop the extent to which services are currently available through Irish and it identifies areas for future enhancement.

The new Scheme also builds on the principles of Quality Customer Service and will continue to ensure that persons who wish to conduct their business in Irish are facilitated.

The principal achievements under the First Scheme included:

- significant improvement in services through Irish to the Gaeltacht in the Glenties Electoral Area through a combination of recruitment, placement and training initiatives
- sustained and significant growth in the number of customers using Irish in Dungloe Public Services Centre (see Appendix 1)
- Calls to Switch/Reception in Dungloe Public Services Centre can be dealt with in Irish, and Irish is the first language of Reception/Switchboard staff when answering the phone.
- Provision of extensive training in Irish language for a significant number of staff on a countywide basis, including the European Certificate in Irish under the auspices of the University of Ireland, Maynooth, Diplomas in Irish with Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta, Gaoth Dobhair and the University of Ulster, an intensive course in translation skills for staff already fluent in the Irish language, and staff attendance at *Gaeleagras* courses.
- the Council established a Placenames Committee which has brought about major policy changes in the naming of new housing developments throughout the county, with emphasis on the Irish language, culture and traditions.
- provision of a bilingual website for Donegal County Council
- the translation of our full suite of application forms for the public
- the provision of a total of 102 Gaeltacht Scholarships for young people in County Donegal, in conjunction with our Summer Colleges
- a staff audit to ascertain levels of Irish within the organisation, and to identify members of staff who were competent in the language
- the inclusion of Irish as an integral part of the recruitment process for specific posts in specific offices
- participation in Irish Language Week events, including Library events, dramas, social evenings etc
- Use of simultaneous translation services (STE) in all Islands Committee meetings, in a number of presentations to Town Councils, and at a number of conferences organised within the county by other community organisations. A new high quality simultaneous translation system was purchased for the Dungloe Public Service Centre in 2007.
- Continued support for, and maintenance of, Coiste na Gaeilge consisting of 8 elected members from Donegal County Council. In 2008 this number was increased with the addition of one elected member from each of our Town Councils. Furthermore, a training day for Councillors (County and Town), was held in October 2007.

- Community and Enterprise Division of Donegal County Council closely involved in initiatives to attract, and support, major events such as Oireachtas na Gaeilge, Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann and An Fhéile Phan-Cheilteach to major towns in the county which had not yet experienced national and international events of this nature.
- inclusion of policies to support the Irish language and the Gaeltacht in Donegal County Development Plan 2006-2012
- increased bilingualism in our signage, documentation, information brochures, press releases etc

However, Donegal Local Authorities recognise that there are a range of services that are not currently available through Irish, and welcome the opportunity provided by this second scheme to further develop and enhance our service through Irish.

## **Section 2**

### **Summary of Services provided by Donegal Local Authorities**

This Chapter provides an overview of the services provided by Donegal Local Authorities.

#### **2.1 Corporate Services**

The principal services provided by the Corporate Services directorate include human resources, support for elected Council, information systems, Irish language development, franchise and elections, and FOI.

#### **2.2 Community, Enterprise and Cultural Services**

The Community, Culture and Enterprise Directorate is made up of two Divisions – The Community and Enterprise Division and the Cultural Services Division. The Community and Enterprise Division has been set up within Donegal County Council in recognition of the Council’s expanded role with regard to the promotion and co-ordination of economic, social and cultural development in the county. The Cultural Services Division is responsible for the provision of Library, Arts, Archive, Museum and Heritage services throughout the county, as follows:

#### **2.3 Planning and Economic Development**

The overall aim of Planning and Economic Development within Donegal County Council is to “formulate and implement strategies and policies for the spatial management and development of the county as an enabling measure for sustainable development.” Key activities of this directorate including the processing of planning applications, planning enforcement, and the preparation of development plans for the county and local areas.

#### **2.4 Water, Environment and Emergency Services**

The roles and responsibilities of the Water Services Division include the supply of water to households in the county through various schemes, upgrading deficient water supply sources, reducing overall water loss, the treatment and disposal of wastewater, and the provision of wastewater facilities. The Environment Service is responsible for the regulation of municipal solid waste collection, disposal and recycling, litter pollution, Blue Flag beaches and monitoring water quality in the aquatic environment, and the overall protection and enhancement of the environment. The Emergency Services includes responsibility for modern and effective fire protection and prevention in the county, planning for major emergency events, Donegal Civil Defence, and water safety.

## **2.5 Housing, Social and Building Services**

Donegal County Council's primary goal in this area is "to facilitate and support the provision of a standard of accommodation for the people of County Donegal which best meets their needs and aspirations." The aim of the Council is to enable every household within the County to have available a dwelling of good quality, which is suited to the needs of the household, and to be affordable, and at the tenure of its choice. The key activities of this service include the implementation of housing action plans, reducing waiting lists, managing and maintaining the Council's housing stock, elimination of homelessness, accommodation for Traveller families and asylum seekers and the Rental Accommodation Scheme.

## **2.6 Roads and Transportation Services**

The Roads and Transportation Service is responsible for the design, maintenance and improvement of the national and non-national roads network throughout County Donegal. The service is also involved in work relating to the Marine Infrastructure and Road Safety. The overall objective being pursued is to provide safe and comprehensive access within the county, to satisfy the projected needs of all who live and work or visit Donegal.

## **2.7 Finance**

The functions of the Finance Service includes the discharge of our statutory accounting responsibilities, preparation of the annual budget, cash management, internal audit, and the financial management systems of the organisation.

## **2.8 Town Councils**

Key services and functions provided by the Town Councils in Letterkenny, Buncrana, Bundoran include the areas of housing, roads, town development and promotion, street cleaning, and recreation and amenity provision.

Ballyshannon Town Council has more limited functions, which include housing maintenance, the Arts and miscellaneous.

## **2.9 Principle Means of Written Communication with the Public**

The principal means of written communication with our customers include written correspondence, brochures and information leaflets, application forms, publications, press releases, websites, advertisements, minutes of meetings, and reports.

## **Section 3**

### **Services Currently Available in Each Official Language.**

#### **3.1 Services Operating Principally in Irish**

The following services are currently provided principally through the medium of the Irish language and this will continue to be the case throughout the lifetime of this scheme.

- Community and Enterprise (Dungloe Public Service Centre)
- Gaoth Dobhair Fire Station
- Irish Language Office (Lifford HQ)
- Cogar: Pobal le Gaeilge (Letterkenny Public Services Centre)
- Gaoth Dobhair Community Library
- Dungloe Community Library

#### **3.2 Services Operating Bilingually**

The following services are currently provided bilingually and this will continue to be the case throughout the lifetime of this scheme.

- Motor tax / Driving Licence (Dungloe PSC)
- Front Desk Customer Service (Dungloe PSC)
- Islands Committee (Dungloe PSC)
- Housing & Building Services (Dungloe / Carndonagh / Milford PSCs)
- Electoral Area Committee (Glenties)
- Planning Section (Dungloe & Milford PSCs)
- General Planning Queries ( Lifford HQ)
- Roads and Transportation Section (Dungloe PSC)
- Water Inspection (Gaoth Dobhair Parish)
- Water Group Schemes / Well Grants / Capital Projects (Lifford HQ)
- Arts Officer

#### **3.3 Services Operating Principally in English<sup>1</sup>**

- Higher Education Grants (Lifford HQ)

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<sup>1</sup> Some members of staff in the services in section 4.3 are undergoing training in Irish through the European Certificate in Irish, and are willing to use Irish to the best of their ability in delivering services to the public.

- Information Systems (Lifford HQ)
- Human Resources Office (Lifford HQ)
- County Manager's Office (Lifford HQ)
- Reception / Switchboard (Lifford HQ)
- Register of Electors (Lifford HQ)
- Freedom of Information (Lifford HQ)
- Council Meetings (Lifford HQ)
- County Secretariat (Lifford HQ)
- Finance Services
- County Museum
- County Library
- County Archives Service
- Town Councils
- All other services not outlined in 3.1 and 3.2 above

## **Section 4**

### **Enhancement of Services to be provided bilingually**

#### **4.1 Guiding Principles**

Donegal Local Authorities:

- recognise that people have the right to choose which official language to use
- accept that a person can express their needs and requirements most effectively in their chosen language
- appreciate that giving people real choice regarding the use of language in local authority services is the essence of good practice and leads to better outcomes in terms of quality of service
- appreciate the enormous historical contribution of the people of the Donegal Gaeltacht in preserving the Irish language as a spoken community language over many centuries
- recognise that we have a duty of care to facilitate and support the continuation and development of Irish as the spoken language of the Gaeltacht
- are committed to developing a corporate image which embraces bilingualism across all our services.

#### **4.2 Background and Context**

As outlined in Section 5.2 of our First Scheme Donegal Local Authorities have undergone a process of unprecedented change, embracing the objectives of Better Local Government, fundamentally changing how our services are delivered, and providing more accessible services for our customers from local Public Service Centres. The Council has a mix of staff with varying degrees of competence in Irish in each Public Service Centre, including Dungloe, and this continues to present a major challenge for the Council in the achievement of its goal to provide quality one-to-one bilingual services.

#### **4.3 Enhancement of Services from various offices:**

##### **4.3.1 All Offices**

In the final year of the previous scheme, a draft consultative document identifying staffing issues that need to be addressed was prepared, and is currently being considered by the HR Department. It is our objective that this will inform the preparation of draft policies for consultation with staff and representative organisations towards furthering the aims set out throughout this Scheme. These policies will include initiatives in the areas of:

### *Recruitment and Placement,*

The Authorities, in co-operation, where appropriate, with the Public Appointments Service, and through a consultative process with staff and their representative bodies, will review recruitment policy and staff mobility policies, with the objective of recruiting an adequate number of staff proficient to provide services in the Irish language, and in that regard;

- Donegal Local Authorities will continue to identify posts requiring competency in Irish (both written and oral) throughout the organisation, with particular emphasis on posts in council offices that serve/are located in Gaeltacht areas.
- Current arrangements will be reviewed with staff representative organisations with the objective of ensuring that staff assignment/deployment to services in offices that serve Gaeltacht areas will have regard to competency in Irish.
- The Authorities will continue to work with, and seek agreement with staff competent in the Irish language to provide services in the Irish language across a range of services where a demand for services through Irish may arise. With their consent, such staff will be identified for our customers on our website, telephone directory etc;

### *Training and Development*

The Authorities will continue their ongoing commitment to provide appropriate training and development for all staff, in both official languages, to meet the evolving needs of our customers and to develop the full potential of staff during their careers.

The Authorities will:-

- Continue to support the provision of a range of high-quality Irish language training courses to staff, both during and after normal working hours, through its Staff Education Scheme, as an integral part of the Authorities' overall training plan.
- Provide further courses through the medium of Irish for members of staff who are currently fluent in the language (e.g. simultaneous translation, media skills, use of Irish on computers, grammar and letter writing skills etc)
- Irish language materials and resources (dictionaries, computer software, publications etc) will continue to be made available to staff to facilitate the development and delivery of services through Irish.
- Continue to assess all courses, including Irish language courses and courses delivered through Irish, on a regular basis to ascertain how effectively they meet the Authorities' goals.
- Include language awareness as part of both Induction and Customer Service training courses so as to ensure that staff:
  - understand why the Council implements a bilingual policy;
  - understand the context and background to the policy; and
  - are fully informed about how the policy will affect their work
  - gain an empathetic understanding of the needs and concerns of Irish-speaking customers

- The Authorities will also examine other mechanisms (e.g. award schemes) to encourage and promote the development of services through Irish by staff, and to recognise the endeavours of staff.
- Training opportunities will also be provided for elected members who wish to learn and use Irish.

#### 4.3.2 Dungloe Public Services Centre

Given the statutory obligations, and Donegal County Council's own stated commitment, in its First Language scheme, to have Irish as the working language of the Dungloe Public Services Centre by 2020, Donegal County Council, in consultation with staff and staff representative organisations, will continue to develop policies and strategies (see Section 4.3.1 above), to further the achievement of that commitment during the lifetime of this scheme.

#### 4.3.3 Other Offices and Services located in the Gaeltacht

Donegal County Council currently has a number of other services in the Gaeltacht, including library services and fire services. Irish is currently the principal language of the community libraries in Gaoth Dobhair and Dungloe, and of the fire station in Gaoth Dobhair. This position will continue to be supported and maintained during the lifetime of the current scheme.

The Council, in consultation with staff and staff representative organisations, will continue to develop policies and strategies (see Section 4.3.1 above) to ensure that, in accordance with the commitment contained in the first scheme, Irish will become the working language of other service points within the Gaeltacht by 2020, including the Fire Stations in Dungloe, Glencolmcille and Falcarragh.

#### 4.3.4 All Other Offices and Services outside the Gaeltacht.

Within the lifetime of this scheme, either through recruitment, upskilling or deployment, and in consultation with staff and their representative organisations, Donegal Local Authorities will continue to ensure that:

- There shall be at least two members of staff who will be competent in delivering local authority services through Irish to the public from each Public Services Centre located outside the Gaeltacht but which provides a service to Gaeltacht areas; namely Donegal Public Service Centre and Letterkenny Public Service Centre (or whichever Public Service Centre is the main service point for the old Milford Electoral Area, now combined with the Letterkenny Electoral Area).
- At least one member of staff shall be able to provide local authority services in Irish from each of our Public Service Centres not serving a Gaeltacht area; namely, Carndonagh Public Service Centre. At least one member of staff shall be able to provide local authority services in Irish from the main office serving the Stranorlar electoral area, currently Lifford headquarters. .
- Town Councils have a small staff complement, the majority of which are English-speaking, which creates challenges for the development of a customer service in Irish. However, Donegal County Council will continue to work in partnership with

Town Councils in building a service through Irish. Further staff and member training will be provided.

#### **4.4 Information Systems**

The Authorities shall:

- Continue to maintain and develop Donegal County Council website as a fully bilingual website, both in terms of navigation and content.
- The static content on any new websites developed by Donegal County Council, or on its behalf and which are under the direct control of the Council, will be available bilingually.
- Continue to promote the availability of the Irish language service in its various sections by listing contact details on the website for customers. As new services become available it is proposed to update this list on an ongoing basis. This will have the additional effect of promoting public confidence in the availability of a quality customer service in Irish and unlocking latent demand for services in Irish.
- The Council's web page dealing with Irish Language Development shall be maintained and further developed as an Irish language resource for the public.
- An Irish language section will be developed on each Town Council Website. (By June 2011).
- The Council's intranet system will continue to be developed as a staff resource for the promotion of bilingualism: proper spelling of placenames, help on writing letters, phrases for receptionists, names of posts and services within Council, formal speeches etc.
- The potential for expanding the use of translation software within the organisation will be examined.
- Any new computer systems being installed will be fully capable of handling the Irish language, subject to availability.
- All existing computer systems will, where necessary, be made compatible with the Irish language in conjunction with the next suitable planned maintenance or upgrade work.
- Any new interactive services which allow the general public to make applications or receive benefits on line will be introduced simultaneously in both languages, subject to availability.
- The Local Authorities will ensure that all existing on-line interactive services will be made bilingual in conjunction with the next suitable planned maintenance or upgrade work.
- The Local Authorities will ensure that the ability of all above-mentioned computer packages to handle the Irish language will be raised in all initial contacts and subsequent dealings with consultants, companies etc.
- Donegal County Council has developed a members' extranet service. The Council will explore the potential of this service for furthering use of Irish among Councillors in various ways, e.g. Irish language phrases, information on Irish services and events.

#### **4.5 Application Forms**

County Donegal Local Authorities will continue its policy to always offer each customer the choice to receive application forms and associated documentation in the official language of their choice. Accordingly, it is the policy of the Local Authorities to ensure that all application forms and associated documentation are and will continue to be made available simultaneously in both official languages on our website.

During the first year of this scheme, the Local Authorities will identify certain application forms and associated documentation which can be made available under one cover. The Council will ensure that such forms and associated documentation as identified are provided in both official languages under the one cover by the end of this scheme.

Where application forms and associated documentation are provided as separate Irish and English language versions, the Local Authorities will ensure that equal prominence is given to both versions at all public locations and that the Irish language version will be as readily accessible as the English language version. Customers will proactively be made aware of the availability of a separate Irish version by way of a suitable statement on the English version of the document and by any other means that the Council deems appropriate.

#### **4.6 Public Meetings Policy**

The Council conducts the majority of its public meetings in the English language.

Currently, meetings of Coiste na Gaeilge, Grúpa Earnála na Gaeilge, and Cogar: Pobal le Gaeilge are conducted entirely in the Irish language. There is occasional use of simultaneous translation at Coiste na Gaeilge meetings.

Simultaneous translation facilities are available at all Coiste na nOileán meetings in Dungloe Public Service Centre, and minutes are provided bilingually. This will continue during the lifetime of this scheme.

During the lifetime of the first scheme, the translation equipment was used at a number of public meetings, on a trial basis. It is intended to continue to expand the use of simultaneous translation to public meetings which are held in the Gaeltacht.

The use of simultaneous translation equipment at internal Council staff meetings will be considered to allow Irish-speaking staff the opportunity to develop skills in simultaneous translation in a safe trial-friendly environment.

Donegal County Council's simultaneous translation equipment will continue to be available, on request, to community-based organisations.

Donegal County Council considers that its current simultaneous translation equipment, in conjunction with the lack of available space and particular layout of the County Council Chamber, is not conducive to a high standard of translation in that particular context. In any future physical development of Corporate Headquarters the need for simultaneous translation systems will be regarded as an integral part of the planning process.

## **4.7 Services on the Telephone**

Receptionists / switchboard operators are the first points of contact with the public. In accordance with the commitments contained in the first scheme, Donegal Local Authorities will ensure that

- a dedicated telephone reception service in the Irish language is maintained, to enable Irish speaking customers across the entire county to access Local Authority services in the Irish language, and to have their first initial contact with the Local Authority dealt with entirely in Irish.
- the receptionists / switch operators in Dungloe Public Services Centre will continue to be fully competent in dealing with fluent Irish speakers through the Irish language
- receptionist / switchboard staff in all offices will give the name of the organisation/ Section in Irish, and
- will be at least familiar with the basic greetings in Irish, and suitable arrangements will be in place so that they can put members of the public in touch without delay with whatever office of officer is responsible for offering the service required through Irish

## **4.8 The Media / Press Releases**

Additional authoritative staff in each Service will be identified, where available, to carry out interviews with the Irish language media, particularly Ráidió na Gaeltachta and TG4.

Donegal County Council will continue to issue all Press Releases in Irish only, or in Irish and English.

Town Councils will issue bilingual Press Releases in relation to the Irish language community and events within their respective jurisdictions.

## **4.9 Brochures & Information Leaflets**

County Donegal Local Authorities will continue its policy to always offer each customer the choice to receive information leaflets and brochures in the official language of their choice. Accordingly, it is the policy of the Local Authorities to ensure that all information leaflets and brochures are and will continue to be made available simultaneously in both official languages on our website.

During the first year of this scheme, the Local Authorities will identify certain information leaflets and brochures which can be made available under one cover. The Council will ensure that such leaflets and brochures as identified are provided in both official languages under the one cover by the end of this scheme.

Where information leaflets and brochures are provided as separate Irish and English language versions, the Local Authorities will ensure that equal prominence is given to both versions at all public locations and that the Irish language version will be as readily accessible as the English language version. Customers will proactively be made aware of the availability of a separate Irish version by way of a suitable statement on the English version of the document and by any other means that the Council deems appropriate.

Documents relating to Gaeltacht areas will be in Irish only, or bilingual.

Documents of a technical nature will continue to be published in English only, except where there is a wider interest to the public or local significance, in which case a bilingual version or a summary in the Irish language will be made available.

#### **4.10 Placenames**

In addition to the statutory requirements of An tOrdú Logainmneacha (Ceantair Ghaeltachta) 2004, Donegal Local Authorities will continue to promote the use of the Irish language versions of Gaeltacht placenames across areas of work and activities not specifically referred to in the Order (e.g. databases, mail etc).

Donegal Local Authorities will continue to encourage staff to make greater use of the Irish version of placenames outside the Gaeltacht.

Donegal County Council established a Placenames Committee in 2004. The Committee's terms of reference includes promoting the use of Irish language, heritage and culture in the selection of names for new housing developments, streets etc. This work will continue over the duration of this second scheme.

#### **4.11 Donegal County Development Plan**

Donegal County Council will continue to implement all the provisions relating to the Gaeltacht and the Irish Language contained within the Donegal County Development Plan 2006-2012.

#### **4.12 An Straitéis**

Donegal County Council, through its Community and Enterprise Division, will continue to work with other agencies on Donegal County Development Board to further the aims and objectives of An Straitéis 2002-2012 as they relate to the preservation and promotion of the Irish language within County Donegal.

#### **4.13 Other Promotional Measures**

The following are additional proposals which the Council shall continue to provide and/or seek to develop over the life of the plan:

- Continuation of Scholarship Scheme in conjunction with Gaeltacht Colleges
- Participation in Irish Language Week (e.g. events/exhibitions in library services)
- Ongoing support for, and participation in, Irish language events within County Donegal (e.g. Oireachtas, An Baile Beo etc)
- Sponsorship of Glór na nGael Award for local community group which advances the use of our Irish language services among the public.

- Promotion of voluntary Fáinne Scheme among staff so that Irish-speaking staff are readily identifiable to the public and to each other.
- Organisation of Irish language social events for staff through social club, including Irish language coffee mornings and lunch breaks
- Inclusion of substantial Irish language material in any staff organ; e.g., Grapevine
- Where a service in Irish is available, greater efforts will be made to make it clear to visiting customers what service is available, where, and from whom.
- Where the local authorities organise, or participate in the organisation of, festivals throughout the county (e.g. Féile an Earagail, Bluestacks Festival, Bealtaine, Weanfest etc), we will continue to encourage the use of the Irish language and Irish language events as part of these festivals.
- The local authorities will take the linguistic needs of our Gaelscoileanna and Gaeltacht schools into account in any events and competitions. We intend to consult with An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta in relation to how to proceed in this area, over the lifetime of this scheme.
- Recognising the important work carried out by a number of national and local Irish language organisations, and other agencies involved in the promotion and preservation of the Irish language, Donegal Local Authorities intends to engage in ongoing consultation with these agencies throughout the lifetime of this scheme, to explore any benefits that may result from further co-operation.

## **Section 5**

### **Implementation, Monitoring and Revision**

#### **5.1 Senior Management**

Once this scheme has been approved, overall responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of the Scheme lies with the Senior Management Team. Each Director will identify the key milestones against which progress will be benchmarked, by way of an annual progress report from each directorate to the County Manager. The Senior Management Team will keep the effective operation of the scheme under review, principally through the mechanisms outlined here.

#### **5.2 Public and Elected Members**

The elected members of Donegal County Council, and various Town Councils, will continue to play a key role in sustaining the approach outlined in this Scheme. The primary responsibility for this will lie with the relevant Strategic Policy Committee.

Progress on implementation of the Scheme will be reported to the public and elected members via the Annual Report.

#### **5.3 County Partnership Committee**

The County Partnership Committee and the Area Partnership Committees will provide the mechanism through which staff and their representative organisations can participate fully in the further development of the Irish language within the organisation and in the range and quality of services to customers.

#### **5.4 Irish Language Development Officer**

The Irish Language Development Officer, as well as providing ongoing specialist support to line managers and staff, will regularly review and report on progress on the implementation of the commitments within the scheme to Senior Management.

In the last scheme, Corporate Services/Dungloe Public Services Centre carried out extensive work in compiling statistics on the demand for Irish language services. We will extend this to a number of other local authority services and offices.

The Authorities may initiate further development activities not covered in this scheme.

## Section 6

### Publicising of Agreed Scheme

The contents of this scheme will be publicised to the general public by means of:-

- Press Release
- Official Launch of Scheme
- Circulation to appropriate agencies and public bodies
- County Council and Town Council Websites.

Wherever Donegal Local Authorities has established the capacity to provide a service in the Irish language, we will promote the availability of the service through our website, signage, and information at Public Service Centres etc.

As well as the above, the Local Authorities will take every opportunity in its day-to-day interactions with customers to promote and publicise the services it provides through Irish, including by:

- directly informing customers on a pro-active basis of the option of dealing with the the Local Authorities through Irish, for example, by the display of notices at reception areas indicating the Irish language services that are available and also by prominently listing these on Local Authority websites;
- including footnotes on selected guidelines, leaflets, and applications forms explaining that these documents are also available in Irish (in cases where bilingual printed material is not produced under a single cover); and
- including notes in publications and advertisements that the Local Authorities provide services through Irish and, accordingly, welcomes customers who wish to deal with it in Irish, according to the commitments in this Scheme.

A copy of this Scheme has been forwarded to An Coimisinéir Teanga's office.

The **English** language version is the original text of this scheme.