

# Falkirk Council

## GAELIC LANGUAGE PLAN



This plan has been prepared under Section 3 of the  
Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005

## FOREWORD

Falkirk Council is committed to the use and promotion of the Gaelic Language in recognition of its status as one of Scotland's national languages and its unique contribution to the richness and diversity of Scottish culture today. In taking this forward we recognise that our contribution will help to sustain and develop the Gaelic language and its place as an integral part of the Scottish way of life and within the nation's heritage.

Although the Falkirk Council area has not been one of Scotland's traditional Gaelic speaking areas or has a large number of people who speak Gaelic today, the Council will pursue a pragmatic approach in its drive to help the Gaelic language. This will include proposals to enhance the status of Gaelic across the area, promote the acquisition and learning of the language as well as encourage its increased use.

Mary Pitcaithly  
Chief Executive



Mary Pitcaithly OBE

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## Summary

Falkirk Council recognises that Gaelic is an integral part of Scotland's heritage, national identity and cultural life. Falkirk Council is committed to the objectives set out in the *National Plan for Gaelic* and will play its part in supporting a sustainable future for Gaelic in Scotland.

Falkirk Council recognises that the position of Gaelic is fragile and if it is to be reinvigorated as a living language in Scotland, a concerted effort on the part of government, the public and private sectors, community organisations and individual speakers is required to:

- *enhance the status of Gaelic;*
- *promote the acquisition and learning of Gaelic;*
- *encourage the increased use of Gaelic.*

This document is Falkirk Council's Gaelic Language Plan prepared within the framework of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005. It sets out how we will use Gaelic in the operation of our functions and how we will promote and develop Gaelic through taking a pragmatic approach which recognises the area's tradition and use of the language today.

Falkirk Council's Gaelic Language Plan has been prepared in accordance with statutory criteria set out in the 2005 Act, and having regard to the *National Plan for Gaelic* and the *Guidance on the Development of Gaelic Language Plans*.

## Structure of the Gaelic Language Plan

The key components of our Gaelic Language Plan are:

### *Chapter 1 – Introduction*

This chapter provides the background and context relating to the preparation of Gaelic Language Plans under the 2005 Act and the structure of Falkirk Council's main areas of operation. It also provides a summary of the demography of the Gaelic language.

### *Chapter 2 – Core Commitments*

This chapter sets out how Falkirk Council will use, and enable the use of Gaelic. It covers key areas of operation such as corporate identity, signage, communication with the public and the use of Gaelic on our website.

### *Chapter 3 – Policy Implications for Gaelic: implementing the National Plan for Gaelic*

This chapter sets out how Falkirk Council will help implement the *National Plan for Gaelic*. It also shows how we intend promoting the use of Gaelic in service planning and delivery.

### *Chapter 4 – Implementation and Monitoring*

This chapter sets out how the implementation of our Gaelic Language Plan will be taken forward, and how implementation and outcomes will be monitored.



## CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION



## Setting the Context for Developing Gaelic Language Plans

### *The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 and the issuing of a notice:*

The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 was passed by the Scottish Parliament with a view to securing the status of the Gaelic language as an official language of Scotland commanding equal respect to the English language.

One of the key features of the 2005 Act is the provision enabling Bòrd na Gàidhlig to require public bodies to prepare Gaelic Language Plans. This provision was designed to ensure that the public sector in Scotland plays its part in creating a sustainable future for Gaelic by raising its status and profile and creating practical opportunities for its use.

### *Consultation on a draft Gaelic Plan:*

The 2005 Act requires public bodies to bring the preparation of its Gaelic Language Plan to the attention of all interested parties. Falkirk Council has consulted publicly on the draft of its Gaelic Language Plan and has taken into account representations made to it during the consultation process.

### *Approval of Falkirk Council's Gaelic Language Plan:*

Falkirk Council's Gaelic Plan will be submitted to Bòrd na Gàidhlig for approval on 31 October 2011.

## Overview of the functions of Falkirk Council and the use of Gaelic within our area of operation

Falkirk Council is a unitary authority which provides all local government services for the Falkirk Council area. Covering 112 square miles, it has a population of 152,480 (2009) and extends from Banknock in the west to Blackness in the east and from South Alloa in the North as far as Limerigg in the south.

The Council Headquarters are located in Falkirk but there are many service points throughout the area. The Council has in the region of 7,000 employees making it the largest employer in the area with an expenditure of £473 million. There are 32 Councillors in 9 wards of 3 or 4 members each in Falkirk Council.

Falkirk Council's aim is to improve the quality of life for local people by working with all communities, sectors and groups to deliver high quality services which are accessible, accountable, responsive and provide value for money.

The Council is developing an effective policy of decentralisation and is committed to consultation and partnership with the community to ensure that high standards of service delivery are achieved and maintained.

Falkirk Council's goals are to:

- Further develop a thriving, sustainable and vibrant economy;
- Continue to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of our citizens and communities;
- Increase our efforts to tackle disadvantage and discrimination in all its forms; and
- Enhance and sustain an environment in which people want to work, live and visit.

In addition, the Service Plan recognises the need to ensure we work in a manner that underpins the values of the Council i.e. Partnership, Public Service and Performance. We also confirm our commitment to stimulating partnership working amongst agencies, organisations, citizens and communities. We also are working toward achieving the vision for our area as set out in our strategic community plan.

Our aspirations for the area remain high with our vision being:

- The legacy of our past and the potential of our future are protected.
- Our area is at the centre of Scottish life.
- Our future is one of the most culturally diverse and distinct areas in Scotland.
- Our future has investment in jobs, learning homes and leisure for all.
- Our area is the place to be in the third Millennium.

The Council has recently approved a community participation strategy and is committed to consultation and partnership with the community to ensure that high standards of service delivery are achieved and maintained.

The Falkirk Council area has strong local communities, each with its own distinctive landmarks, industries, events, achievements and heritage. We had to channel these assets



into a cohesive vision, while recognising the individual communities that make up the area. Along with our partners, we agreed that all our activities should have a clear link with and make a positive contribution to promoting and achieving this long-term vision the priorities within our new Strategic Community Plan.

A commitment to sustainability, equality of opportunity and social inclusion and cohesion is central to our vision. We want to make sure everyone in the area feels part of it, especially those who are most disadvantaged or socially marginalised. Engaging young people positively is one of our top priorities. The Falkirk Council area is home to more young people than most areas in Scotland. They are the future of our area and we want to equip them with the skills, ambition and self belief to realise their potential.

Equally we recognise that in order to have healthy and vibrant communities, we must make sure people of all ages feel part of our vision and our future. This includes our youngest and oldest citizens.

The Council already has a strong track record in establishing innovative and effective partnerships, linked to our strategic priorities, across a range of sectors. We work closely with other public organisations as well as the private sector, involving key stakeholders and the community through initiatives such as the business panel and *My Future's in Falkirk* and we will enhance this partnership working in the coming years.

We have a firm foundation to build on. The Falkirk Council area is one of the country's fastest growing: more houses being built; crime rates among the lowest in the UK; clear-up rates are high and we are one of the best connected places in Scotland, with major motorways, excellent rail connections and expanding port facilities at Grangemouth.

### **Gaelic within the Authority's area of operation**

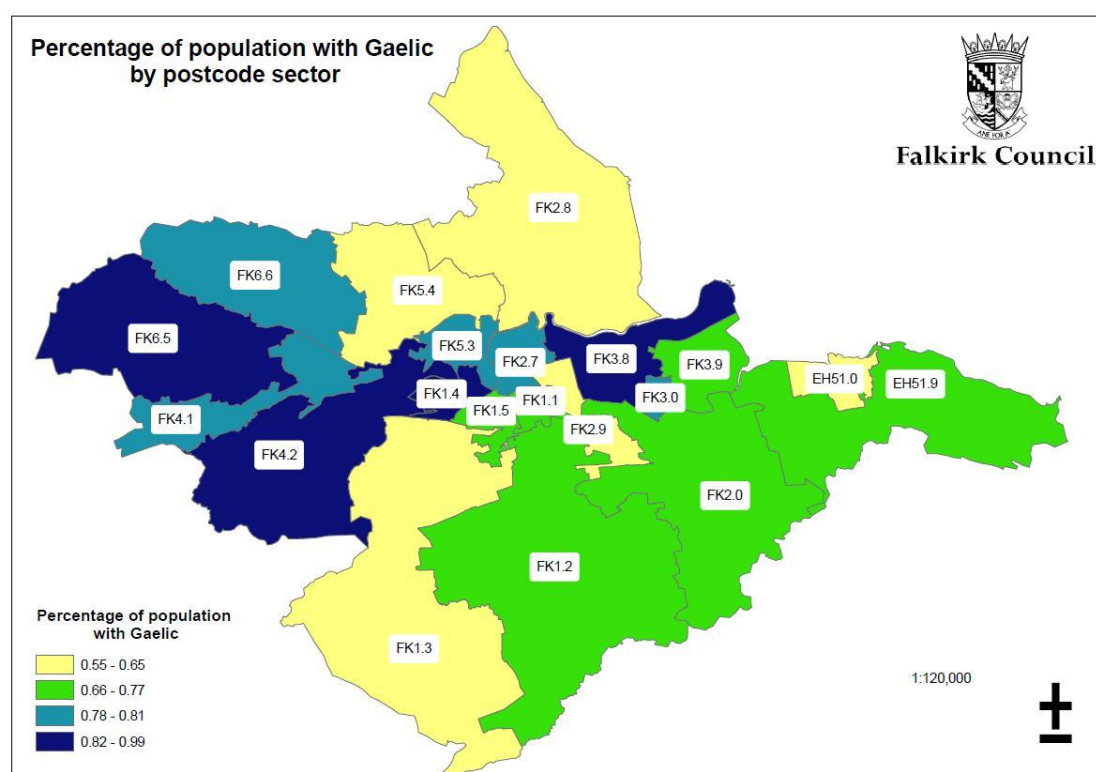
Our area does not have a large Gaelic speaking community. The 2001 Census showed only 0.67% of the Falkirk population able to either, write, read or speak Gaelic. However Gaelic awareness has been raised as part of Falkirk hosting the Royal National Mod in 2008, which has then developed Gaelic organisations such as Fòram Gàidhlig na h-Eaglaise Brice (Falkirk Gaelic Forum) and Fèis Fhoirt (Forth Festival). Over the past two years partnerships with local Gaelic organisations and the Council have developed in order to raise awareness of Gaelic language and culture as well as increased support and opportunities for Gaelic learners.

At present four children attend Gaelic Medium Education outside the authority with one at Riverside School Gaelic Unit, one at Wallace High (both in Stirling Council) and five at Condorrat Gaelic Medium Unit (North Lanarkshire). We have a commitment to Gaelic Learners in the Primary School (GLPS). This is used to promote the acquisition of Gaelic Language. Adult provision is provided through a voluntary organisation offering Gaelic learning opportunities for adults who meet weekly developing their oral and written skills.

Within Falkirk there are five Gaelic organisations:

- Fòram Gàidhlig na h-Eaglaise Brice (Falkirk Gaelic Forum): The aims of the forum are to support Gaelic Language and culture and to help secure the long term future for Gaelic language development in Falkirk district. As well as providing support where it can to other local Gaelic groups, the forum's primary focus is on pre-school Gaelic language development and Gaelic Medium Education, which they hope will ultimately lead to the establishment of Gaelic medium toddler groups, nurseries and mainstream Gaelic Medium Education (GME) up to secondary level within Falkirk district. The forum organises Gaelic Summer schools and Gaelic language classes for children.
- An Comunn Gàidhealach (The Highland Society): An Comunn Gàidhealach has long been a leading light in the teaching, learning and use of the Gaelic language and the study and cultivation of Gaelic literature, history, music and art. Through the organisation and running of the Am Mòd Maiseanta Rìoghail (The Royal National Mòd), and grass roots community development work, An Comunn Gàidhealach continues to further its aim of supporting and developing all aspects of the Gaelic language, culture, history and heritage at local, national and international levels. The Falkirk branch organises regular cèilidhs and supports local competitors attending the Mòd.
- Fèis Fhoirt: Gaelic cultural group, offering classes and festivals for 8 – 18 year olds within the Falkirk, Stirling and Clackmannanshire area. They also run instrumental classes, masterclasses and Gaelic language support in some schools.
- Falkirk Junior Choir: meet weekly developing children's Gaelic singing and regularly compete in the Royal National Mod.
- An Clas Gàidhlig (Falkirk Gaelic Class): language class for adults looking to develop Gaelic language and cultural skills.

Figure 1: Distribution of population with knowledge of Gaelic in the Council area (2001 Census).



## CHAPTER 2 - CORE COMMITMENTS



## Section 1 - Identity

### Rationale

The presence of Gaelic in the corporate identity and signs of a public authority can enhance the visibility of the language, increase its status and make an important statement about how Gaelic is valued and how it is given recognition. Developing the use of Gaelic through signage can also enrich the vocabulary of Gaelic users, raise public awareness of the language and contribute to its development.

**Falkirk Council recognises the importance of extending the visibility of Gaelic and increasing its status.**

Current Practice	Actions	Target Date	Lead
<b>Corporate Identity</b> The council currently does not have an agreed policy for the use of Gaelic in its corporate identity	We will develop general corporate guidelines for the use of Gaelic language in conjunction with the corporate identity where required.	End of 2012	Corporate & Neighbourhood Services
<b>Signage</b> The Council does not have a policy for use of Gaelic in its signage	We will where appropriate consider the use of Gaelic when signage is replaced or new signage is ordered.	From beginning of 2012	All Services

## Section 2 – Communications

### Rationale

The use of Gaelic at the initial point of contact that members of the public have with a public authority increases the visible and audible presence of the language, and contributes to the sense that the use of Gaelic is possible and welcome. In addition to raising the profile of the language, it also creates opportunities for its practical use and encourages members of the public to use Gaelic in subsequent dealings with the public authority.

The use of Gaelic in interactions with the authority by mail, e-mail and by telephone is important in creating practical opportunities for the use of the language, and in contributing to the sense that its use is possible and welcome. The presence of Gaelic in a wide range of bilingual forms and Gaelic only forms can also greatly enhance the visibility and prestige of the language. The preparation of Gaelic versions of forms, applications and similar documents, can also assist in expanding the range of Gaelic terminology and the awareness of the Gaelic-speaking public of such terminology, thus helping the development of the language itself.

***Falkirk Council recognises the importance of creating opportunities for the practical use of Gaelic in a wide range of everyday situations and is committed to increasing its level of provision in this area as resources allow and where there is an identified need.***

Current Practice	Actions	Target Date	Lead
<b>Complaints procedure</b> The Council does not at present use of Gaelic in its complaints procedures	A Gaelic translation of our complaints procedures will be made available on request and in line with our guidance on translation.	Beginning of 2012	Corporate and Neighbourhood Services

## Section 3 – Publications

### Rationale

The use of Gaelic in a range of printed material can assist Gaelic development in a variety of ways. It helps increase the visibility of the language, it enhances Gaelic's status by being used in high profile publications, and it can help develop new and enhance existing terminology. The use of Gaelic in the media helps demonstrate a public authority's commitment to the medium of Gaelic, as well as enhancing the visibility and status of the language.

***Falkirk Council is committed to increasing the use of Gaelic in those areas where the subject matter is of most interest to the general public or relates specifically to Gaelic issues.***

Current Practice	Actions	Target Date	Lead
<b>Printed material</b> The Council does not have a policy on publishing material in Gaelic	Guidelines will be developed for publishing material in Gaelic in line with our existing interpretation and translation guidelines.	End of 2012	Corporate & Neighbourhood Services
<b>Websites</b> At present there is no Gaelic provision within the Council website.	Our services will identify as appropriate information they wish to provide in Gaelic through our website	Over the lifetime of the plan	All Services



## Section 4 – Staffing

### Rationale

In order to deliver services through the medium of Gaelic, it is necessary to develop the requisite job skills and language skills of staff. The provision of language learning for staff helps promote adult Gaelic learning and promotes Gaelic as a useful skill in the workplace. The identification of jobs in which Gaelic is a designated skill will contribute greatly to the status of the language and to identifying it as a positive skill to acquire.

The use of Gaelic in advertising also helps recognise that Gaelic should be used in public life and that Gaelic users have an important role to play within a public authority.

***Falkirk Council recognises the importance of seeing Gaelic as a job skill and of identifying situations in which its use is essential or desirable. Falkirk Council also recognises the importance of enabling staff to develop their Gaelic skills if they wish to do so.***

Current Practice	Actions	Target Date	Lead
<b>Training</b> The Council makes provision for staff training in Gaelic for GLPS staff	We will continue to provide relevant opportunities for staff and communities to learn Gaelic	Over the lifetime of the plan	Education Services
<b>Advertising</b> The Council does not make provision at present for the use of Gaelic in advertisements	Where the post requires Gaelic, the advert will be created in both Gaelic and English	Over the lifetime of the plan	All Council Services



# Implementation of the National Plan for Gaelic

## Policy implications for Gaelic

Falkirk Council recognises that the various priority areas identified in the National Plan for Gaelic will be primarily implemented through our Gaelic Language Plan but that opportunities will arise to promote and develop the language through existing policy measures.

In the formation, renewal and monitoring of policies, Falkirk Council will ensure that the impacts on Gaelic will be in line with the National Plan for Gaelic.

## Overview of the National Plan for Gaelic

The National Plan for Gaelic identifies the following interlinking aspects of language development:

### 1. *Language Acquisition*

Increasing the number of Gaelic speakers by ensuring the language is transferred within families and by securing effective opportunities for learning Gaelic, through:

- increasing the number of children acquiring Gaelic in school via Gaelic Language in the Primary School
- increasing the number of adult Gaelic learners (beginners' class/access to Glow)

### 2. *Language Usage*

Encouraging greater use of Gaelic, providing opportunities to use the language, and promoting access to Gaelic forms of expression, through:

- increasing the use of Gaelic in communities (beginner class)

### 3. *Language Status*

Increasing the visibility and audibility of Gaelic, enhancing its recognition and creating a positive image for Gaelic in Scottish public life, through:

- increasing the visibility and recognition of Gaelic (signs at public access points)

### 4. *Language Corpus*

Strengthening the relevance and consistency of Gaelic and promoting research into the language, through:

- increasing the accessibility of Gaelic translations (summaries of key council policies)

## Commitment to the Objectives of the National Plan for Gaelic

Falkirk Council is committed to supporting the implementation of the National Plan and in this section we set out how we will achieve that aim.

### 1. Language Acquisition

Falkirk Council recognises that a sustainable future for Gaelic requires more people to learn the language and that attention requires to be focused on the home, education and adult learning as the key means of achieving this. We will take the following steps to help create a supportive environment for growing the number of Gaelic speakers in Scotland.

Objective	Action	Target Date	Lead Service / partners
<b>1. Gaelic in the home</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offer support to pupils and parents who attend GME</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Education Services
<b>2. Gaelic in Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will continue to offer places for teachers to develop Gaelic language through the Gaelic Learners' Provision in Primary Schools (GLPS)</li> </ul>	2 places each year	Education Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop online communities through Glow for staff, pupils and parents to access.</li> </ul>	Staff page set up by the end of 2011, pupils and parents by 2012	Education Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to develop Gaelic song and traditional music as part of the Youth Music Initiative, taking place in educational establishments across the authority. Further support is also given through Fèis Fhoirt.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Education Services Falkirk Community Trust
<b>3. Gaelic in Adult Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide continuing support to the An Clas Gàidhlig</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Education Services



## 2. Language Usage

Falkirk Council recognises that creating a sustainable future for Gaelic requires not only increasing the number of people able to speak the language, but increasing actual usage.

Objective	Action	Target Date	Lead Service / partners
<b>1. Gaelic in Communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to support the local Gaelic organisations to provide and develop Gaelic language and culture.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Education Services Falkirk Community Trust
<b>2. Gaelic in the Workplace</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide press release and job adverts in Gaelic when appropriate and where there is an identified need.</li> <li>Provide a range of information in Gaelic on the Council website where there is an identified need.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	All Services
<b>3. Gaelic in the Arts.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When appropriate produce Gaelic information for exhibitions and events</li> <li>Continue to develop Gaelic and traditional music as part of the Youth Music Initiative</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Education Services Falkirk Community Trust
<b>4. Gaelic in Tourism, Heritage and Recreation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When hosting Gaelic events, produce welcome signs and event information in Gaelic</li> </ul>	Ongoing	All Services



### 3. Language Status

Falkirk Council recognises that the status of a language is affected by its presence in the daily environment and the extent to which it is used, valued and perceived to be valued by those institutions which play an important role in our daily lives.

The Gaelic Language Plan has been prepared in partnership with services across the Council as well as local Gaelic organisations. We have also received input through our public consultation process.

Objective	Action	Target Date	Lead Service / partners
<b>1. Preparation of Gaelic Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Liaise with all services to produce plan</li></ul>	31 October, 2011	All Services
<b>2. Increase visibility of Gaelic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Provide signage at public access points</li></ul>	From beginning of 2012	All Services

### 3. Language Corpus

Falkirk Council recognises the need to strengthen the relevance and consistency of Gaelic, the importance of facilitating translation services and to promote research into the language.

Objective	Action	Target Date	Lead Service / partners
<b>1. Gaelic translation and interpretation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Translate Summaries of a range of key council policies</li></ul>	By end of 2012	Corporate & Neighbourhood Services

## CHAPTER 4 – IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING



## **Timetable**

The timetable for actions is noted throughout the plan. We will review the overall plan in five years i.e. 2016.

## **Publicising the Plan**

Falkirk Council's Gaelic Language Plan will be published bilingually on Falkirk Council's website. In addition, we shall:

- make copies of the plan available in our public offices and reception areas,
- make the plan known to employees via Falkirk Council's Intranet;
- distribute copies of the plan to Non-departmental Public Bodies and agencies, agents and contractors;
- distribute copies of the plan to Gaelic organisations;
- distribute copies of the plan to other interested bodies; and
- make copies available on request.

## **Administrative Arrangements for Implementing the Gaelic Language Plan**

This plan is the policy of Falkirk Council and has been endorsed both by our senior management team and Council members.

### *Overall Responsibility:*

The *Chief Executive* will be responsible ultimately for ensuring that the Falkirk Council delivers on the commitments set out in this Plan.

## **Monitoring the Implementation of the Plan**

We will gather quantitative data to evidence:

- the number of staff attending professional learning opportunities via
  - the GLPS programme
  - Sabhal partnership
- the number of children accessing
  - GME
  - Gaelic learning via GLPS
- the number of people who attend:
  - An Clas Gàidhlig
  - Beginner Evening Class

We will gather qualitative data to evidence the experience of:

- children who access GME and Gaelic learning via GLPS
- staff who participate in professional learning opportunities via
  - Sabhal partnership
  - Beginner Evening Class

We will gather feedback from local Gaelic organisations on:

- the awareness of Falkirk Council's Gaelic corporate identity
- the accessibility of translated Falkirk Council policies

## Contact details

The senior officer with operational responsibility for overseeing preparation, delivery and monitoring of Falkirk Council's Gaelic Language Plan is:

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Queries about the day-to-day operation of the plan should be addressed to:

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