

**To: Education and Children's Services Policy Board**

**On: 9 June 2022**

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**Report by: Director of Children's Services**

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**Heading: Gaelic Medium Primary Education Provision in Renfrewshire**

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## **1. Summary**

- 1.1. On 1st February 2017 Bòrd na Gàidhlig published clear guidelines to education authorities on the Gaelic provisions in the 2016 Education (Scotland) Act and, for the first time, set out what parents can expect for their children in Gaelic education. It details how to proceed with the submission of a request to an education authority to assess the need for Gaelic Medium Primary Education (GMPE) and the regard which local authorities must have for the guidance. Renfrewshire Council received a request, on behalf of several individual children due to enter primary education in August 2022, for GMPE under this Guidance. This paper summarises the progress to date.
  - 1.2. GMPE offers the benefits of early linguistic development along with daily learning. Working with Scottish Government, Bòrd na Gàidhlig and partner authorities, officers have been planning for provision, including staffing and resources.
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## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. The Education and Children's Services Policy Board are requested to:
    - a) Note progress to date in relation to Gaelic Medium Primary Education
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### **3. Background**

- 3.1. Renfrewshire Council does not currently offer Gaelic Medium Primary Education. The Council provides transport for a total of 33 locally resident children and young people who access provision in neighbouring authorities (Glasgow and Inverclyde). 67% of these individuals live centrally within Renfrewshire, and within the envelope of Paisley and Renfrew.
  - 3.2. Gaelic Medium Primary Education (GMPE) gives children an opportunity to learn Gaelic through their normal schoolwork as their classes are delivered in Gaelic and they absorb Gaelic along with their learning. The linguistic benefits of bilingualism are well documented. Currently we support families choosing Gaelic Medium Education and deliver this through partnerships with neighbouring Councils.
  - 3.3. Under the provisions of the Act, local authorities must respond to requests for Gaelic Medium Primary Education with an obligatory assessment, and our process is clearly outlined on the Renfrewshire Council website. Earlier this year, requests were received on behalf of several individual children due to enter primary education in August 2022. Following legal consultation, it was acknowledged that the threshold for assessment had been satisfied under the 2016 Act. Renfrewshire Council will commence delivering GMPE from August 2022.
  - 3.4. Throughout the process parents have been involved and there have been indications, in the form of meetings and telephone calls from parents, that demand for places will increase over time. Currently, there are 6 parents interested in placing their child(ren) in Renfrewshire Council and the provision will grow from Primary 1 stage. The principle is total Gaelic immersion, with only Gaelic spoken. The Gaelic immersion approach is developed within the context of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. It is not possible to have entry points for older children unless they have already been in Gaelic immersion education previously.
  - 3.5. As the catchment area for GMPE will be the whole authority, West Primary School in Paisley has been selected as it has the capacity to house the unit and is centrally placed with good access and transport links. The Leadership team in the school is enthusiastic about this opportunity.
  - 3.6. Environmental and infrastructure team, Scottish Government, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, partner authorities and other Council officers have been working in partnership to advance plans for recruitment, resourcing and support for leadership.
  - 3.7. Recruitment is planned for a fluent Gaelic-speaking Principal Teacher to develop the Unit, supported by the Leadership Team. Proposals to recruit additional staff are in development and external funding through Bòrd na Gàidhlig is being targeted.
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## Implications of this report

- 1. Financial**  
Staffing this unit will create revenue costs which will be off-set by a Scottish Government Specific Grant for Gaelic.
- 2. HR and Organisational Development**  
Additional posts will be created at West Primary School in the first instance. There will be opportunities for Gaelic language development amongst the school workforce.
- 3. Community/Council Planning**  
Our Renfrewshire is thriving - Children have the best start in life.  
  
Working together to improve outcomes - Consultation with the parents involved has been ongoing throughout the process and Scottish Government and Bòrd na Gàidhlig have been fully engaged in supporting the Council through the development of GMPE in Renfrewshire.
- 4. Legal**  
Renfrewshire Council is complying with the key legislative provision of the Education (Scotland) Act 2016, Gaelic Language (Scotland) 2005, the Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000 and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. These Acts together provide a framework for children to be educated in accordance with their parents' wishes.
- 5. Property/Assets**  
None.
- 6. Information Technology**  
None.
- 7. Equality and Human Rights**  
The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because for example it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website. (Report author to arrange this).
- 8. Health and Safety**  
None.
- 9. Procurement**  
None.
- 10. Risk**

None.

**11. Privacy Impact**

None.

**12. Cosla Policy Position**

None.

**13. Climate Risk**

None.

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**List of Background Papers**

None

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***Children's Services***

LMcA/LG

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