

**Supporting Good Decisions**

**Promoting Equality and Human Rights;**

**Reducing Poverty; and**

**Protecting the Environment**

**Integrated Impact Assessment Form**

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**Promoting Equality and Human Rights;**

**Reducing Poverty; and Protecting the Environment**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Title of Policy/ Proposal** | Gaelic Language Plan |
| **Timescale for Implementation** |  |
| **IIA Completion Date** | July 2025 |
| **Completed by** | Toby Renouf |
| **Lead officer** | Stewart Cooper |

**Section 1: Screening**

**1.1 Briefly describe the policy/proposal/activity you are assessing.**  
The East Lothian Gaelic Language Plan 2025–2030 sets out East Lothian Council’s approach to increasing the visibility, use, and support for Gaelic. The plan focuses on three strategic aims: (1) increasing community engagement with Gaelic language and culture; (2) securing sustainable Gaelic Medium Education (GME) and progression routes for Gaelic Learner Education (GLE); and (3) enhancing the visibility and accessibility of Gaelic across Council services and communications. The plan is developed under the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 and aligns with the National Gaelic Language Plan 2023–28.

**1.2 What will change as a result of this policy?**  
The plan will increase Gaelic visibility through bilingual signage and publications, promote Gaelic learning opportunities for adults and young people, support community-led Gaelic initiatives, and reinforce the Council’s responsibilities in ensuring inclusive access to Gaelic education and services. It will also enhance partnership working to sustain GME pathways.

**1.3 Deciding if a full Impact Assessment is needed.**

|  | **Yes** | **No** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| The policy/ proposal has consequences for or affects people e.g. how they can access a service? | ✅ |  |
| The policy/proposal has potential to make a significant impact on equality and human rights, socio-economic disadvantage, the council’s role as a corporate parent, children’s rights, or the council’s commitment to tackling climate change? | ✅ |  |
| The policy/proposal is likely to have a significant environmental impact as defined by the Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005? |  | ✅ |
| The policy/ proposal involves a data processing activity (storage / collection of personal data) that is likely to result in a high risk to individuals as determined by Article 35 of the General Data Protection Regulation? |  | ✅ |

**Section 2: Integrated Impact Assessment**

**2.1 Have those who are directly affected by the policy had the opportunity to comment on new proposals?**  
Yes. The plan was developed in consultation with East Lothian Council staff, parents, Gaelic speakers and learners, national Gaelic organisations, and local communities.

**2.2 What information/data have you used to inform the development of the policy to date?**

* 2022 Census data on Gaelic skills
* East Lothian Council staff survey (2023)
* National data from Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Education Scotland
* Feedback from parents
* Community consultation during the draft plan development
* Engagement with partner councils and Gaelic organisations

**2.3 What does the evidence/ research suggest about the policy’s actual or likely impact on equality groups and those vulnerable/ or experiencing socio-economic disadvantage?**

| **Evidence** | **Comment** |
| --- | --- |
| **Which groups are in particular need of this service?** | Gaelic speakers, learners, and their families; children and young people; care-experienced young people; culturally and linguistically underrepresented groups. |
| **What level of service uptake/ access is there from protected and vulnerable groups?** | There is growing demand for GME and GLE provision. Care-experienced young people, rural families, and those on low incomes are included in the access model. |
| **Can you identify positive outcomes for service users** | Increased access to Gaelic education; enhanced inclusion and linguistic rights; stronger cultural identity; community empowerment. |
| **What is the service user experience of those from protected or vulnerable groups?** | Positive, but with known barriers to continuity in Gaelic education. The plan aims to address these through partnership and communication improvements. |
| **What opportunity have those from protected groups had to co-produce or comment on the service/ plans?** | Opportunities provided during consultation phase. Feedback from Gaelic-speaking and learning communities directly informed plan commitments. |

**2.4 How does the policy meet the different needs of groups in the community?**

| **Equality Groups** | **Comments** |
| --- | --- |
| Older people, people in the middle years | Positive – supports lifelong learning opportunities and community inclusion through Gaelic. |
| Children and young people | Positive – improved access to GME and GLE; enhances cultural identity; aligns with UNCRC Article 30. |
| Women, men and transgender people (includes issues relating to pregnancy and maternity) | Neutral – no differential impact identified. |
| Disabled people | Neutral – no specific barriers identified; plan commitments apply equally. |
| Minority ethnic people | Positive – contributes to linguistic diversity and promotes inclusive cultural expression. |
| Refugees and asylum seekers | Neutral – plan does not directly target this group but promotes overall inclusivity. |
| People with different religions or beliefs | Neutral. |
| Lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual people | Neutral. |
| People who are unmarried, married or in a civil partnership | Neutral. |

In addition to benefits for Gaelic speakers, learners, and vulnerable groups, the plan supports wider community wellbeing by enhancing East Lothian’s cultural diversity and heritage. Indirectly, all residents can benefit from increased opportunities for cultural participation and the preservation of linguistic heritage.

**Those vulnerable to falling into poverty**

| **Group** | **Comment** |
| --- | --- |
| Unemployed, people on benefits | Positive – supports access to free Gaelic learning and cultural participation. |
| Lone Parents | Positive – ensures opportunities to access GME/GLE regardless of income or location. |
| Care experienced children and young people | Positive – plan removes structural barriers to participation; supports equal access to Gaelic education. |
| Carers (including young carers) | Positive – increased availability of local Gaelic resources. |
| Homeless people | Neutral – not directly affected. |
| Those involved in the community justice system | Neutral. |
| People with low literacy/numeracy | Neutral – Gaelic learning resources can support language skills, but not specifically targeted. |
| Families with 3 or more children; those with a child/children under 1 | Positive – provides inclusive access to early years Gaelic provision and parent support. |

**Geographical communities**

| **Community Type** | **Comment** |
| --- | --- |
| Rural / semi-rural communities | Positive – targets equitable GME access and signage across all areas. |
| Urban communities | Positive – continued access to GME provision in partner authority area. |
| Coastal communities | Positive – applies across all of East Lothian, including coastal communities. |
| Those living in the most deprived communities (bottom 20% SIMD areas) | Positive – ensures access to Gaelic opportunities regardless of socio-economic background. |

**People with communication needs**

| **Group** | **Comment** |
| --- | --- |
| Gaelic Language Speakers | Central target group – visibility, access and inclusion are key aims of the plan. |
| British Sign Language (BSL) users | Neutral. |
| English as a Second Language | Positive – Gaelic offered in parallel with English to promote inclusive multilingualism. |
| Other (e.g. Deafblind, Plain English, Large Print) | Neutral – all Council communications standards apply. |

**2.5 Are there any other factors which will affect the way this policy impacts on the community or staff groups?**  
The plan contributes to cultural sustainability by embedding Gaelic into community life, education, and public visibility. This supports the long-term safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage and strengthens East Lothian’s identity as part of Scotland’s national Gaelic story.

**2.6 Is any part of this policy/ service to be carried out wholly or partly by contractors?**  
Yes. Some GME services are delivered in partnership with City of Edinburgh Council. Equality and linguistic rights considerations are built into partnership agreements. In addition, the plan is supported by collaboration with Education Scotland, the Gaelic Learner Education consortium, heritage organisations such as the Battle of Prestonpans Heritage Trust, and local schools, libraries, and cultural groups to ensure consistent delivery and promotion of Gaelic across sectors.

**2.7 Have you considered how you will communicate information about this policy or policy change to those affected e.g. to those with hearing loss, speech impairment or English as a second language?**  
Yes. Bilingual communication is central to the plan. Accessibility standards (plain English, translation, and digital access) apply.

**2.8 Equality and Human Rights**

| **Impact Area** | **Comments** |
| --- | --- |
| Promotes / advances equality of opportunity | Improves access to Gaelic education and services for all. |
| Promotes good relations / tackles harassment | Promotes inclusive cultural identity and positive visibility. |
| Promotes participation, is inclusive | Engages communities in shaping Gaelic development. |
| Preserves dignity and self-respect | Recognises and supports linguistic and cultural rights. |
| Builds support networks and community capacity | Supports Gaelic learner and speaker networks and resources. |

**Socio-Economic Disadvantage / reducing poverty**

| **Impact Area** | **Comments** |
| --- | --- |
| Maximises income / reduces inequality | Supports inclusion regardless of income; promotes cultural capital. |
| Helps young people into positive destinations | Enhances language skills and pathways through education. |
| Aids those returning to or progressing in labour market | Gaelic skills contribute to employability in education, heritage, and public service. |
| Improves employability skills | Builds confidence, communication and literacy through language learning. |
| Reduces costs of taking part in activities | Many Gaelic opportunities are free or Council-supported. |
| Reduces the cost of living | Neutral. |

**Tackling Climate Change**

| **Impact Area** | **Comments** |
| --- | --- |
| Reduces travel / supports sustainable transport | Gaelic promotion increasingly digital; supports remote access. |
| Minimises waste / encourages resource efficiency | Gaelic promotion increasingly makes use of shared digital resources and online learning opportunities, reducing duplication of printed materials and supporting sustainable use of resources. |
| Sources goods/services responsibly | Neutral. |
| Improves energy efficiency / low-carbon energy | Neutral. |
| Protects/enhances environments | Neutral. |
| Promotes transition to low carbon economy | Neutral. |
| Adapts communities for climate change impacts | Neutral. |

**Corporate Parenting and Care Experienced Young People**

| **Impact Area** | **Comments** |
| --- | --- |
| Impacts care experienced young people | Plan ensures no barriers to Gaelic education. |
| Provides or reduces opportunities | Increases participation options for care experienced learners. |
| Adversely affects wellbeing | No adverse impacts identified. |
| Adversely impacts outcomes | No adverse impacts identified. |

**Section 3: Action Plan**

| **Changes to be made** | **Expected outcome** | **Resources Required** | **Timeline** | **Responsible person** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Renew GME partnership agreements | Continued access to education provision | Officer time; existing budgets | By 2026 | Education Services |
| Establish Gaelic education steering group | Improved oversight and planning | Officer time | 2025–26 | Gaelic Working Group |
| Promote bilingual signage & materials | Increased visibility and inclusion | Communications and printing budget | 2025–2028 | Communications |
| Deliver staff awareness training | Greater internal capacity and support | HR/training budget | Annual | HR / Gaelic Officers |
| Monitor and report progress | Ongoing improvement and accountability | Officer time | Bi-annually | Gaelic Lead Officer |

**For consideration of the Head of Service**

**Can you identify any cumulative impacts on equality groups or vulnerable people arising from this policy, when considered alongside other changes across other services?**  
Yes – the plan complements other Council strategies supporting inclusion, children’s rights, and educational access. Cumulatively, these policies contribute to cultural and linguistic equality and community cohesion.

**Sign off by Head of Service**

**Name:** Hayley Barnett

**Date:** 26 August 2025