

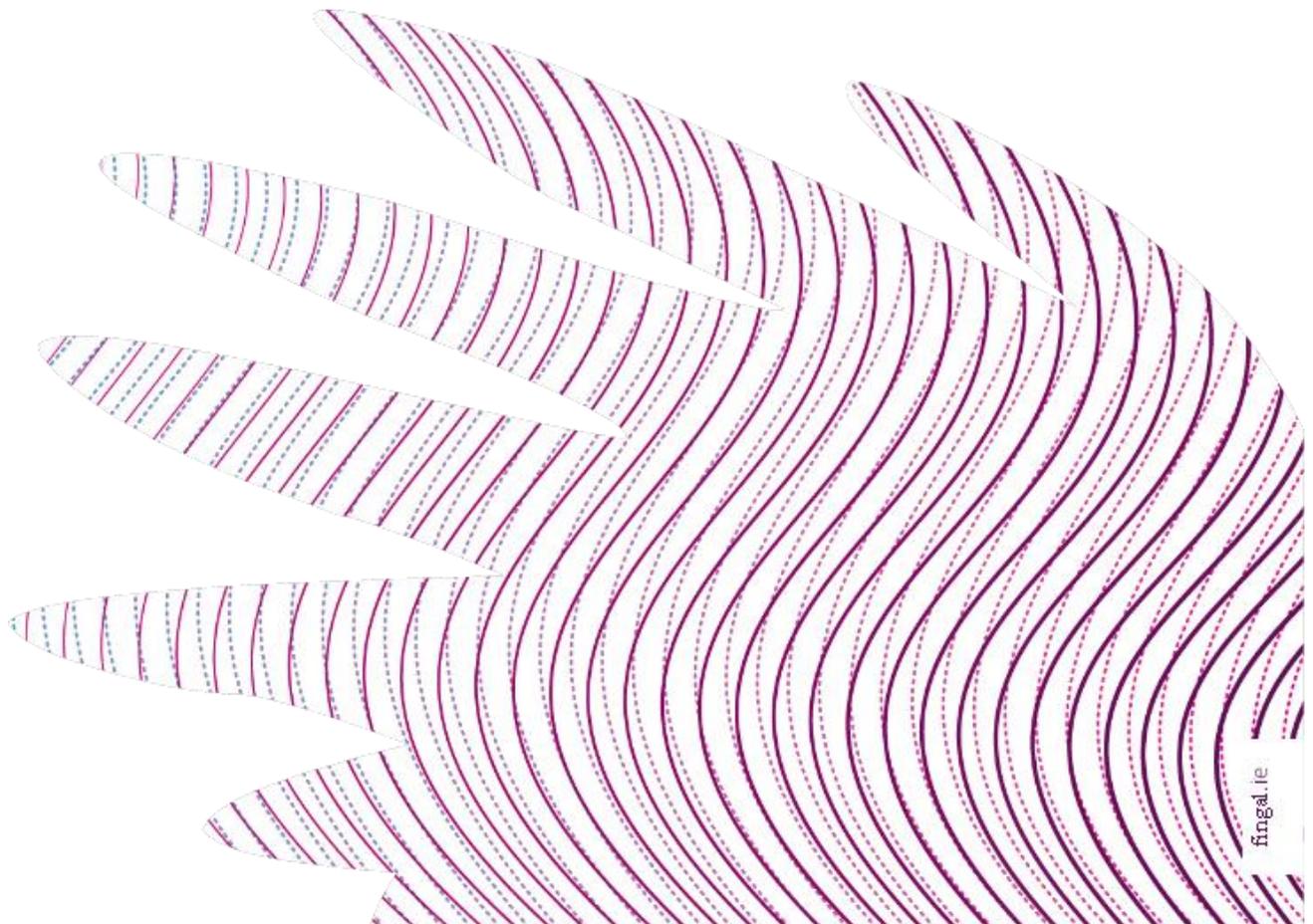


# FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

## THIRD LANGUAGE SCHEME

2018 – 2021

(Under Section 15 of the Official Languages Act 2003)



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## **Chapter 1 Introduction and background**

### **1.1 Introduction & Review of 2nd Language Scheme**

Fingal County Council prepared its second Language Scheme in 2015 in accordance with the Official Languages Act 2003. The Scheme was confirmed on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2015 and has been reviewed as part of the preparation of this third scheme.

### **1.2 Content of the Irish Language Scheme**

This Scheme was prepared under Section 15 of the Official Languages Act 2003. Section 11 provides for the preparation by a public body of a statutory scheme specifying the services it proposes to 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 currently provided by the body through the medium of the Irish language will be so provided within an agreed timeframe. This Scheme has been drawn up in accordance with the guidelines and is predicated on all of the commitments in any previous scheme being implemented. In the event of commitments in earlier schemes not having been fully implemented to date, this matter has been the subject of discussion with the Office of an Coimisinéir Teanga.

Fingal County Council's Third Scheme aims to build on the principles of Quality Customer Service and

- will continue to ensure that persons who wish to conduct their business in Irish are facilitated;
- build incrementally on the existing levels of services currently provided in the Irish language;
- identify areas which can be improved on having regard to what is realistically achievable over the next three years.

The Scheme includes a commitment to assess on an ongoing basis the level of demand for services through Irish and to ensure that Fingal County Council continues to meet this

demand in a planned and coherent way. Audits will be carried out to determine the level of queries/requests for services through Irish.

Responsibility for ensuring implementation, as well as monitoring and reviewing the Scheme will rest with Senior Management within Fingal County Council. The scheme is implemented in the context of the prevailing public service and resourcing environments.

### **1.3 Commencement date of New Scheme**

The Minister for Culture, Heritage & the Gaeltacht has confirmed this scheme with a commencement date of **28 May 2018** and it 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 later.

## **Chapter 2                      Overview of Fingal County Council**

### **2.1 Fingal County Council's Corporate Plan 2015 - 2019:**

As a local authority Fingal County Council has due regard to the following core values:

The following Core Values will inform all of the activities of the Council, shaping the culture of our organisation, guiding the setting of objectives and the delivery of services:

- Democratic and Civic Leadership
- High standards of integrity, transparency and accountability
- Inclusive engagement with communities, citizens and customers
- High quality, accessible services & value for money
- Proactive, Responsive, Innovative and Sustainable approaches
- The commitment and skills of our employees

#### **Our Mission Statement is:**

"To make Fingal the place of choice to live, work, visit and to do business in Ireland".

#### **Customers & Clients of Fingal County Council**

Fingal County Council has a population of over 296214 (Census 2016) and is the fastest growing local authority areas in the country, with the youngest population. We provide services to a wide range of stakeholders:

- Residents of Fingal
- Commercial businesses
- Elected representatives & Council staff
- Government departments & semi-state agencies
- Other local authorities
- Local and national media

#### **Fingal County Council Customer Charter states:**

*"We will facilitate bilingualism (English/Irish) to the maximum possible extent and recognise other languages as appropriate".*

## **2.2 Summary of services provided by Fingal County Council**

### **Economic Development**

Provision of supports for structured and sustainable economic development of Fingal by planning for, initiating and managing projects that contribute positively to the county's ongoing economic and community development

### **Planning & Strategic Infrastructure**

Planning for the medium to long term development of the county while managing the day to day development, enforcement and building control of development being undertaken in the county

### **Housing Services**

Provision of Housing, Accommodation and Estate Management Services to council tenants, to those with a housing need and private householders

### **Community Services**

Library, Community, Sports and cultural services

### **Environment & Water Services**

Develop and implement sustainable policies for the protection of our environment and to safeguard the provision and distribution of high quality drinking water supply and the treatment and disposal of waste waters

### **Operational Services**

The general maintenance of regional and local roads, parks and public open spaces along with landscaping, tree maintenance, litter collection, beaches, harbours and public conveniences

### **Corporate Affairs**

Provision of support for the democratic functions and corporate support and strategic planning to the organisation

## **Information, Communication and Digital Services**

Provision of information technology and digital services to the organisation

## **Human Resource Management**

Provision of Human Resource Management services to the organisation

## **Financial Services**

Provision of Financial Management advice and services to the organisation

## **Architectural Services**

Provision of Architectural advice and services to the organisation

## **Legal Services**

Provision of legal advice and services to the organisation

**Chapter 3 Breakdown of current services in each Official Language**

<b>Services available in Irish</b>	<b>Services available bilingually</b>	<b>Services available in English</b>
	<p>A number of staff are available throughout the organisation who can provide a bilingual service if requested, subject to availability.</p> <p>A section on Fingal County Council's Website <a href="http://www.fingal.ie">www.fingal.ie</a> advertises this.</p> <p>Libraries are now delivering a bilingual service in many of their branches (subject to the availability of bilingual staff).</p>	<p><b>County Hall Swords</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Affairs &amp; Governance Dept</li> <li>• Human Resources Dept.</li> <li>• Information Technology</li> <li>• Architects Dept.</li> <li>• Finance Dept.</li> <li>• Economic Enterprise &amp; Tourism Development Dept.</li> <li>• Planning &amp; Strategic Infrastructure Dept.</li> </ul> <p><b>Blanchardstown Office, Grove Road</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operations Dept.</li> <li>• Housing &amp; Community Dept inc.</li> <li>• Community, Culture &amp; Sports Division.</li> <li>• Water Services &amp; Environment Dept.</li> <li>• Law Dept.</li> </ul> <p><b>Libraries</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All services operating from 10 branch libraries, the mobile library service and the housebound service.</li> <li>• The County Archive</li> <li>• The Local Studies Office</li> </ul>

## **Chapter 4                      Commitments to enhance the use of the Irish Language**

The objectives of this third Scheme are to build on the progress achieved since 2015 in the provision of quality services to our Irish-speaking customers and to broaden the range of services available bilingually over the lifetime of the scheme.

Our third Scheme includes a commitment to monitor the level of demand for services through Irish on an ongoing basis, so that we can continue to meet this demand in a planned, coherent and practical way.

Fingal County Council undertakes to continue with the following commitments to the development of the Irish language under this Third Scheme over the lifetime of the Scheme unless otherwise stated:

### **4.1      Written Documentation**

Fingal County Council will continue to make all application forms and associated information leaflets available in bilingual format, or in separate Irish and English versions.

Where application forms and associated information leaflets are provided as separate Irish and English language versions, equal prominence will be given to both versions at all public locations.

Documents of a technical or scientific nature, of specialist interest only or intended for an international audience only, will continue to be published in English only.

### **External Communications**

All press releases pertaining to Irish language issues will be issued simultaneously in Irish or bilingually. Some other press releases will also be issued bilingually.

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

These staff will be made available for interview to the Irish language media through the Council's Communications Office.

Fingal County Council will use Irish in at least one post weekly on our Social Media platforms.

## **4.2 One-to-One Services**

Ongoing training will continue to be provided to interested members of staff to offer services through Irish and by the end of the Scheme it is anticipated that each department will have staff that can deal with a member of the public through Irish.

## **4.3 Receptionist/Switchboard & Oral Announcements**

Receptionist staff/switchboard staff in Council offices will continue to give the name of Fingal County Council and/or the Department in Irish and will continue to be provided with training to give basic greetings in Irish. Suitable arrangements will continue to be in place so that they can put members of the public in touch without delay with staff responsible for offering the service required through Irish.

Individual staff members can set their voicemail messages in the single language of their choice, or bilingually.

## **4.4 Website**

Fingal County Council's website [www.fingal.ie](http://www.fingal.ie) is optimised for mobile devices and is bilingual in content and navigation. Some content of a technical nature, and of specialist interest, is available only in English. We are currently in the process of developing a new website which is due to be completed by late 2018.

## **4.5 Information Systems**

Any new computer systems being installed will be fully capable of handling the Irish language.

An e-mail address [eolas@fingal.ie](mailto:eolas@fingal.ie) has been set up to deal with queries in the Irish Language. Queries will be responded to as promptly as English language queries.

The Council will continue to promote the availability of Irish language services by providing a section on the homepage of the Website indicating how business can be conducted through Irish. This will promote public confidence in the availability of these services through Irish.

The Irish Language Page on 'Grapevine', the Council's Internal Social Networking Software, will continue to be developed as a staff resource for the promotion of bilingualism including help and advice on: writing letters, phrases for receptionists, names of posts and services within the Council, details of upcoming Irish language events and any other relevant information.

#### **4.6 On-line Interactive services**

Any new on-line interactive services, developed by Fingal County Council, which allow the general public to avail of Council services will be introduced simultaneously in both languages.

#### **4.7 Training & Development**

Fingal County Council's Training Section and Human Resources Department, are committed to improving the knowledge and skills of employees and will ensure that all staff are given equal encouragement and opportunity to improve their Irish language competence. The demand for services through Irish during the lifetime of the Scheme will be a factor in determining the degree to which the Irish Language proficiency is enhanced. Audits of the demand for services through Irish will be carried out on a regular basis.

The Council 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 a range of courses through the medium of Irish for members of staff who are currently fluent in the language.
- Provide Irish language materials to staff through Grapevine and Fingal Today 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:
  - a. understand why the Council implements a bilingual policy
  - b. understand the context and background to the policy; and
  - c. are fully informed about how the policy will affect their work
  - d. gain an empathetic understanding of the needs and concerns of Irish-speaking Citizens
- The Council will continue to 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.

#### **4.8 Promotional Measures**

Fingal County Council will continue to:

- Participate in and promote Seachtain na Gaeilge (Irish Language Week)
- Support the Irish Language lunchtime group and any Irish language social events.
- Include an Irish Language section in the staff newsletter 'The Raven'.
- Provide information for staff through the Irish Language Community on 'Grapevine' and through the Daily Staff Bulletin 'Fingal Today'
- Increase the use of Irish on our Social Media Platforms – Twitter and Facebook

#### **4.9 Recruitment and Placement**

Fingal County Council will implement recruitment, staff mobility and resourcing policies with a view to ensuring an adequate number of Irish speaking staff are available to provide services in the Irish language. In a context where qualifications for posts are set nationally by central government, Fingal County Council will continue to review whether there are posts which may require competency in Irish (both written and oral) throughout the organisation.

The Council will continue to work with staff who are competent in the Irish language to provide services in the Irish language across as full a range of services as possible and as demand for services through Irish arises. A section will be provided on the homepage of the Website indicating how business can be conducted through Irish.

#### **4.10 Public meetings policy**

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

Training opportunities will be provided for elected members who wish to learn and use Irish.

Fingal County Council will continue to work with the Coiste Gaeilge set up through the Arts, Culture, Heritage and Community Strategic Policy Committee to promote the Irish Language in the Council and in Fingal.

## **Chapter 5 Implementation, Monitoring & Publicising of Agreed Scheme**

### **5.1 Implementation & Monitoring**

The overall responsibility for implementing the scheme rests with the Senior Management Team who will implement in the context of the available resources. The day to day monitoring function will be carried out primarily by line managers in each Department.

The Communications Unit will report on Fingal County Council's compliance with the Official Languages Act 2003 and progress on implementation of the Irish Language Scheme. Once the Scheme is approved, a 3-year Implementation Plan will be prepared which will set targets against which progress on the scheme can be measured.

Quarterly Progress reports will be made to the Chief Executive which will include reference to the following:

- Initiatives that have promoted the use of Irish
- Materials published in whole or in part in Irish
- Any complaints or suggestions relating to the provision of services in Irish by Fingal County Council
- Progress against each commitment set out in the Scheme
- Level of demand for services in Irish.

The Council's Annual Report will include a section on the Irish Language.

### **5.2 Publicising of agreed Scheme**

The Irish Language Scheme will be circulated to all staff and will be made available on 'Grapevine'.

The Council will take every opportunity to promote and publicise the services we provide in Irish through the following means:

- directly informing customers on a proactive basis of the option of conducting business with us through Irish, for example, by the display of notices at reception areas indicating that Irish language services are available;
- providing information on the homepage of the Website indicating how business can be conducted through Irish ;
- Indicating on guidelines, leaflets or application forms that these documents are also available in Irish, unless presented bilingually;
- giving equal prominence to Irish and English language materials.

This Scheme will be made available to the general public by means of:

- Fingal County Council Website
- Social Media
- Press Release
- Fingal Libraries

A copy of the agreed scheme will be forwarded to the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga

Further information available from:

Communications Unit,

Fingal County Council.

County Hall

Main Street

Swords

Email: [eolas@fingal.ie](mailto:eolas@fingal.ie)

Web [www.fingal.ie](http://www.fingal.ie) [www.fingal.ie/ie](http://www.fingal.ie/ie)