



**Comhairle Contae  
Dhún na nGall**  
Donegal County Council

**Donegal County Council**  
**Language Scheme**  
**2019 - 2022**

Under Section 15 of the  
Official Languages Act 2003

**(Fourth Scheme)**

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# **Donegal County Council Language Scheme**

2018-2021

under Section 15 of the  
Official Languages Act 2003

## **Section 1: Background**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This is the fourth scheme prepared by Donegal County Council under Section 15 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.

Donegal County Council published a notice under Section 13 in February 2017 inviting submissions in relation to the preparation of the scheme from any interested parties.

The Scheme seeks to support and build upon the commitments made in our first three schemes from 2005 to the present.

This scheme takes account of the fact that Donegal County Council has a range of decentralised services across the county of Donegal, including Public Service Centres in the Municipal Districts of the Glenties, Donegal, Inishowen and Letterkenny, with its Corporate Headquarters based in Lifford, which also serves as a base for the Stranorlar Municipal District. The Scheme also takes into account recent changes as a result of reorganisation in the changing economic climate (eg recentralisation of specific services, the consolidation and development of the Customer Contact Centre, recent relaxation of the moratorium on recruitment, yet still significant reduction in staff numbers from 2007 figures). Attention in this scheme continues to be focussed on the consolidation and further development of services through the Irish language provided by those Centres that serve Gaeltacht communities, and also on the use of the main Council website and social media sites to maximise all elements of the Council's written and printed communications in Irish to the public in a cost-effective, yet comprehensive manner. However, Donegal County Council also recognises the development of Irish speaking communities outside the Gaeltacht, particularly the ongoing development of Gaelscoileanna and other Irish-medium educational communities, and the need to cater for these growing communities.

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

This scheme has been confirmed by the Minister for Culture, Heritage and The Gaeltacht. The scheme is commenced with effect from 04 February 2019 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 later.

### **1.4 Customers and Clients of Donegal County Council**

Members of the public, customers and community groups throughout County Donegal, including the Donegal Gaeltacht

Applicants for services under various schemes

Government Departments, State Agencies and other public services

Business community

Other local authorities and regional authorities

Local Community Development Committee

Social partners, sectoral interests and Local Development Agencies

Local and National Media, both electronic and print

## **1.5 Functional Areas of Donegal County Council**

Housing, Corporate and Cultural Services

Roads and Transportation Services

Community and Planning Services

Economic Development, Information Systems and Emergency Services

Water and Environment Services

Finance Services

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

All Donegal County Council Offices throughout County Donegal, including

Public Service Centres, Outreach Centres, Community Libraries, Fire Stations, Museums, Arts and Cultural Centres, Training Centres, Depots, Project Offices etc

## **1.7 Language Scheme Background**

The Official Languages Act provides for the preparation by public bodies, including Donegal County Council, of a statutory scheme detailing the services we will provide

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

and the measures we shall adopt to ensure that any service not provided by the Council 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, including Donegal County Council, have a duty to ensure that

- an adequate number of our staff are competent in the Irish language
- the particular Irish language requirements associated with the provision of services in our Gaeltacht areas are met
- the Irish language becomes the working language in our Gaeltacht offices within a timeframe to be agreed with the Minister, currently 2020.

## **1.8 Summary of progress under the first three Schemes 2005-2017**

Significant progress has been made over the lifetime of the first three schemes and this provides a solid foundation on which we can deliver further improvements during the lifetime of this, and further, schemes. This fourth scheme is predicated on all of the commitments in the first three schemes being implemented. In the event of commitments within those schemes not having been fully implemented to date, this matter is dealt with by way of review carried out under the auspices of An Coimisinéir Teanga. The objective of this fourth Scheme is to continue the delivery of these commitments and build on the progress achieved across the Council over the period of the previous schemes. It sets out

a commitment on behalf of this Council and our staff to develop the extent to which services are currently available through Irish and we identify areas for future enhancement. Our 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 our first three schemes included:

- provision of a dedicated Irish language customer service line from the Council's Customer Service Centre, so that the first point of contact by all customers, on the phone, can be made in fluent Irish. (from Third Scheme)
- Establishment of a dedicated Irish Language Department (End of Third Scheme)
- significant improvement in services through Irish to the Gaeltacht in the Glenties Electoral Area through a combination of recruitment, placement and training initiatives (First Scheme)
- sustained and significant growth in the number of customers using Irish in Dungloe Public Services Centre (First Scheme)
  - Calls on the phone, and visits to Reception, in Dungloe Public Services Centre can be dealt with in Irish (First Scheme).
  - Provision of extensive training in Irish language for a significant number of staff on a countywide basis, including the European Certificate in Irish (Teastas Eorpach na Gaeilge) under the auspices of the National 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 other courses. (All three Schemes)
  - the Council established a Placenames Committee which brought about major policy changes in the naming of new housing developments throughout the county, with emphasis on the Irish language, culture and traditions. (First Scheme)
  - provision of a bilingual website for Donegal County Council. (First Scheme)



- the provision of application forms in Irish for the public. (First Scheme)
- the provision of around 300 full Gaeltacht Scholarships for young people in County Donegal, in conjunction with our Summer Colleges. (All three Schemes)
- a staff audit to ascertain levels of Irish within the organisation, and to identify members of staff who were competent in the language. (All three Schemes)
- the inclusion of Irish as an integral part of the recruitment process for specific posts in specific offices and services. (First, Second and Third Schemes)
- ongoing participation in Irish Language Week events, including Library events, dramas, social evenings etc. (All three Schemes)
- Introduction and extension of use of simultaneous interpretation system (SIS) at Islands Committee meetings, at a number of conferences organised within the county by other community organisations (from First Scheme), at full meetings of Donegal County Council and at all meetings of Glenties Municipal District (from Third Scheme). A more modern, mobile, radio-based interpretation system was also purchased during the lifetime of the second and third schemes, and this system - with its absence of cables, and its instantaneous set-up - is facilitating an increasing number of meetings.
- continued support for, and maintenance of, Coiste na Gaeilge consisting of 12 elected members from Donegal County Council. (All schemes)
- 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 the various Donegal County Development Plans.
- increased bilingualism in our signage, documentation, information brochures, invites, correspondence, posters, press releases etc. (All Schemes)

However, Donegal County Council recognises that there are a range of services that are not currently available through Irish, and welcomes the opportunity provided by this fourth scheme to further develop and enhance our services through Irish.

## **Section 2**

# **Summary of Services provided by Donegal County Council**

This Chapter provides an overview of the services and functions provided by Donegal County Council, through our six overarching Directorates.

### **2.1 Housing, Corporate and Cultural Services**

#### **Corporate and Housing**

Housing services	Motortax
Housing Construction	Register of Electors
Human Resources	Council Secretariat
Training	Services to Members
Freedom of Information	Facilities Management

#### **Cultural Services**

Library Services	Arts Office
Archives Service	Public Art
Regional Cultural Centre	Heritage and Conservation
County Museum	Creative Ireland

## **2.2 Roads and Transportation Services**

Road Construction and Maintenance	Traffic Management
Road Safety	Public Lighting
National Road Design Office	Non-National Road Design Office
Roads Management Office	Piers and Harbours
Burial Grounds	

## **2.3 Community and Planning Services**

### **Community**

Local Community Development Committee	Local Economic & Community Plan
Public Participation Network	Film Office
Playground and Recreational Amenities	Research and Policy
Social Inclusion Unit	Irish Language Office

### **Planning**

Planning Services (including Enforcement)	Planning Policy
Building Control	Unfinished Housing Estates

## **2.4 Economic Development, Information Systems and Emergency Services**

### **Economic Development:**

Local Enterprise Office	Donegal Diaspora Project
Tourism Marketing	Global Engagement
EU Funding Unit	FDI and Indigenous Investment (support)
Strategic Capital Investment	

### **Information Systems:**

Digital Agenda	Information Systems Technology
Infrastructure and Network	Communications and Media Liaison
Corporate Planning	

### **Emergency Services:**

Fire Service	Major Emergency Management
Civil Defence	

## **2.5 Water and Environment Services**

Managing Service-level Agreement with Irish Water	Pollution Control
Beach Management (including Blue Flag Beaches)	Water Quality
Environmental Protection	Swimming Pools
Waste Management	Litter Management
Veterinary Services (including Dog Control)	

## **2.6 Finance Services**

Financial Management	Budget Management
Income Collection Unit	Annual Financial Statements
Payroll	Accounts Payable
Internal Audit	Procurement
Asset Management	

## **2.7 Principal 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, social media networks, 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 Development (Dungloe Public Service Centre)
- Gaoth Dobhair Fire Station
- Irish Language Department (Lifford and Letterkenny)
- 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 (Dungloe PSC)
- Front Desk Customer Service (Dungloe PSC)
- Islands Committee (Dungloe PSC)
- Housing Services (Dungloe / Carndonagh / Milford PSCs)
- Glenties Municipal District Committee
- 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>**

- Information Systems (Lifford HQ)
- Human Resources Office (Lifford HQ)
- Chief Executive's Office (Lifford HQ)
- Reception / Switchboard (Lifford HQ) – This role now taken over by Customer Contact Centre, which can provide bilingual service
- 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
- All other services not outlined in 3.1 and 3.2 above

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<sup>1</sup> Some members of staff in the services in section 3.3 are undergoing training in Irish through the European Certificate in Irish (Teastas Eorpach na Gaeilge), and are willing to use Irish to the best of their ability in delivering services to the public.

## Section 4

# Enhancement of Services to be provided bilingually

### 4.1 Guiding Principles

Donegal County Council:

- recognises that people have the right to choose which official language to use
- accepts that a person can express their needs and requirements most effectively in their chosen language
- appreciates 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
- appreciates the enormous historical contribution of the people of the Donegal Gaeltacht in preserving the Irish language as a spoken community language over many centuries
- recognises that we have a duty of care to facilitate and support the continuation and development of Irish as the spoken language of the Gaeltacht
- is committed to maintaining a corporate image which embraces bilingualism across all our services.
- Recognises the need to support other language initiatives of the state where they intersect with Council work (eg Gaeltacht Language Plans, Gaeltacht Service Towns, National 20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030, Donegal County Language Plan, LECP etc).

## **4.2 Background and Context**

Donegal County Council has a range of decentralised services across the county of Donegal, including Public Service Centres in the Municipal Districts of the Glenties, Donegal, Inishowen and Letterkenny, with our Corporate Headquarters based in Lifford, which also serves as a base for the Stranorlar Municipal District.

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 our goal to provide quality one-to-one bilingual services. The loss of significant numbers of staff between 2008 and 2016, many of whom provided services through Irish, combined with decreasing budgets, a moratorium on recruitment, and structural reorganisation, all increased the challenges faced by Donegal County Council in our provision of services through the Irish language.

However, the Council remains firmly committed to developing, maintaining and improving the number, range and quality of services we provide to the public through the Irish language. We intend to do this through a combination of the continued use of modern technology (website, interactive online services, social media sites), reorganisation of staff and services (eg centralised Customer Contact Centre) and traditional methods (face-to-face spoken services, printed publications, correspondence etc). The emphasis throughout the duration of this fourth scheme will be to consolidate the delivery of commitments made in our previous three schemes, commitments which involve increasing and accumulating workloads.

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

### **4.3.1 All Offices**

The Council's Human Resources Department actively pursues practices, and identifies staffing issues that need to be addressed in relation to the provision of services in the



Irish language. The Council will also adopt and implement any clear recruitment policies and proposals that may be agreed at national level as part of the current review of the Official Languages Act.

### Recruitment and Placement

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

- Donegal County Council 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 continue to 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 Council 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 Council will continue its 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 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 our Staff Education Scheme, as an integral part of the Council's 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 interpretation, 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 Council's 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;
  - are fully informed about how the policy will affect their work, and
  - gain an empathetic understanding of the needs and concerns of Irish-speaking customers
- The Council 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 our first three Language schemes, 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 An Clochán Liath, 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 An Clochán Liath, Gleann Cholm Cille and An Fál Carrach.

#### 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 County Council 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, Letterkenny Public Service Centre, and the new Customer Contact Centre in Milford.
- 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.

#### **4.4 Information Systems**

The Council 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 other 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 place a minimum of 5 messages per week in Irish (average of 1 per day) on Social Media Networks, prioritising those notices and services of greatest interest to the public. (From start of scheme).
- 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.
- The Council's intranet system will continue to be developed as a staff resource for the promotion of the Irish language and bilingualism: information on Irish language events and activities, 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 continue to be examined and implemented as appropriate.

- 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 Council 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 Council 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**

The Council 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 Council 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.

The Council will continue to 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.

Where application forms and associated documentation are provided as separate Irish and English language versions, the Council 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.

The Council currently provides, and will continue to provide, a simultaneous interpretation system at the following meetings:

- All meetings of Coiste na Gaeilge
- All Islands' Committee Meetings
- All meetings of Glenties Municipal District
- All full meetings of Donegal County Council
- Other meetings when staff resources allow (eg Donegal Youth Council, Public Consultations in the Gaeltacht etc)

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.

## **4.7 Telephone Services**

Donegal County Council has established a centralised Customer Contact Centre for the entire county of Donegal. All calls to Donegal County Council, from any location and any electoral area within the county or from outside the county, are now dealt with from the Customer Contact Centre. The Customer Contact Centre is now the first point of contact for the public.

The Customer Contact Centre now has, and will maintain, a dedicated Irish language line to allow all customers to make their first initial contact with the Council entirely through the Irish language

- the Customer Contact Centre has, and will continue to have, a sufficient number of staff to deal with calls in the Irish language, promptly and efficiently.
- all staff responding to calls from the Customer Contact Centre will give an initial bilingual response to all calls (greeting and/or name of organisation), to indicate to the customer that both language options are available.
- the frontline staff in Dungloe Public Services Centre will continue to be fully competent in dealing with fluent Irish speakers through the Irish language
- all other frontline staff in all offices will give a bilingual response to all calls (greeting and/or name of organisation or section), to indicate to the customer that both language options are available.

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

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.

## **4.9 Brochures & Information Leaflets**

Donegal County Council 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 Council to ensure that all information leaflets and brochures are and will continue to be made available simultaneously in both official languages in print form and/or on our website.

The Council will continue to 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.

Where information leaflets and brochures are provided as separate Irish and English language versions, the Council 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.

Brochures and information leaflets 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 and 2011, Donegal County Council 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 fourth 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 current Donegal County Development Plan.

#### **4.12 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, etc)
- Sponsorship of Glór na nGael Award for local community group which best promotes the Irish language services among the community each year.
- 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, either in print form or electronic form
- 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 Council organises, or participates 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 Council will take the linguistic needs of our Gaelscoileanna and Gaeltacht schools into account in any events and competitions.
- 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 County Council 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 Chief Executive Officer. 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 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 and via Coiste na Gaeilge.

### **5.3 County Partnership Committee**

The County Partnership Committee 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 Services Officer**

The Irish Language Services 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.

The Council may initiate further development activities not covered in this scheme, including a number of proposals within the submissions received from the public.

#### **5.5 Audits and Surveys**

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.

## **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

- Council Websites.

Wherever Donegal County Council 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 Council 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 Council 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 Council websites;
- including footnotes on selected guidelines, leaflets, and application 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 Council 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.