



Fingal County Council

2nd Irish Language Scheme 2015 to 2018

(Under Section 15 of the Official Languages Act 2003)





**FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL
SECOND IRISH LANGUAGE SCHEME**

2015 – 2018

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Chapter 1 Introduction and background

1.1 Introduction & Review of 1st Language Scheme

Fingal County Council prepared its first Irish Language Scheme in 2006 in accordance with the Official Languages Act 2003. The Scheme was confirmed on 1st October 2006 and has been reviewed as part of the preparation of this second 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 second 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.

However, we must take account of the prevailing public service context and in this regard, the current constraints on resources and on public sector recruitment allied with the state of the public finances could have a negative impact on the level of progress that can be achieved.

1.3 Commencement date of New Scheme

The Minister for Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht has confirmed this scheme with a commencement date of **9 February 2015** 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 principles:

Prosperity: To enable people and businesses to make the most of opportunities to increase their prosperity and to enable society as a whole to benefit from that prosperity.

Community: To help communities to flourish, becoming stronger and safer places to live, offering improved opportunities and a better quality of life.

Smarter: We will promote and support lifelong learning to increase opportunities and to sharing the benefits of our achievements.

Greener: To improve our natural and built environment and the sustainable use and enjoyment of it.

Healthier: We will help people to sustain and improve our citizen's health, especially in disadvantaged communities, by providing leisure activities and ensuring that Fingal is accessible to everybody.

Our Mission Statement is:

"To improve the quality of life of our citizens and communities by developing our county and strengthening the region through sustainable economic growth."

Customers & Clients of Fingal County Council

Fingal County Council has a population of over 273,000 (Census 2011) and is one of the fastest growing local authority areas in the country. 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

Corporate Affairs Department is responsible for Council meetings, Register of Electors, Communications, Freedom of Information requests, public counters and reception desks. The Property Services Division deals with acquisition and management of Council property.

Human Resources Department recruits, develops and motivates staff to deliver customer focused quality services.

Information Technology Department works with all Council Departments with a view to improving services to the staff and citizens of Fingal.

Architects Department

The Architects Department provides a range of services and advice on all aspects of the built environment to other departments in Fingal County Council.

Finance Department

The Finance Department manages Council spending, income, borrowing, leasing and investments.

Law Department

The Law Department provides a complete range of legal services to the Council. The Law Agent advises the County Manager in relation to statutory powers and duties.

Economic Development Services Department

The Economic Development Services Department supports the structured economic development of Fingal and includes the Local Enterprise Office. It is also responsible for the management & maintenance of the Council's major regional parks & historic properties.

Planning & Infrastructure Department deals with strategic development of the County – the adoption of the County Development Plan, enforcement functions of the Council including Planning Enforcement, and inspections of buildings, to ensure compliance with the Building Control Acts & Regulations.

Water Services & Environment Department continues to provide water services to the public on behalf of Irish Water and is also responsible for the environmental regulation of Waste and the Waste Management Plan.



Operations Department deals with the road network, public open spaces & parks, landscaping, tree maintenance, litter and beaches & harbours.

Housing Department deals with housing maintenance & estate management, allocation of houses, rent assessment & collection, grants and provision of Traveller accommodation.

Community, Culture & Sports Department includes Libraries, Community, Arts and Sports Sections who manage a range of facilities and provide programmes and services to residents, schools, clubs and voluntary groups across Fingal.



Chapter 3 Breakdown of current services in each Official Language

Services available in Irish	Services available bilingually	Services available in English
	<p>Libraries now delivering a bilingual service include Blanchardstown, Swords, Rush, Malahide, Howth and Library HQ <i>(note that this is liable to change if staff are transferred between libraries)</i></p>	<p>County Hall Swords</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Affairs Dept • Human Resources Dept. • Information Technology • Architects Dept. • Finance Dept. • Economic Development Services Dept. • Planning & Strategic Infrastructure Dept. <p>Blanchardstown Office, Grove Road</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operations Dept. • Housing Dept. • Community, Culture & Sports Dept. • Water Services & Environment Dept. • Law Dept. <p>Libraries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All services operating from 10 branch libraries, the mobile library service and the housebound service. • The County Archive • The Local Studies Office



Chapter 4 Commitments to enhance the use of the Irish Language

The objectives of this second Scheme are to build on the progress achieved since 2006 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 second 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 make the following commitments to the development of the Irish language under this second 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 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 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.

The media and press releases

All press releases pertaining to Irish language issues will be issued simultaneously in Irish or 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.



4.2 One-to-One Services

Ongoing training will 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 be provided with training to give basic greetings in Irish. Suitable arrangements will 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 has done considerable work to improve the content and navigation of our website. Our new website www.fingal.ie was launched in 2013 and is optimised for mobile devices. It is bilingual in content and navigation.

4.5 Information Systems

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

An e-mail address will be 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 listing contact information for relevant departments on our website. This will promote public confidence in the availability of these services through Irish.

The Irish Language Page on 'Fingal Connections' 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 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, Human Resources Department, is 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.
- Irish language materials and will be made available to staff through Fingal Connections 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 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.

4.8 Promotional Measures

Fingal County Council will promote:

- Participation in the Irish Language Week (Seachtáin na Gaeilge)
- 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 Fingal Connections'

4.9 Recruitment and Placement

In the event that the public sector recruitment embargo is removed Fingal County Council will review recruitment policy and staff mobility policies, to encourage the recruitment of an adequate number of Irish speaking staff to provide services in the Irish language. From the commencement date of the Scheme, Fingal County Council will continue to review which posts require competency in Irish, (both written and oral), throughout the organisation.

The Authorities will continue to work and seek agreement with staff competent in the Irish language to provide services in the Irish language across a range of services, as demand for services through Irish arises. Contact details for Irish language services will be provided on the Council's website.

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. A committee will be 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. The day to day monitoring function will be carried out primarily by line managers in each Department.

The Communications Section and the Organisational Development 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:

- Policies and 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 in the form of a staff handbook which will be made available on 'Fingal Connections'.

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 where Irish language services are available;



- prominently listing these services on our website;
- 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
- Official Launch of the Scheme
- Fingal Libraries

The English language version of this scheme is the official version.

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

Further information available from:

Communications Section,
Fingal County Council.
County Hall
Main Street
Swords
Email: eolas@fingal.ie
Web www.fingal.ie