



Limerick City and County Council

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT 2003
LANGUAGE SCHEME
2015 - 2018

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction

The Official Languages Act 2003 provides for the preparation by public bodies of a language scheme detailing the services which they will 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.

In accordance with section 14(3) of the Act, language schemes remain in force for a period of 3 years or until such time as a new scheme is confirmed by the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, whichever is the later.

1.2 Preparation and Content of the Scheme

In the preparation of this scheme, due regard has been given to the Guidelines issued by the Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht. In addition, there has been a comprehensive process of consultation with relevant stakeholders.

The Limerick City and County Council is guided by the principle that the provision of Irish language services should be based on:

- the underlying level of demand for specific services in the Irish language,
- the importance of a proactive approach to the provision of such services, and
- the resources, including human and financial resources, and the capacity of the body concerned to develop or access the necessary language capability.

This scheme complements the principles of Quality Customer Service and our Customer Charter. It has been formulated with the intention of ensuring that all relevant obligations under the Official Languages Act by the Limerick City and County Council will be fully addressed on an incremental basis, through this and future schemes.

The time and effort put in by all concerned in this process is acknowledged and appreciated.

1.3 Commencement date of the Scheme

This Scheme has been confirmed on **18 May 2015** by the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. It commences with effect from this date and shall remain in force for a period of 3 years or until a new scheme has been confirmed, whichever is the later.

Chapter 2: Overview of Limerick City and County Council

Limerick City Council and Limerick County Council amalgamated in June 2014 prior to which there had been a lot of movement of staff between Limerick County Council's and Limerick City Council's main headquarters. Limerick City and County Council is the administrative body responsible for Limerick City and Limerick County and comprises an elected and executive structure.

Limerick City and County Council has a total of 40 Elected Members. The full Council meets bi-monthly. The Metropolitan District of Limerick meets monthly as do the following Municipal Districts:

- Adare- Rathkeale
- Newcastle West
- Cappamore-Kilmallock

5 Strategic Policy Committees (SPC's) have been established where policy will be debated before recommendation to the full Council for approval. The SPC's are as follows:

- Economic Development, Enterprise & Planning
- Environment
- Travel & Transportation
- Home & Social Development
- Community, Leisure & Emergency Services

The Corporate Policy Group (CPG) deals with policy matters of a cross cutting nature and with some specific functions statutorily allocated to it such as the preparation of the Corporate Plan and consultation on the Annual Budget.

The day-to-day business of the Council is carried out by an Executive which is headed by the Chief Executive and operates within the policy framework laid down by the Elected Members.

2.1 Mission and Objectives

OUR VISION

- That the people of Limerick are supported by a professional, proactive and accessible local government structure at the heart of a wider public service.
- That Limerick is acknowledged for its inclusive participation of all its citizens in the development of their community.
- That Limerick is the desired location for business development, cultural enrichment and educational opportunity.
- That Limerick and the Mid-West will compete with other European destinations in terms of business, tourism, living and investment.

OUR STRATEGY

- Empowering the citizen to participate in the development of their community, both rural and urban.
- An environment for real economic development and job creation.
- A new model of local governance and service delivery. |

2.2 Main Functions

The main functions of Limerick City and County Council are currently carried out under a number of Directorates which are as follows:

Corporate Services, Human Resources and Change Management
Home and Social Development
Economic Development and Planning
Water Services & Environment
Travel and Transportation
Community, Leisure and Emergency Services
Finance, Motor Tax & Information and Communications Technology (ICT) |

2.3 Key Services

Development Control Services

Processing planning applications
Controlling Unauthorised Structures and Derelict Sites
Preparing Development Plans
Controlling Casual Trading

Economic Development Services

Providing Supports for Business
Limerick Marketing

Environment Services

Managing Street Cleaning
Controlling Animals – (Dogs & Horses)
Managing Burial Grounds
Investigating Pollution and taking enforcement action
Implementing Water Safety Plans
Managing waste collection and recycling facilities
Managing Environmental Awareness Programmes

Road Maintenance Services

- Maintaining the Road & footpath network
- Controlling & Managing Road Closures & Road Works
- Processing Road Opening Licence applications

Housing Services

- Providing Social Housing
- Providing and managing Homeless Accommodation
- Providing and managing Traveller Accommodation
- Administering Grant Schemes for Housing

Water and Drainage Services

- Working on behalf of Irish Water
- Providing and managing Drainage systems and providing flood defences

Community and Leisure Services

- Managing & Operating the Museum & Archives, Art Galleries & Libraries
- Providing and managing parks, playgrounds and open spaces
- Organising sports and fitness campaigns
- Organising community development projects
- Managing public events and parades

Emergency Services

- Providing Fire Prevention Services
- Providing Civil Defence Services
- Managing Major Emergencies

2.4 Customers and Clients

The activities of Limerick City and County Council impacts on the lives of all the people of Limerick but we interact with a far wider range of groups and organisations:

- The Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government
- Other Government Departments
- Limerick City and County Council Customers and the general public
- Local Community and Voluntary Groups
- State Agencies
- Social Partners
- Other local and regional authorities
- Organisations of the European Union
- Local Development Agencies
- LEADER Groups
- Private sector
- Applicants for services
- Strategic Policy Committee sectoral representatives
- Local and National Media

Chapter 3: Details of services currently being provided in English only or bilingually

Details of services currently being provided in English only or bilingually in Irish and English; **including services in Gaeltacht areas.**

Current Provision of Services		
Services (General)	In English only	Bilingually, in English and Irish
Processing Planning Applications	English	
Controlling Unauthorised Structures and Derelict Sites	English	
Preparing Development Plans	English	
Controlling Casual Trading	English	
Providing Supports for Business	English	
Limerick Marketing	English	
Managing Street Cleaning	English	
Controlling Animals – (Dogs and Horses)	English	
Managing Burial Grounds	English	
Investigating Pollution and taking enforcement action	English	
Implementing Water Safety Plans	English	
Managing waste collection and recycling facilities	English	
Managing Environmental Awareness Programmes	English	
Maintaining the Road and footpath network	English	
Controlling & Managing Road Closures & Road Works	English	
Processing Road Opening Licence applications	English	
Providing Social Housing	English	
Providing and managing Homeless Accommodation	English	
Providing and managing Traveller Accommodation	English	
Administering Grant Schemes for Housing	English	
Working on behalf of Irish Water	English	
Providing and managing Drainage systems and providing flood defences	English	
Managing & Operating the Museum & Archives, Art Galleries & Libraries	English	
Providing and managing parks, playgrounds and open spaces	English	
Organising sports and fitness campaigns	English	

Organising community development projects	English	
Managing public events and parades	English	
Providing Fire Prevention Services	English	
Providing Civil Defence Services	English	
Managing Major Emergencies.	English	

Chapter 4: Enhancing the provision of Irish Language Services

The provisions shaded in grey in the table below are mandatory requirements under the Official Languages Act 2003.

Means of communication with the public		Commitment	
Recorded Oral Announcements		<p>The following recorded oral announcements will be in Irish or bilingual:</p> <p>(a) Recorded oral announcements provided on the telephone when the offices of the public body are closed;</p> <p>(b) Recorded oral announcements transmitted by a public address system;</p> <p>(c) Recorded oral announcements created and transmitted by means of a computerised messaging system or a computerised telephone answering system.</p> <p>This provision relates to 'recorded' announcements rather than 'live announcements'.</p> <p>Where a Placenames Order is in force, a public body is required to use the Irish language version of the placename specified in that Order in recorded oral announcements made by it or on its behalf.</p>	Mandatory
Written Communication	Letters and Electronic Mail	All written communication will be responded to in the official language in which it was received.	Mandatory
	Stationery	Headings of stationery, including notepaper, compliment slips, fax cover sheets, file covers and other folders, labels and envelopes are provided in Irish or bilingually.	Mandatory
Signage	Signage	All signage placed by Limerick City and County Council or on its behalf must be in Irish or bilingually, in accordance with the regulations (S.I. No.391/2008).	Mandatory
Publications	Publications	Documents setting out public policy proposals, audited accounts or financial	Mandatory

		statements, annual reports and strategy statements will be published simultaneously in Irish and English.	
	Circulars/Mailshots	Where a public body communicates in writing or by electronic mail with the general public or a class of the general public for the purpose of furnishing information to the public or the class, the body shall ensure that the communication is in the Irish language or in the English and Irish languages.	Mandatory
An Ghaeltacht	Gaeltacht Placenames	The official placenames of Gaeltacht areas will be used by the public body in accordance with the legislation.	Mandatory

Limerick City and County Council will also undertake the following list of actions under each service..

Means of communication with the public		Commitment	Timeline By end Yr 1/ Yr 2 / Yr 3
Oral/Written Communication	Reception	Reception staff will be familiar with the basic greetings in Irish	Year 1
	Face to Face/Counter Service	Staff will be familiar with the basic greetings in Irish	Year 1
	Switchboard	Switchboard staff will give the name of Limerick City and County Council in Irish	Year 1
	Telephone communications with the public	Limerick City and County Council will provide staff with guidance on handling telephone calls from Irish speaking members of the general public. Customers will be greeted firstly in Irish and then in English.	Year 1
	Live announcements	Limerick City and County Council does not use live announcements	
	Information Leaflets/ Brochures	20% of information leaflets will be available in Irish and English	Year 1
	Application Forms	20% of application forms will be available in English and in Irish	Year 1
Media	Press Releases	Press releases pertaining to Irish Language issues will be issued simultaneously bilingually	Year 1
	Media	We will upskill a member of staff to liaise	Year 2

	Spokespersons	with the Irish language media	
	Speeches	We will include 10% of Irish content in English speeches	Year 1
Information Technology	Email	We will publish a dedicated email address for queries in Irish on the website	Year 2
	Websites	The static material on the home page on the website will be available in Irish The static material on any new website will be available bilingually	Year 2
	Computer Systems	Any new computer system being installed will be fully capable of handling the Irish language	When applicable

Chapter 5: Improving Language Capability

5.1 Recruitment

The recruitment of staff with the appropriate level of competence in the Irish language in each area of work of Limerick City and County Council will be the primary means of optimising the availability of services through Irish. Our recruitment policy, which is subject to the framework of agreed national recruitment procedures, will have regard to the need to improve Irish language capability on an incremental basis.

All new staff will be provided with an induction pack containing a copy of our agreed scheme in order to ensure that they are made aware of our commitments under the legislation.

5.2 Training and Development

The Limerick City and County Council is committed to making available opportunities for staff to attend appropriately accredited Irish language training courses, as resources permit. All staff will be advised of facilities/opportunities to improve their competency in Irish.

		Commitment	Timeline By end Yr 1/ Yr 2 / Yr 3
Improving Irish Language Capability	Recruitment	New staff will be provided with an induction pack containing a copy of our agreed scheme	Year 1
	Training	Limerick City and County Council is currently providing Irish language classes to 28 members of staff	Year 1
	Participation in language promotion activities /Provision of resources	Access to information on language resources will be facilitated	Year 1

5.3 Designated Irish Language Posts

Having regard to Government policy for enhanced provision of services in Irish, the Council will, by the end of the period covered by the scheme, undertake a review with a view to identifying any posts for which Irish language competency is an essential requirement. Every effort will be made to fulfil these requirements by the end of this scheme having regard to recruitment, promotion and training policies, as appropriate. This will enable the Council to plan and prioritise the incremental improvement of services in Irish in a more strategic manner.

Chapter 6: Monitoring and Review

The implementation of the scheme will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis by Corporate Services Department. The contact person for the scheme will be Valerie Thompson, Corporate Services, Limerick City and County Council, Merchant's Quay, Limerick email: valerie.thompson@limerick.ie tel: 061-407195

A formal system for monitoring requests for services through Irish will be available and recorded in our Annual Report.

Chapter 7: Publicising of Agreed Scheme

This scheme will be publicised both internally and externally, through a press release initially. A bilingual version of the scheme will be made available on our website and circulated to all staff and appropriate agencies. Other means to publicise the scheme may also be used.

In addition, we will take every opportunity in our day to day interaction with customers 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 the Irish language services that are available;
- prominently listing these services on our website;
- signifying on selected guidelines, leaflets and application forms that these documents are also available in Irish, unless presented bilingually;
- giving equal prominence to Irish and English language materials.

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

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