

CHAPTER 1

Introduction/Background

This Scheme was prepared under Section 11 of the Official Languages Act 2003 by Kerry Local Authorities. 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 both Irish and English

This Scheme sets out the measures to be adopted to ensure that any services that are not provided through the medium of Irish will be so provided within an agreed timeframe.

1.1 Content of the Language Scheme

The Scheme builds on Kerry County Council's Irish Action Plan 2001-2006. An internal Working Group, comprising representatives from Senior Management Team, Kerry County Council and staff members from Kerry County Council and Town Councils assisted in drafting the scheme. Responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the scheme will rest with the senior management within Kerry Local Authorities.

1.2 Commencement Date of Scheme

This Scheme **has been** confirmed by the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. The Scheme is commenced with effect from **26th July 2005** 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 Official Languages Act, whichever is earlier.

1.3 Kerry Local Authorities Overview

Our mission statement is as follows:

Our aim as a primary democratically elected body of the county, is to facilitate the sustainable development of Kerry and enhance the quality of life of our people.

Kerry County Council is the Local Authority responsible for administration of the County of Kerry. There are three Town Councils - Tralee, Listowel and Killarney. Each Council within the county area, comes under the jurisdiction of the County Manager.

The principal functions and services of the Council are classified into eight Management Sections:

- Housing and Social Support
- Roads and Transportation
- Water Services
- Environment
- Economic, Planning and Development
- Community, Culture, Heritage and Recreation
- Corporate Services
- Finance

Town Councils have direct responsibility to provide virtually all services in their urban areas - housing, roads (not national or regional), water and wastewater network, planning and development, environmental services, burial grounds, parks and amenities within the urban area. Tralee Town Council has additional responsibilities including the management of visitor attractions.

1.3.1 List of Customers/ Clients

- The Minister and Department of the Environment
- Other Government Departments and Ministerial Offices
- Kerry Local Authorities Customers and the general public
- Local Community Groups
- Other State Agencies
- Social Partners
- Other local and regional authorities
- Organisations of the European Union
- LEADER Groups
- Private sector service providers
- Local private businesses

1.4 Assessment of extent to which services are already available through Irish

The primary objective of the Act is to ensure better availability and a higher standard of public services through Irish. In this regard Kerry County Council provides certain services through Irish or bilingually, including services for Gaeltacht communities and Irish language organisations outside the Gaeltacht.

Kerry Local Authorities Customer Charter states that:

We will comply with the requirements of the Official Languages Act 2003.

CHAPTER 2

Provision of General Council Services/Activities

2.1 Methodology and Research Undertaken

In the preparation of this Scheme, Kerry County Council undertook consultation as follows:

- (i) sought submissions from the public on the preparation of a draft Scheme - 25 submissions were received from the public during the consultation process.
- (ii) an internal audit of services provided/capable of being provided through Irish by each section.

The following are the findings of the Customer Survey which was undertaken in March 2004 in relation to the provision of services through the medium of Irish:

| | Strongly Agree/ Agree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Disagree/Strongly Disagree | Average |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| KCC staff members have an appropriate standard of Irish. | 20.5% | 73.0% | 6.5% | 3.1 |
| I prefer to speak in Irish when dealing with a public body. | 4.1% | 23.6% | 72.3% | 2.1 |

- 600/ 23% feedback
- 2 completed the questionnaire in Irish

Summary of Services/Activities provided by Kerry Local Authorities

This section states service provision by each Department within Kerry County Council.

Kerry County Council has a language policy, outlined in the Council's Irish Action Plan 2001/2006. A member of staff has been nominated as Irish Officer within some department, including Town Councils. Kerry County Council endeavours over the lifetime of this Scheme to maintain and build on the Council's language policy within each Department.

2.2 Summary of Services/Activities provided by Departments

HOUSING DEPARTMENT

The Housing Department provides accommodation for people through the direct provision of housing for rent and also promotes home ownership through the various loan schemes offered. The Council's role as Housing Authority is to ensure that every household has a dwelling suitable to its needs at a price or rent it can afford.

ROADS & TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

Kerry County Council is responsible for the construction and maintenance of public roads in the County. This involves responsibility for planning, design and development of 430 km of National Roads and 4,230 kms of Non-National Roads. This includes safety considerations and ongoing maintenance in order to provide a safe and efficient network to serve the needs of the County for Industrial, Agricultural, Tourism and Community Development.

MOTOR TAXATION DEPARTMENT

The Motor Taxation Department is responsible for the issue of Driver and Vehicle Licences and other related functions and services on behalf of Central Government. All monies collected are credited to the Local Government Fund.

WATER SERVICES DEPARTMENT

The Department is responsible for the operation and maintenance of public water supply schemes, waste water treatment facilities, public conveniences and burial grounds throughout the County, in accordance with current National and EU Legislation and Policy.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

The Planning Authority's policy is to ensure that development is planned in accordance with principles of sustainability, facilitates long-term economic and social progress, promotes the efficient use of land, resources and infrastructures and safeguards the natural and built environment.

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

The Environmental Services Department has responsibility for environmental protection throughout the county. This involves the enforcement of all current environmental legislation in the areas of Waste Management and Pollution Control. In addition, it has responsibility for the promotion of Environmental Awareness.

LIBRARY SERVICES

The County Library service has a network of 9 branch libraries in the main towns throughout the County, providing a comprehensive community service, making available reading and reference material with audio-visual material for both adults and children. Kerry Library service promotes the Irish Language county wide, through various activities throughout the year and through its Local History Department.

CORPORATE SERVICES DEPARTMENT

The Department deals with a broad range of services and provides administrative back up to the Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Services in areas relating to the Elected Council. Services also included in this department are Customer Service, Area Meeting Administration, Press and Communications.

FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT

The Fire Service Department has responsibility for response to emergency situations by brigades, along with the giving of advice on fire safety. The Fire Service Department provides a 24 hour / 365 day Fire Brigade Service for the County with Retained Brigades in ten towns and Volunteer Squads in three villages. These Brigades respond to fires, road traffic accidents and other emergencies.

HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

The function of the Human Resources Department is to ensure that a suitably qualified, trained and resourced staff is deployed within all of the Council's services. It is also responsible for industrial relations issues along with the safety, health and welfare of employees. The Department is a key one within the organisation and its main focus is on the provision of services to other operational areas of the Council.

FINANCE

The Finance Department is comprised of three departments – namely the Finance Department the Revenue Department and the Internal Audit Department.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT

The Council's Information Technology Department is responsible for maintaining the Council's computer systems, for overseeing the development of the Council's Information Technology strategies and to support other Departments in their service delivery. There are no direct services provided to the general public.

COUNTY SOLICITOR'S DEPARTMENT

The Department provides legal services and advice for the Council. While much of the work involves internal matters the department has contact with members of the public and their legal representatives

CIVIL DEFENCE

The role of the Civil Defence is to assist at disasters and accidents and to provide a resource of trained volunteers, equipment and logistical support to deal with a variety of community support and emergency situations.

ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE

The main areas of works in this function include:-

- Promotion of access to, participation in and awareness of the arts in Kerry.
- Promote pride, formulate policy and facilitate the collection of data in relation to all aspects of the built and natural heritage within Kerry.
- Develop the use of Irish within Council services and provide information and support in the promotion of Irish in Kerry.

COMMUNITY & ENTERPRISE

The Community & Enterprise Department supports the County Development Board (CDB) and the development of policies and initiatives with a social inclusion and enterprise focus for Kerry County Council and the other Kerry Local Authorities. Staff are supporting the CDB structures through the implementation phase of Meitheal Chiarraí 2002 – 2011: the Social, Economic and Cultural Strategy which guides and influences all developments in the County.

CHAPTER 3

Means of Communication with the Public/ Information to the Public

Objective 3.1: Information Leaflets and Application Forms

| Current Status | Target | Timescale |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| All Departments within Kerry County Council have some forms available in Irish and English. | All Kerry Local Authorities will ensure all application forms and associated information leaflets, will be produced bilingually within the one cover. | End 2006 |
| There are no forms available in Irish from the Town Councils. | Generic forms used nationally will be requested in Irish. | |
| Some information leaflets and forms are available in Irish from some Departments of Kerry County Council. | Kerry Local Authorities Information Leaflets will be published bilingually. | August 2008 |
| Town Council Information Leaflets are available in English. | | |

Objective 3.2 Oral Announcements

| Current Status | Target | Timescale |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Some Kerry County Council pre-recorded oral announcements may be bilingual. | Kerry County Council will have all pre-recorded oral announcements in Irish only or in Irish and in English. | End 2005 |
| Town Councils pre-recorded oral announcements are in English only. | Town Councils will have all pre-recorded oral announcements in Irish only or in Irish and in English. | End 2007 |
| There are no forms available in Irish from the Town Councils. | | |

Objective 3.3 Receptionists/ Switchboard Operators

| Current Status | Target | Timescale |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| <p>Receptionists/ switchboard operators at Áras an Chontae, Kerry County Council give the name of the Council in Irish or in Irish and in English.</p> <p>Receptionists/ Switchboard operators could use Irish in Tralee Town Council.</p> | <p>Receptionists/ Switchboard operators at Áras an Chontae, Kerry County Council will continue to give the name of the Council in Irish or Bilingually:-</p> <p>Specific courses will be provided for receptionists/ switchboard operators for staff to learn basic greetings and names of departments in Irish.</p> <p>Receptionists/ Switchboard operators will continue to use Irish/Irish and English when dealing with customers in Tralee Town Council.</p> <p>Training will be provided for receptionists/ switchboard operators at Listowel and Killarney Town Councils, through Kerry County Council training department.</p> | <p>End 2006</p> |

CHAPTER 4

Working language of Departments within Kerry Local Authorities

4.1 Departments providing service through the medium of Irish in Kerry County Council/ Town Councils

| Current Status | Target | Timescale |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| The Irish Department within Kerry County Council works fully through the medium of Irish. | The Irish Department will continue to promote and develop the provision of service through the medium of Irish throughout Kerry Local Authorities. | Through the lifetime of this Scheme |

Objective 4.2 Departments Working through the medium of English or Bilingually

| Current Status | Target | Timescale |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Members of Staff, nominated as Irish Officers, are within some sections at Áras an Chontae and Town Councils.</p> <p>However, personal callers to certain offices of Kerry Local Authorities may have to use English</p> <p>Oifig Ceantair an Daingin Leabharlann an Daingin</p> <p>Cathair Saidhbhín</p> | <p>The initiative of Nominated Irish Officers will be reviewed and addressed within all departments and in line with Recruitment and Placement Policies of this Scheme.</p> <p>The following principal offices at Áras an Chontae will be able to provide counter service through the medium of Irish and English in the Reception at Áras an Chontae Reception at Áras an Chontae Roads – Main Office Planning – Main Office Motor Tax</p> <p>Administrative services in the other Departments within Kerry County Council, inclusive of area offices outside of Gaeltacht areas, will be reviewed during the lifetime of this Scheme, with a view to addressing the issue of the provision of a quality one to one customer service through Irish from these areas in the second and subsequent schemes.</p> <p>Administrative Staff an An Daingean Area Office and Leabharlann an Daingin will continue to be able to provide a service in both Irish and English.</p> <p>Cathair Saidhbhín Area Office will be addressed under Objective 5.5.1, should a position arise in the Administrative Office. In the meantime Irish language training will be provided for staff at Cathair Saidhbhín area office- with a view to addressing the issue of the provision of a quality one to one customer service through Irish from these areas in the second and subsequent schemes.</p> | <p>Lifetime of this Scheme</p> <p>August 2008</p> |

Objective 4.3 Departments Working through the medium of English or Bilingually

| Current Status | Target | Timescale |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Town Councils - Departments within Town Councils work mainly through the medium of English only. | All Town Council's will ensure one member of staff will be nominated as Irish Officer. Nominated Irish Officers from the Town Councils will receive training through Kerry County Council Training Department – with a view to addressing the issue of the provision of a quality one to one customer service through Irish from these areas in the second and subsequent schemes. | August 2008 |

CHAPTER 5

Enhancement of Services to be provided bilingually - **continued**

Ag spreagadh muinín sa phobal go bhfuil seirbhís d’ardchaighdeán ar fáil i nGaeilge agus tiocfaidh an t-éileamh foluiteach sin atá ann ar sheirbhísí trí Ghaeilge chun cinn.

Objective 5.1: Computer Systems

| Current Status | Target | Timescale |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| <p>Kerry County Council has currently an electronic mailing address gaeilge@kerrycoco.ie</p> | <p>Kerry Local Authorities will promote the use of this address for the use of customers choosing Irish as a means of communicating with the Authorities. Kerry Local Authorities will ensure that such queries are addressed promptly as with English language queries.</p> | <p>End 2005</p> |
| <p>Kerry Local Authorities are currently in the process of updating Intranet and Internet “Content Management Systems” One of the requirements is that the new systems will support dual language.</p> | <p>All static data and matters over which we have control will be fully bi-lingual. However 3rd party systems will be beyond our immediate control. While council policy might address the former, the latter will require changes from suppliers over which we have no control.</p> | <p>2010</p> |

Objective 5.2: Publications

| Current Status | Target | Timescale |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| <p>Publications available in English only include:- Consultant Records Technical documents Arts Culture Kerry</p> | <p>Consultant and technical reports, and action plan/documents based on national policy, will be published in the language in which they are written.</p> <p>Arts Culture Kerry – Publications of Arts activities countywide – will be published in English only. If information is supplied in Irish it will be published in Irish.</p> | <p>2005</p> |

Objective 5.3: Press Statements

| Current Status | Target | Timescale |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| <p>Press Releases particular to Gaeltacht areas are issued bilingually by Kerry County Council.</p> <p>All other Press Releases have bilingual heading.</p> | <p>All Kerry County Council Press Releases will be issued bilingually by the end of 2005</p> | <p>End 2005</p> |
| <p>Town Council's Press Releases are issued in English only.</p> | <p>All Town Council Press Releases will be issued bilingually by end of 2006</p> | <p>End 2006</p> |

Objective 5.4. An Ghaeltacht Oifig Ceantar an Daingin agus Leabharlann an Daingin

| Current Status | Target |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Irish as the working language of An Daingean area office and Leabharlann an Daingin</p> | <p>Given the statutory obligations and Kerry County Council's own aim to promote Irish as the working language of An Daingean area office and Leabharlann an Daingin, in consultation with staff and staff representative organisations, will develop policies and implementation strategies, to further the achievement of that aim by the end of the year 2020.</p> <p>Over the lifetime of this scheme we will agree, in consultation with all appropriate parties, an implementation plan to achieve these goals.</p> |

Objective 5.5 Recruitment/Placement

| 5.5.1 | Timescale |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Kerry County Council's Human Resources Department is committed to ensuring sufficient number of staff will be competent in delivering service in either Irish or English within all Kerry Local Authorities.</p> | <p>During the lifetime of this Scheme</p> |
| 5.5.2 | Timescale |
| <p>Appropriate placement of staff with proficiency in Both Irish and English will be implemented throughout Kerry Local Authorities, including Gaeltacht Offices, or in offices that will service Gaeltacht areas, ensuring the needs of sections in relation to being able to provide a high quality service through Irish is taken into account, when placing or moving staff within the organisation.</p> | <p>During the lifetime of this Scheme</p> |
| 5.5.3 | Timescale |
| <p>The Human Resource Department will review recruitment policy in the context of proficiency in the Irish language (both written and oral) being an essential requirement for a number of posts in offices of Kerry County Council that serve Gaeltacht areas. This will be addressed in line with National Recruitment Policy and through Partnership.</p> | <p>During the lifetime of this Scheme.</p> |

Objective 5.6: Training and Development

Kerry Local Authorities will continue with their commitment to provide appropriate training and development for all staff, in both official languages.

Training/ Human Resources/Irish Office

| Current Status | Target | Timescale |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Language Awareness has been included in Customer Service Courses by Kerry County Council. | Extensive consultation to take place within departments as to what courses are required to up skill staff, to gain confidence and competency in the Irish Language. | End 2005 |
| | Language Awareness Courses to be delivered as part of induction courses and Customer Service training, ensuring understanding of Kerry Local Authorities Language Policy and how it will affect work within the organisations. | 2005 |
| Kerry Local Authorities award Scholarships to interested staff members currently. | Kerry Local Authorities to review awarding of Scholarships. Kerry Local Authorities will continue to award Scholarships to staff, to attend appropriate Irish language courses. | Summer 2005 |

Objective 5.7: Public Meetings Policy

| Current Status | Target | Timescale |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Most Kerry Local Authorities public meetings are held through the medium of English. | Kerry County Council will gradually expand the use of simultaneous translation over the course of this scheme to public meetings held in the Gaeltacht. | End 2007 |
| | Meetings held outside of the Gaeltacht, but involving groups operating within the Gaeltacht, or whose remit includes Gaeltacht areas, Kerry Local Authorities will endeavour on request to provide a translation service to Irish | August 2008 |

Objective 5.8 Logainmneacha Gaeltachta/ Gaeltacht Placenames

| Current Status | Target | Timescale |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| The Official Gaeltacht Placenames being used in the Register of Electors mailing list. | Kerry Local Authorities will ensure compliance with Placenames Order (Gaeltacht) 2004 | 2005 |

Chapter 6

Monitoring and Revision

The Senior Management Group within Kerry Local Authorities will keep the effective operation of this Scheme under review, with assistance from An Grúpa Oibre.

The day-to-day monitoring function will be carried out primarily by line managers in each of the Sections (who are responsible for the implementation of the Scheme within their own areas), with the assistance of the Irish Officer, and reporting on a regular basis to their Director of Services.

Chapter 7

Publicising of Agreed Scheme

The contents of this scheme, along with the commitments and provision of the scheme, will be publicised to the general public by means of:-

- Press Release;
- Official Launch of the Scheme;
- Advertising of provisions
- Circulation to appropriate agencies and public bodies;
- Website.

A copy of this scheme [has] also been forwarded to Oifig Choimisinéir na dTeangacha Oifigiúla.