

Police launch Gaelic language plans consultation period



Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) have today launched a joint public consultation seeking views on their respective draft Gaelic Language Plans.

The draft plans were unveiled at the Royal National Mòd in Oban, with the support of Bòrd Na Gàidhlig, alongside officers wearing uniforms bearing English and Gaelic forms of Police Scotland and a vehicle with the Gaelic version of the Police Scotland logo.

Gaelic Language Plans are a statutory requirement for all public bodies in Scotland. The Plans detail how the police service and the police authority will contribute to creating a sustainable future for Gaelic in Scotland. The commitments contained in each plan aim to raise the status and profile of Gaelic, and create practical opportunities for learning and use of the language.

Some of the potential developments contained in both Police Scotland and the SPA plans include:

- Dual branding of the Police Scotland/ Poileas Alba logo to feature on police uniforms, signage and police vehicles on a replacement cost neutral basis,
- Enhanced opportunities for the public to communicate with Police Scotland and the SPA in Gaelic,
- Increased number of corporate publications made available in Gaelic,
- The introduction of training opportunities for police officers and police staff to learn Gaelic
- Dedicated Gaelic pages on Police Scotland and the SPA's website

Police Scotland and the SPA are now inviting members of the public and members of staff to read their draft plans and provide feedback on them. The separate plans are available electronically, from Police Scotland and SPA websites, and upon request, in hard copy.

Chief Superintendent Julian Innes, Local Policing Commander for Highland and Islands Division, and project lead, said: "As a public body Police Scotland has a legal obligation to develop a Gaelic Language Plan and we will do that in consultation with the communities we serve and the organisations who work with us.

"The consultation is open and accessible to anyone and I'd encourage those who would like a chance to contribute to do so by making contact with their views.

"Gaelic-speaking communities exist throughout Scotland, although obviously the majority of those who use Gaelic live across the Highlands and Islands region."

Ian Ross, SPA Board Member, added:

"As one of Scotland's national languages, Gaelic has played a central part in Scotland's culture and heritage. Our first Gaelic Language Plan sets out how the SPA will improve understanding and use of Gaelic within our organisation, which in turn will improve how we engage with Scotland's communities."

"I would encourage the public and police officers and police staff to read both the SPA and Police Scotland Gaelic Language Plans and give us their feedback on the commitments we are considering."

Dr Alasdair Allan MSP, Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland's Languages, said: "As Minister with responsibility for Gaelic, I am delighted to support the launch of this consultation. The Scottish Government is firmly committed to

supporting all our indigenous languages, including Gaelic. It is welcome to see Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority demonstrating such firm commitment to supporting Gaelic and I encourage anyone with an interest to have their say on these important publications.”

Bòrd na Gàidhlig Interim CEO, Joe Moore said: “Gaelic Language Plans have proven to be successful in supporting Gaelic by mainstreaming the language in to the everyday operations of Public Bodies while offering those with Gaelic the opportunities to use the language. We are pleased to see Police Scotland and the SPA launch their draft plans for public consultation and look forward to working with them throughout this process.”

It is anticipated that following the consultation an assessment will be made of the ways in which Gaelic can be most appropriately brought into use by the organisation and the police authority.

Any re-branding work will be on a rolling replacement and maintenance basis in order to reduce any costs associated with the plan.