



Comhairle Cathrach
& Contae **Luimnigh**

Limerick City
& County Council

**OFFICIAL LANGUAGES
ACT 2003
LANGUAGE SCHEME
2019 - 2022**

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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 Culture Heritage and the Gaeltacht, whichever is the later.

1.2 Preparation and Content of the Scheme

This is the second language scheme of Limerick City and County Council. The Council is guided by the principle that the provision of Irish Language services should be based on a range of factors, including the following:

- the level of demand for such services:
- the importance of a proactive approach to the provision of services in the Irish language, and
- the resources, including human and financial resources, and the capacity of the Council to develop or access the necessary language capability to provide these services.

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 relating to Limerick City and County Council are being 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 by the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. It commences with effect from 01 Feabhra 2019 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 and County Council (Comhairle Cathrach agus Contae Luimnigh) is the authority responsible for local government in the City of Limerick and County Limerick. It came into operation on 1st June 2014. It is a merger of Limerick City Council and Limerick County Council under the provisions of the Local Government Reform Act 2014.

There are 40 Elected Members on the Council – 21 Members in the Metropolitan District of Limerick (consisting of the Local Electoral Areas of Limerick City East, Limerick City North and Limerick City West) six Members in the Municipal District of Adare-Rathkeale, seven Members in the Municipal District of Cappamore-Kilmallock and six Members in the Municipal District of Newcastle West.

Meetings of the Full Council are normally held on the fourth Monday of every second month in the Council Chamber at Dooradoyle. The Metropolitan District of Limerick and the Municipal Districts meet monthly.

The Corporate Policy Group (CPG) is a Committee of the Council consisting of the Mayor of the City and County of Limerick and the Chairs of each of the Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs). The CPG links the work of the different SPCs, acts as a type of cabinet and provides a forum where policy positions can be agreed for submission to the full Council, which retains the decision making authority. The CPG also monitors the performance of the Local Authority and plays a key role in preparing the budget.

The Strategic Policy Committee comprised Elected Members and Sectoral Representatives, working together in a more participative form of democracy, thereby providing a more effective policy focus on the functions and activities carried out by Limerick City and County Council. A Director of Service supports each SPC in its work. While each SPC formulates and develops policy, the final decisions rest with the Full Council. There are six SPC's within Limerick City and County Council;

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

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.]

Our Aim

- Build a city and county council that is recognised as ambitious for the people of Limerick
- Actively engage with our communities.
- Work with our colleagues across the public sector and our partners in the private sector to deliver on a shared commitment to Limerick as set out in the Charter for Limerick.
- Build our economy and create opportunity in Limerick.
- Be efficient, effective and committed to providing services that will underpin an innovative Limerick.
- Invest in Limerick's infrastructure and protect its natural and built environment and unique heritage.
- Promote a socially integrated, healthy and safe Limerick.

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:

- Economic Development
- Physical Development
- Social Development
- Housing Development
- Service Operations
- Capital Investment
- National and Regional Shared Services
- Support Services

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 and 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 and operating the Museum, Archives, Art Galleries and 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

Limerick City and County Council interacts with a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including members of the Government, other public representatives and other local authorities departments, offices and agencies.

In addition, we interact with a wide range of parties from outside the public service, including groups and individual members of the public who use our services and have an interest in our activities.

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

Details of individual services and schemes operated by Limerick City and County Council are available on our website at www.limerick.ie

Details of Limerick City and County Council’s services, which are currently available, bilingually in Irish and English or in English only are set out below.

In the case of where a service through Irish is not currently available, arrangements will be made to respond to requests for such a service where possible. Service in Irish may be limited and cannot be guaranteed in the case of matters requiring specialist or technical knowledge.

| Name of Service | In English Only | Bilingually |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Processing Planning Applications Controlling Unauthorised Structures and Derelict Sites Preparing Development Plans Controlling Casual Trading | √ | |
| Providing Supports for Business Limerick Marketing | √ | |
| Managing Street Cleaning Controlling Animals – (Dogs and Horses) Managing Burial Grounds Investigating Pollution and taking enforcement action Implementing Water Safety Plans Managing waste collection and recycling facilities Managing Environmental Awareness Programmes | √ | |
| Maintaining the Road and footpath network Controlling, managing Road Closures and Road Works Processing Road Opening Licence applications | √ | |
| Providing Social Housing Providing and managing Homeless Accommodation Providing and managing Traveller Accommodation Administering Grant Schemes for Housing | √ | |

| | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|--|
| Working on behalf of Irish Water Providing and managing drainage systems and providing flood defences | √ | |
| Managing and Operating the Museum, Archives, Art Galleries and Libraries Providing and managing parks, playgrounds and open spaces Organising sports and fitness campaigns Organising community development projects Managing public events and parades | √ | |
| Providing Fire Prevention Services Providing Civil Defence Services Managing Major Emergencies. | √ | |

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 |

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|----------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| | | 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 lists 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. Customers will be greeted Irish and then in English. The names of the members of staff who are able to communicate in Irish will be available to various sections of the Council. | Currently in place By end of Year 1 By end of Year 1 |
| | Face to Face/Counter Service | Staff will be familiar with the basic greetings in Irish. An up to date list of staff members who can provide a service through Irish will be made available. | Currently in place By end of Year 1 |
| | Switchboard | The name of Limerick City and County Council will be given in Irish. | Currently in place |
| | Telephone communications with the public | The 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. Individual staff members will be encouraged to provide voicemail messages bilingually. | Currently in place By end of Year 2 |
| | Live announcements | The Council do not use live announcements | |

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|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| | Official Invitations | Invitations to official functions hosted by Limerick City and County Council will be issued bilingually where possible. | By end of Year 2 |
| | Information Leaflets/ Brochures | 25% of public information and standard notifications will be published in both official languages, other than in the case of documents of a technical, scientific or specialist nature. | By end of Year2 |
| | Application Forms | 25% of application forms will be available in both official languages. | By end of Year 2 |
| | Written correspondence | The Council will continue to reply to correspondence received in Irish. This also applies to e-mail correspondence. | Currently in place |
| Media | Press Releases | Press releases pertaining to Irish Language issues will be issued simultaneously bilingually. | Ongoing |
| | Media Spokespersons | The Council will facilitate media requests in both Irish and English. | Currently in place |
| | Speeches | The Council include 10% of Irish content in our speeches | Currently in place |
| | Email | We will publish a dedicated email address for queries in Irish on the website. Standard and pre-written messages on the Council's email, will be made in both Irish and English. | By end of Year 1 By end of Year 3 |
| Information Technology | 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. | By end of Year 1 |
| | Computer Systems | Any new computer system being installed will be fully capable of handling the Irish Language, where appropriate. | 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

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. | Ongoing |
| | Training | In the lifespan of the previous Irish Language Scheme the Council facilitated a number of staff to Irish Language courses of varying standards. In response to demand, further options for language courses will continue to be provided. | Ongoing |
| | Participation in language promotion activities /Provision of resources | The Council is committed to promoting cultural initiatives, which support and encourage the use of the Irish Language. The Council currently have a 'Ciorcal Gaeilge Tuar an Daill' who meet weekly. | Ongoing |

5.3 Designated Irish Language Posts

Having regard to Government policy for enhanced provision of services in Irish, the Council will, identify 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 this Council to plan and prioritise the incremental improvement of services in Irish in a more strategic manner.

Chapter 6: Monitoring and Review

Each Directorate of Limerick City and County Council will be required to reflect the commitments of this scheme in its Annual Business Plan.

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 Freda Ryan, Corporate Services, Governance and Customer Services.

The Council will monitor requests for services through Irish received through its website and telephone systems.

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 from time to time.

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.