

COUNTY GALWAY LOCAL AUTHORITIES LANGUAGE SCHEME 2014 - 2017

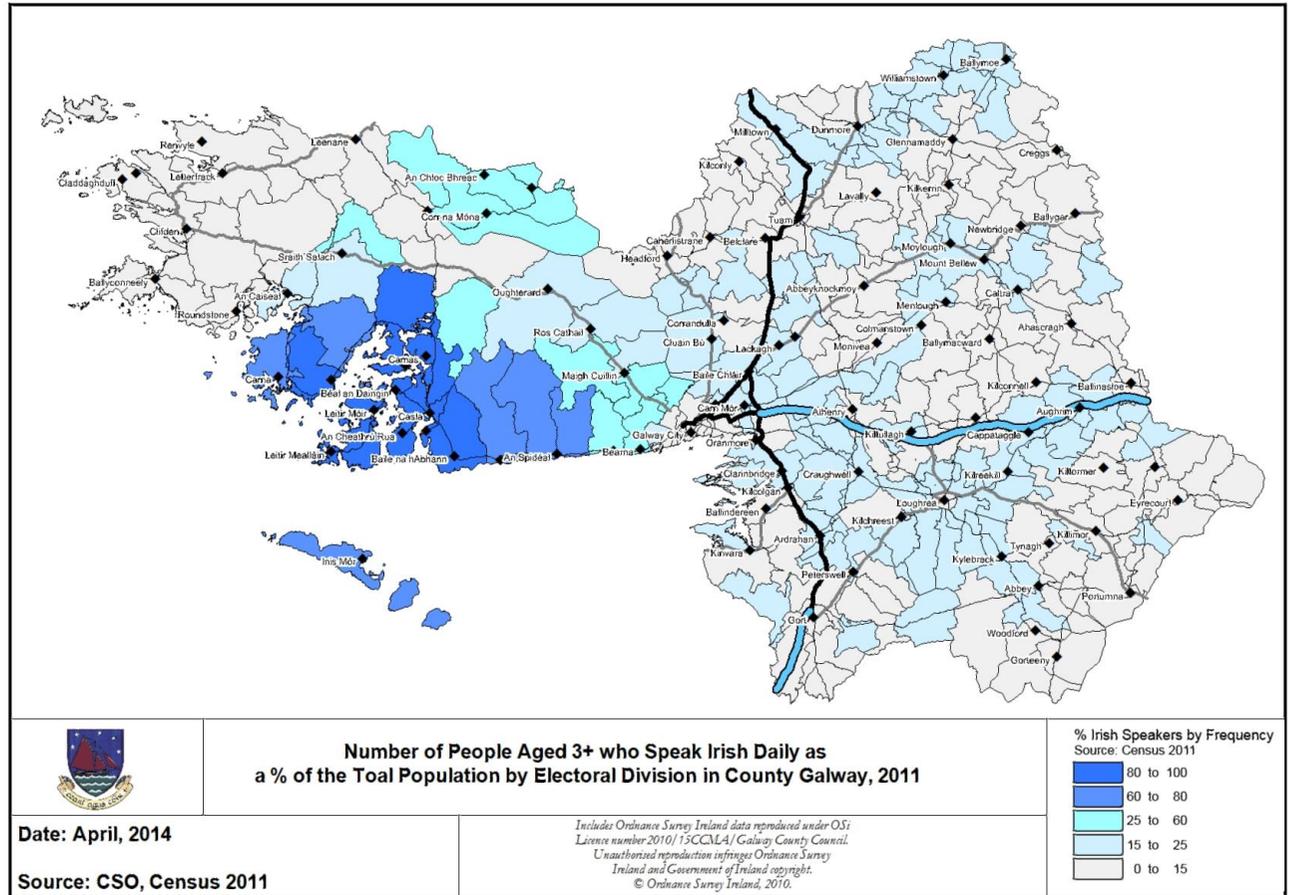
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Contae na Gaillimhe: Introduction and Overview

Contae na Gaillimhe / County Galway is Ireland's second largest County after Cork with an area of 6,149 square kilometres and has a highly indented coastline stretching to almost 2,000 kilometres. The County is blessed with a landscape of extraordinary beauty and rich cultural heritage. The Irish language and culture, and the physical landscape provide the County as a whole with a special and unique cultural identity.

Contae na Gaillimhe has the largest Gaeltacht population in Ireland containing 48.5% of the national Gaeltacht population.

The County's population increased by 10 % from 2006 to 2011 and currently stands at 175,124 (excluding Galway City). The County has a predominately rural character with only three centres of population deemed large enough to be categorised as towns at a national level. Migration towards Galway City is placing an increasing demand on infrastructure and services, while some rural areas are experiencing decline and depopulation. 77.4% of the population live in aggregate rural areas.



According to figures from the CSO, Census 2011, of the 1.77 million people who indicated that they speak Irish, 574,735 people aged 3+ speak Irish on a daily basis. 84,962 persons in Contae na Gaillimhe indicated they could speak the Irish language and of these 35,668 spoke the language daily. Approximately 24,000 of these are located in Gaeltacht areas in Conamara and to the east of Galway City. Irish is the daily community language in communities from Na Forbacha to Carna including Oileáin Árainn with over 90% of some of these communities using the language as their daily language of choice. These figures do not include Irish speakers in Galway City and its environs.

There are 8 Gaelscoileanna and 38 National Schools operating wholly through Irish within the County as well as 10 post primary all Irish schools. County Galway is host to the headquarters of An Roinn Ealaíon, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta, Údarás na Gaeltachta, Oifig an Choimisinéara Teanga and the main offices of national Irish language media such as RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta and TG4. There are a vast amount of Irish language organisations or branches of such operating in the County as a whole.

Part 1: An Scéim Teanga 2014-2017

1.1 Preparation of the Language Scheme

County Galway Local Authorities prepared this Scheme under Section 15 of the Official Languages Act 2003.

Included in County Galway Local Authorities are Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe together with Ballinasloe, Loughrea and Tuam Town Councils. The Scheme applies to all of the Authorities mentioned unless stated otherwise elsewhere in this Scheme.

The Act provides that, for the purposes of promoting the use of the Irish Language for official purposes in the State, public bodies prepare a statutory Scheme specifying the services, which the public body proposes to provide

- exclusively through the medium of the Irish Language
- exclusively through the medium of the English Language, and
- through the medium of both the Irish and English Languages

and the measures the body proposes to adopt to ensure that any services that are not provided by the body through the medium of the Irish Language will be so provided within an agreed timeframe.

This Scheme was prepared having regard to the Guidelines of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht under Section 12 of the Official Languages Act 2003.

Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe in association with Ballinasloe, Loughrea and Tuam Town Council's published a notice under Section 13 of the Act inviting submissions, regarding the preparation of the draft Scheme from any interested parties. The Scheme was prepared taking all relevant submissions from interested parties into consideration.

Included also is the Council's many years experience of the demand for quality services through Irish and the public's wishes in this regard. The Council is extremely grateful for the input and support of each person and all organisations that made the effort to contribute to the preparation of this Scheme.

1.2 Content and objectives of the Language Scheme

The Council recognises that members of the public can express their views and needs better in their preferred language and that enabling the public to use their preferred language is a matter of good practice. With the implementation of this Scheme the Council is committed to the progression of a bilingual culture in their dealings with customers and to providing all its services through the medium of Irish in a phased manner over a series of schemes.

The primary objective of the Official Languages Act 2003 and this Scheme is to ensure better availability and a higher standard of public services through Irish. This scheme seeks to achieve this in light of the experience of the implementation of the Council's first Scheme and seeks to continue and build on the objectives of the first scheme as appropriate. It sets out a commitment on behalf of the Council and staff to develop the extent to which services are currently available through Irish and it identifies areas for future enhancement.

The first Scéim Teanga of Údaráis Áitiúla Chontae na Gaillimhe came into force on the 23 August 2005 and is succeeded by this second scheme. Oifig An Choimisinéara Teanga completed an interim and final review of the first scheme with the cooperation of Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe. Issues associated with the implementation of commitments within that scheme have been dealt with by the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga on an ongoing basis and in the context of the formal review process.

The Scheme has regard to the principles of Quality Customer Services as outlined in our Customer Service Action Plan. The Scheme clarifies the services currently available in Irish and the services provided by County Galway Local Authorities which will be improved over a period of time and/or series of Schemes.

Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhes' decentralised locations are taken into consideration, including the differing levels of demand and the differing contexts within which each of the Area Offices operate. Particular attention is focussed on the offices that deliver services to Gaeltacht areas. The Council recognises the demand for quality services through Irish from the Irish speaking community outside of the Gaeltacht including Gaelscoileanna, Irish Language schools, Irish Language Organisations and Irish speakers throughout the County.

The Scheme also includes a commitment to assess and encourage on an ongoing basis the level of demand for services through Irish and to ensure that the Council continues to meet this demand in a planned, coherent and accessible way. As part of this scheme, the Council will gauge the level of demand for its services in the Irish Language by carrying out audits through a system of counting/measuring the level of queries/requests for services through Irish in a given period. It is through publicising and illustrating the reliability of new services through Irish delivered at different times that the demand and usage of services will be encouraged.

1.2.1 Interpretation

In this Scheme, save where the context otherwise requires–

- “Act” - means the Official Languages Act 2003;
- “Language” - means the official languages meaning the Irish language (being the national language and the first official language) and the English language (being a second official language) as specified in Article 8 of the Constitution;
- “Service” - means a service offered or provided (whether directly or indirectly) to the general public or a class of the general public by the Council;
- “Council” - means County Galway Local Authorities comprising of and including all structures of Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe, Ballinasloe, Tuam and Loughrea Town Councils;
- “Scheme” - means County Galway Local Authorities Language Scheme 2014-2017 under Section 15 of the Act as confirmed by the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht under Section 14 of the Act;
- “Measure” means the measures or commitments of the scheme in accordance with Section 11(1)(b) of the Official Languages Act 2003.
- “Gaeltacht” means an area that was before the passing of the Gaeltacht Act 2012 determined to be a Gaeltacht area by order made under section 2 of the Ministers and Secretaries (Amendment) Act 1956 and continued to be such an area by section 7(1) of the Gaeltacht Act 2012, and any Gaeltacht Language Planning Area designated by order under section 7 (2) of the Gaeltacht Act 2012.
- “Placename” - includes the name of any province, county, city, town, village, barony, parish or townland, or any territorial feature (whether natural or artificial), district, region or place, as shown in the maps of Ordnance Survey Ireland.

1.3 Commencement Date of the Scheme

This Scheme has been agreed and confirmed between Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe and the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht Affairs. The Scheme is commenced with effect from 06 May 2014 and succeeds the previous Scheme. It shall remain in force for a period of three years from this date or until the Minister pursuant to Section 15 of the Act has confirmed a new Scheme, whichever is the later.

1.4 Context and Parameters of the Scheme

The implementation of the Scheme for the period 2014-2017 will take place in a much different operating environment to that which pertained in the preceding scheme. The current operating environment of County Galway Local Authorities is marked by a sharp decline in finance available which will impact negatively on all of our work programmes. In particular the financial environment coupled with Government policy including a moratorium on recruitment and the implementation of schemes such as the Incentivised Scheme for Early Retirement or the Shorter Working Year Scheme has resulted in a significant loss of staff to the Council. These changes require increased staff mobility within and between departments and the organisation is currently undergoing a significant degree of restructuring and staff movement. These staff reductions and movements inevitably impact negatively on our ability to meet our targets and objectives across all programmes including this Scheme notwithstanding our endeavours to ensure that this is minimised. In particular the requirement to move staff for operational reasons will affect in a positive or negative way our ability to deliver a service in Irish having regard to the current function of that staff member and their capacity to deliver services through the Irish Language.

It should be noted that 'Putting People First- Action Programme for Effective Local Government' will result in reforms across all the main areas of local government, including service and structural reforms within local authorities. The details of the transition and implementation measures remain under development and hence are not reflected in the measures of this scheme.

It must also be noted that should economic circumstances within the period allow for a resumption of some level of recruitment, the Council must adhere to the qualifications for the post set by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government in respect of any position.

It is intended that the paragraphs above set out the context and parameters of the scheme in recognition of the difficult operating environment which currently exists.

Part 2

General Services/Activities of County Galway Local Authorities

2.1 Overview of County Galway Local Authorities

According to the Local Government Act 2001, a primary function of the local authority is to provide a forum for the democratic representation of the local community and provide the community with civic leadership. In addition, the local authority has responsibility for the provision of a range of services together with regulatory and enforcement functions. Responsibilities include the planning, design and construction of important infrastructural facilities. It is the custodian of the environment and through its polices seeks to promote the sustainable development of the County while enhancing its business, economic, social, arts, heritage and cultural identity.

In accordance with the Irish system of local government, which encompasses both democratic representation and public administration, the Council as a local authority performs both a representational and operational role. Thirty elected representatives drawn from 5 electoral areas perform the representational role of the authority under a system of *reserved functions* whereby they lay down the framework for policy under which a Management Team operates. A Corporate Policy Group and five Strategic Policy Committees formulate and agree policy proposals for consideration by the full Council. The SPC's comprise of elected Councillors and voluntary / sectoral representatives who review and formulate policy across the range of Council functions. A Management Team consisting of the County Manager, Directors of Services, and Law Agent operate in an executive capacity.

Ballinasloe Town Council

Ballinasloe is a statutory administrative area in its own right and the Town Council is a Municipal Authority with origins dating back to 1841. The Council over the years has laid the foundations for the development of Ballinasloe by providing the necessary infrastructure and services. The Town Council has 9 elected members and performs important representation functions as well as articulating the views of their areas in relation to policy and operational matters.

In addition to providing essential services such as public lighting, street cleaning, social housing, development control and physical planning, the Council are involved in a wide range of other activities such as the provision and maintenance of recreational and amenity facilities, casual trading, the October Fair and Tidy Towns. The Council consists of 9 elected representatives, and the day-to-day administration of the organisation is carried out under the guidance of the Town Clerk.

Loughrea & Tuam Town Councils

Town Council representative and policy-making structures operate in Tuam and Loughrea Town Councils. Each Town Council has 9 elected members. Loughrea and Tuam Town Councils are not separate functioning authorities in their own right but perform important representation functions and articulate the views of their areas in relation to policy and operational matters. These town Councils are important service delivery centres for the Council in their respective Towns.

The Council's mission statement is:

**To deliver local authority services for County Galway
which enhance the economic, social and cultural life of the citizens.**

2.2 Main Activities of the Local Authority

4 Directorates and a Finance Unit have responsibility for the provision of the range of services delivered by the local authority.

CORPORATE, HOUSING & EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Corporate Services Section encompasses a wide variety of Council services ranging from Corporate Support to Library Services, Internal Audit, Legal Services, and support to the Council in the form of Corporate Secretariat. The Section provides direct services to the public in areas such as recreation and amenity, Freedom of Information, Register of Electors and Student Support Grants. The promotion and development of the Irish language within the local authority and the County is also a responsibility of this Section. The objective of the Housing & Emergency Section is to provide appropriate housing accommodation and a responsive and supportive housing service for those in need of assistance. The Section seeks to enable eligible households to have available an affordable dwelling of good quality, suited to its needs, in a good environment and as far as possible at the tenure of its choice. The Council is the Fire Authority for the whole of the County including the City and appropriate fire safety measures are implemented

ROADS, TRANSPORTATION, MARINE AND GENERAL SERVICES

The Roads, Transportation, Marine & General Services Unit is responsible for the design, maintenance and improvement of the National, Regional and Local Road Network throughout the County. It also deals with matters relating to the Marine Infrastructure, Road Safety, and Arterial Drainage. Its objective is to provide safe and efficient roads, piers and harbours for the movement of persons and goods, within integrated and sustainable transport policies. Most of the Council's area offices are the responsibility of this Unit also.

PLANNING, INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS, COMMUNITY, ENTERPRISE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Planning Section's aim is to promote and support development within the county so that our customers can live in vibrant communities, where cultural differences are valued and encouraged, where everyone can be actively involved in economic, social and cultural life, where people have access to an acceptable level of services and infrastructure. The protection of the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Gaeltacht through the planning process is a responsibility of this Unit also. The Community & Enterprise Section plays a key role in supporting community development, interaction between the community and local authority services, Economic and Tourism Development, Social Inclusion, Arts, Culture and Sports.

HUMAN RESOURCES

The key functions of the Human Resources Department are to support Line Managers and Employees in achieving efficient and effective delivery of Galway County Council's corporate and business objectives; promote a positive working environment; manage workforce planning, training and development of staff, staff recruitment, delivery of statutory and non-statutory staff welfare policies and procedures; maintain stable industrial relations and create an equitable, consultative and supportive working environment.

WATER SERVICES AND ENVIRONMENT

The provision of a clean, healthy environment, which promotes and facilitates sustainable development, is a core remit of the Environment and Water Services Section. The Section has a strong enforcement role in relation to waste management and environmental protection, in addition to monitoring and protecting the natural and built environment.

FINANCE

The Finance unit encompasses the Information Systems Section and Motor Tax Section and its function is to ensure that all financial transactions conducted are accountable and transferable and to implement systems for the efficient operation of Council financial resources. All of the activities of the Council have financial implications and the management of the Council's finances is a core function of the Finance Section.

2.3 Council Structure

The Council's main offices are located in Áras an Chontae and in Centrepoin in the Liosbaun Industrial Estate in Galway City.

There are 8 area offices located in the 5 electoral areas that constitute the County. The locations of those offices are as follows: Clifden, An Cheathrú Rua, Ballinasloe, Athenry, Loughrea, Gort, Portumna, and Tuam. The offices in An Cheathrú Rua are located in a Gaeltacht area.

A branch library network extends to 29 locations which are An Cheathrú Rua, An Spidéal, Athenry, Ballinasloe, Ballybane, Ballygar, Clifden, Dunmore, Eyrecourt, Glenamaddy, Galway City, Gort, Headford, Inisbofin, Inis Meáin, Inis Oírr, Killimor, Cill Rónáin, Leenane, Letterfrack, Loughrea, Moylough, Oranmore, Oughterard, Portumna, Cloch na Rón, Tuam, Westside, Woodford. A mobile library also operates throughout the County.

The library headquarters and the Galway City Branch are the responsibility of the library services and are located in Galway City. The An Cheathrú Rua, An Spidéal, Inis Meáin, Inis Oírr, and Cill Rónáin branch libraries are located in Gaeltacht areas and the Oughterard, Cloch na Rón, Clifden and Oranmore libraries have extensive Gaeltacht areas within their functional areas.

Fire Stations are located in 10 areas around the County. These are Athenry, Ballinasloe, Clifden, Galway City, Gort, Inis Mór, Loughrea, Mountbellew, Portumna and Tuam. The Clifden, Galway City and Inis Mór fire stations service Gaeltacht Areas.

The Council employs up to 889 staff on a full or part-time basis including office and outdoor staff. Up to 72 of this staff complement are in the Library Services. Ballinasloe Town Council has 25 staff with Tuam and Loughrea Town Councils served by Town Clerks.

2.4 Customers and Clients

- All members of the public in Contae na Gaillimhe
- Government Departments
- State Agencies
- Other Regional and Local Authorities
- Galway County Development Board Structures
- Elected Members
- Council Staff
- Voluntary and Business Sectors
- Local and National Media
- Community Co-ops, Councils and Groups
- EU Organisations
- Community Fora
- LEADER Companies
- Social partners and Sectoral representative groups

2.5 Assessment of current Irish Services

The following specific services are fully available through Irish currently and are available in English also if such is requested/required.

- Oifigeach Forbartha na Gaeilge;
- Environmental Awareness Services;
- Revenue Collection in Conamara;
- Motor Tax Services in An Cheathrú Rua;
- Road Safety Promotional Services;
- Senior Environmental Technician Services;
- Housing Liaison in Conamara;
- Management level Services in Roads unit
- Community Warden services in the Conamara Theas Engineering Area
- Library services in An Spidéal, An Cheathrú Rua, Cill Rónáin, Inis Meáin & Inis Oírr;
- Community Development Services in Conamara.

The following specific services are currently partially available bilingually:

- Library Services in Westside & Library HQs.
- Meetings with Irish Organisations/Agencies
- Heritage & Arts Offices
- Planning Public Counters & Meetings
- Corporate Services Public Counter
- Motor Tax Services in Áras an Chontae
- Housing Public Counters in Áras an Chontae
- Roads Public Counter in Áras an Chontae
- Fire Services in Conamara & Islands

All of the Councils brochures, information leaflets and application forms are currently bilingual and these constitute a significant proportion of how services are initiated and delivered.

Part 3 - Measures of the Scheme

Measure 3.1. Brochures/Information Leaflets

Target Date: Ongoing except where stated.

- All brochures/information leaflets produced by the Council will continue to be in Irish only or bilingual within the one document with both languages given equal status but may be in English only if related to an initiative specific to the English language.
- In exceptional cases where this proves impractical due to the technicality or the size of content of brochures/information leaflets, separate Irish and English versions may be made available. Their availability will be simultaneous and both versions will be given equal prominence and will carry a message confirming that the brochure/information leaflet is also available in the other language.
- The Council will ensure that where brochures/information leaflets are provided by it as separate Irish and English language versions, that equal prominence is given to both versions at all public locations and that the Irish language version will be as readily accessible as the English language version. Customers will proactively be made aware of the availability of a separate Irish version by way of a suitable statement on the English version of the document and by any other means that the Council deems appropriate.
- In the case of brochures/information leaflets used or provided by the Council, being produced by another body apart from the Council, Irish only and bilingual forms will continue to be actively requested. Separate Irish and English brochures/information leaflets of this type will continue to be distributed together by post or over the counter, where both are made available to the Council on request, and where the language preference of the customer has been established to be Irish, the Irish brochure/information leaflet only shall be issued, where such Irish brochure/information leaflet is made available to the Council on request.

Measure 3.2. Written Communication

Target Date: Ongoing except where stated.

- The Council will continue to welcome correspondence in either Irish or English. A standard statement will continue to be included on the Council's headed paper, compliment slip, email disclaimer, website, public notices etc. to say that correspondence is welcomed in Irish or English.
- Correspondence received by the Council will continue to be acknowledged (where such is required) in the language of the original letter. When further correspondence is required it will continue in the same language.
- Corresponding with the Council in Irish will not cause any undue delay and the target period set out in the Customer Action Plan will apply.
- All correspondence following a telephone or face-to-face conversation in Irish will continue to be in Irish unless the member of the public has indicated otherwise. This will also apply where it has been established that the customers preferred language is Irish, although the meeting/telephone conversation concerned may not have been held through the medium of Irish.
- General correspondence initiated by the Council with the public in a Gaeltacht area or an individual, group, school, Gaelscoil or an organisation that normally uses Irish or prefers to do so, where this is known, will generally be in Irish or may be bilingual if requested or deemed necessary.
- In the day to day running of services, circulars and standard letters will be issued to the public bilingually in accordance with Section 9(3) of the Act.
- A central listing of individuals, groups, schools, Gaelscoileanna and organisations that it is known to prefer to carry out communications in Irish will continue to be maintained as per current practice.

Measure 3.3. Application Forms

Target Date: Ongoing except where stated.

- All application forms and associated explanatory material produced by the Council will continue to be in Irish only or in Irish and in English within the one document but may be in 'English only' if related to an initiative specific to the English language .
- In exceptional cases where this proves impractical due to the technicality or the size of documents, separate Irish and English versions may be made available. Their availability will be simultaneous and both versions will be given equal prominence and will carry a message confirming that the form is also available in the other language.

- The Council will ensure that where application forms and associated explanatory material are provided by it as separate Irish and English language versions, that equal prominence is given to both versions at all public locations and that the Irish language version will be as readily accessible as the English language version. Customers will proactively be made aware of the availability of a separate Irish version by way of a suitable statement on the English version of the document and by any other means that the Council deems appropriate.
- All bilingual application forms produced by the Council itself will include a clear statement welcoming the completion of the form in Irish.
- The Council will make every effort to ensure that the Irish used in the application forms it produces is legible and easily understood while having regard to accuracy of standard spelling and grammar.
- In the case of application forms used or provided by the Council, being produced by another body apart from the Council, Irish only and bilingual forms will continue to be actively requested. Separate Irish and English forms will be equally available and distributed together by post or over the counter, where both are made available to the Council on request and where the language preference of the customer has been established to be Irish, the Irish form only shall be issued where such Irish application form is made available to the Council on request.

Measure 3.4. Press Releases and Statements

Target Date: Ongoing except where stated.

- Any Communications policy prepared by the Council shall have regard to the measures of this Scheme during policy preparation.
- Where the language preference of specific members of the press or media has been established it will continue to be the case that their language of choice shall continue to be recognised, including in issuing replies to specific media queries and requests for statements.
- All press releases relating to Countywide issues, Gaeltacht areas, Gaeltacht issues or Irish Language issues will be issued bilingually.
- The Council will endeavour to ensure that an adequate number of Irish speaking spokespersons, of sufficient authority, will be available for media interviews on any Council issues when the need arises while also ensuring that where contact names for further information are given on press releases/statements that an officer will be made available to provide that information in Irish or English.

Measure 3.5. Publications

Target Date: Ongoing except where stated.

- All of the Council's bilingual publications will continue to be within the same cover in accordance with best practice except where impractical due to the size of the document where they will be published in accordance with section 10 of the Act.
- Where a publication is to be produced bilingually, it will be assumed that the document is not ready for publication unless both language versions are available.
- Documents currently published bilingually by the Council and not covered by Section 10 of the Act will continue to be published bilingually.
- Documents pertaining specifically to a Gaeltacht area will continue to be published in Irish only or bilingually.
- Documents of a technical nature will continue to be published in English only, except where there is a wide interest to the public in general or the document is of local significance to the Gaeltacht in which case a bilingual version or an Irish summary will be made available.
- If there is a charge to be made for a bilingual publication, such a charge will not be greater than that made for a single language document in either official language.
- Irish used in publications pertaining to Gaeltacht areas will be legible and easily understood while having regard to accuracy of standard spelling and grammar.
- The Council will establish a planned structure for the translation needs of the Council including the use of external translators.

Measure 3.6. Website, Online & IT Services

Target Date: Ongoing except where stated.

- The Council's website, www.gaillimh.ie / www.galway.ie, will be fully bilingual, have equal functionality and will be fully interchangeable between languages.
 - Any content added to the website will be published simultaneously in both languages with each unit responsible for the provision of content in both languages. In emergency situations where content must be published to the website immediately and where translation services may not be immediately available, content can be published in English only with the Irish version to follow within the next working day.

- Documents, publications, minutes, brochures, adverts etc. which are available bilingually will be published on the website in bilingual format. Documents, publications, minutes, brochures, adverts etc in respect of which there is no commitment to publish bilingually will be published on the Website in the original language only.
- Presentations, speeches etc. may be published on the website in the language in which they were given. If the content is of significant local or public importance consideration will be given to providing a summary or a version in the other language.
- The homepage/landing page on the Council’s website through www.gaillimh.ie / www.galway.ie will be developed to offer the option of proceeding through Irish via www.gaillimh.ie or through English via www.galway.ie and both will continue to have equal functionality and all content will be fully interchangeable between www.gaillimh.ie / www.galway.ie
- The Council will ensure that static content will be bilingual on any new website, introduced during the course of this scheme, which pertains to the local authorities specific functions and on which the Council have full control of the website and its content.
- Any new systems or programmes developed by the Council in-house or bought directly will have a fully bilingual customer interface, be introduced simultaneously and capable of handling the Irish language.
- Any new interactive services developed by the Council in-house will be fully bilingual and introduced simultaneously.
- Any existing interactive services developed by the Council in-house whose customer interface is not currently bilingual will be made fully bilingual on the next scheduled upgrade within the lifetime of this scheme.
- The Council will ensure that all printers etc. will be fully capable of handling the Irish language on replacement.
- The Council will continue to promote and administer gaeilge@cocogaillimh.ie as a generic email address for all queries in the Irish Language.
- The Council will continue to actively use technology to improve the provision of bilingual services.
- The Gaeilge section of the Council’s Intranet will continue to be expanded as a support and resource for staff.

Measure 3.7. Telephone Communication

Target Date: Ongoing except where stated.

- As part of its upgraded telephone service, the Council will, within the lifetime of this scheme, establish to the greatest extent possible, a dedicated Irish Language telephone number/service for those who wish to conduct their business in Irish.
- If the/an Irish speaker, within the relevant service area is not available, the person receiving the call will explain the situation courteously and take the caller’s name, number and details of the query and will ensure that an Irish speaker from the Council returns the call. This will only be done if it can be ensured that calls will be returned within two hours where an Irish speaker is available on the premises or, at most, within one working day. Otherwise the caller will be offered the choice of being called back in Irish by another member of staff or continuing the conversation in English along the same timelines.
- In publicising any phone numbers to the public, the Council will ensure that a suitable alternative number for the Irish service is also published.
- A directory of Irish speakers willing to deal with Irish Language calls within the Council will be integrated to the internal telephone directory as a guide to staff who wish to transfer calls to Irish speakers. Units will facilitate internal support networks to facilitate the service.
- Receptionists/switchboard operators in Gaeltacht offices shall continue to be fully competent in dealing with fluent Irish speakers and telephone calls in these offices will be answered using greetings in Irish only and the call can continue in the customer’s preferred language thereafter.

Measure 3.8. Counter Services

Target Date: Ongoing except where stated.

- The Council welcomes callers to its offices in Irish or English and this will be made known to the public. All callers to its offices will be treated on the basis of courtesy and equality, recognising the language of preference of the customer including the appropriate use of simple Irish greetings, and in accordance with the principles of Quality Customer Service.

- The Council will ensure that such structures as detailed in the Scheme are and will be in place so that all counter services in Áras an Chontae and Centrepoint office locations will be fully available bilingually to deal with Irish speakers. The Council shall publicise clearly such structures by means of appropriate public notices at service delivery locations.
- An Irish language counter service will be provided on a structured bilingual basis in the Council's principal offices as follows:
 - If the/an Irish speaker able to provide the service requested in Irish is available, an Irish language service will be provided.
 - If the/an Irish speaker able to provide the service requested in Irish is not available, the person dealing with the customer will explain the situation courteously and inform the customer of when an Irish speaker, will be available, (this will only be done if an Irish speaker will be available in a reasonable amount of time) or alternatively the customer will be offered the following options:
 - To arrange a certain time when an Irish speaker will be present.
 - The customer may, if they so wish, avail of the option of continuing the conversation in English. *The option to continue the conversation in English, will only be offered in the event that all of the options as detailed above, have been offered and declined by the customer.*
- Where Regional Service Centres become fully operational within the lifetime of this Scheme it shall be an objective to ensure that:
 - For Regional Service Centres that do not have Gaeltacht areas within their functional areas, at least one member of staff will be competent in delivering local authority services through Irish.
 - For Regional Service Centres that have Gaeltacht areas within their functional area, at least two members of staff that will be competent in delivering local authority services through Irish
 - The Council will ensure that any Regional Service Centre located in a Gaeltacht area will have the ability to provide all of the centres' counter services through Irish
 - The Council will ensure that the particular Irish language requirements associated with the provision of services in Gaeltacht areas are met in any Regional Service Centre which has a Gaeltacht area within its functional area.
- Within the lifetime of this Scheme, Ballinasloe Town Council will provide training for an adequate number of staff in order to advance the provision of a Reception Desk Service in Irish to deal with customer queries in the first instance when such a service is requested.
- Staff will readily accept any customer's details accurately in Irish and there will be no requirement for the customer to change their details to English at any time. Where it is established/known that a customer's preferred language is Irish and that their details are currently in English on the relevant system/database etc in use, the customer will be advised of an option to authorise the change of their details to Irish through the appropriate mechanisms.
- Any correspondence, consequent to a counter transaction where the customer's language preference is determined, will continue to be in that language even if the transaction may have transpired in the other language.

Measure 3.9. Public Meetings/Meetings with the public

Target Date: Ongoing except where stated.

- Contributions in Irish or English will continue to be welcomed at meetings with the public, organised by or on behalf of the Council.
- Upon organising a meeting with a client if it is established that Irish is the language of choice, the Council will continue to ensure that arrangements are in place to facilitate the use of Irish by the client.
- If previous dealings with the client have been through Irish it will be assumed that the language of the meeting and any consequent contact will be through Irish.
- If the meeting occurs without adequate time to arrange for a bilingual officer to meet with the client, the situation will be explained courteously and the client will, unless the presence of a particular officer is required, be given a choice of: 1) arranging a further appointment with an Irish speaking officer, 2) having an Irish speaking third party present at the meeting if such is available, 3) holding the discussion in English.

- The client's preferred language will be established before a meeting in the home/outside the office is arranged. In a Gaeltacht area the preferred language will automatically be assumed to be Irish. The Council will ensure that officers attending meetings with individuals, whose preferred language is known to be Irish, will be Irish speakers unless the presence of a particular officer is required.
- Any public meetings held, by the Council or on the Council's behalf by a third party, in the Gaeltacht, or dealing with specific Gaeltacht issues, will continue to be conducted through Irish. Simultaneous translation may be provided if required.
- The language preference of those attending a public meeting will be sought in advance by inviting them to declare their language preference in the notice of the meeting. Where this is not specified in the notice of the meeting it may be assumed that the use of Irish at the meeting will be welcome.
- The Chair or at least one key speaker will be encouraged to make official use of Irish at all meetings with the public arranged by or on behalf of the Council.
- Arrangements will be made for members of the public to use their preferred language, Irish or English, at public meetings where the language preference is known.
- Where it is required, the Council will provide portable translation equipment at all meetings with the public organised by or on behalf of the Council at locations where permanent translation equipment is not installed.
- The provision of simultaneous translation facilities will be made known at the beginning of the meeting and care will be taken to ensure an accessible and clear structure will be in place for distributing headsets, ensuring that they are used correctly and that they are working efficiently.
- When the Council specifically arranges meetings with organisations that normally work in Irish, the meeting will take place in Irish. Simultaneous translation may be provided as required.
- Where the majority of participants at any meeting are known in advance to be Irish speakers or from Irish language organisations, the Council will make arrangements to organise work teams so as to include, or have availability of, an Irish-speaking employee at the meeting which will be conducted through Irish.
- An appropriate officer will decide whether simultaneous or other translation facilities are required for public meetings, having regard to the above and other factors pertaining. These will include the subject or purpose of the meeting, its location, those likely to attend and any prior notification of language preference.

Measure 3.10. Consultation

Target Date: Ongoing except where stated.

- All consultation conducted by, or on behalf of the Council will be conducted bilingually or in English or Irish, according to the preference of the consultee. This includes consultation with external stakeholders e.g. residents, service users, businesses, voluntary organisations, partner organisations and Town and Community Councils.
- Questionnaires, consultation documents and associated information will be published bilingually and be equally accessible to consultees.
- Stakeholders will be given the choice of participating in interviews, discussion groups or interactive forums in English or Irish. In exceptional circumstances where this is not possible simultaneous translation will be provided.
- When planning consultation, consideration will be given to whether Irish speakers or English speakers should be consulted as a specific target group.
- If undertaking feedback on a consultation process in general, the feedback will include a determination whether satisfaction varies between Irish speakers and English speakers in the community.
- If consultation is to be undertaken by an external agency, the above requirements will be included in the brief and the relevant contract between the Council and the agency.

Measure 3.11. Corporate Image, Signage, General Measures

Target Date: Ongoing except where stated.

- The Council's name is Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe / Galway County Council.
- The names for the Town Council's will be as follows: Comhairle Baile Bhéal Átha na Sluaghe / Ballinasloe Town Council; Comhairle Baile Thuama / Tuam Town Council; Comhairle Baile Bhaile Locha Riach / Loughrea Town Council.

- The Irish titles of members and Council officials will be used wherever possible. e.g. Méara, Comhairleoirí, Bainisteoir Contae, Rúnaí Contae, Cléireach an Bhaile etc. and phased to a situation where only the Irish version is used with the agreement of appropriate parties.
- Where the Council name appears on uniforms and identity badges it will continue to be in Irish.
- Any text on the Council's current crest and any new crest the Council develops will continue to be in Irish only.
- Any signage, erected by the Council, in the environs of a Gaelscoil or school working through the medium of Irish will be in Irish only.
- In certain circumstances internationally recognised symbols may be used instead of English on signs in Gaeltacht areas.
- The Council will ensure that the text on all signage will be accurate, understandable, clear and checked for accuracy.
- The Council will facilitate and encourage any town/village/community inside or outside the Gaeltacht who wish to have signage in their area in Irish only.
- Any signage which requires permission from the Council to be erected will be fully bilingual. Such signs will be in Irish only in the Gaeltacht. The spelling/accuracy of the text will be approved by the Council or an appropriate linguistic expert.
- Any planning permissions granted by the Council in Gaeltacht areas will include conditions to have all permanent signage, internal and external, on such developments in Irish only including during the construction phase, and that the spelling/accuracy of the text must be approved by the Council or an appropriate linguistic expert.
- Any commercial planning permissions granted by the Council outside the Gaeltacht will include conditions to have both internal and external permanent signage in Irish only or in Irish and in English and that the spelling/accuracy of the text must be approved by the Council or an appropriate linguistic expert.
- Any new residential developments will continue to be named in Irish as a condition of the planning permission. The Council's placenames committee will have the responsibility of vetting and selecting such names according to its terms of reference, consultation with the Placenames Branch of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if required and having consideration for the existing placenames, history and local heritage of the area.
- Adoption of Irish names for new streets, roads, features will be promoted and appropriate consultation will be conducted in order to define the name of the street, road etc. This will be the responsibility of the Council's Placenames Committee.
- For historical developments, street names, roads, place names and geographical features, where the difference between Irish and English versions of a name and street is merely spelling, the Irish form will be adopted as the only form. In all cases where two versions of names are used, the Irish version will be placed foremost and uppermost.
- An t-Ordú Logainmneacha (Ceantair Ghaeltachta) 2004 will be used by the Council for official purposes and used as a default in all of the Council's databases and correspondence.
- The Council will actively ensure that it performs to, at the very least, the minimum statutory role and duties given to it in any legislation regarding the Irish language and will continually endeavour to go above and beyond that role. e.g. Planning & Development Acts, Local Government Act 2001, Official Languages Act 2003, Gaeltacht Act 2012, etc.
- The library service will ensure that the amount of Irish books available in its units and provided to schools is increased continually.

Measure 3.12. New Policies and Initiatives

Target Date: Ongoing except where stated.

- The Council will assess the linguistic consequences of any new policies, strategies or initiatives of its ownership during the process of formulation, and their effect on the Irish language within a service and communities in the Gaeltacht and in the County as a whole with a view to informing the preparation of further language schemes.
- New policies and initiatives will be consistent with and not undermine the Scheme and will promote and facilitate the use of Irish wherever possible; they will not be to the detriment of the Cultural and Linguistic Heritage of the Gaeltacht, will have a promotional aspect wherever possible and will endeavour to move the Council closer to implementing the principle of linguistic equality at every opportunity.

- Staff and consultants involved in policy formulation will be informed of the Scheme and of the organisation's obligations under the Official Languages Act 2003.
- Existing policies will be reviewed and if within the direct remit of the Council altered, if deemed necessary, to be in line with the provisions of this Scheme.

Measure 3.13. Services delivered on behalf of the Council

Target Date: Ongoing except where stated.

- Standard procedures for dealing with third parties delivering services to the public in conjunction with or on behalf of the Council will make provision to ensure that account is taken of this Scheme and its requirements, and the Official Languages Act 2003 and any regulations made under that Act.
- All documents, tenders, contracts, agreements and grant conditions etc. will include provision for services to be delivered according to this Scheme. Where services involve contact with the public, agents or contractors will be asked to state how those services will be delivered in Irish.
- In practice, specifications will vary according to the service being provided on the Council's behalf, having regard to the nature of the contact between the contractor and the public when the service is being provided, and what commitments the Irish Language Scheme and Official Languages Act 2003 have in respect of such contact.
- When working in partnership with other organisations the Council will inform all parties of the Language Scheme and ensure that the measures contained are implemented where such is within the Councils control. Wherever possible the Council will encourage, promote and strengthen the use of the Irish Language, bilingual policies and the Cultural and Linguistic Heritage of the Gaeltacht when such arrangements exist.

Measure 3.14. An Ghaeltacht

Target Date: Ongoing except where stated.

- General correspondence initiated by the Council with the public in a Gaeltacht area will be in Irish only or bilingual
- All press releases relating to Gaeltacht areas, Gaeltacht issues or Irish Language issues will be issued bilingually.
- Documents pertaining specifically to a Gaeltacht area will continue to be published in Irish only or bilingually.
- Irish used in publications pertaining to Gaeltacht areas will be legible and easily understood while having regard to accuracy of standard spelling and grammar. This will apply to application forms also.
- Receptionists/switchboard operators in offices located in the Gaeltacht shall continue to be fully competent in dealing with fluent Irish speakers and telephone calls in these offices will be answered using greetings in Irish only and the call can continue in the customer's preferred language thereafter.
- Where Regional Service Centres become fully operational within the lifetime of this Scheme it shall be an objective to ensure that:
 - For Regional Service Centres that do not have Gaeltacht areas within their functional areas, at least one member of staff will be competent in delivering local authority services through Irish.
 - For Regional Service Centres that have Gaeltacht areas within their functional area, at least two members of staff will be competent in delivering local authority services through Irish
 - The Council will ensure that any Regional Service Centre located in a Gaeltacht area will have the ability to provide all of the centres' counter services through Irish
 - The Council will ensure that the particular Irish language requirements associated with the provision of services in Gaeltacht areas are met in any Regional Service Centre which has a Gaeltacht area within its functional area.
- Public announcement systems used by or on behalf of the Council on its premises or elsewhere in a Gaeltacht area will function in Irish only.
- The client's preferred language will be established before a meeting in the home is arranged. In a Gaeltacht area it will automatically be assumed to be Irish. The Council will ensure that officers attending meetings with individuals whose preferred language is known to be Irish will be Irish speakers unless the presence of a particular officer is required.
- Any public meetings held, by the Council or on the Council's behalf by a third party, in the Gaeltacht, or dealing with specific Gaeltacht issues will continue to be conducted through Irish. Simultaneous translation may be provided if required.

- In certain circumstances internationally recognised symbols may be used instead of English on signs in Gaeltacht areas.
- The Council will facilitate and encourage any town/village/community inside or outside the Gaeltacht who wish to have signage in their area in Irish only. Any signage which requires permission from the Council to be erected in the Gaeltacht will be in Irish only.
- Any planning permissions granted by the Council in Gaeltacht areas will include conditions to have all permanent signage internal and external on such developments in Irish only including during the construction phase and that the spelling/accuracy of the text must be approved by the Council or an appropriate linguistic expert.
- An t-Ordú Logainmneacha (Ceantair Ghaeltachta) 2004 will be used by the Council for official purposes and used as a default in all of the Council's databases and correspondence.
- Irish will be the working language of any Council offices located in the Gaeltacht not currently functioning in this manner by 2020.
- Where Galway County Council strengthens or adds to the services provided from Oifigí na Ceathrún Rua the services will be in accordance with this Scheme.
- The Council will actively ensure that every aspect of its work directly or indirectly affecting the Gaeltacht will be in Irish and have cognisance of the cultural and linguistic heritage of the Gaeltacht and will not have a detrimental effect on the use of Irish as a community language but will promote and encourage it.
- The Council will assess the linguistic consequences of any new policies, strategies or initiatives of its ownership during the process of formulation, and their effect on the Irish language within a service and communities in the Gaeltacht and in the County as a whole with a view to informing the preparation of further language schemes.
- New policies and initiatives will not be to the detriment of the Cultural and Linguistic Heritage of the Gaeltacht and will have a promotional aspect wherever possible.
- When working in partnership with other organisations the Council will inform all parties of the Language Scheme and ensure that the measures contained are implemented where such is within the Councils control. Wherever possible the Council will encourage, promote and strengthen the use the Irish Language, bilingual policies and the Cultural and Linguistic Heritage of the Gaeltacht by all appropriate means

4: Implementation & Monitoring

4.1 Responsibility & Administration

An Bainisteoir Contae will be responsible for the overall implementation, monitoring and review of this Scheme. Directors of Services and analogous grades will be responsible for implementing the Scheme within their own Directorates/sections and for reporting progress on implementation at least annually. Each directorate/section will be required to prepare an Action Plan or to include in their annual action plans details of the actions required to ensure implementation of the requirements of this Scheme, together with target dates which correspond to the target dates set out in this Scheme. A Senior Officer within each Directorate/section may be nominated to take responsibility for its implementation within a Directorate/section. A Senior Officer within Corporate Services will be nominated to coordinate the implementation of the Scheme for the organisation as a whole, to provide advice on requirements to sections as necessary and to evaluate the Council's performance in delivering the requirements of the Scheme and to report on these matters to Management. The Director of Services responsible for a Town Council, will be responsible for the implementation, monitoring and review of this Scheme in that Town Council through the relevant Town Clerk.

4.2 Training

Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe is committed to ensuring the success of this Scheme. It therefore recognises the importance of Irish Language training for its employees. It is also recognised that the training will need to be prioritised so as to ensure that employees who are at the first point of contact with those of the County's residents who wish to use Irish, are trained to be confident in their use of the language. This applies to 'front line' employees who need to respond regularly both orally and in writing to requests, queries, comments and complaints.

Note: It is made absolutely clear in this Scheme that whilst employees will be encouraged to undertake an appropriate level of training in Irish, there will be no compulsion or coercion for them to do so.

The Council will continue to raise the confidence and competence of Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe's staff and Councillors in their bilingual skills, and to increase their oral and written use of the Irish language to support and facilitate wider use of bilingual skills in the administration of the Council to enable serving the public bilingually. The Council has endeavoured to develop its capacity to deliver services in Irish through a training programme offered to its staff. Teastas Eorpach na Gaeilge has been offered to staff throughout the lifetime of the first Scheme and up to 57 staff have undertaken various levels of the course.

In this context:

- Members of staff will be encouraged to attend appropriate courses aimed at facilitating their use of Irish with the public at work, according to the requirements of their jobs.
- The Irish Language Training Programme will endeavour to ensure the most effective and efficient use of time and resources. Learners of Irish will be encouraged to attend appropriate classes. These may be local classes organised by the Authority within the working day, or if more appropriate evening classes or intensive week/weekend courses.
- Learners' progress will be regularly monitored.
- The Information Systems section will ensure that any new Irish language support software acquired by the Council for general use is installed 1) to those who request it 2) on all existing and new P.C.'s in a planned rollout.
- Units/sections will provide copies of appropriate dictionaries for their staff.
- The need to provide training through the medium of Irish will be kept under review and offered as competencies/needs require.

- The Council will investigate the value of providing the relevant training and support for officers who will be making more use of their bilingual skills in expanding the use of translation software within the Council where appropriate.
- The Council will continue to provide Irish language support for staff on the Gaeilge section of the Council's Intranet with phrasebooks, terminology, template letters, forms advertisements etc.
- Officers who are learning Irish will be encouraged to use it at every opportunity without being deterred by lack of confidence or practice. Coffee mornings, Ciorcail Comhrá and other events may be organised to support Irish learning staff in this instance.
- Members of staff and Councillors who are able to communicate through the medium of Irish will be encouraged to make wider use of the language both orally and written in the workplace and to assist and support staff known to be learning Irish, in their use of Irish in the workplace.
- The Council will ensure that Irish Language Awareness and sensitivity training will be provided to all sections.
- The Council will investigate the opportunity of participating in Irish Language Training Networks for Local Authorities nationally or regionally.
- The Council will encourage and if possible assist professional bodies in Ireland providing training courses, to develop courses that would assist in the implementation of Language Schemes in local authorities Countrywide.
- As the need arises with the improvement of services in Irish and the requirement for bilingual skills of staff the Council will encourage professional bodies in Ireland providing training courses to deliver courses through the medium of Irish.

4.3 Staffing & Recruitment

The Official Languages Act 2003 states that a public body in preparing a draft Scheme 'shall ensure that an adequate number of its staff are competent in the Irish Language so as to be able to provide its services through Irish as well as English'. This is to enable the Council to deliver the services it commits to provide bilingually in this Scheme or over a series of schemes in line with the principles of quality customer services. The Council is committed to providing services that are efficient and of good quality to its Irish speaking residents. To achieve this it acknowledges the need to develop a sufficient complement of strategically placed Irish speaking employees. To this end the Council, in cooperation and consultation, where appropriate, with the Public Appointments Service, staff and their representative bodies will review and implement policies on recruitment, placement and training, with the objective of training, placing and recruiting an adequate number of staff proficient to provide services in the Irish Language, for the achievement of the commitments and objectives outlined in this Scheme. Notwithstanding the current embargo on recruitment, the difficulties envisaged in recruiting an adequate number of staff with specialist skills and having a sufficient competence in Irish are recognised and its effect on the achievement of the objectives of the Scheme must be recognised.

The Human Resources section of the Council will prepare a linguistic skills strategy, which will be included in any Human Resources Strategy in order to ensure that sufficient staff with an appropriate ability in Irish are available to the Council.

In the placement & recruitment of staff with an appropriate ability in Irish the Council will ensure that appropriate consideration is given to posts located in or specifically related to strong and vibrant Gaeltacht areas.

4.4 Monitoring & Review

Responsibility for the monitoring and review of the Scheme is as described in section 4.1 of this Scheme. The effective implementation, operation and review of progress will be carried out through usual Local Authority mechanisms.

Part 5

Publicising Agreed Scheme

The contents of the Scheme along with the commitments and provisions of the Scheme will be publicised to the general public by means of:

- Press Release
- Publication of the Scheme on the Council's website
- Social Media including Twitter & Facebook
- Circulation to appropriate agencies and public bodies.

As new or improved services through Irish become available these will be widely publicised to the public they are directed at.

Reports on implementation, monitoring and review of the Scheme as outlined previously will be made available as appropriate in the Annual Report and on the Council's website.

In addition, the Local Authorities will take every opportunity in their day-to-day interactions with customers to promote and publicise the services it provides through Irish, including by:

- directly informing customers on a pro-active basis of the option of dealing with the Local Authority through Irish, for example, by the display of notices at public counters indicating the Irish language services that are available and also by listing these on the Council's website;
- including a statement on selected applications forms and supplementary material explaining that these documents are also available in Irish (in cases where bilingual printed material is not produced under a single cover); and,
- including a statement in publications and advertisements publicising Local Authority services welcoming customers to deal with them in Irish, when such services are available through Irish.

A copy of this Scheme has been forwarded to Oifig Choimisinéir na dTeangacha Oifigiúla.

The English version of this scheme is the original version agreed.