

# Language Strategy Working Group

Friday, 10th June, 2022

## LANGUAGE STRATEGY WORKING GROUP MINUTES HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillors Bower, O'Hara,  
Spratt and Walsh.  
Councillor Bower attended on behalf  
of Councillor McMullan.

In attendance: Mr. J. Walsh, Chief Executive;  
Mr. M. Johnston, Language Officer;  
Mr. C. McGuigan, Irish Language Officer;  
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer;  
Mrs. G. Boyd, Democratic Services Officer; and  
Ms. J. Beck (Interpreter)

### **Apologies**

Apologies for an inability to attend the working group were noted from Councillors Hutchinson and McMullan.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were declared.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 15th March were taken as read and signed as correct.

### **Election of Chairperson**

Councillor McMullan was elected as chairperson, however, as he was unable to attend the meeting, Councillor Walsh acted as chair for the meeting.

### **Round table feedback on the proposals in the draft action plan**

At the inaugural meeting of the Language Strategy Working Group, the Members had asked for more time to consider the documents they had been presented with and in order that they could give feedback on these at a future meeting.

Accordingly, the Members gave feedback on the Draft Language Strategy Action Plan and the Terms of Reference for each of the proposed stakeholder fora. There was

a discussion around the provision of support for sign language users, both BSL and ISL. The Language Officer gave an update on the work of the Council in relation to facilitating better services for sign language users.

After discussion, it was agreed that officers would bring a report to the next meeting outlining the work of the Council to support sign language, what was being planned in the future and to outline the potential for the Council to create a sign language forum.

The Members also discussed the need to be proactive in terms of diversity of languages the Council could support, for example, the increased need for the Ukrainian language and perhaps that something could be built into the action plan to formalise the Council's approach.

### **Terms of Reference**

The Terms of Reference were agreed.

### **Draft Language Strategy Action Plan**

The Group noted the contents of the draft language strategy action plan and noted that this would require further discussion from all parties to agree a way forward.

### **Guiding Principles**

The Working Group noted the guiding principles.

### **Terms of Reference – Irish**

The Irish Language Officer gave an update in relation to the actions relating to the Irish Language in the Draft Action Plan. He advised Members that a report would be brought to The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at a future date. The Irish Language officer advised that a community forum would be set up as a matter of urgency.

The Group noted the terms of reference for the Irish Language Community Forum.

### **Terms of Reference - Ulster Scots**

The Working Group noted the terms of reference for Ulster Scots and noted an update in relation to the work of officers to encourage collaboration between the Irish Language and Ulster Scots to encourage cross party working and cross language working to ensure there was no detriment to either language.

### **Discussion of potential next steps and party priorities**

The Chief Executive advised the Members that the next step would be to develop a workplan that would include key milestones, working in conjunction with all parties to ensure their views were represented.

**Date of next meeting**

The date of the next meeting would be in August 2022 and the Members would be advised of the date in due course.

Chairperson