



Subject:	Language Strategy: Draft Action Plan 2023-26
Date:	22 September 2023
Reporting Officer:	Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor and Director of Legal and Civic Services
Contact Officer:	Sarah Williams, Governance and Compliance Manager

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of report or summary of main issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Strategic Policy & Resources (SP&R) Committee on the draft Language Strategy Action Plan 2023-26.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approve the Action Plan for the purposes of formal public consultation.• Note that, if approved, the draft Language Strategy Action Plan will be issued for public consultation in October 2023.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<u>Background</u>

	<p>Following the agreement of the Language Strategy 2018-2023 in April 2018, an interim action plan which covered the period from December 2018 to March 2020 was agreed by Members.</p>
3.2	<p>The Council agreed a strategic approach to progress the Language Strategy in May 2021 including approving the establishment of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a cross-party, quarterly Member Language Strategy Working Group; • a new external Irish Language Forum and a new external Ulster-Scots Forum to add to the existing Council stakeholder fora for the other language communities; and • an internal Language Strategy officer working group.
3.3	<p>The internal Language Strategy officer working group comprised officers from Marketing & Communications; Customer Focus; Good Relations; Tourism, Culture, Heritage and Arts; Building Control; Corporate HR; City & Neighbourhood Services; Physical Programmes as well as the Language Officers. This officer working group developed a detailed, prioritised Language Strategy Action Plan which was agreed by the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee in November 2022 for the purposes of pre-consultation engagement with stakeholders, following which an updated Plan would be brought to Committee for approval to go to public consultation.</p>
3.4	<p>Pre-consultation engagement has been undertaken with the Irish Language Stakeholder Forum, the Ulster-Scots Stakeholder Forum, a sub-group of the Migrant Forum and the Sign Language Forum. Following on from feedback from these various stakeholders, the Action Plan has been updated. The external Irish and Ulster-Scots Foras have been meeting on a monthly basis since March this year. Committee will note that the actions are not the same in respect of all languages and this is reflective of the feedback from stakeholders in terms of the issues they raised in terms of accessing Council services, visibility etc.</p>
3.5	<p><u>Next steps</u></p> <p>Members are asked to agree the Draft Language Strategy Action Plan be issued for a 12-week public consultation exercise via online survey and online public meetings.</p> <p>Following the consultation, an updated Action Plan will be brought back to the Language Strategy Working Group and SP&R Committee in due course. Officers are hopeful that the Action Plan will be formally adopted by April 2024.</p>
3.6	<p><u>Monitoring and Reporting</u></p> <p>A quarterly progress update on the Action Plan will be brought to the Language Strategy Working Group, which reports into SP&R Committee.</p>

	Financial & Resource Implications
3.7	The short-term actions in the Language Strategy Action Plan will be covered from existing budgets. Any additional resources required will be identified as longer-term actions are scoped and agreed.
	Equality, good relations or rural needs implications
3.8	An equality and rural needs screening is currently being completed.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1: Draft Language Strategy Action Plan 2023-26