



Ulster-Scots Policy

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1. Preamble

1.1 Purpose

This policy sets out Council's commitments to facilitate and encourage the promotion and use of Ulster-Scots. This policy builds on Council's commitments to celebrate linguistic diversity and to deliver equality of opportunity for all who avail of Council services. It also sets out Derry City and Strabane District Council's legislative obligations along with details of procedures to be implemented.

1.2 Background

According to the 2011 Census, 8.08% (140,204) of the population of Northern Ireland has some knowledge of Ulster-Scots. In the Derry City and Strabane District Council area 5.13% (7,266) of the population has knowledge of Ulster-Scots.

The rights of Ulster-Scots speakers are protected in international legislation (in particular under the Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities and The European Convention on Human Rights), but in addition to this, the British Government has signed The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages up to Part II for Ulster-Scots.

The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

Part II of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages calls for resolute action to be taken to promote the use of Ulster-Scots in public and private life. Article 7 outlines Objectives and Principles as follows:

1. In respect of regional or minority languages, within the territories in which such languages are used and according to the situation of each language, the Parties shall base their policies, legislation and practice on the following objectives and principles:
 - a. the recognition of the regional or minority languages as an expression of cultural wealth;
 - b. the respect of the geographical area of each regional or minority language in order to ensure that existing or new administrative divisions do not constitute an obstacle to the promotion of the regional or minority language in question;
 - c. the need for resolute action to promote regional or minority languages in order to safeguard them;
 - d. the facilitation and/or encouragement of the use of regional or minority languages, in speech and writing, in public and private life;
 - e. the maintenance and development of links, in the fields covered by this Charter, between groups using a regional or minority language and other groups in the State employing a language used in identical or similar form, as well as the establishment of cultural relations with other groups in the State using different languages;
 - f. the provision of appropriate forms and means for the teaching and study of regional or minority languages at all appropriate stages;

- g. the provision of facilities enabling non-speakers of a regional or minority language living in the area where it is used to learn it if they so desire;
 - h. the promotion of study and research on regional or minority languages at universities or equivalent institutions;
 - i. the promotion of appropriate types of transnational exchanges, in the fields covered by this Charter, for regional or minority languages used in identical or similar form in two or more States.
- 2. The Parties undertake to eliminate, if they have not yet done so, any unjustified distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference relating to the use of a regional or minority language and intended to discourage or endanger the maintenance or development of it. The adoption of special measures in favour of regional or minority languages aimed at promoting equality between the users of these languages and the rest of the population or which take due account of their specific conditions is not considered to be an act of discrimination against the users of more widely-used languages.
- 3. The Parties undertake to promote, by appropriate measures, mutual understanding between all the linguistic groups of the country and in particular the inclusion of respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to regional or minority languages among the objectives of education and training provided within their countries and encouragement of the mass media to pursue the same objective.
- 4. In determining their policy with regard to regional or minority languages, the Parties shall take into consideration the needs and wishes expressed by the groups which use such languages. They are encouraged to establish bodies, if necessary, for the purpose of advising the authorities on all matters pertaining to regional or minority languages.
- 5. The Parties undertake to apply, *mutatis mutandis*, the principles listed in paragraphs 1 to 4 above to non-territorial languages. However, as far as these languages are concerned, the nature and scope of the measures to be taken to give effect to this Charter shall be determined in a flexible manner, bearing in mind the needs and wishes, and respecting the traditions and characteristics, of the groups which use the languages concerned.

The Good Friday Agreement

The Good Friday Agreement (Section marked Rights, Safeguards and Equality of Opportunity: Economic, Social and Cultural Issues) also gives makes reference to Ulster-Scots. Paragraph 3 states:

"All participants recognise the importance of respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to linguistic diversity, including in Northern Ireland, the Irish Language, Ulster-Scots and the languages of the various ethnic communities, all of which are part of the cultural wealth of the island".

Following the signing of The Good Friday Agreement a North/South language Body was created with two autonomous agencies: Foras na Gaeilge and Tha Boord o Ulstèr-Scotch which is responsible for promoting greater awareness and use of Ullans (written Ulster-Scots) and of Ulster-Scots cultural issues.

Northern Ireland (St. Andrew's Agreement) Act 2006

More recently, additional provisions for Ulster-Scots were made in the St. Andrew's Agreement -Annex B in which it states:

"The Government firmly believes in the need to enhance and develop the Ulster-Scots language, heritage and culture and will support the incoming Executive in taking this forward".

Department of Culture Arts and Leisure – Draft Strategy for Ulster-Scots Language, Heritage and Culture

DCAL published a consultative document in 2012 outlining a draft strategy for Ulster-Scots Language, Heritage and Culture.

Under the Sections marked 'Public Services' and 'Culture' the document outlines a number of potential actions:

- Where appropriate, public bodies should produce an Implementation Plan setting out how they will to contribute to the Aims, Objectives and Areas for Action in this Strategy.
- Public bodies to identify what public services can be delivered in the Ulster-Scots language.
- Where demand has been demonstrated, public bodies to implement services in the Ulster Scots language.
- Develop translation standards for Ulster Scots language.
- Mainstream Ulster Scots language, heritage and culture into our cultural fabric e.g. libraries, museums and festivals etc.

- Develop the Ulster-Scots contribution to cultural tourism on the island of Ireland.
- Pilot Heritage Heartlands as partnerships between district councils, schools and local communities.

Derry City and Strabane District Council is also required to meet equality commitments and legislative responsibilities under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998). This policy develops on Council's commitments to make information and services accessible to those who belong to minority language communities.

Derry City and Strabane District Council is also committed to promoting linguistic diversity, cultural inclusion and ensuring equality of opportunity.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Council departments and to the services they provide to the public. This policy also applies to communications between Council and other bodies.

3. Definitions

The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages : The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML) is a European treaty (CETS 148) adopted in 1992 under the auspices of the Council of Europe to protect and promote historical regional and minority languages in Europe.

The Good Friday Agreement (Belfast Agreement): The Good Friday Agreement or Belfast Agreement was signed in Belfast on 10 April 1998 (Good Friday) by the British and Irish governments and endorsed by most Northern Ireland political parties. The concord was endorsed by the voters of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland in separate referenda on 23 May 1998.

St Andrews Agreement: The St Andrews Agreement was an agreement between the British and Irish Governments and the political parties in relation to the devolution of power to Northern Ireland. The agreement resulted from multi-party talks held in St Andrews, Fife, Scotland from 11 October to 13 October 2006, between the two governments and all the

major parties in Northern Ireland, including the DUP and Sinn Féin. It resulted in the restoration of the Northern Ireland Assembly, the formation (on 8 May 2007) of a new Northern Ireland Executive, a decision by Sinn Féin to support the Police Service of Northern Ireland and an undertaking to introduce an Irish Language Act.

4. Policy Statement

Derry City and Strabane District Council is committed to promoting the use of Ulster-Scots both within council and in the Derry City and Strabane District Council area. Council is committed to complying with the relevant legislation to ensure that the rights of Ulster-Scots speakers are enshrined within the policy framework and to ensure that Council aims to provide equality of opportunity to those who wish to access Council information and services in the medium of Ulster-Scots.

4.1 Roles and Responsibilities

In order for this policy to have strategic effect it must be implemented throughout Council. As with all corporate policy, the Corporate Administration and Performance Improvement Directorate will act as the responsible department.

Irish Language Officer (ILO): The ILO will be responsible for providing guidance and support in relation to the policy. The ILO will assist Council in ensuring compliance with the policy and will specify procedures to be adopted in furtherance of the policy aims.

Heads of Department: Heads of Department are responsible for making staff aware of the policy, for implementing the policy within their own departments and for ensuring compliance with the policy.

Council Staff: All staff are required to be made aware of the policy and will be encouraged to undergo Language Awareness Training. All staff must also follow the guidance provided within the Ulster-Scots Language Courtesy Guidelines and must implement policy within their service area as required.

4.2 General Principles

4.2.1 Cultural Identity

Derry City and Strabane District Council will respect the right of members of the public and of employees to use their name and address in Ulster-Scots.

Derry City and Strabane District Council will respect the right of employees to use Ulster-Scots within the workplace and that of members of the public to use Ulster-Scots in their dealings with the Council and within Council buildings.

Derry City and Strabane District Council will work to remove restrictions on the right to use Ulster-Scots in public life nor will oppressive practices towards speakers of Ulster-Scots be allowed.

4.2.2 Corporate Identity

Derry City and Strabane District Council will adopt an official corporate identity which includes the Council name in English, Irish and Ulster-Scots. The trilingual version of the logo will supersede all previous versions of the logo and will be reinforced through use on all Council correspondence and publications.

This will be reflected in a revised Corporate Identity policy and guidelines.

4.2.3 Correspondence

Derry City and Strabane District Council will accept written correspondence in Ulster-Scots and where possible, will reply in Ulster-Scots.

In reply to correspondence in Ulster-Scots, Derry City and Strabane District Council will use the Ulster-Scots name and address of the original.

4.2.4. Telephone Communications

Although Language Line Services for Ulster-Scots are not currently available Derry City and Strabane District Council will ensure that interface staff adhere to the relevant Ulster-Scots courtesy guidelines.

Employees working in frontline positions will be encouraged to attend Language Awareness training to ensure that staff members are familiar with procedures in relation to dealing with enquiries from members of the public in Ulster-Scots.

4.2.5 Producing Information in Ulster-Scots

Ulster-Scots versions of Council information will be translated upon request.

All service literature and Council publications will contain the strap line "This document is available in alternative formats including minority languages upon request".

Documents translated into Ulster-Scots will be made available on the website.

In the case of publications prepared separately in English and Ulster-Scots, both versions will be produced to the same design and presentational standard.

Derry City and Strabane District Council will increase the range, volume and accessibility of information in Ulster-Scots on the Council website.

4.2.6 Support for Ulster-Scots Culture and Heritage

Derry City and Strabane District Council will support Ulster-Scots cultural activities by facilitating events within Council buildings and venues where practicable.

4.2.7 Presentations/ Public Speaking/ Events

All representatives from Derry City and Strabane District Council will be permitted to use Ulster-Scots in their presentations, public speaking and events.

Use of Ulster-Scots will be encouraged at formal occasions and public meetings.

4.2.8 Events

Derry City and Strabane District Council will encourage that in planning of all festivals / civic celebrations consideration is given to the opportunity to promote Ulster-Scots as a component part of these celebrations.

4.2.9 Signage and Visibility

Derry City and Strabane District Council will provide dual-language streetnames and roadnames where community consensus exists among occupiers of premises in any given street.

An index of dual-language street-names will be maintained and updated. (N.B Please cross-refer to Derry City and Strabane District Council's Streetnaming and Property Numbering Policy – City Engineer's Department).

Upon scheduled replacement, internal and external signs on Derry City and Strabane District Council owned buildings, offices, internal directional signs and vehicles will include Ulster-Scots.

4.2.10 Grant Aid

Council will promote opportunities for the use of Ulster-Scots by encouraging grant-aid applications for Ulster-Scots initiatives.

5. Legal & Policy Framework

5.1 Linkage to Corporate Plan

Ulster-Scots has a role to play in the marketing of the city as a Signature Destination and to the marketing of the Derry City and Strabane District Council area and the North West region. Ulster-Scots is part of the intrinsic, unique character of Derry and of Strabane both having borders with East Donegal.

As Ulster-Scots is a significant cultural component part of the heritage of this city, its promotion and development will be important in the marketing of the city as a world-class heritage destination capable of achieving World Heritage Site status.

5.2 Linkage to wider policy and legislation

This policy relates directly to the following:

The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages states that policies, legislation and practice are to be based on the following objectives and principles:

- the recognition of Ulster-Scots as an expression of cultural wealth;
- the respect of the geographical area of Ulster-Scots in order to ensure that existing or new administrative divisions do not constitute an obstacle to the promotion of Ulster-Scots;
- the need for resolute action to promote Ulster-Scots
- the facilitation and/or encouragement of the use of Ulster-Scots, in speech and writing, in private and public life;
- the maintenance and development of links between groups using Ulster-Scots
- the promotion of appropriate types of transnational exchanges (i.e cross border exchanges)

This policy also reflects a number of the obligations identified within:

- The Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities
- The European Convention on Human Rights
- Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act
- The Good Friday Agreement, and
- The St Andrews Agreement;

6. Impact Assessment

6.1 Screening and Equality Impact Assessment

This draft policy has been screened out for equality impacts as the previous policy has not been substantially altered.

6.2 Impact on staff and financial resources

This policy will impact on all staff and will require Ulster-Scots Awareness Training particularly for those at the public customer care interface. Longer-term implementation will require an, as yet unquantified resource allocation to cover translation, interpretation, publication, design and associated costs.

6.3 Sustainable development

This policy will have a neutral sustainability impact.

6.4 Other impacts

None

7. Implementation

Overall responsibility for the implementation of the Ulster-Scots Policy lies with the Irish Language Officer who will assist in the operational implementation of the policy.

7.1 Training

All Council staff will be offered language awareness training. All Heads of Department must ensure that they and their staff are aware of the obligations relating to their service areas under the policy. New staff will be offered the opportunity to undergo language awareness training as part of their induction.

Staff working at the customer care interface including reception areas staff will be trained to recognise Ulster-Scots and to observe the relevant courtesy guidelines.

7.2 Resources

The Council will use the translation service within the Linguistic Operations Branch of the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) or the Council's Select List of Translators and Interpreters.

7.3 Advice

Further information on this policy and advice in relation to Ulster-Scots issues can be requested from the Irish Language Officer. Legal advice can be obtained from the City Secretary and Solicitor.

7.4 Guidelines and Forms

None required

7.5 Communication Strategy

Responsibility for the communication of this policy lies with the Irish Language Officer. Awareness Training will be arranged in conjunction with the Training Officer.

7.6 Risk Management

Failure to implement this policy may lead to Council failing to meet its legislative obligations, customer-service obligations and equal opportunities obligations.

8. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

This policy will be subject to annual review or earlier as may be required by legislative changes or good-practice adaptations.

A review of progress towards meeting the European Charter's objectives and the progress report will be made publicly available.

