

**Comhairle Ceantair an Iúir, Mhúrn agus an Dúin**

**Straitéis na Gaeilge 2020-2023**

**Newry, Mourne and Down District Council**

**Irish Language Strategy 2020-2023**



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## 1. Introduction

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council recognises the Irish language as an integral part of the heritage, identity and cultural life of the district. We have a strong, vibrant, ever increasing Irish Language community living, working, visiting and socialising in the Council area.

The Council remains committed to the objectives set out in our Bilingualism Policy and have put in place the necessary structures to ensure that the Irish language and Irish language community has a sustainable future.

Building upon our Irish Language Strategy 2017-2019, we have developed an Irish Language Strategy for the period 2020-2023 which sets out how the Council will continue to:

- increase the use of Irish language within its functions;
- facilitate the use of the Irish language when communicating with the public and relevant stakeholders; and
- promote and encourage the development of the Irish language across the Council area.

## 2. The strategic framework – mission, vision and values

Council's mission is twofold:

- *To mainstream the use of Irish Language in the internal administration of Council, and in its dealings with other public bodies and the community.*
- *To embed equality of opportunity standards, address barriers of access to information and services, promote the development of the Irish Language, and to give leadership in meeting the evidenced needs of existing and emerging Irish language communities within the District.*

Our Council's vision for the Irish Language Strategy 2020-2023 is:

- *To establish a sustainable environment which supports and enables the use and development of the Irish language in public, personal, economic and community life.*

In pursuing our mission, we will be guided by the five values outlined within the Council's Corporate Plan 2019-23:

- **Collaborative:** We will work in partnership with others;
- **Responsive:** We will listen and respond openly and positively to the views of everyone;
- **Engaging:** We will involve residents and staff in identifying needs and improving our services;
- **Sustainable:** We will modernise and transform our services in developing the district for current and future generations; and,
- **Transparent:** We will make our decisions and resource allocation openly and decisions will be informed by objective evidence.

## 3. Strategic objectives

The two strategic objectives of the Irish Language Strategy 2020-2023 are as follows:

Strategic Objective 1: To facilitate, enable and encourage the development of the Irish Language within Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and the District.

Strategic Objective 2: To effectively engage with the Irish Language Community to strengthen community capacity, encourage collaboration, co-operation and identify appropriate funding opportunities.

#### **4. The delivery framework**

4.1 The associated action plan to deliver upon the two strategic objectives sets out:

- **Positive actions:** the detail and anticipated scale of the action.
- **Performance Measures:** demonstrating how effectively the strategy is achieving its anticipated outcomes.
- **Outcomes:** what will change as a result of the proposed action.
- **Responsibility:** identifies the relevant responsibility in relation to a given action.
- **Timeframes:** when the action will be delivered.

The actions complement the Council's Corporate Plan, and Bilingualism Policy to facilitate and encourage the promotion and use of both the Irish language and the English language in the Council area through:

- Progressively realising greater access to information and services;
- Increasing Irish language community capacity, civic engagement and participation, and encouraging partnership-working;
- Improving sustainability and viability of the Irish language community sector; and,
- Developing connectivity between Irish language communities and the Statutory and Voluntary sectors;
- Appropriate budget allocation, monitoring, evaluation and review.

#### **5. Structure and governance**

Council's Irish Language Unit is responsible for implementation of the Irish Language Strategy. The Unit is part of the Corporate Policy Section of the Corporate Planning & Policy Department which is within the Council's Corporate Services Directorate

The Council's Irish Language Strategy Cross Party Working Group has a pivotal role in considering and discussing the implementation of the Irish Language Strategy. The Irish Language Strategy Cross Party Working Group does not have decision making powers, it makes recommendations only. Recommendations arising are tabled at the Council's Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee for consideration.

#### **6. Monitoring and review**

Six-monthly reports on progress will be prepared for consideration by the Irish Language Strategy Cross Party Working Group.

The Irish Language Strategy will be reviewed annually to ensure actions and the associated budget remain relevant and appropriate.

Strategic objective 1		To facilitate and encourage the development of the Irish Language within Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and the District		
Positive action	Performance measure	Outcome	Responsibility	Timeframe
<b>1.1</b> Provision of core Irish language Services of Irish Language Unit (ILU)	Provision of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Translation &amp; interpretation</li> <li>• Advice &amp; support</li> <li>• Research re: Signage / Street and development naming</li> <li>• Programme to raise awareness and understanding of Irish language</li> <li>• Irish Language Week programme (Seachtain na Gaeilge)</li> </ul>	Delivery of core Irish Language services to Council, all Departments and Services and our community.  Irish language and Irish Language Unit positively promoted and addressing perceptions  Increased awareness of Bilingualism Policy, Procedures and Guidelines	Irish Language Unit (ILU)	Ongoing core work of ILU
<b>1.2</b> Review Bilingualism Policy, Procedures and Guidelines for employees	Reviewed Bilingualism Policy  Revised Bilingualism Policy Procedures  Revised Guidelines for the use of Irish Language in Newry, Mourne and Down District Council	Irish Language Unit promoting the Irish language across Council services / addressing barriers of access  A consistent approach to the promotion of the Irish language across Council's services  A consistent standard of service provision, in line with the Corporate Brand guidelines  Guidelines for employees	ILU	December 2020
<b>1.3</b> Mainstream Irish language within strategic and business plans and operational arrangements (service delivery opportunities)	Number of meetings with Directorates / Service areas  Details of amendments / Number of prioritised programmes	Progressive realisation of mainstreaming bilingualism within Council functions  Increased visibility and promotion of the Irish language	ILU	March 2021

<p><b>1.4</b> Development and maintenance of functioning bilingual website and social media platforms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Migration of information</li> <li>• Prioritising, moderating and updating Irish language content on Council's website and social media platform</li> </ul>	<p>Functioning bilingual website and social media platforms operational</p>	<p>Progressive realisation of Council's bilingual website and social media platforms Functioning and meeting needs of Irish language communities in District and beyond</p>	<p>ILU / Comms and Marketing / IT</p>	<p>March 2021</p>
<p><b>1.5</b> Prepare for Irish language legislation</p>	<p>Meetings with Irish language leading bodies</p>	<p>Council preparedness should an Irish Language Act be implemented during lifetime of this strategy</p>	<p>ILU / Corporate Policy</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p><b>1.6</b> Six-monthly monitoring reports for consideration by the Irish Language Strategy Working Group</p>	<p>Monitoring reports completed</p>	<p>Monitoring, review and evaluation of Irish Language Strategy</p>	<p>ILU / Corporate Policy</p>	<p>Six-monthly during period of strategy</p>
<p><b>1.7</b> Irish language capacity building / training for employees and Elected Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• training on the Bilingualism Policy, Procedure and Guidelines;</li> <li>• HR to establish an Irish Language Professional Development pathway for employees and Elected Members;</li> <li>• On-going developmental</li> </ul>	<p>Minimum of 2 workshops per annum re Bilingualism Policy &amp; associated Procedures and Guidelines for Use of Irish in Council</p> <p>Irish Language Skills training offered as a professional learning and development opportunity</p> <p>Numbers of attendees</p> <p>Development of an e-learning package</p>	<p>Enhanced employee skills and knowledge base</p>	<p>ILU HR Training &amp; Development Officer</p>	<p>Delivered and reviewed annually during period of strategy</p> <p>December 2020</p>

<p>support to Council departments on implementation of Council's Bilingualism Policy and associated Procedures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditional and e-learning approach</li> </ul>				
<p><b>1.8</b> Objective justification principles with regard to Irish language skills applied as part of all Recruitment and Selection processes</p>	<p>Number of posts which identify Irish Language as an essential or desirable criterion</p>	<p>Enhanced employee skills and knowledge base</p>	<p>HR / ILU / Corporate Policy</p>	<p>September 2020</p>
<p><b>1.9</b> Continue mapping the Irish Language Community Infrastructure</p>	<p>Integration of Irish language infrastructure map for Irish language community development</p>	<p>Enhanced knowledge of Irish language community infrastructure</p>	<p>ILU / Community Engagement</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p><b>2.0</b> Review of Irish Language Strategy 2020-2023</p>	<p>Four-year review of Irish Language Strategy</p>	<p>Monitoring, review and evaluation of Irish Language Strategy 2020-2023 and development of new Irish Language Strategy</p>	<p>ILU / Corporate Policy</p>	<p>November 2022 – April 2023</p>

<b>Strategic objective 2</b>		<b>To effectively engage with the Irish Language Community to strengthen community capacity, encourage collaboration, co-operation and identify appropriate funding opportunities</b>		
<b>Positive action</b>	<b>Performance measure</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
<b>2.1</b> Facilitate continued development of Fóram an Dúin agus Oirialla (Down and Oriel Forum) within the Irish Language community sector in the Council area	Number of Forum meetings Number of people in attendance Number of groups in attendance	Increased community engagement on critical issues  Increased sustainability of Irish language community organisations	ILU	Ongoing
<b>2.2</b> Implementation of Irish Language Financial Assistance programme	Number of applicants Number of successful applicants	Irish Language community renewal and development, and positively engaging the Irish Language through financial assistance to support: a) Projects / initiatives that encourage Irish language community capacity building, mentoring and volunteering. It is envisaged that this scheme will inspire better developed Irish language communities to partner with newer or developing language communities to share resources and build better networks and encourage volunteering. b) Community engagement projects /initiatives to build positive relations, raise awareness and understanding, address perceptions and promote respect for the Irish language.	Programmes Unit / ILU	Annually



<b>2.3</b> Promote non-Council funding opportunities for Irish Language groups	Number of non-Council financial assistance opportunities promoted	Provision of support to potential applicants of non-Council funding streams	ILU External funding bodies	Ongoing
<b>2.4</b> Internal promotion of opportunities for community engagement with the Irish Language community	Number of meetings with DEA Officers	Promotion of a culture of constructive community engagement with the Irish language community throughout all Council departments	ILU / DEAs network	Ongoing
<b>2.5</b> Implementation of Irish Language Bursary Scheme	Number of applications  Number of successful applicants  Amount awarded	Individuals assisted to improve Irish Language skills through bursaries for Irish Language courses, including Gaeltacht colleges, intensive courses and third level courses	ILU	Annually
<b>2.6</b> Education sector engagement	Number of schools engaged with  Number of students participating in workshops	Positive relationships established and maintained with education sector	ILU Education sector	Ongoing
<b>2.7</b> Community Engagement	Explore opportunities for good relations through initiatives such as PEACE IV initiative	Community cohesion Increased Respect for Irish language	AHC Directorate/ ILU / Programmes Unit	Ongoing
<b>2.8</b> Support volunteering within the Irish Language community	Number of attendees at the sector specific volunteer development workshop / celebration event	Promotion of volunteers engaged in delivering Irish Language services in Council area  Reduced dependency on grant funding  Increased sustainability of Irish Language community organisations	ILU / Community Engagement	Ongoing