

South Dublin County Council

Draft Irish Language Scheme

2010-2012

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South Dublin County Council**

Chapter 1 Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction and Background

The Irish Language Scheme 2010-2012 under Section 11 of the Official Languages Act 2003 was prepared with regard to Guidelines under Section 12 of the Official Languages Act 2003 issued by the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. A notice was published of Intention to prepare a draft scheme in accordance with Section 13(1)(a) of the Act, in local newspapers, on www.sdcc.ie, and a notice circulated in Áras Chrónáin, Ionad Cultúrtha, Clondalkin in September 2009.

South Dublin County Council recognises that the public have a right to choose to do business in their preferred language and that they will be facilitated, in their dealings with us, whether in English or in Irish. The main objective of this Language Scheme is to ensure higher standards of public service through the Irish Language as the national language and the first official language of the country. South Dublin County Council wishes to develop and encourage a bilingual culture so that customers feel comfortable and confident to communicate in the language of their choice, for example, English or Irish.

There are certain services which each customer is entitled to under the Official Languages Act, including a response to correspondence in Irish and the availability of major publications in Irish, e.g. the Annual Report.

These rights are protected in the above mentioned act, and are not repeated in this Scheme. The scheme sets out to improve other services e.g. in Irish, and the above are legally required irrespective of this scheme.

1.2 Commencement Date of Scheme

The deadline for the preparation of this Scheme is 16th October 2009. The commencement date will be....., subject to confirmation of the Irish Language Scheme by the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and it shall remain in force for a period of 3 years from that date or until a new scheme has been confirmed by the Minister pursuant to Section 15 of the Official Languages Act, whichever is earlier.

Chapter 2 Overview of South Dublin County

2.1 The Corporate Plan 2010-2014 of South Dublin County Council

The main themes of the South Dublin County Council Corporate Plan 2010-2014 are as follows; A Living Place, A Connected Place, A Busy Place and A Protected Place. The Corporate Plan 2010-2014 is being prepared and will be adopted by the South Dublin County Council early 2010.

2.2 The Physical Place

South Dublin County Council is responsible for the administration of the County, with an area of 222.5 square km and a population of approximately 250,000 comprising of almost 85,000 households. It is the second largest housing authority and the third largest local authority in the State. The county extends from the Dublin Mountains in the south to the River Liffey in the north. It includes the urban areas of Tallaght, Clondalkin, Lucan, Palmerstown, Templeogue and Rathfarnham, and the rural villages of Newcastle, Saggart and Rathcoole and their hinterlands.

There is a vibrant Irish speaking community in South Dublin County, which supports the activities of Gaelscoileanna, naíonraí and Áras Chrónáin, Clondalkin. Three of the eight, Secondary Gaelscoileanna and eight of thirty one Primary Gaelscoileanna throughout the Greater Dublin area are located in South Dublin County.¹

These organisations are successful and in high demand, with waiting lists for Gaelscoileanna and an annual footfall of over 50,000 in Áras Chrónáin, Ionad Cultúrtha. This support offers testimony to the interest of the public in the Irish Language and their efforts to keep the language strong in South Dublin County, efforts which South Dublin County Council supports.

2.3 Principal points of customer contact

South Dublin County Council is divided into eight departments as follows, Environmental Services; Corporate, Human Resources and Libraries Services; Housing, Social and Community; Land Use, Economic and Transport Planning; Development, Parks and Roads; Information Technology; Finance, Architecture and Law

The primary service points for the Council are at the County Hall, Tallaght and the Civic Offices in Clondalkin. There is also a network of 6 Libraries throughout the County. The Council also interacts with a wide range of Government Departments, State Agencies, Social Partners, Local Development Organisations (such as area based Partnerships and Leader Groups) Business and Community Groups and Resident Associations.

The Internet is used extensively to communicate with staff and customers. This is an important medium in terms of the promotion of the Irish language in South Dublin County.

¹ Gaelscoileanna, 7 Merrion Square, Dublin 2

2.4 Consultation Undertaken

South Dublin County Council published a notice of Intention to prepare a draft scheme in accordance with Section 13(1)(a) of the Act,

- in local newspapers
- on www.sdcc.ie
- circulated in Áras Chrónáin, Ionad Cultúrtha in September 2009.

Two submissions were received during the consultation period from 23rd September to the 21st October 2009 -see Appendices 1 & 2.

The issues raised were in relation to the following:

- **Proactive notification of Services available through Irish**
- **Further development of www.athcliaththeas.ie**
- **Raising Staff awareness to commitments made in the Irish Language Scheme**

The above issues have been taken into account in framing this scheme:

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Chapter 3 Proposals made for Enhancement of Service Provision through the Irish language in the Language Scheme of 2006-2009

Commitments and implementation of the Irish Language Scheme 2006-2009

Significant work has been done to implement commitments to develop and promote Irish within the County in the Irish Language Scheme of 2006-2009 and they are outlined below. All obligations to support the Irish language and Culture in a proactive way have been fully implemented. Events organised include, SnaGÁct, Seachtain na Gaeilge Átha Cliath Theas with over 13,000 people attending events in 2008 and 2009.

Queries from the public through the medium of Irish are welcome. As a result of the Irish Language Scheme 2006-2009, 33 members of staff, across all departments, are in a position to deal with customers through the medium of Irish. Of these, there is at least one member of staff in each Library and Customer Care areas. South Dublin County Council have invested in the provision of support and training in the Irish language for staff and elected members.

Review of commitments made in the Irish Language Scheme 2006-2009

3.1 Means of Communication with the Public

The Communication Methods used include:

- Brochures & Information Leaflets
- Application Forms
- Publications
- Press releases
- Website
- One to one communication at Customer Care Centres and Libraries
- Educational visits to schools within South Dublin County

Specific proposals for improvements in this area under the first scheme were as follows:

3.2 Written Documentation

(i) Brochures, Information Leaflets & Application Forms

- All new Publications, Information Leaflets and Posters contain a short Introduction and Summary in the Irish language to convey general information on the communication.
- All Application Forms and any associated/accompanying information leaflets produced by South Dublin County Council are available in both Irish and English and online through Irish on www.athcliaththeas.ie

(ii) Major Policy documents

- Major Policy documents are published on the website www.sdcc.ie in both English and Irish simultaneously, with a page on www.athcliaththeas.ie dedicated specifically to [Irish Policies and documents](#).
- Both the English and Irish Version of such policy documents are available on a CD Rom where applicable.

- Hard copies of documents in Irish are available on request.
- (iii) Press releases
- Press releases relating to Irish language issues are produced bilingually and circulated to the Irish and English language media contacts.
- (iv) Council website
- A separate website page on www.athcliaththeas.ie has been developed to link Irish language content to facilitate access to relevant material by Irish speakers.
 - Information on the homepage of www.sdcc.ie and description of each Department is available in Irish by clicking on “As Gaeilge” button on www.sdcc.ie or visiting www.athcliaththeas.ie

3.3 Oral Communication

The Council's Customer Care Centre handles all general queries from customers. Receptionists, Telephone Operators and Porters are the first points of contact with the public.

- Reception/switchboard staff are able to give the name of the Local Authority in Irish
- All staff are familiar with the basic greetings in Irish, and will be in a position to acknowledge a request for service in Irish and are in a position to put customers in touch with staff member who speaks Irish .
- A limited number of staff are available at all customer contact points to handle any queries in Irish.
- There is a symbol and search ability on the staff list on the Intranet indicating members of staff who are capable and willing to conduct Council business in Irish.
- High profile public events include Irish in the introductions address as part of the Council's efforts to promote Irish within the community.
- South Dublin County Council is committed to educational visits to local schools to support the use and development of Irish in the County.

3.4 Information & Communications Technology

- The standard disclaimer attached to emails from South Dublin County Council is now bilingual.
- An Irish Page has been developed for the Internet , Intranet and Membersnet.
- A simple Irish lesson will be available on the website using lurgan.biz?? This website will also provide online support. This will be linked from the intranet; membersnet and internet. Weekly Irish class are available in the County Library at different times throughout the year.
- All Irish language forms are available on the website www.athcliaththeas.ie for online submission (where available) or download.
- A generic e-mail address for queries ‘as Gaeilge’, gaeilge@athcliaththeas.ie is in use. The Council will ensure that such queries are addressed promptly.

- All Irish Associations / Schools in the county can develop a website in Irish using [Connect](#) .
- All new software which South Dublin County Council purchases independently is compliant with the use of Irish.
- New interactive systems are language compliant.

3.5 Staff Placement

South Dublin County Council have regard to proficiency in the Irish language (both written and oral) where possible in staff mobility policies..

3.6 Training & Development

South Dublin County Council acknowledges the importance of having a highly trained workforce to ensure efficient and effective delivery of service. This involves significant investment in training and development.

In the light of the above strategy as outlined in the [Corporate Plan](#), [the Official Languages Act](#) and this Scheme, the Council will ensure:

- All staff and elected members are encouraged and given the opportunity to improve their Irish language skills through training and development courses with a view to improving access to service provision through the Irish language.
- Language Awareness is included in both Induction and Customer Care training courses.
- South Dublin County Council continues to seek volunteers to provide Irish language services in relevant sections across the Council.
- Staff who volunteer to provide services through Irish are being supported by the provision of training, events and software .
- Training and guidelines in relation to commitments under this scheme have been developed and are available on the intranet.
- NUI Maynooth provides training in The European Language Certificate in Irish in South Dublin County Council. This course is open to staff and elected members. 120 students availed of the training over the last three years.
- NUI Maynooth provided training in the Diploma in Irish in South Dublin County Council. 13 Students availed of this 2 year course over the last three years.

3.7 Roads and Road Signage, Housing and Infrastructure

Planning for all new developments is approved by South Dublin County Council. The Irish version of each place name is provided by the Irish Office and both Irish and English names are registered on the Managers Order as the official names.

South Dublin County Council undertook a project to assemble a database of our Road Names and Street Names in Irish.

- All signage has been reviewed.

- A listing of all Irish names on place name signage in the county has been collated.
- A list of Place Names was sent to the Place Names Branch of the Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs for correction and translation.
- The database is available on South Dublin County Councils Intranet, [Internet](#) sites, www.athcliaththeas and www.sdcc.ie
- A programme to have accurate signage in Irish in place was rescheduled and it is proposed, to have this completed on a phased basis by the end of 2015 provided funding is available . This programme will also include a procedure which will ensure that all Irish text on new signage being erected by the Roads Department of South Dublin County Council is correct.
- South Dublin County Council has compiled a database and published a book '[South Dublin Placenames and Streetnames](#)' giving a list of place names. This book is available online and in hard copy.

The approved version of a place name is given to developers to ensure that all new signage will be correct. Signage is then confirmed during the taking in charge process .

3.8 Gaelscoileanna & Other Irish Language Organisations

South Dublin County Council recognises and acknowledges the use of Irish/bilingualism in Irish language schools and Gaelscoileanna in South Dublin County, as well as other Irish Language organisations and groups operating throughout the county and nationally. The provision of services in Irish has been facilitated over the lifetime of this scheme.

The Council organised a forum to enable all interested individuals and groups within the county to come together with the purpose of co-ordinating the promotion of the Irish language. This open day focused on schools within the county and organisations dealing with the Irish Language were present to discuss supports available. This forum will be held annually during Seachtain na Gaeilge.

Chapter 4 Proposals made for Enhancement of Service Provision through the Irish language in the Language Scheme of 2010-2012

Scheme Proposals for Enhancement of Service Provision through the Irish Language Scheme 2010-2012 to enhance the commitments in The Irish Language Scheme 2006-2009

In addition to continuing the commitments mentioned, The Language Scheme of 2010-2012 of South Dublin County Council will continue to build upon the work laid out under The Language Scheme of 2006-2009.

- As www.sdcc.ie is developed, forms in all languages, including Irish, will be considered.
- www.athclaitheas.ie will be developed further. Static information on departments and other general information will be available in Irish by the end of this scheme
- A joint venture by South Dublin County Council and Áras Chrónáin, Ionad Cultúrtha is developing Gaeilge i nGnó, www.ging.ie, to encourage local business and Community Groups to use Irish and increase its visible presence within the County. This initiative will be available by the end of 2010.
- South Dublin County Council will publicise the fact that services are available in Irish through our Council publications. Notices in Irish will be placed at all public entrances.
- South Dublin Libraries will develop an Irish language Website for Libraries accessible from www.southdublinlibraries.ie
- The SOURCE website, an online digital archive will be available in Irish, accessible from the English site and will contain static information from the English version.
- The Library Catalogue in South Dublin County will be available in Irish in all libraries and online through www.southdublinlibraries.ie
- Self Service points will be available through the medium of Irish and English, where software and technology allows. This service will be available initially in the County Library and rolled out to the other libraries on a phased basis.
- SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL will draft and circulate information in relation to commitments made to the Irish Language Scheme via the intranet

Chapter 5 Monitoring, Revision & Publicising of agreed Scheme

5.1 Monitoring & Revision

South Dublin County Council will review effective operation of this scheme on an annual basis. The Irish Officer will prepare a progress report which will be published in South Dublin County Councils' Annual Report.

5.2 Publicising of Agreed Scheme

The contents of this scheme will be advertised to the general public by means of:-

- ◆ Press Release
- ◆ Official Launch
- ◆ Publication of softcopy on the Council's Internet, Intranet, Library website and Membersnet sites
- ◆ Circulation to appropriate agencies, public bodies and individuals or agencies from whom we received a submission.
- ◆ A soft copy of this scheme will also be forwarded to Oifig Choimisinéir na dTeangacha Oifigiúla.