



Comhairle Contae Dhún Laoghaire-Ráth an Dúin

Scéim Teanga 2018 – 2021

faoi Alt 15 d’Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla, 2003

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council

Language Scheme 2018 – 2021

under Section 15 of the Official Languages Act, 2003

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Chapter 1 – Language scheme 2018–2021

1.1 Introduction and Background

This Scheme was prepared under Section 15 of the Official Languages Act, 2003 by Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council. Section 11 provides for the preparation by a public body of a statutory Scheme specifying the services it proposes to provide:

- through the medium of Irish
- through the medium of English and
- through the medium of both Irish and English.

The Scheme sets out the measures that will be implemented in relation to the services which will be provided through the medium of Irish during the life of the Scheme. The Scheme also sets out the actions the Council proposes to take to ensure that reasonable progress is made during the period of the Scheme in achieving the ultimate goal of ensuring that services that are not currently provided in Irish by the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council will eventually be so provided. This will be done with due regard to the underlying level of demand for specific services to be provided in Irish and the resources available to the Council - both human and financial.

1.2 Commitment of the Council

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council is committed to meeting its statutory obligations under the Official Languages Act, 2003. The Council is pleased to set out in this Scheme the steps it proposes to take over the period 2018 to 2021 to ensure better availability and a higher standard of public services are provided by the Council through Irish and in particular to ensure that appropriate progress is made in ensuring that services which are currently not available in Irish will be made available. Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council is fully committed to ensuring the successful implementation of the Scheme. The Scheme has the full support of the Chief Executive and of the Council's Management Team.

1.3 Preparation of the Language Scheme

This draft Scheme has been prepared in accordance with the Guidelines issued by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht Affairs under Section 15 of the Official Languages Act, 2003.

The Council published a notice under Section 15 of the Act inviting representations in relation to the preparation of the draft Scheme from any interested parties. One submission was received from Comhdháil Náisiúnta na Gaeilge. The submission was taken into account in the preparation of the Scheme and can be viewed at www.dlrcoco.ie.

This scheme complements the principles of Quality Customer Service and our Customer Charter. It has been formulated with the intention of ensuring that all relevant obligations under the Official Languages Act by Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council will be fully addressed on an incremental basis, through this and future schemes.

This Scheme is predicated on all of the commitments in any previous scheme having been implemented. In the event of commitments in earlier schemes not having been fully implemented to date, this matter is the subject of discussion with the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga.

The time and effort put in by all concerned in this process is acknowledged and appreciated.

1.4 Commencement Date of Scheme

This scheme has been confirmed by the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. The scheme is commenced with effect from **19 February 2018** and 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, 2003 whichever is the later.

Chapter 2 Overview of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council and of the Services it provides

2.1 Overview of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council was established on 1 January 1994. This followed the dissolution of Dublin County Council and the Borough Corporation of Dún Laoghaire and their replacement with three new administrative counties – Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal and South Dublin.

The County of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown covers an area of 125.8 km² south of Dublin City, being bounded by South Dublin County Council to the west and Wicklow County Council to the south. It has a population of 206,300 according to the results of Census 2011. Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown accounts for 16.2% of the population of Dublin.

The Council's Mission Statement is as follows:

"to foster an exemplary social, physical, economic and cultural environment for all the people living in, working in or visiting the County".

2.2 Council Structure

The Council is comprised of 40 elected members drawn from the 6 electoral areas in the County. The elected members have a key representational role and under a system of *reserved functions* they determine Council policy. In exercising their policy functions the elected members operate through a Corporate Policy Group and five Strategic Policy Committees. The Strategic Policy Committees are comprised of Councillors and representatives of voluntary/sectoral organisations.

The Chief Executive and the Management Team consisting of Directors of Services, the Law Agent, and the County Architect operate in an executive capacity in implementing the policies of the Council and managing the provision of Council services.

2.3 Services Provided by the County Council

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council provides a multiplicity of services which touch the lives of every citizen in the County. The Council is organised into a number of Departments for the purpose of delivering services as follows:

- Corporate Communications & Governance
- Architects
- Municipal Services
- Finance & Risk Management
- Housing
- Legal Services
- Planning & Organisational Innovation
- Economic, Community & Cultural Development
- Infrastructure & Climate Change

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council's '**Corporate Plan 2015 – 2019**' was prepared following an extensive process of consultation with staff of the Council and with a wide range of stakeholders in the County. The Plan, which has been adopted by the Council, sets objectives and strategies for the Council for the period until 31st December 2019.

2.4 The Council's Customers and Clients

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council's primary customer base is made up of those individuals who live or work in the County or who visit the County. In addition to our day-to-day contact with customers on an individual basis, the Council also has dealings with a broader customer/client base including:

- The Minister and the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government
- Other Ministers and Government Departments
- State Agencies
- Members of the Oireachtas

- Social Partners
- Local and Regional Authorities
- Organisations of the European Union
- Private Sector Service Providers
- Business, Commercial and Industrial Sectors
- Voluntary and Community Groups

2.5 Council Services Currently Available Through Irish

The primary objective of the Act is to ensure better availability and a higher standard of public services through Irish. In this regard, the Council already provides the following services through the medium of Irish:

- Staff competent to work through the medium of Irish, are available in a number of Departments including the following:

Architects

Housing

Municipal Services

Finance & Risk Management

Corporate, Communications & Governance

The provision of a full Irish language service in these Departments is not guaranteed as it depends on the availability of certain key staff.

Chapter 3 Summary of Services To Be Provided Under the Scheme

3.1 Means of Communication with the Public

The Council uses of the following methods to communicate with the public:-

- Brochures and Information Leaflets
- Application Forms
- Statutory Publications and Policy Documents
- Press Releases
- Notices issued in Newspapers
- Advertisements
- Dún Laoghaire Rathdown Times and Other Publications
- Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council's Website – www.dlrcoco.ie
- By way of Letter and E-mail and
- Invoices and Associated Documentation

3.2 Proposed Actions in Relation to Written Communication

At present the vast bulk of all written communication with the public is done mainly through the medium of English.

The Council is committed to implementing the following actions during the period of the Scheme to improve the provision of written communication through the medium of Irish:

- All leaflets, forms and explanatory documentation giving information on Council services are made available in both Irish and English except where it is not feasible because of the size, nature or layout of the material.
- Technical documentation such as information technology, engineering and building specifications, tender documentation etc. will continue to be produced in English only.

- Invoices, bills, parking tickets etc are issued in both Irish and English.
- Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council will develop an Irish language version of its website which will be completed by end of year 1 and all static content will be bilingual.
- A generic e-mail address for queries 'as Gaeilge' has been established. The Council will ensure that such queries are addressed promptly in the same manner as English language queries.
- Any standard messages or disclaimers on e-mail correspondence will be provided in Irish.
- The Council will ensure that all new computer software and hardware, which is purchased, is capable of handling the Irish language. Existing systems will, where necessary, be made compatible in conjunction with the next suitable planned maintenance or upgrade work.
- All Council web based payment systems will be available in Irish & English.
- All written invitations issued by the Council will be in Irish and English.
- All information/commemorative signs, plaques etc will in both Irish and English.
- 25% of all annual Council press releases will be made available, in Irish and English.

3.3 Proposed Actions in Relation to Oral Communication

At present oral communication with the public is done mainly through the medium of English. Although, as is outlined at 2.5 a number of staff are competent to work through the medium of Irish, English is the working language of all Sections of the Council.

The Council is committed to implementing the following actions during the period of the Scheme to improve the provision of oral communication services through the medium of Irish:

- Intensive Irish language training will be made available by the Council's Planning & Organisational Innovation Department to interested Council staff and Councillors to improve their competency in the use of the Irish language. This will improve the provision of services through Irish by the Council. Particular attention will be paid to staff in those Departments that do not at present have a capacity to provide a service through the medium of Irish.
- Consideration will be given to recruiting suitably qualified staff who are competent to conduct business through the medium of Irish as vacancies arise.
- Reception/switchboard staff will be given on-going training so that they can continue to give the name of the Council in Irish. They will be familiar with the basic greetings in Irish and will be in a position to acknowledge a request for service in Irish and put customers in touch with the appropriate officer providing the service in the Council in Irish where such is available.
- The Council will ensure that at least one member of Information Desk staff and one staff member in each Library will be in a position to offer a bilingual service by the end of the Scheme.
- Educational visits by the Council to schools will contain an element of Irish. Educational visits to Gaelscoileanna will be conducted exclusively in Irish subject to the availability of staff with Irish language skills.
- A directory of members of staff and Councillors capable of and willing to conduct business through the medium of Irish in all Council offices and in all Council Departments/Sections will be maintained.
- The Council will make spokespersons available to give interviews to the Irish language media as and when required.

3.4 Proposed Actions in Relation to Placenames

- The Council will continue to replace road signage with the correct Irish Version of Street/Place names during the period of the scheme.
- Any new residential developments will be named in Irish or in Irish and English as a condition of the planning permission. The Council will have responsibility of vetting and selecting appropriate names in consultation with the Council's Heritage Officer and having consideration for the existing place names, history and local heritage of the area.

3.5 Other Proposed Actions

In order to advance the implementation on the provisions of the Scheme, to co-ordinate the provision of services through Irish and to oversee the promotion of Irish by the Council an Irish Language Development Officer will be appointed by the Council.

It should be noted that all commitments to services offered by the Councils are given based on the current situation as outlined in the sections above. It must be noted that delivery on these commitments may be negatively affected by financial and staffing changes that may occur in the future, which are beyond the control of the Council.

4.1 Responsibility for Implementation and Administration

This Scheme has been approved by the Chief Executive and by the Council's Management Team. The Director of Corporate Services will ensure that appropriate Guidelines are issued relating to the implementation of the Scheme. Heads of Departments will ensure that Guidelines and other instructions are available to all staff involved in the implementation of the Scheme, as required. Heads of Departments will also ensure that all members of staff are made aware of the requirements and implications of the Scheme.

The Irish Language Development Officer will have day-to-day responsibility for the implementation of the Scheme.

4.2 Publicity

The contents of this Scheme, along with the commitments and provision of the Scheme, will be publicised to the general public by means of:

- Press releases
- Circulation to appropriate agencies and public bodies
- On the Council's website
- By means of Newspaper notices

In addition, we will take every opportunity in our day to day interaction with customers to promote and publicise the services we provide in Irish through the following means:

- directly informing customers on a proactive basis of the option of conducting business with us through Irish, for example, by the display of notices at reception areas indicating the Irish language services that are available;
- prominently listing these services on our website;

- signifying on selected guidelines, leaflets and application forms that these documents are also available in Irish, unless presented bilingually;
- giving equal prominence to Irish and English language materials.

A copy of this Scheme will be forwarded to the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga.

4.3 Scheme Overview

A Committee under the Chairmanship of the Chief Executive or his nominee and consisting of the Irish Language Development Officer, other Council staff, Councillors and representatives of outside organisations will be established to promote the use of Irish within the Council and to monitor and report on progress on the implementation of the Scheme.

The Committee will also monitor and assess the demand for the provision of services through Irish. A report will be submitted annually to the Council on progress in implementing the Scheme and will also be published in the Annual Report.