South Dublin County Council

Irish Language Scheme

2012-2015

Contents Page

Chapter 1: General Information
1.1 Introduction and Background

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.

Under the Official Languages Act 2003 customers are entitled to specific services through the Irish language 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 therefore not repeated in this Scheme.

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.

The Second Irish Language Scheme 2012-2015 under the Official Languages Act 2003 was prepared having regard to Guidelines under Section 12 of the Official Languages Act 2003 issued by the Department of Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht in 2004. Accordingly 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. These submissions are available to view on the Council website www.sdcc.ie.

The Scheme has been developed taking into account, variously, the submissions received through the public consultation process, the views and suggestions of staff across departments in relation to Irish language service availability and capability, and an assessment of the demand for services through Irish over the lifetime of the first Scheme. The Council would like to extend its thanks to all those who contributed to the process.

1.2 Commencement Date of Scheme
This scheme has been approved by the Minister of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and is effective from 30th July 2012. It will remain in force for a period of three years from this date or until a new scheme has been confirmed by the Minister pursuant to Section 15 of the Official Languages Act, whichever is earlier.

1.3 Contents of the Irish Language Scheme.

Extensive commitments were made in the first scheme by the Council, to improve the level of services available in Irish. These committments included

- Training of staff to enable SDCC to accommodate customers who wish to engage through Irish. As a result of this training programme there are now 30 members of staff, from all the different departments, available to deal with customers through Irish.   There is at least one member of staff in every library and customer care counter who can engage with customers through Irish. This is as result of the considerable investment made by the Council in the training and support of all staff and elected members.
- A major commitment was undertaken in which all Placename Signage were to be corrected. As a result of this a book has been published listing place names in Irish English/ English Irish and a major campaign to correct all incorrect placename signage.
- www.athcliaththeas.ie has been developed. 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
- Direct contact through Irish at Gaeilge@athcliaththeas.ie

Included also were the events which were organised by SnaGÁct, Seachtain na Gaeilge Átha Cliath Theas, at which nearly 34,000 people were present in 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012.

All of the commitments of the first scheme have been delivered. The objective of the second scheme is to continue the delivery of these commitments and to improve the level of services available in Irish throughout the lifetime of this scheme. This scheme also builds on the principles of Quality Customer Service, and it will continue to ensure the facilitation of people who wish to conduct their business through the medium of Irish.

Chapter 2:   Overview of South Dublin County

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

The Corporate Plan 2010-2014 was adopted by the South Dublin County Council early 2010 and provides the following main themes: A Living Place, A Connected Place, A Busy Place and A Protected Place.

2.1.1 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 265,174 [1]comprising of over 97,000 households[2]. 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, Palmerston, 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.[3]

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.

2.2 Principal Points of Customer Contact

The Council communicates with the public through:
• written means, including electronic means; and
• interpersonal means.

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 and social media is also used extensively to communicate with the public.

Chapter 3:   Enhancement of services under Second Scheme 2012-2015

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[1] Census 2011
[2] Census 2011
[3] Gaelscoileanna, 7 Merrion Square, Dublin 2

3.1   Written Documentation
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(i) Brochures, Information Leaflets & Application Forms

- It is the policy of the Council to ensure that all application forms and associated documentation which are available bilingually will continue to be made available in both official languages on our website.
- The practice that all new Publications, Information Leaflets and Posters contain a short Introduction and Summary in the Irish language to convey general information on the communication will continue.
- The practice that all Application Forms and any associated/accompanying information leaflets produced by South Dublin County Council are available in Irish and English will continue.
- The Council will ensure that where application forms and information leaflets are provided as separate Irish and English language versions, that equal prominence is given to both versions at all public locations and that the Irish language version will be as readily accessible as the English language version. Customers will proactively be made aware of the availability of a separate Irish version by way of a footnote on the English version of the document advising that the document is available in the Irish language .

(ii) Major Policy documents – other than those under Section 10 of Act
- These publications are, in general, made available bilingually. If the cost of bilingual publication in any individual case is deemed excessive due to the size of the document, the Council will continue to use its discretion to publish only the executive summary/recommendations in bilingual format.
- The practice of ensuring that both the English and Irish Version of such policy documents are available on a CD Rom, where applicable, will continue.

(iii) Press releases
- Press releases relating to Irish language issues will continue to be issued bilingually and circulated to the Irish and English language media contacts.

3.2 Oral Communication / First Point of Contact

 Receptionists, Telephone Operators and Porters are the first points of contact with the public.

- From the commencement of the scheme telephone callers will be greeted by an Irish recording, giving the name of the authority in Irish.
- The name of the Authority will be given in Irish and English to all telephone callers to the Customer Care Centre.
- All Customer Care staff are and will continue to be familiar with the basic greetings in Irish, and will be in a position to acknowledge a request for service in Irish and will be in a position to put customers in touch with a member of staff who speaks Irish.

3.3 One to One Services

- The Council's Customer Care Centre handles all general queries from customers.

- In accordance with the commitment in the first Scheme, one member of staff in the customer care centre and one member of staff in each library are and will continue to be available to deal with the public through Irish.

3.4 Library Services

- In addition to having at least one person in each library who can provide a bilingual service South Dublin County Libraries will develop an Irish website which will be available from www.southdublinlibraries.ie and will contain the static information 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. http://source.southdublinlibraries.ie/?locale=ga

- By the end of the scheme, 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.

3.5 Website, Interactive Services and IT.

- www.athcliaththeas.ie will be developed further so that static design content[4] on each section of the Council will be available in Irish by the end of this scheme.
- From the beginning of the scheme, forms, information leaflets, documents and publications which are published in Irish will be available on the Irish website. www.athcliaththeas.ie
- The static design content on any new website(s) developed by South Dublin County Council, or on our behalf by a third party, which are under the direct control of the council will be available bilingually.
- All existing computer systems within the control of SDCC, which require information in relation to members of the public to be inputted, for example names and addresses, are capable of handling the Irish Language and any new computer systems being installed will be fully capable of handling the Irish language.
- Our existing online interactive systems(i.e. services which enable members of the public to make applications, receive benefits or make payments), for example self services points in our libraries, smart phone apps by libraries for account access, www.deisighdoshraid.ie / www.fixyourstreet.ie and its app, and renewal of dog license are all available bilingually and any new online interactive services developed over the course of this Scheme will be made available simultaneously in Irish and English.

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[4]. Static design content refers to the general information available in the main text area of a webpage.

- South Dublin County Council will continue to provide a standard bilingual disclaimer attached to all emails.
- An Irish Information Page has been developed for the Internet , Intranet and Membersnet. We will continue to keep this up to date in the second scheme.
- SDCC will continue to promote the use of www.abairleat.ie. and provide links through the council website.
- 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.

3.6 Staff Placement

South Dublin County Council will continue to have regard to proficiency in the Irish language (both written and oral) when exercising its staff mobility policy, where such would facilitate the delivery of committments made in this scheme.

3.7   Training, Development and other Initiatives

*S*outh 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.

The Council is committed to the following:

- All staff and elected members will be encouraged and given the opportunity to use and improve their Irish language skills through various training and development programmes.
- Staff with ability to provide inter-personal Irish language service will, with their agreement, continue to be identified in an appropriate way on internal telephone lists
- High profile public events will, with agreement of key stakeholders, continue to include Irish in the introductions address as part of the Council's efforts to promote Irish within the community.
- Staff with ability to provide inter-personal Irish language service will continue, with their agreement, to include Irish material in educational visits to local schools.
- 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. They are informed of any provision of training, events and software which may assist them in offering services in Irish.
- Training and guidelines in relation to commitments under this scheme have been developed and are available on the intranet.

The demand for services through the medium of Irish during the lifetime of the current Scheme, will be a factor in determining the degree to which Irish language proficiency is enhanced, in the context of increasing demands for efficiencies.

3.8   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.

- A list of Place Names was sent to the Place Names Branch of the Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs for correction and translation.
- 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 database is available on South Dublin County Councils Intranet, Internet sites, www.athcliaththeas.ie and www.sdcc.ie
- All signage has been reviewed and all incorrect signs have been replaced..
- A protocol for Taking in Charge has been developed: 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.

3.9   Gaelscoileanna & Other Irish Language Organisations

South Dublin County Council continues to recognise and acknowledge the use of Irish/bilingualism in Gaelscoileanna and other Irish Language Organisations.

South Dublin County Council will support Áras Chrónáin, Ionad Cultúrtha in 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.

South Dublin County Council will erect appropriate signage to publicise the availability of services through the medium of Irish.

Chapter 4   Monitoring, Revision & Publicising of agreed Scheme

4.1 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.

4.2 Publicising of Agreed Scheme

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

- Press Release
- 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 been forwarded to Oifig Choimisinéir na dTeangacha Oifigiúla.

In addition to these measures, the Council will take every opportunity in its day-to-day interactions with customers to promote and publicise the services it provides through Irish, including by:

- directly informing customers on a pro-active basis of the option of dealing with the Council through Irish, for example, by the display of notices at reception areas indicating the Irish language services that are available and also by prominently listing these on the Council's website;
- including footnotes on selected guidelines, leaflets, and applications forms explaining that these documents are also available in Irish (in cases where bilingual printed material is not produced under a single cover); and
- including notes in publications and advertisements that the Council provides services through Irish and, accordingly, welcomes customers who wish to deal with it in Irish, according to the commitments in its agreed Scheme.

The English version is the original version of this scheme

A copy of this scheme has been forwarded to Oifig An Choimisinéara Teanga