

ITEM No ...7.....

REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 24 SEPTEMBER 2018
REPORT ON: DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL'S BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE PLAN 2018-2024
REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE
REPORT NO: 256-2018

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides Committee with Dundee City Council's first British Sign Language (BSL) Local Plan for the period 2018-2024.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Committee is asked to approve Dundee City Council's local BSL Plan 2018-2024 attached.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The Scottish Government allocated specific funds to consult, translate and develop the local BSL Plans with BSL communities. Approximately £6,500 remains of this funding and will be made available to take forward actions identified in our plan.
- 3.2 Budget holders will also be expected to prioritise expenditure in order that needs of the BSL Communities are taken into account, as far as reasonably possible.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

- 4.1 The BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 required listed public bodies (including local authorities) to publish BSL plans by 24 October 2018. These must:
- involve BSL users (including those who use the tactile form of the language) and those who represent them;
 - ensure that the consultation on the draft plan is accessible to D/deaf and Deafblind BSL users; and
 - be published in BSL as well as in English in both draft form, and in final form.
- 4.2 The legislation requires that BSL plans should 'try to achieve consistency' with the [BSL National Plan 2017-2023](#) published in October 2017. BSL plans of listed authorities should also take account of any guidance issued by Scottish Ministers. The BSL National Plan 2017-2023 is framed under **ten long-term goals** which have been co-produced with BSL users across Scotland. Within our local BSL Plan we have clearly referenced and linked to these long-term goals.
- 4.5 In the production of this plan, community engagement was designed and undertaken in partnership with Angus Council, Perth and Kinross Council and NHS Tayside. A number of community consultation events were held in May and June 2018 to listen to the Deaf BSL user community and their organisations to gather their views on what they would like to see in their local BSL plans. A video, produced in BSL and available through the Council's website provided a further opportunity for BSL users to give their views on the draft BSL plan.
- 4.6 Public consultation on the draft BSL plan ended on the 21 August and views received have been incorporated into our local BSL plan.

4.7 Following Committee approval, the final version of this plan will be transcribed into BSL video format and publicised fully.

4.8 Implementation of the plan will be co-ordinated by the Council's Equality and Diversity Steering Group which includes representatives of all services. A significant contribution will also be made by members of the Dundee Disability and Age Action Group.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This report has been subject to an assessment of any impacts on Equality and Diversity, Fairness and Poverty, Environment and Corporate Risk. A copy of the Impact Assessment is available on the Council's website at www.dundee.gov.uk/ia.

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

The Council Management Team were consulted in the preparation of this report as were D/deaf and Deaf Blind BSL users and organisations across Tayside.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

David R Martin
Chief Executive

Date: 31 August 2018

Dundee City Council

British Sign Language (BSL)

Local Plan

2018-2024

Dundee
City Council

www.dundee.gov.uk

CHANGING
FOR THE FUTURE



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The Scottish Government published the British Sign Language (BSL) National Plan 2017-2023 in October 2017. Within the national plan there are 70 actions which will help the Scottish Government in achieving the 10 long term goals agreed.

The BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 requires each public body in Scotland to develop and publish a local plan which demonstrates how they will work towards implementing the national plan.

This plan sets out the goals and actions for Dundee City Council from 2018-2024 and is framed around the same goals as the national plan. Our BSL plan also aims to ensure equal access to services and support for services by BSL users.

The 2011 Census highlights that 408 people in Dundee use BSL as a language other than English at home. A priority in this plan is to ensure that BSL users throughout the city have equal access to services that are welcoming, inclusive, fair and focused on their needs.

This plan has been finalised after consultation with BSL users as well as sensory services in Dundee and Tayside. The engagement with BSL users will continue during the implementation and monitoring of the plan and Dundee City Council will contribute to the national progress report in 2020.

We are also committed to working in partnership whenever possible with our neighbouring local authorities, NHS Tayside, Dundee Health and Social Care Partnership and local organisations working with BSL users and the Deaf community in the development of common approaches to the delivery of our local actions.

Dundee City Council's British Sign Language (BSL) Plan 2018-24 is framed around the same long-term goals as the Scottish Government's BSL National Plan 2017-2023:

- What we'll do across all of our services
- Family Support, Early Learning and Childcare
- School Education
- Post School Education
- Training, Work and Social Security
- Health (including Social Care), Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Transport
- Culture and the Arts
- Justice
- Democracy

Our plan focuses on ensuring that BSL users and their families have equal access to services that are welcoming, inclusive, fair and focused on their individual needs.

This plan sets out our actions that we are aiming to deliver between 2018 and 2024. We are focussing our resources on a number of key areas:

- Ensuring services and the information we provide to customers are accessible to BSL users.
- Ensuring the principles and outcomes of "Getting it right for every child" are delivered for all D/deaf or deafblind children and young people and ensuring their families are able to access support when required.
- Supporting our BSL communities to access jobs, education or training to ensure they are not left behind economically.
- Providing support to BSL users to take part in the breadth of leisure and cultural offerings across the city and to share their own BSL and Deaf culture.
- Ensuring BSL users can access mental health and wellbeing services when required.
- Encouraging BSL users to engage and become involved in the democratic and public life aspects within our city.

3.1 Background

We aim to ensure that all our plans and strategies contribute to and deliver on the outcomes and objectives of the City Plan (Local Outcome Improvement Plan) 2017-2026 and Council Plan 2017-2022. Our plans build upon the foundation of city-wide strategies and plans and aim to support our partners to deliver joined up services for mutual benefit. The Council Plan is set against the backdrop of ongoing financial and social challenges but still aims to deliver high quality and transformational services for our customers.

The BSL Plan for Dundee 2018-2024 plays an important role within our city and contributes to the delivery of a range of aims and objectives within our strategic plans.

3.2 Where Are We Now?

Dundee City Council and its partners have supported our 408 BSL users across the city to be fully involved in all aspects of life in the following ways so far:

- All service areas arrange BSL interpreters on request.
- During 2013-2016 over 200 Council and Partnership staff completed Deaf Awareness training.
- Our web page provides a link to Contact Scotland BSL.
- We funded a Deaf Awareness Card to help BSL users inform individuals and agencies of their communication needs.
- We routinely engage via our Disability and Age Action Group with local Deaf and Sensory Impaired individuals and third sector agencies to develop inclusive policy and practice.
- The Accessibility and Inclusion Service (AIS), within the Children and Families Service, employs the equivalent of one full-time Education Communication Support Worker (ECSW). The purpose of this post is to support BSL users in school, to promote the BSL skills of colleagues within the AIS and to be available to support parents who are BSL users in their interactions with nurseries and schools. AIS has one member of staff who is a fully registered BSL interpreter and two have BSL as their first language.
- Dundee Repertory Theatre provide 'signed' performance for each of their main productions. These have been well received.
- 12 pupils were involved in a consultation event on the BSL Local plan hosted by the National Deaf Children's Society in March this year.
- North East Sensory Services (NESS) delivers statutory social work services for citizens who are sensory impaired on behalf of Dundee Health and Social Care Partnership.
- The Council's Equality Outcomes include a commitment to ensure that protected characteristic communities, including BSL users, are fully involved with Dundee's Community Planning Partnership through the provision of appropriate communication support.
- The Council's accessible transport policies and practice take account of the communication needs of BSL users.

408

BSL users across the city supported by Dundee City Council and its partners



228

+



180

4.1 Across all services

We share the long-term goal for all Scottish public services set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“ Across the Scottish Public Sector, information and services will be accessible to BSL users. ”

By 2020 we will:

- Work with local BSL organisations to develop a programme aimed at providing information on Dundee City Council’s web site in BSL.
- Continue to support and promote the use of the Scottish Government’s BSL online interpreting video relay services ‘contactSCOTLAND-BSL’ to staff and to local BSL users.
- Continue to support Council front line employees and those who work directly with BSL users to access appropriate BSL awareness training.
- Explore alternative ways for BSL users to contact the Council, for example ‘how to’ videos and webchat.

4.2 Our Actions: Family Support, Early Learning and Childcare

We share the long-term goal for all Scottish public services set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“ The Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) approach will be fully embedded, with a D/deaf or Deafblind child and their family offered the right information and support at the right time to engage with BSL. ”

By 2020 we will:

- Continue to ensure that all employees within primary and pre-school services in the city are made aware of sources of advice and support available on BSL issues, within the Council and more widely.
- Continue to promote greater awareness of Deaf culture and share best practice when working in partnership with D/deaf and Deafblind children and their families.
- Explore how digital resources might support communicating information to children and their families.

4.3 Our Actions: School Education

We share the long-term goal for all Scottish public services set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“Children and young people who use BSL will get the support they need at all stages of their learning, so that they can reach their full potential; parents who use BSL will have the same opportunities as other parents to be fully involved in their child’s education; and more pupils will be able to learn BSL at school.”

By 2020 we will:

- Continue to contribute to the Scottish Government’s investigation of the level of BSL held by teachers and support staff working with D/deaf and Deafblind pupils in schools.
- Continue to take account of any new guidance regarding the level of BSL required for specialist teachers and support staff working with pupils who use BSL and ensure that teachers have appropriate BSL skills and qualifications.
- Continue to take steps to improve the way that teachers engage with parents who use BSL.
- Continue to ensure that parents who use BSL know how they can become further involved in their child’s education.
- In keeping with guidance from the Scottish Government, Scottish Qualifications Authority and General Teaching Council of Scotland, continue to encourage BSL as a subject area in primary and secondary schools.
- Continue to gather and share examples of good practice across the region.
- Continue to encourage D/deaf and Deafblind pupils’ involvement in developing best practice.

4.4 Our Actions: Post School Education

We share the long-term goal for all Scottish public services set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“ BSL users will be able to maximise their potential at school, will be supported to transition to post-school education if they wish to do so and will receive the support they need to do well in their chosen subject(s). ”

By 2021 we will:

- Work with all relevant organisations and the Deaf community to identify barriers and opportunities to support the transition of D/deaf and Deafblind students from school to further education and employment and take steps to improve outcomes.
- Signpost pupils and students to information, advice and guidance in BSL about their career and learning choices and the transition process.

4.5 Our Actions: Training, Work and Social Security

We share the long-term goal for all Scottish public services set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“ BSL users will be supported to develop the skills they need to become valued members of the Scottish workforce, so that they can fulfil their potential and improve Scotland’s economic performance. They will be provided with support to enable them to progress in their chosen career. ”

By 2021 we will:

- Gather and review evidence from employees within the Council who are BSL users, identify any barriers or issues and take steps to address these, where appropriate.
- Work with employability service providers and employers to improve knowledge of Deaf culture, available support and best practice.
- Raise awareness of how the ‘Access to Work’ scheme can support employees and employers in the recruitment and retention of BSL users. The Council already offers guaranteed interviews to those with a disability.

4.6 Our Actions: Health (including Social Care), Mental Health and Wellbeing

We share the long-term goal for all Scottish public services set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“ BSL users will have access to the information and services they need to live active, healthy lives and to make informed choices at every stage of their lives. ”

By 2021 we will, in partnership with Dundee Health and Social Partnership, NHS Tayside and Leisure and Culture Dundee:

- Signpost BSL users to health and social care information available in BSL.
- Provide information about sport, local sports facilities and sporting opportunities in BSL.
- Work across public and voluntary agencies to address issues of social isolation faced by many BSL users.
- Work with Angus and Perth and Kinross Councils' schools, local colleges and leisure services in developing regional opportunities for BSL users' participation in sport and leisure activities.

4.7 Our Actions: Transport

We share the long-term goal for all Scottish public services set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“ BSL users will have safe, fair and inclusive access to public transport and the systems that support all transport use in Scotland. ”

By 2019 we will:

- Involve BSL users directly in Dundee City Council's accessible transport forum and provide appropriate communication support.

4.8 Our Actions: Culture and the Arts

We share the long-term goal for all Scottish public services set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“ BSL users will have full access to the cultural life of Scotland, an equal opportunity to enjoy and contribute to culture and the arts, and are encouraged to share BSL and Deaf Culture with the people of Scotland. ”

By 2023 we will, in partnership with Leisure and Culture Dundee and the Dundee Partnership’s Cultural Development Group:

- Continue to support access and opportunities for BSL users through the public library network and cultural agencies.
- Ensure that information in BSL about culture and the arts is routinely available on websites and at venues.
- Continue our productive relationship with the V&A Dundee to ensure equality of access to all exhibits for BSL users.
- Review opportunities to develop training for front of house employees.

4.9 Our Actions: Access to Justice

We share the long-term goal for all Scottish public services set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“ BSL users will have fair and equal access to the civil, criminal and juvenile justice systems in Scotland. ”

By 2024 we will:

- Work with local partner agencies to improve access to information and advice on justice issues for BSL users.

4.10 Our Actions: Democracy

We share the long-term goal for all Scottish public services set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

BSL users will be fully involved in democratic and public life in Scotland, as active and informed citizens, as voters, as elected politicians and as board members of our public bodies.

By 2023 we will:

- Promote the Access to Elected Office Fund via our website and through direct engagement with BSL users locally. The fund can meet the additional costs of BSL users wishing to stand for selection or election in local or Scottish Parliament elections.
- Ensure support is available around the whole electoral process so that users of BSL are not excluded. This will include appropriate support and information to ensure they can register as electors and can cast their vote.
- Continue to work in partnership with other stakeholders including political parties and the Electoral Commission.

The Dundee City Council BSL Plan will be regularly reviewed and updated where appropriate. The plan will develop over time as actions are delivered and projects mature. A progress report on this plan will be delivered in 2020, two years after the launch in 2018.

This report will detail progress and advancements made, including an assessment of how actions and measures will change over the life of the plan and beyond.

The Council is keen to ensure we maintain ongoing and open dialogue with the BSL user community. As a result, consultation and engagement will continue after this plan is launched and when significant progress is made. BSL users are welcome to provide their feedback at any time on positive or negative developments. This insight is key to ensuring we are focusing on areas of greatest need and on our BSL users' priorities.

6.1 Where to find the BSL version of this plan

A BSL version of this plan will be available on our website at:

www.dundee.gov.uk/search/equality

6.2 Name and contact details of lead officer

Scott Mands, Equality and Diversity Co-ordinator

Email: scott.mands@dundee.gov.uk

Tel: 01382 307482

Text: 07914667358

6.3 Key agencies in Dundee

Dundee Deaf Hub

www.taysidedeafhub.org.uk

North East Sensory Services

www.nesensoryservices.org

Dundee Independent Advocacy Support

www.diasdundee.org

Tayside Deaf Children's Society

Local links via main website below

National Deaf Children's Society

www.ndcs.org.uk

Deaf Action

www.deafaction.org.uk

Deaf Blind Scotland

dbscotland.org.uk/resources/contact-us

SENSE Scotland

www.sensescotland.org.uk

