



**Monaghan County Council**

**OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT 2003**  
**LANGUAGE SCHEME**  
**2017 - 2020**

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# Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

## 1.1 Introduction

The Official Languages Act 2003 provides for the preparation by public bodies of a language scheme detailing the services which they will provide:

- through the medium of Irish,
- through the medium of English, and
- through the medium of Irish and English

The language scheme sets the measures to be adopted to ensure that any service not currently provided by the body through the medium of the Irish language will be so provided within an agreed timeframe.

In accordance with section 14(3) of the Act, language schemes remain in force for a period of 3 years or until such time as a new scheme is confirmed by the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, whichever is the later.

## 1.2 Preparation and Content of the Scheme

In the preparation of this scheme, due regard has been given to the Guidelines issued by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. In addition, there has been a comprehensive process of consultation with relevant stakeholders.

The Local Authority is guided by the principle that the provision of Irish language services should be based on:

- the underlying level of demand for specific services in the Irish language,
- the importance of a proactive approach to the provision of such services, and
- the resources, including human and financial resources, and the capacity of the body concerned to develop or access the necessary language capability.

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 Monaghan County Council will be fully addressed on an incremental basis, through this and future schemes.

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

## 1.3 Commencement date of the Scheme

This Scheme has been confirmed by the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. It commences with effect from **02 October 2017** and shall remain in force for a period of 3 years or until a new scheme has been confirmed, whichever is the later.

## **Chapter 2: Overview of Monaghan County Council**

### **2.1 Mission and Objectives**

Monaghan County Council maximises and drives economic, community and cultural development, within our county, and provides high quality sustainable public services and infrastructure. We do this in an open inclusive manner in partnership with our stakeholders.

### **2.2 Main Functions**

Monaghan County Council, through the implementation of 'Putting People First', has a broader role and a much greater responsibility in the expansion of existing businesses, creating new enterprise and increasing local employment opportunities.

The main departments of Monaghan County Council are listed below:

- Housing and Building
- Roads and Transportation
- Motor Taxation
- Water Services
- Finance
- Governance & Corporate Affairs
- Planning & Economic Development
- Tourism
- Community Development
- Environment
- Fire Service, Building Control & Civil Defence
- Library Service
- County Museum
- Arts Office
- Human Resource Management
- Ballybay-Clones Municipal District
- Monaghan Municipal District
- Carrickmacross-Castleblayney Municipal District

### **2.3 Key Services**

The Council's open and transparent approach helps maximise operational efficiency, prioritises inclusive and accessible services to citizens, and continuously reviews value for money in service provision in order to deliver a broader range of services that promote the well-being and quality of life of citizens and communities within the county.

The move to devolve greater decision-making to local level and give Elected Representatives and communities more control over a broader range of issues means the council is more responsive to local needs and circumstances, and enables stakeholders to solve problems at local level. This is enhancing the

Council's role in developing sustainable communities, improved community identity and is contributing to the effectiveness and credibility of democratic representation.

## **2.4 Customers and Clients**

Monaghan County Council takes account of relevant policies and objectives set out in National, Regional and Local Plans and National Legislation. These have been taken into account when developing our strategic objectives and supporting strategies such as Annual Operational Plan. The main stakeholders for Monaghan County Council are our citizens and community, and the following issues are highlighted as areas that our stakeholders are particularly interested in.

- Social inclusion to enable everyone – especially the marginalised – to participate in local decision making;
- Meaningful citizen and community engagement, participation in identifying priorities and shaping local communities through LCDC's (Local Community Development Committees) including voluntary activity and active citizenship;
- Inter-agency co-operation and working to achieve successful outcomes for communities;
- Promotion of economic development and job creation;
- The integration of sustainable development considerations;
- Having a clear focus on making the best use of available resources and achieving the best value-for-money possible from these resources;
- Consideration of environmental issues.

### Chapter 3: Details of services currently being provided in English only or bilingually

Details of services currently being provided in English only or bilingually in Irish and English; **including services in Gaeltacht areas.**

Current Provision of Services			
Services (General)	In English only	In Irish only	Bilingually, in English and Irish
Housing & Building	✓		
Water Services	✓		
Planning	✓		
Roads & Transportation	✓		
Governance & Corporate Affairs	✓		
Finance , IT & Motor Taxation	✓		
Planning & Economic Development	✓		
Community Development	✓		
Environment			✓
Fire, Building Control & Civil Defence	✓		
Human Resources	✓		
Museum	✓		
Arts			✓
Libraries			✓
Services in Gaeltacht Areas	In English only	In Irish Only	Bilingually, in English and Irish
N/A			

## Chapter 4: Enhancing the provision of Irish Language Services

The provisions in the table below are mandatory requirements under the **Official Languages Act 2003**.

Means of communication with the public		Commitment	
<b>Recorded Oral Announcements</b>		<p>The following recorded oral announcements will be in Irish or bilingual:</p> <p>(a) Recorded oral announcements provided on the telephone when the offices of the public body are closed;</p> <p>(b) Recorded oral announcements transmitted by a public address system;</p> <p>(c) Recorded oral announcements created and transmitted by means of a computerised messaging system or a computerised telephone answering system.</p> <p>This provision relates to 'recorded' announcements rather than 'live announcements'.</p> <p>Where a Placenames Order is in force, a public body is required to use the Irish language version of the placename specified in that Order in recorded oral announcements made by it or on its behalf.</p>	Mandatory
<b>Written Communication</b>	<b>Letters and Electronic Mail</b>	All written communication will be responded to in the official language in which it was received.	Mandatory
	<b>Stationery</b>	Headings of stationery, including notepaper, compliment slips, fax cover sheets, file covers and other folders, labels and envelopes are provided in Irish or bilingually.	Mandatory
<b>Signage</b>	<b>Signage</b>	All signage placed by Monaghan County Council or on its behalf must be in Irish or bilingually, in accordance with the regulations (S.I. No.391/2008).	Mandatory
<b>Publications</b>	<b>Publications</b>	Documents setting out public policy proposals, audited accounts or financial statements, annual reports and strategy statements will be published simultaneously in Irish and English.	Mandatory
	<b>Circulars/Mailshots</b>	Where a public body communicates in writing	Mandatory

		or by electronic mail with the general public or a class of the general public for the purpose of furnishing information, the body shall ensure that the communication is in the Irish language or in the English and Irish languages.	
<b>An Ghaeltacht</b>	<b>Gaeltacht Placenames</b>	The official placenames of Gaeltacht areas will be used by the public body in accordance with the legislation.	Mandatory

The objectives of this second Scheme are to build on the progress achieved since 2008 in the provision of quality services to our Irish-speaking customers and to broaden the range of services available bilingually over the lifetime of the scheme.

Our second Scheme includes a commitment to monitor the level of demand for services through Irish on an ongoing basis, so that we can continue to meet this demand in a planned, coherent and practical way. Monaghan County Council undertakes to make the following commitments to the development of the Irish language under this second Scheme over the lifetime of the Scheme unless otherwise stated:

<b>Means of communication with the public</b>		<b>Commitment</b>	<b>Timeline By end Yr 1/ Yr 2 / Yr 3</b>
<b>Oral / Written Communication</b>	Reception switchboard, Face to Face/Counter Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reception/switchboard staff will continue to give the name of the Local Authority in Irish.</li> <li>• They will be familiar with the basic greetings in Irish, and will be in a position to acknowledge a request for service in Irish.</li> <li>• They will put customers in touch with the appropriate officer responsible for offering the service required through Irish, where such is available. The names of the members of staff who are able to communicate in Irish will be advertised in the various sections of the office of the public body &amp; at reception.</li> <li>• An up to date list of staff members who can provide a service through Irish will be made available.</li> <li>• All recorded phone greetings and out of hours messages will be bilingual and reviewed on regular basis to ensure compliance.</li> <li>• All written communication received by post or email from the public, other organisations or elected representatives will be responded to in the official language in which it was received. The service in Irish should not be of a lower</li> </ul>	Ongoing



		standard than the service in English. The Council will record and report on all correspondence received in Irish.	
	Telephone communications with the public	Staff will be provided with guidance on handling telephone calls from Irish speaking members of the general public.	Ongoing
	Recorded Oral Announcements	Bilingual staff will have their pre-recorded personal telephone greetings in bilingual format.	Year 1
	Live announcements	No live announcements are made in Monaghan Co. Co. buildings however if this was to change all announcements would be made bilingually.	
	Information Leaflets/ Brochures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council will continue to ensure that during the lifetime of the scheme, policy documents approved by Council for publication are made available in Irish and English within the same cover except where it is not feasible because of the nature, size or layout of the material.</li> <li>• In these circumstances documents will be published in one language only, but a statement will be included in the English version of the document, stating that an Irish version of the form is also available.</li> <li>• Where applications forms and information leaflets are provided as separate Irish and English versions, equal prominence will be given to both versions at public locations.</li> <li>• There will be a bilingual or Irish version of the most commonly used leaflets &amp; brochures available. Other leaflets will be made available in Irish upon request.</li> </ul>	Ongoing Ongoing
	Application Forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be a bilingual or Irish version of the most commonly used application forms available. All other forms will be made available upon request.</li> <li>• In exceptional circumstances, forms will be published in one language only, but a statement will be included in the English version of the form, stating that an Irish version of the form is also available</li> </ul>	Ongoing
	Other	Publications such as the Corporate Plan and the Annual Report will be published bilingually	Ongoing

<b>Media</b>	Press Releases	Press releases relating to the Irish language issues will be issued in Irish or bilingually and circulated to the Irish language and English language media simultaneously.	Ongoing
	Media Spokespersons	An Irish speaking spokesperson will be available for interviews with the Irish language media.  Notices and advertisements published in local/national newspapers where the subject matter relates specifically to Irish language issues will be published bilingually.	Year 1
	Speeches	Speeches by the Cathaoirleach of the Council, Mayors of the Municipal Districts, and Chief Executive relating to matters of Irish Language interest will be produced bilingually and circulated simultaneously.	Ongoing
<b>Information Technology</b>	Email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A dedicated e-mail eolas@monaghancoco.ie address will be established for persons wishing to communicate directly in Irish with Monaghan County Council</li> <li>• Standard email messages such as disclaimers, will be bilingual</li> </ul>	Year 1
	Websites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The static material on the home page and the specified main pages on the public body's website will be available in Irish</li> <li>• An option will be available on the home page for language, either Irish or English</li> <li>• A separate website page will be developed to bring together links to all Irish language content from within the site to facilitate access to relevant material by Irish speakers.</li> <li>• The information on the homepage and description of each Department will be available in Irish by the end of this scheme. This will be activated by clicking on an "As Gaeilge" button.</li> <li>• The Intranet system will be developed as a staff resource for the promotion of bilingualism, proper spelling of place-names, phrases for receptionists, names of posts and services within the local authorities, road signage, formal speeches, etc.</li> </ul>	Year 1

	Computer Systems	The public body will continue to actively use technology to improve the provision of bilingual services Any new computer software systems being installed will be bilingual.	Year 1
	Interactive Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All interactive services online will be available bilingually</li> <li>• Any online and interactive services that are developed by external companies will be fully available on a bilingual basis, in accordance with technical availability</li> <li>• Any new interactive services which allow the general public to make applications or on line will be introduced simultaneously in both languages by the end of the scheme</li> </ul>	Year 1
Other	Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributions in Irish or English are welcome at public meetings organised by Monaghan County Council.</li> <li>• Meetings organised by the public body that deal with Irish language issues will be held in Irish or bilingually, as appropriate</li> <li>• Monaghan Local Authorities will continue to support the work of An Coiste Logainmneacha. The committee will continue to promote actively the use of Irish and local knowledge, culture and heritage in the selection of place names for new developments both public and private.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
	Placenames Order	The Council will use the official Irish version of placenames that are to be found on <a href="http://www.logainm.ie">www.logainm.ie</a> for official business.	Year 1

## Chapter 5: Improving Language Capability

### 5.1 Training and Development

Monaghan County Council is committed to making available opportunities for staff to attend appropriately accredited Irish language training courses. All staff will be advised of facilities/opportunities to improve their competency in Irish.

		<b>Commitment</b>	<b>Timeline By end Yr 1/ Yr 2 / Yr 3</b>
<b>Improving Irish Language Capability</b>	Recruitment	New staff will be provided with an induction pack containing a copy of our Scheme	Year 2
	Training	Opportunities to develop the Irish language competence of staff will be provided. Appropriate arrangements will be made for the provision of Irish language training and proficiency testing certification for staff in order to support staff in maintaining their proficiency in the Irish language.	Year 2
	Other	<p>Monaghan County Council will provide sufficient resources to implement this Scheme; The Council will also</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• continue the Gaeltacht Scholarship Scheme</li> <li>• assist traditional Irish music and song concerts;</li> <li>• foster in young people reading through Irish with the assistance of the libraries;</li> <li>• help to promote the Irish language in the everyday activities and events of the community at large ;</li> <li>• liaise with other organisations such as the G.A.A., Gaelscoileanna &amp; other Irish Language Organisations</li> <li>• Monaghan Local Authorities recognise and acknowledge the particular linguistic preferences of Naionrai and Gaelscoileanna in County Monaghan, as well as other Irish Language organisations and groups operating throughout the county and nationally. The provision of services in Irish to these particular bodies and groups will be facilitated over the lifetime of this scheme.</li> </ul>	

## **Irish Language Capability**

Having regard to Government policy for enhanced provision of services in Irish, Monaghan County Council will, by the end of year one of the scheme, identify any posts for which Irish language competency is an essential requirement. Every effort will be made to fulfil these requirements by the end of this scheme having regard to recruitment, promotion and training policies, as appropriate. This will enable this Department to plan and prioritise the incremental improvement of services in Irish in a more strategic manner.

## **Chapter 6: Monitoring and Review**

The implementation of the scheme will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis by Governance and Corporate Affairs, through a bi-annual report to the Director of Service.

Further monitoring will take place by An Coiste Gaeilge, made up of elected members at the 3 scheduled meetings per annum.

The contact person for the scheme will be Nial Ó Conchúir Oifigeach Gaeilge, [noconnor@monaghancoco.ie](mailto:noconnor@monaghancoco.ie)

## **Chapter 7: Publicising of Agreed Scheme**

This scheme will be publicised both internally and externally, through a press release initially. A bilingual version of the scheme will be made available on our website and circulated to all staff and appropriate agencies. Other means to publicise the scheme may also be used.

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 the agreed scheme will be forwarded to the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga.