



English and Gaelic road sign © Wee Epics

**Gaelic Language Plan 2024-28**  
**consultation report**



**Cairngorms**  
National Park

**Pàirc Nàiseanta a'**  
**Mhonaidh Ruaidh**

# Cairngorms National Park draft Gaelic Language Plan 2024-28: consultation report

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**Description:**

This report showcases the results of the Cairngorms National Park Authority's public consultation on the draft Gaelic Language Plan for 2024 – 2028, held online between 25 January and 7 March 2024.

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# 1. Summary of consultation findings

## Exponential growth in engagement

A total of 427 responses were submitted, out of which 31 (7.3%) were in Gaelic. This is an unprecedented, 1,086% increase in consultation responses when compared with the 36 total responses which were submitted to the public consultation for the 2018 – 2022 Gaelic Language Plan.

## Overwhelming support

82% of respondents either 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' with the draft Gaelic Language Plan's three strategic priorities. 78% of respondents found the Gaelic Language Plan to be clear and easy to understand. 76% of respondents believe that the Gaelic Language Plan helps safeguard and promote Gaelic language and culture.

## Interest in Gaelic among residents and visitors alike

The consultation was answered by high numbers of visitors and residents of the National Park. Both demographic groups showed majority support for the Gaelic language, and there was a large increase in respondents who had at least a basic understanding of Gaelic when compared with the respondents to the 2018 – 2022 Gaelic Language Plan consultation.

Several resident respondents were interested in taking an active role in fulfilling some aspects of the Gaelic Language Plan, showing that there is community support for more Gaelic events and educational opportunities within the National Park area for the benefit of the local community as well as visitors.

## Critical timing and challenges

Several respondents highlighted the critical state of the Gaelic language and the urgent need for action, as captured in the National Gaelic Language Plan 2023 – 2028. Multiple comments praised the Park Authority's commitment to Gaelic but noted the difficulty in Gaelic development and promotion within a body which did not have any fluent Gaelic-speaking staff members.



## 2. Introduction

The Cairngorms National Park Authority is in the process of producing a new Gaelic Language Plan for the period 2024 – 2028. This is a five-year plan which demonstrates the Park Authority’s commitment to Gaelic. As the Park Authority is a public body, it is legally obligated to prepare a Gaelic Language Plan under section 3 of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005. The 2024 – 2028 Plan is the third Gaelic Language Plan produced by the Park Authority and follows on from the work of the previous 2018-2022 Gaelic Language Plan.

There are three main objectives outlined in the Park Authority’s 2024 – 2028 Gaelic Language Plan:

- Increasing the use of Gaelic
- Increasing the learning of Gaelic
- Promoting a positive image of Gaelic

These objectives reflect the aims and priorities outlined in the National Gaelic Language Plan 2023 – 2028, the main aim of which is to ‘increase the use and learning of Gaelic’.

### 2.1 – The consultation

The Park Authority invited feedback from the public on its draft Gaelic Language Plan for 2024 – 2028 through an online survey (with options for paper or phone-based response too). The consultation period ran for a period of six weeks, from 25 January to 7 March 2024. The survey was available in both English and Gaelic, as is the Gaelic Language Plan itself.

The consultation was promoted extensively both on and offline across a range of channels. This included working with social media influencer Somhairle to produce tailored Instagram and TikTok content to engage a younger audience. We estimate that over 150 responses overlapped with this activity.

Two emails were shared with over 100 contacts within the new Gaelic Officers Network, which has led to multiple organisational responses and lots of direct email correspondence around potential partnerships.

Elsewhere, a specific media announcement (in Gaelic and English) was prepared and picked up by various regional titles, alongside an ongoing stream of social

media and website activity – including the creation of a dedicated consultation landing page.

A total of 427 responses were received, out of which 31 (7.3%) were in Gaelic. This is an unprecedented, 1,086% increase in consultation responses when compared with the 36 total responses which were submitted to the public consultation for the 2018 – 2022 Gaelic Language Plan.

While the total number of responses submitted in Gaelic increased by 244% (from 9 to 31), the majority of this growth was among the English responses, which increased from 27 to 396. This suggests an increased awareness of Gaelic among the non-Gaelic speaking population.

## 2.2 – Survey completion

A survey response in which at least two of the main three questions were answered was considered a complete response. 85% of responses fulfilled these criteria, with around 15% of respondents to both the Gaelic and the English surveys submitting incomplete responses which only answered questions 1 and 2. This is the reason why the total number of responses in the analyses in Section 4 (Consultation findings) is lower than the total of all responses submitted (427).

## 3. Demographic information

### 3.1 – Sex and gender

A total of 231 people across the Gaelic and English versions of the survey chose to answer the question ‘Which one of the following best describes your gender?’. A further 165 people choose to skip it. Of those who answered, 107 (43%) chose male, 133 (54%) female, six (2%) ‘in another way’, and one (0.4%) ‘prefer not to say’.

According to Scotland’s Census (from 27 March 2011) – which provided two options (male or female) – women made up 51% of the Scottish population and men 49%.

229 answered the question, ‘Do you consider yourself to be a trans person?’, with 167 skipping it. Of those who answered, eight (3%) said yes, 231 (94%) said no, and a further six people (2%) said ‘prefer not to say’.

According to the 2018 *Health Care Needs Assessment of Gender Identity Services* report, while there is no precise estimate of the number of trans or non-binary people in Scotland, the most commonly used figure for trans people is 0.5% of the population, equivalent to almost 24,000 adults. This would suggest that a higher number of trans or non-binary people answered the survey than might be expected from general population trends.

### 3.2 – Sexual orientation

A total of 240 people answered the question, ‘Which of the following best described your sexual orientation?’, with 187 skipping it. Of those who answered,

23 (10%) said bi / bisexual, 26 (11%) said gay / lesbian, 174 (73%) said heterosexual / straight, 17 (3%) said 'prefer not to say'.

By way of comparison, a 2015 report from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) suggested that 95% of the Scottish population identified as heterosexual, 1.0% as gay or lesbian, 0.6% as bisexual, 0.4% other, and 2.8% prefer not to say.

### 3.3 – Ethnicity

A total of 245 people answered the question, 'What is your ethnic group?'. A further 182 chose to skip it. Of those who answered, 227 (93%) answered 'White Scottish, White Irish, White Gypsy / Traveller, White British', three (1%) answered 'Mixed or multiple ethnic groups', 31 (13%) answered 'Other', and two (1%) answered 'Prefer not to say'.

By way of comparison, according to the 2011 Scottish Census, 98.5% of residents in the five local authority areas covering the Cairngorms National Park were 'White Scottish, White Irish, White Gypsy / Traveller, White British', 0.9% were 'Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British' and 0.6% were 'Other ethnic groups'.

### 3.4 – Disability

244 people answered the question, 'Are you currently living with any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses?'. 183 people skipped this question. Of those who answered, 53 (22%) said yes, 183 (75%) said no, and eight (3%) said 'prefer not to say'.

The wording of this question varied slightly from the last census in terms of the options available to participants. Whereas Scotland's Census 2011 had the option of 'Yes, limited a lot', 'Yes, limited a little' and 'No', this survey included a more binary yes / no choice. This will be amended in future consultation activity.

For context, 80.4% of the Scottish population said their day-to-day activities were not limited, 10.1% said their activities were limited a little, and 9.6% said their activities were limited a lot. Whilst a direct comparison is not possible, the figures from the consultation are broadly in line with these statistics.



## 3.5 – Income

A total of 244 people answered the question, ‘Do you consider yourself to be on a low income?’, with 183 people skipping the question. Of those who responded, 63 (26%) said yes, 169 (69%) said no, and 12 (5%) said ‘prefer not to say’.

According to the 2011 Scottish Census, 14% of individuals in Scotland were living in relative poverty after housing costs were factored in.

## 3.5 – Caring responsibilities

245 people answered the question, ‘Do you have any caring responsibilities?’. 165 people skipped this question. Of those who answered, 45 (18%) said yes, 197 (80%) said no, and three (1%) said ‘prefer not to say’.

According to the 2011 Scottish Census, 9.3% of the Scottish population have caring responsibilities.

## 3.6 – Connection to the National Park

A total of 239 people answered the question, ‘What is your connection with the Cairngorms National Park (select all that apply)?’, with 188 people skipping the question. Of those who responded, 15 (6%) said ‘Business owner or employee’, one (0.4%) said ‘Partner organisation’, four (2%) said ‘Community group member’, five (2%) said ‘Staff / board member or Park Authority volunteer’, five (2%) said ‘Land manager or worker’, 163 (68%) said ‘Visitor’, 74 (31%) said ‘Local resident’, four (2%) said ‘Prefer not to say’, and 17 (7%) said ‘Other’. Please note, as people could select multiple options, the total does not add up to 100%.

## 3.7 – Age range

A total of 248 people answered the question, ‘What is your age group?’, with 179 choosing to skip it. Of those who responded, 80 (32%) said 16-24, 56 (23%) said

25-34, 28 (11%) said 35-44, 33 (13%) said 45-54, 29 (12%) said 55-64, 20 (8%) said 65 or over, and two (1%) said 'Prefer not to say'.

The 2011 census reported that 11.9% of Scotland's population was aged 16-24, 12.6% between 25-34, 13.9% between 35-44, 14.9% between 45 and 54, 12.6% between 55-64, and 16.8% over 65. However, the population of the National Park skews older as compared to the rest of Scotland, and there has been a decline in the number of 16-24-year-olds since the last census was completed (eg the UK figure declined by 20,000 last year alone).

### 3.8 – Employment status

246 people answered the question, 'What is your employment status?', with 181 people choosing to skip it. Of those who responded, 120 (49%) were full-time employed, 27 (11%) were part-time employed, 19 (8%) were self-employed, 45 (18%) were in an apprenticeship / training / studying, 27 (11%) were retired, seven (3%) were unemployed, one (0.4%) selected 'Prefer not to say', and five (2%) said 'Other'.

## 4. Consultation findings

The following section focuses on the answers to questions 1 – 8 of the consultation; that is, the questions not relating to equality and diversity.

There was a total of 427 responses submitted to the online consultation for the Gaelic Language Plan. 31 of these were Gaelic language responses and 396 were in English. A further three responses were submitted via alternative means (two emails and one hand-written letter). While these did not follow the structure of the survey or provide any demographic information, their input was included in the analysis of findings.

Questions 1 – 5 were multiple choice questions, allowing for a quantitative analysis of answers. Questions 3 – 5 had follow-up questions which encouraged respondents to explain their answers. Questions 6 – 8 were open questions. The data from the follow-up and open questions was analysed qualitatively, focusing on finding common themes and threads in order to paint a representative picture of the public's response to the Gaelic Language Plan.

### 4.1 – Representation

Both the English- and Gaelic-language survey variants asked respondents whether they are responding to the Gaelic Language Plan consultation as one or more of the following categories:

- Resident
- Business – tourism
- Business – non-tourism
- Visitor
- Member of a Gaelic organisation
- Community representative
- Pupil at a Gaelic Medium Education school
- Teacher at a Gaelic Medium Education school
- Student or adult learning Gaelic
- Other public sector organisation
- Staff or Board member
- Other

All (100%) of the respondents who filled in this survey in both languages answered this question. While this equals 427 individual surveys, the possibility of selecting more than one option means that the real number of responses to this particular question was 490.

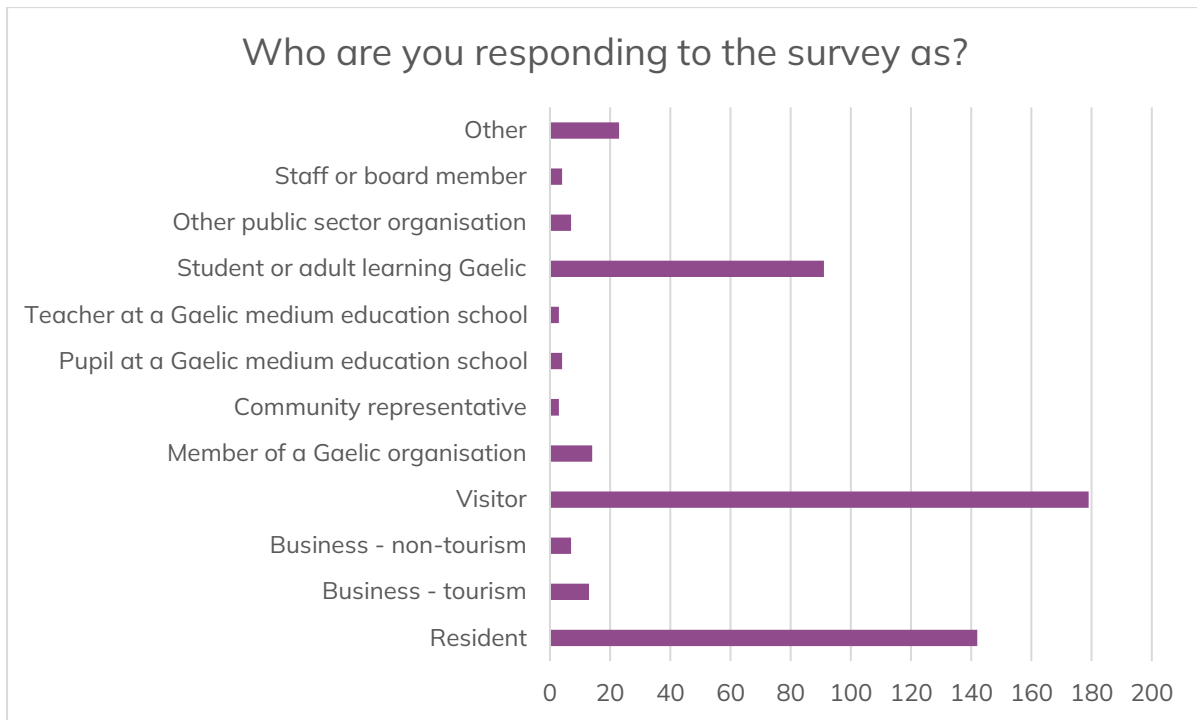


Figure 1: Data showing what group respondents identified themselves as belonging to when filling in the Gaelic Language Plan consultation. N=490.

## Visitors

179 respondents identified as filling in the survey as ‘visitors’ of the Cairngorms National Park. Of these 179 people, 38 (around 21%) identified as being ‘visitors’ as well as one other category. In total, over 40% of respondents identified as ‘visitors’ of the National Park, making this the largest group of respondents.

## Residents

142 respondents identified as filling in the survey as ‘residents’ of the Cairngorms National Park. Of these 142 people, 26 (around 18%) identified as being ‘residents’ as well as one other category. In total, around a third of respondents

identified as 'residents' of the National Park, making this the second-largest group of respondents.

## **Businesses – tourism and non-tourism**

20 respondents identified as filling in the survey as either representing a 'tourism' or 'non-tourism business'. There were around twice as many people representing a 'tourism business' (13) as there were a 'non-tourism business' (seven), likely reflecting the proportionally larger share the tourism industry has within the economy of the Cairngorms National Park area compared to the national average.

## **Members of a Gaelic organisation**

14 respondents identified as filling in the survey as 'members of a Gaelic organisation', making up around 3% of the total responses. By comparison, in the public consultation for the Park Authority's 2018 – 2022 Gaelic Language Plan, only three respondents identified as 'members of a Gaelic organisation', making up around 8% of those surveyed.

## **Community representatives**

Three respondents identified as filling in the survey as 'community representatives'. Two of these respondents simultaneously identified with other groups: one of them was a 'community representative' as well as representing a 'business – tourism' and identifying as a 'visitor'; one was a 'community representative' as well as representing a 'business – tourism' and identifying as a 'resident'.

## **Pupils and teachers at Gaelic Medium Education schools**

Seven respondents identified as filling in the survey as either a 'pupil at a Gaelic Medium Education school' or a 'teacher at a Gaelic Medium Education school'. The split was almost even, with four respondents identifying as 'pupils' and three

as 'teachers'. Of those identifying with these two groups, two 'pupils' and one 'teacher' filled in the Gaelic-language survey.

By comparison, in the public consultation for the Park Authority's 2018 – 2022 Gaelic Language Plan, only one respondent identified as a 'teacher at a Gaelic Medium Education school' (3%) and no respondents identified as a 'pupil at a Gaelic Medium Education school'.

## **Students or adults learning Gaelic**

91 respondents identified as filling in the survey as a 'student or adult learning Gaelic'. In total, a little over a fifth (around 21%) of respondents identified as a 'student or adult learning Gaelic', making this the third-largest group of respondents. This suggests that a large number of students or adults learning Gaelic wish to express their views on the Park Authority's Gaelic Language Plan.

By comparison, in the public consultation for the Park Authority's 2018 – 2022 Gaelic Language Plan only five people (14%) identified as a 'student or adult learning Gaelic'.

## **Other public sector organisations**

Seven respondents identified as filling in the survey as a member of an 'other public sector organisation'. As the survey did not ask to specify, it is unclear what these other public sector organisations may be. Four respondents who identified as a member of an 'other public sector organisation' answered the English-language survey, and three respondents who identified as such answered the Gaelic-language survey.

## **Park Authority staff or board members**

Four respondents identified as filling in the survey as a 'Park Authority staff or board member'. Three respondents who identified as a 'Park Authority staff or board member' answered the English-language survey, and one respondent who identified as such answered the Gaelic-language survey.



In the public consultation for the Park Authority's 2018 – 2022 Gaelic Language Plan there were also four responses from a 'Park Authority staff or board member'.

## Other

23 respondents identified as filling in the survey as a member of an 'other' group not listed above. Those who selected this option were asked to specify, and the results were as follows: six identified as members of the general public; four identified as a teacher, pupil, or parent of a pupil in a Gaelic Medium Education school; four identified as an adult learner or 'supporter' of Gaelic; three identified as either a former or future resident of the National Park area; two identified as a 'volunteer'; one identified as a 'tourist'; one identified as a 'retired farmer'; one identified as an 'outdoor instructor'; and one identified as an employee of *Fèis Spè*, the branch of the Gaelic cultural outreach *Fèis* organisation for the Strathspey and Badenoch region.

## 4.2 – Gaelic ability

All (100%) of the respondents who filled in this survey in both languages answered this question.

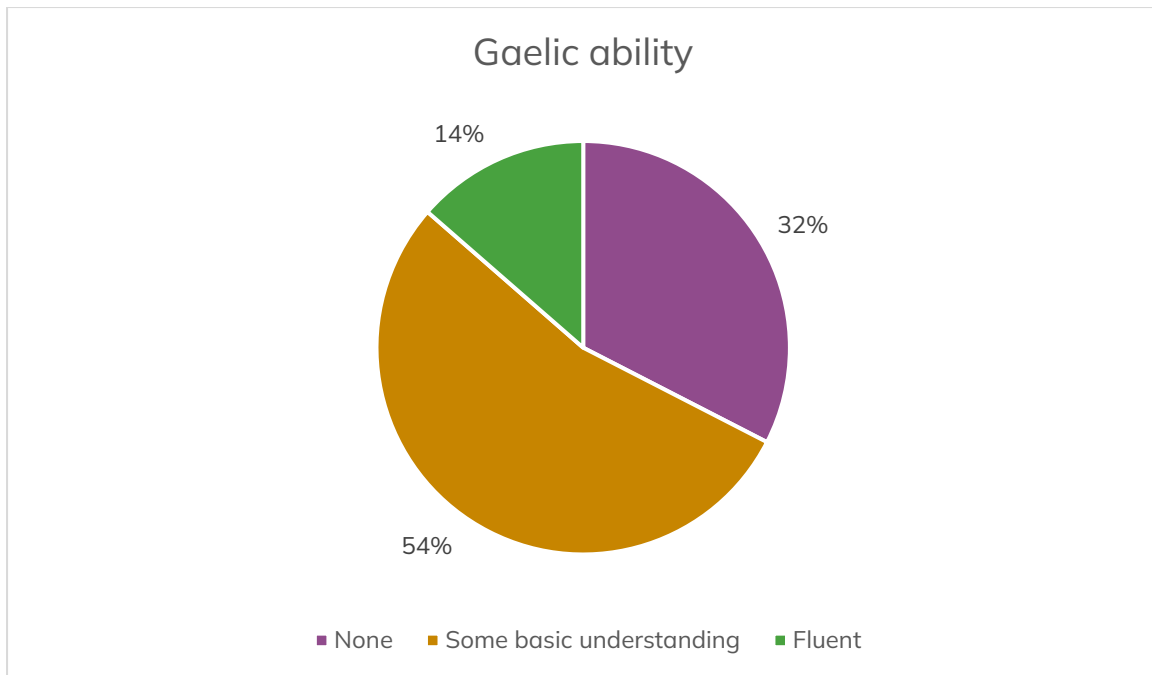


Figure 2: Gaelic ability reported in Gaelic Language Plan survey. N=427.

139 people (around 32%) reported having ‘no Gaelic ability at all’, 58 people (around 14%) reported being ‘fluent Gaelic speakers’, and a majority of 230 people (around 54%) reported having ‘some basic understanding’ of Gaelic.

By comparison, in the public consultation for the Park Authority’s 2018 – 2022 Gaelic Language Plan, 15 respondents (42%) reported having ‘no Gaelic ability at all’, nine respondents (25%) reported having ‘some’ Gaelic ability, and 12 (33%) reported being fully fluent. This shows that, as interest in the Park Authority’s Gaelic Language Plan grew exponentially, the biggest demographic increase was among those who have ‘some basic understanding’ of Gaelic.

This is supported by the findings of the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey, which reported that ‘the number of Scots who can speak some Gaelic has doubled’ between 2012 and 2022. While the number of fluent Gaelic speakers who answered the survey more than quadrupled, their proportional share decreased due to the greater increase among the two other cohorts.

Unsurprisingly, among the 31 people who answered the survey in Gaelic, there were no respondents reporting to have ‘no Gaelic ability at all’. 25 respondents to the Gaelic-language survey were fluent Gaelic speakers (around 81%) and six had ‘some basic understanding’ of Gaelic (around 19%). Between the two

surveys, 73 people who reported having ‘some basic understanding’ of Gaelic also identified as ‘residents’ of the Cairngorms National Park, and 10 of the people who reported being ‘fluent Gaelic speakers’ also identified as ‘residents’. By contrast, 59 people who identified as having ‘no Gaelic ability at all’ also identified as ‘residents’.

This suggests that the demographic of Cairngorms National Park residents who have at least a basic level of Gaelic ability showed a high level of engagement with the Gaelic Language Plan consultation.

### 4.3 – The ‘three strategic priorities’

Question 3 asked the respondents whether they agree or disagree with the three strategic priorities of the Park Authority’s new Gaelic Language Plan, ie ‘increasing the use of Gaelic’, ‘increasing the learning of Gaelic’, and ‘promoting a positive image of Gaelic’.

338 respondents answered this question in the English-language survey and 26 respondents answered it in the Gaelic-language survey, making 364 the total number of responses to this question. This gives a completion rate of about 85%.

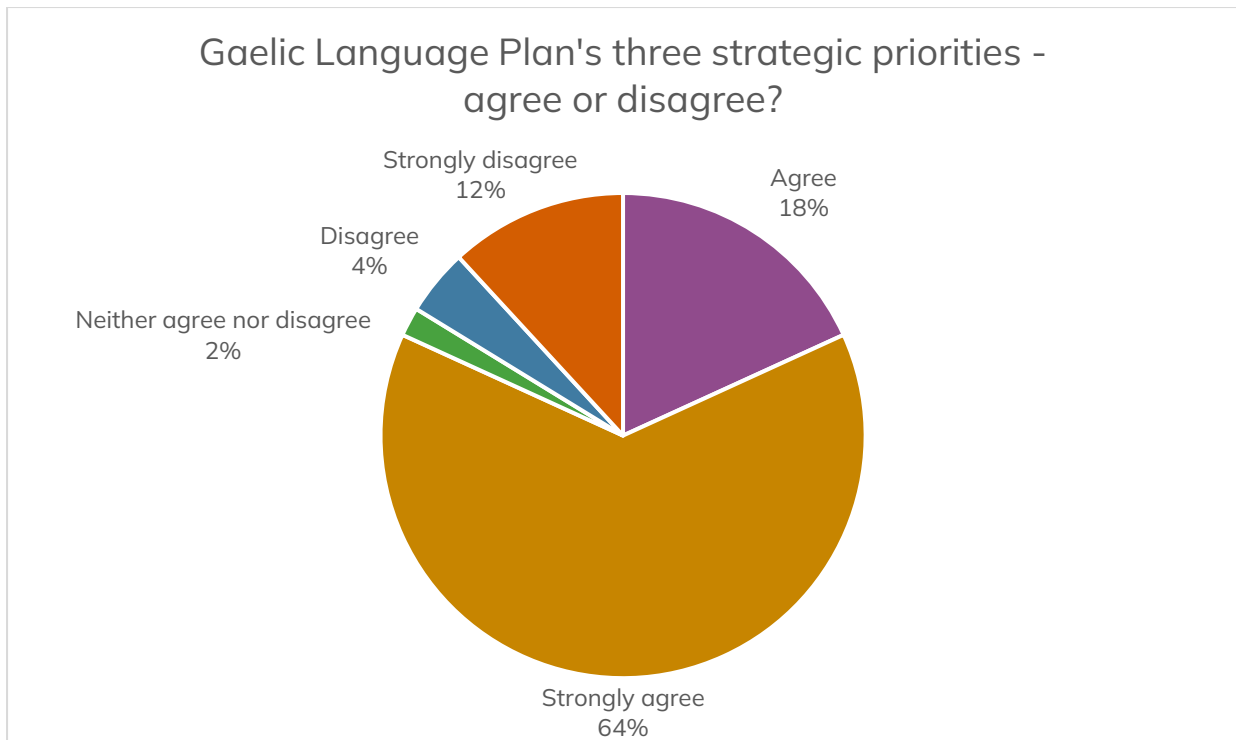


Figure 3: Responses to Q3 in both the Gaelic-language and English-language survey. N=364.

A total of 82% of all respondents either 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' with the draft Gaelic Language Plan's three strategic priorities, showing that an overwhelming majority of those who answered the survey agreed that the new Gaelic Language Plan should focus on 'increasing the use of Gaelic', 'increasing the learning of Gaelic' and 'promoting a positive image of Gaelic'. This is an improvement on the figure from the 2018 – 2022 Gaelic Language Plan consultation, where 58% of respondents either 'Agreed' or 'Strongly agreed' with the priorities set out.

2% of respondents 'Neither agree nor disagree' with these priorities, and a total of 18% of all respondents either 'Disagree' or 'Strongly disagree' with these priorities.

Of the Gaelic-language responses only, six 'Agree', 18 'Strongly agree', and two 'Neither agree nor disagree', showing an almost unanimous support for the Gaelic Language Plan's three priorities in the Gaelic-speaking cohort.

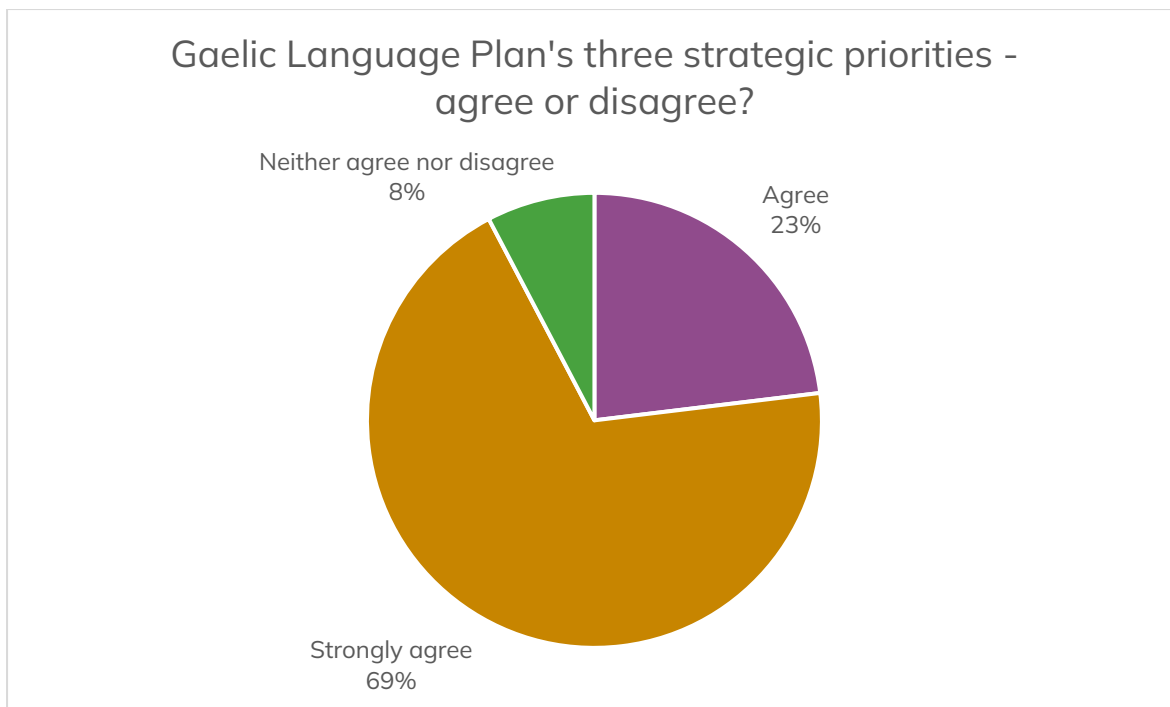


Figure 3: Responses to Q3 in the Gaelic-language survey only. N=26.

An interesting pattern emerged when the answers for this question were compared side-by-side with answers to Q2 (Gaelic ability). Of the 67 people who 'Agree', 10 identified as 'Fluent Gaelic speakers', 40 as having 'Some basic understanding of Gaelic', and 17 as having 'None'. Of the 221 who 'Strongly agree', 36 identified as 'Fluent Gaelic speakers', 147 as having 'Some basic understanding of Gaelic', and 48 as having 'None'. Of the 7 people who 'Neither agree nor disagree', 4 identified as 'Fluent Gaelic speakers' and 3 as having 'Some basic understanding' of Gaelic. Of the 16 who 'Disagree', 3 identified as having 'Some basic understanding of Gaelic' and 13 as having 'None'. Of the 43 who 'Strongly disagree', 5 identified as having 'Some basic understanding of Gaelic' and 38 as having 'None'.

This shows that fluent Gaelic speakers overwhelmingly agreed with the priorities set out in the draft plan (with four remaining neutral). It shows that people with a basic understanding of Gaelic also overwhelmingly agreed with the draft plan's priorities (with three remaining neutral). This also shows that the majority of people with no Gaelic ability at all were also supportive of the priorities set out (65 people out of 116, or around 56%).

There was a minority of respondents who disagreed with the priorities set out in the draft plan (59 in total), and these respondents overwhelmingly had no Gaelic language ability at all (51 in total). There would appear to be a correlation

between having even a basic knowledge of Gaelic and being supportive of the Gaelic Language Plan’s priorities.

Question 3 was answered by a total of 120 respondents who identified as answering the survey as ‘Residents’ of the Cairngorms National Park. A total of 90 ‘Residents’ either ‘Agree’ or ‘Strongly agree’ with the priorities of the Gaelic Language Plan. Three ‘Residents’ stated that they ‘Neither agree nor disagree’ with these priorities, while a total of 27 ‘Residents’ either ‘Disagree’ or ‘Strongly disagree’. This shows that the overwhelming majority of the National Park’s residents who engaged with the consultation are supportive of the Gaelic Language Plan’s priorities.

### Further comments

A total of 151 respondents had further comments for Q3; 145 of these were in English and six were in Gaelic. 93 of these further comments were positive and supportive of the aims of the Gaelic Language Plan.

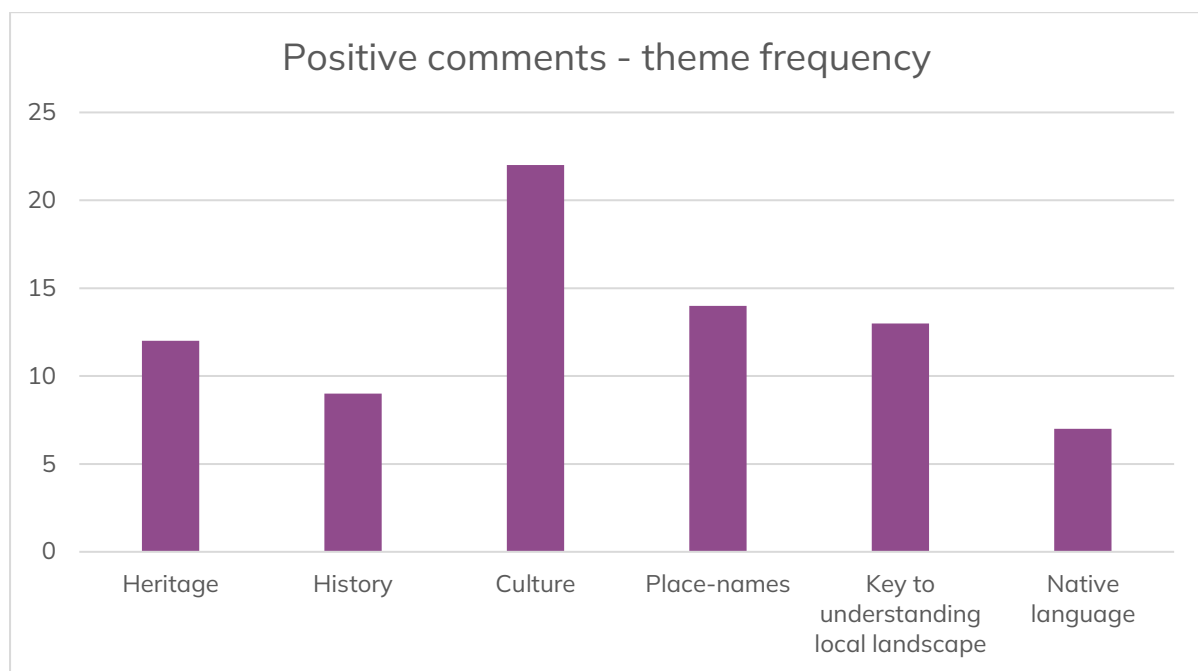


Figure 4: key themes appearing in the positive further comments for Q3.

These positive comments reflected the respondents’ perceptions of the Gaelic language, with 12 respondents mentioning ‘heritage’, nine mentioning ‘history’, 22 mentioning ‘culture’, seven mentioning Gaelic as the local or national ‘native language’, 14 mentioning ‘place-names’, and 13 mentioning Gaelic as being ‘key to understanding the local landscape’ or helping to foster ‘connectedness to nature’.



There were also 27 positive comments with suggestions on how the Gaelic Language Plan could be improved. 22 of these comments urged the Gaelic Language Plan to strive towards the creation of more Gaelic education opportunities across all age groups: early years, school-aged children, and adult classes (something that is beyond the Park Authority's remit).

Six respondents urged the Park Authority to adopt a 'Gaelic first' policy – after the Welsh model – with regards to place-names, signage, and other official matters. Five respondents mentioned the need for more concrete commitments to avoid 'tokenism'. Three Gaelic-language respondents urged the Park Authority to apply a more localised methodology, approaching local *seannachaidhean* (tradition-bearers) to research local memory of Gaelic, and putting *dualchas* (Gaelic intangible cultural heritage) at the centre of the Gaelic Language Plan.

44 of the further comments for Q3 were negative comments about the Gaelic language itself, or the Gaelic Language Plan as a whole, rather than its three key priorities. Many of these comments stated that Gaelic is 'pointless' or 'dead'. One comment called it 'the language of invaders'.

The majority of these comments emphasised that the Park Authority has 'limited resources' and that these resources would be better spent on 'other things' which pertain to a larger proportion of the National Park's resident population. Some of these comments suggest that since only 3.6% of the Cairngorms National Park's resident population can speak Gaelic, only 3.6% of the population benefits from public funding for Gaelic. This is contrary to the large volume of positive responses and comments left by respondents who identified as both 'Residents' and 'Visitors' to the National Park area and stated that they have no Gaelic language ability at all.

Seven of the further comments for Q3 were neutral and expressed either uncertainties or suggestions for improvement. Several people expressed uncertainty about where responsibility for the delivery of Gaelic services lies – whether it was Education Scotland, Highland Council, or the Park Authority – suggesting that the Park Authority may need to improve its clarity of communication as to which responsibilities lie with the Park Authority and which ones lie with other public bodies.

Others suggested that the Gaelic language should be promoted in tandem with Gaelic culture, rather than a purely linguistic focus. This connects with some of the Gaelic-language comments which encouraged a focus on *dualchas* (Gaelic intangible cultural heritage) and the need for a more localised approach to Gaelic research and promotion.

## 4.4 – Clarity and intelligibility

Question 4 asked the respondents whether they agree or disagree that the Park Authority’s draft Gaelic Language Plan is clear and easy to understand.

338 respondents answered this question in the English-language survey and 26 respondents answered it in the Gaelic-language survey, making 364 the total number of responses to this question. This is the same rate of responses as Q3, which means Q4 also has a completion rate of about 85% in both the Gaelic-language and English-language consultation.

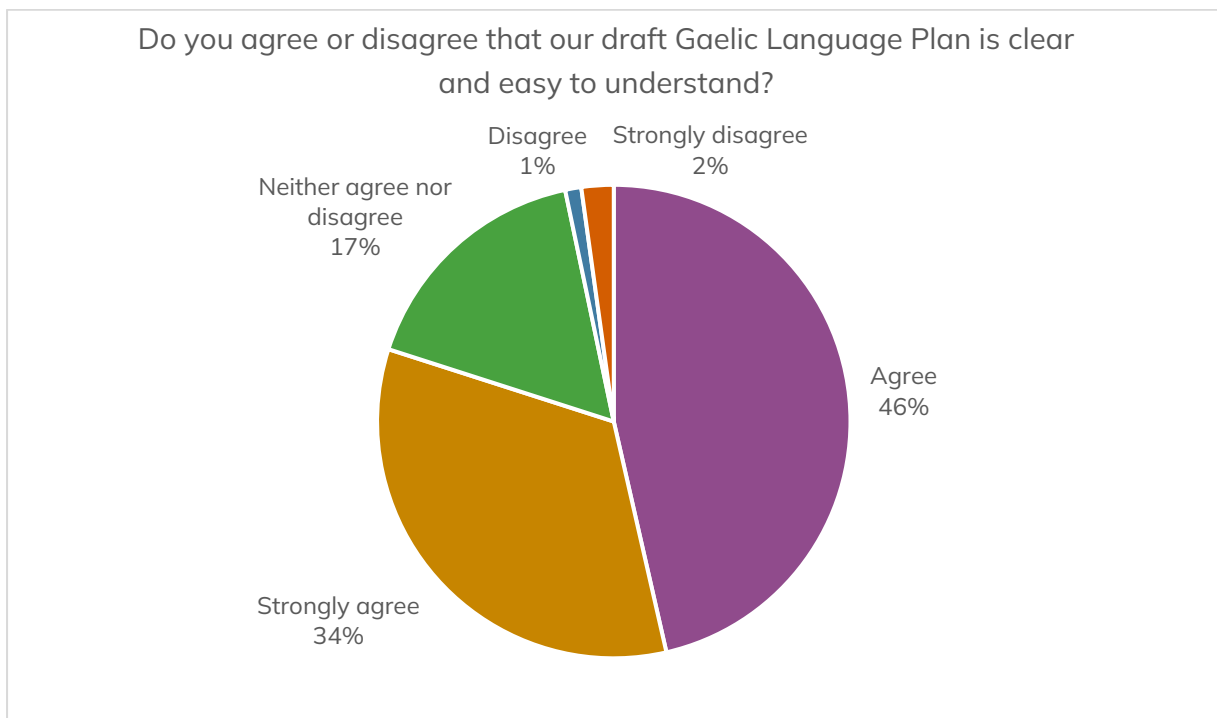


Figure 5: Responses to Q4 in both the Gaelic-language and English-language survey. N=364.

A total of 78% of all respondents either ‘Agree’ or ‘Strongly agree’ that the draft Gaelic Language Plan is ‘clear and easy to understand’. This number is similar to the 81% of people who thought the Gaelic Language Plan was ‘clear and easy to understand’ in the 2018 – 2022 Gaelic Language Plan consultation.

17% of respondents ‘Neither agree nor disagree’ that the draft plan is ‘clear and easy to understand’. A total of 3% of all respondents either ‘Disagree’ or ‘Strongly disagree’.

Of the Gaelic-language responses only, 15 'Agree', 10 'Strongly agree', and one 'Neither agrees nor disagrees', showing that among the Gaelic-speaking cohort there is an almost unanimous consensus that the Gaelic Language Plan is clear and easy to understand.

Q4 was answered by a total of 120 respondents who identified as answering the survey as 'Residents' of the Cairngorms National Park. A total of 85 'Residents' either 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' that the Gaelic Language Plan is clear and easy to understand. 29 'Residents' stated that they 'Neither agree nor disagree' that the Gaelic Language Plan is 'clear and easy to understand', while a total of six 'Residents' either 'Disagree' or 'Strongly disagree'. This shows that the majority of National Park residents who engaged with the consultation found the draft Gaelic Language Plan to be clear and easy to understand.

### Further comments

A total of 52 respondents had further comments for Q4; 49 of these were in English and three were in Gaelic. 27 of these comments were positive and supportive of the draft Gaelic Language Plan.

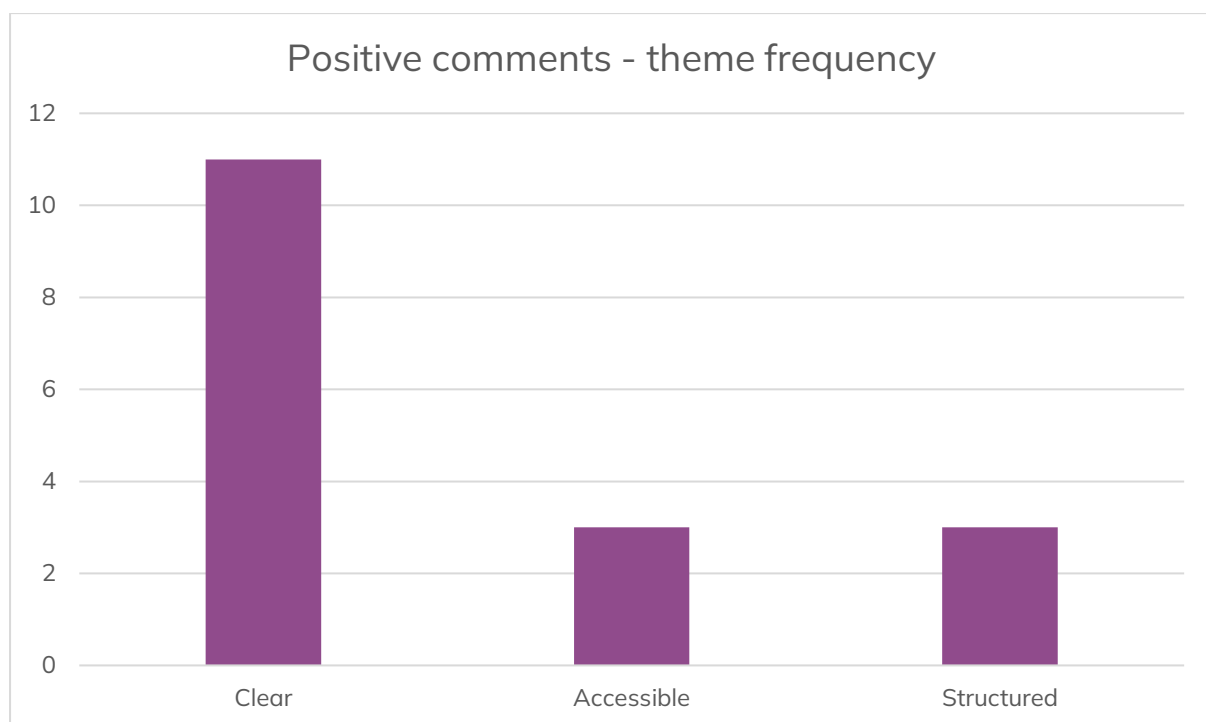


Figure 6: key words appearing in the positive further comments for Q4.

These positive comments reflected the respondents' perceptions of the draft Gaelic Language Plan as clear and easy to understand. 11 respondents called the GLP 'clear', three respondents praised it as 'accessible', and three respondents had positive feedback about its 'structure'.

10 of the further comments for Q4 were negative, although these were negative towards public spending on Gaelic in general rather than the clarity and intelligibility of the Park Authority's Gaelic Language Plan. Three respondents said the plan is a 'waste of money', one respondent said it was 'politically inspired', and two respondents said that they 'didn't even want to read it'.

Nine of the further comments for Q4 were neutral comments with suggestions for improvement. Eight respondents mentioned the plan's length and structure, stating that it is 'wordy', 'too long', or 'too formal'. Three respondents mentioned that the plan is 'sparse in detail when explaining how the identified targets are to be achieved' or how the achievement of outcomes was going to be monitored and urged the Park Authority to be stronger in its commitments to Gaelic.

One respondent provided suggestions for how Gaelic could reach more learners, visitors, and non-Gaelic speakers. One respondent pointed out an inaccuracy in the plan about the availability of Gaelic Medium Education in Perthshire (stating that GME is available in both Perth and Aberfeldy).

## 4.5 – Safeguarding and promoting Gaelic

Question 5 asked the respondents whether they agree or disagree that the Park Authority's draft Gaelic Language Plan helps safeguard and promote Gaelic language and culture.

286 respondents answered this question in the English-language survey and 25 respondents answered it in the Gaelic-language survey, making 311 the total number of responses to this question. This is 53 responses fewer than Q3 and Q4, meaning the completion rate for this particular question is around 73%.

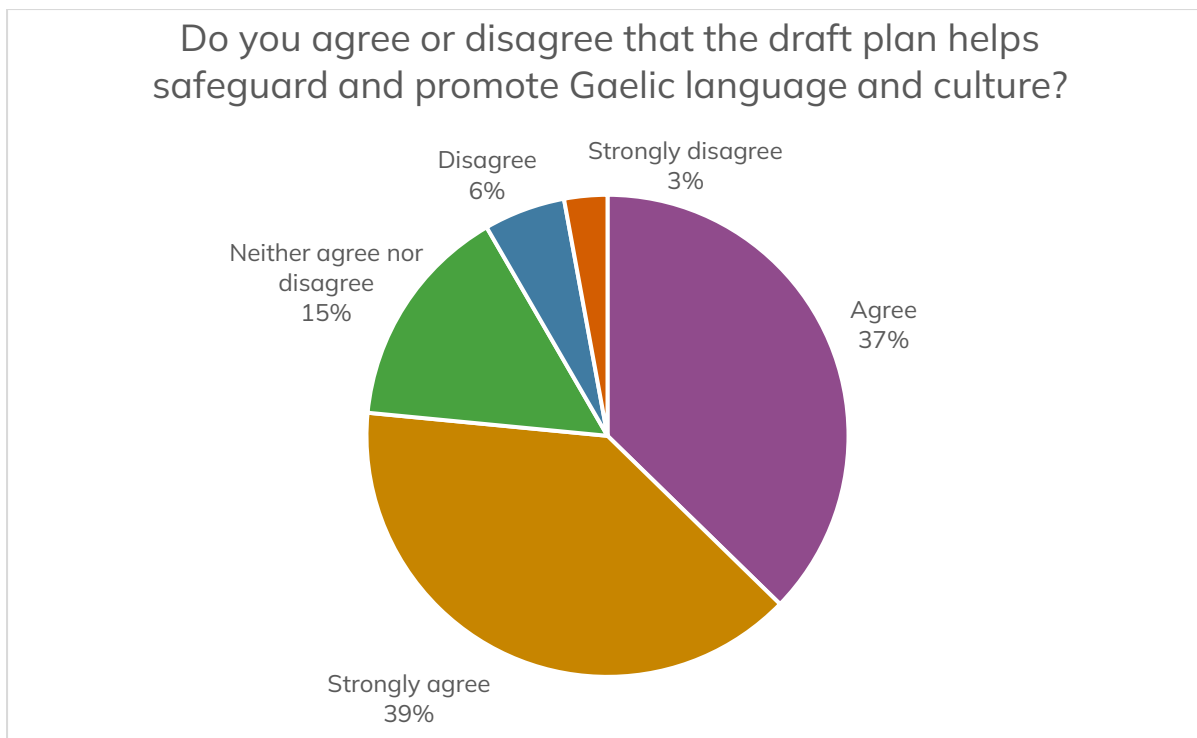


Figure 7: Responses to Q5 in both the Gaelic-language and English-language survey. N=311.

A total of 76% of all respondents either ‘Agree’ or ‘Strongly agree’ that the draft Gaelic Language Plan ‘helps safeguard and promote Gaelic language and culture’. This suggests a majority consensus that the draft Gaelic Language Plan helps safeguard a future for Gaelic language and culture.

15% of respondents ‘Neither agree nor disagree’ that the Gaelic Language Plan ‘helps safeguard and promote Gaelic language and culture’. A total of 9% of all respondents either ‘Disagree’ or ‘Strongly disagree’ with this statement.

Of the Gaelic-language responses only, 13 ‘Agree’, eight ‘Strongly agree’, and four ‘Neither agree nor disagree’, showing a strong belief that the Gaelic Language Plan ‘helps safeguard and promote Gaelic language and culture’ among the Gaelic-speaking cohort.

Question 5 was answered by a total of 105 respondents who identified as answering the survey as ‘Residents’ of the Cairngorms National Park. A total of 71 ‘Residents’ either ‘Agree’ or ‘Strongly agree’ that the Gaelic Language Plan is clear and easy to understand. 23 ‘Residents’ stated that they ‘Neither agree nor disagree’ that the Gaelic Language Plan is ‘clear and easy to understand’, while a total of 11 ‘Residents’ either ‘Disagree’ or ‘Strongly disagree’. This shows that the majority of the National Park’s residents who engaged with the consultation

believe that the draft Gaelic Language Plan helps safeguard and promote the Gaelic language, as well as Gaelic culture.

## Further comments

A total of 60 respondents had further comments for Q5; 56 of these were in English and four were in Gaelic.

18 of these comments were positive and supportive of the draft Gaelic Language Plan. Nine of these positive comments mentioned the critical state in which the Gaelic language is in and its need for safeguarding and promotion. 23 of the further comments for Q5 were negative.

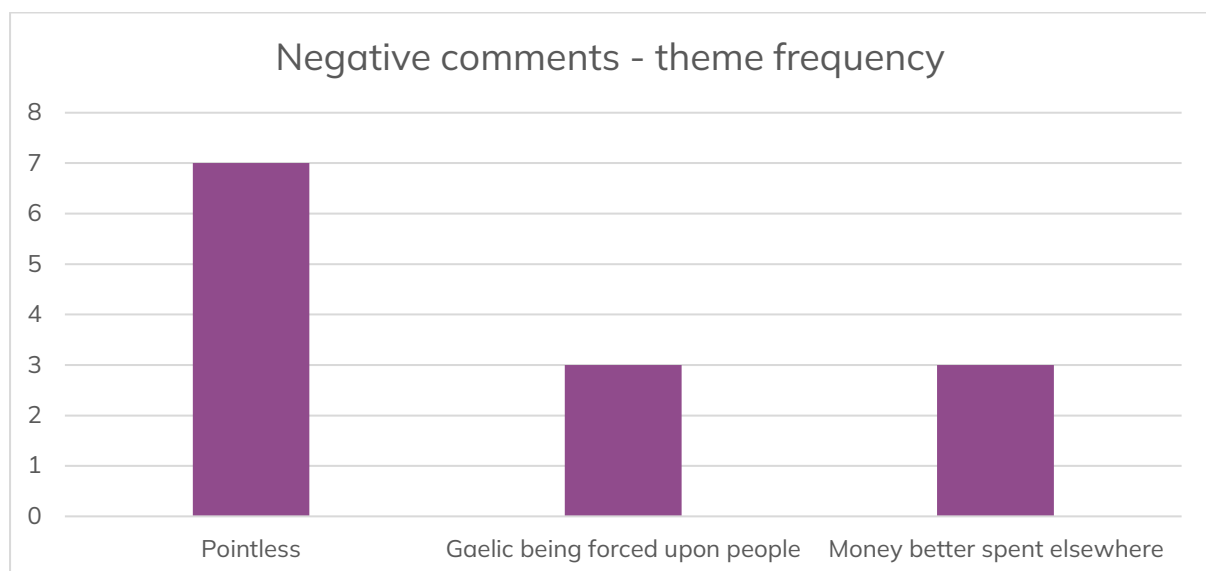


Figure 8: key words appearing in the positive further comments for Q5.

Similar to the negative comments outlined in previous questions, the feedback relates primarily to the funding of Gaelic revitalisation efforts in general, rather than to the perceived efficacy of the draft Gaelic Language Plan. Seven respondents stated it is 'pointless' to safeguard or promote Gaelic, three respondents said they did not want Gaelic to be 'forced' upon them, and a further three respondents mentioned public 'money' which would be better spent elsewhere.

19 of the further comments for Q5 were neutral, with suggestions for improvement. Eight respondents had concerns about how effectively the Gaelic Language Plan was going to be implemented and whether or not its aims were



going to be achieved. Three respondents urged for a far larger allocation of resources in order to achieve the aims set out. Seven respondents mentioned the need for more Gaelic education opportunities locally at every age bracket. One respondent echoed a previously-expressed lack of clarity surrounding where the lines were drawn between the Park Authority's and Highland Council's responsibilities towards Gaelic.

Two respondents asked why Doric or Broad Scots were not being supported locally instead (one of these was an email and not part of the online consultation answers). Two respondents to the Gaelic-language survey noted that the Park Authority as an organisation does very few things for the promotion of Gaelic, citing the creation of Gaelic resources such as the Gaelic Place-Names leaflet as 'welcome, but so far and few between that it brings shame to the Park Authority', and that it should be a legal requirement for a number of Park Authority employees to learn Gaelic to an 'appropriate' level, following the Welsh model where it is a legal requirement for public bodies to have a Welsh-speaking employee. One other respondent to the Gaelic-language survey reiterated that Gaelic is no longer a community language in the area and that researching the local dialect etc would make it more attractive to the local population, rather than treating it as a 'national' language.

## 4.6 – Suggestions for improvement

A total of 101 respondents answered Question 6. Respondents were provided with an open response box and given the prompt to share 'any suggestions on how we could improve our Gaelic Language Plan'. 92 of these responses were in English and nine were in Gaelic.

35 of the responses to Q6 were broadly positive. The most common theme was a call for an increase in provision of Gaelic educational opportunities across all age groups (28 respondents in total). 16 of these focused on adult education, such as community classes or evening classes, and that these should be low-cost or free.

10 of these focused on early years, primary and secondary education, and the urgent need to increase Gaelic Medium Education provision in the Cairngorms

National Park area and immediately outside it, with Moray and Aberdeenshire being mentioned. Seven of these positive comments also suggested that Gaelic education could be paired with the outdoor industry, which would help guide residents and visitors toward correctly pronouncing place-names.

The Park Authority's Ranger team was mentioned by three respondents, with respondents highlighting that it would be productive for the Park Authority to ensure that the Rangers can speak Gaelic and educate the public about the language in the course of their day-to-day interactions with them.

Other respondents suggested a partnership with Glenmore Lodge to encourage outdoor instructors to engage with Gaelic, or the regular provision of place-name walks as a potential tool to get the public involved with the Gaelic language within the landscape.

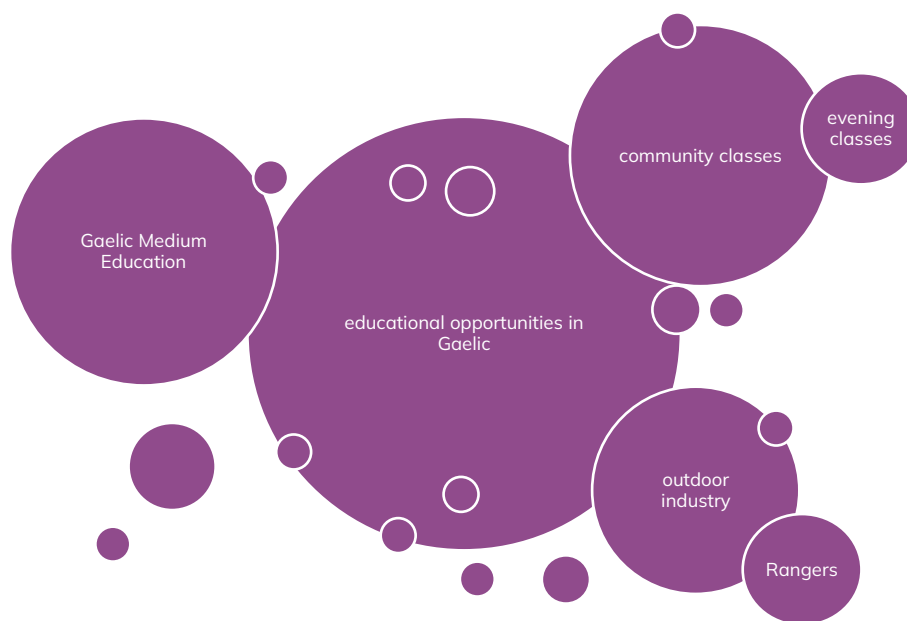


Figure 9: visual depiction of the relationship between different types of Gaelic educational opportunities as highlighted by answers to Q6.

30 of the responses to Q6 were negative. There was a large degree of overlap with the negative comments outlined in previous sections. The feedback related to both the Gaelic Language Plan in itself (some respondents calling on the Park Authority to 'scrap' or 'bin' the plan), as well as to the revitalisation of Gaelic in

general (with some respondents calling any spending on Gaelic a ‘waste of money’, urging the Park Authority or Scottish Government to ‘stop trying to force it’ and ‘take down the Gaelic road signs’).

20 of the responses to Q6 were neutral comments which offer critique of the Park Authority’s current commitment to Gaelic with suggestions for improvement. Seven of these comments mention the lack of Gaelic-speaking employees within the Cairngorms National Park Authority, with one Gaelic-language respondent pointing out that the only position within the Park Authority where a knowledge of Gaelic was a ‘requirement’ was an internship, and that Gaelic cannot be ‘developed’ in the National Park if it is not ‘understood in the first place’.

Several respondents suggest that all Park Authority employees should have knowledge of at least ‘a little’ Gaelic and that ‘several should be fluent’, perhaps a ‘team of Rangers who were competent with Gaelic pronunciation to help tackle a culture of incorrect place-name pronunciations’.

Three respondents mentioned the urgent need to research local Gaelic words and stories before they cease to exist altogether, primarily by contacting living local tradition-bearers or researching various local Gaelic tradition bearers who have been completely forgotten.

Three respondents suggested that the new Gaelic Language Plan needs to have ‘clear outcomes’ in order to prove that this is a good way of using public funds. Four respondents mentioned the Park Authority’s signage and suggested switching to a ‘Gaelic-first’ policy of referring to the Cairngorms National Park as *Am Monadh Ruadh* as the Welsh National Park *Eryri* has recently done (formerly known as Snowdonia). One respondent said that they believe that Gaelic translations for modern words are ‘unnecessary’ and should not be a priority area for resources used.

One respondent wrote a long suggestion (over 1,000 words) highlighting several issues with the current draft of the Gaelic Language Plan: that aside from *Fèis Spè*, the existing grassroots Gaelic organisations within the Cairngorms National Park area are not active, making it hard for the Park Authority to rely on them for co-delivery or co-fulfilment of the plans aims; that certain terms used in the Gaelic Language Plan like *fearann fiadhaich* and *dùthchas* were potentially

culturally appropriating these terms; that the Park Authority needs Gaelic-speaking staff members, such as the Gaelic Officers employed by other public bodies such as NatureScot or Historic Environment Scotland; that without the Cairngorms Nature Festival it will be difficult for the Park Authority to fill the offering gap in Gaelic place-name walks and heritage events; that the plan's current monitoring process of annual reviews of progress and ad-hoc decisions may not be conducive to the fulfilment of long-term projects which is what would be needed when looking at increasing usage of Gaelic among young people in the area, and that the Park Authority should instead focus on long-term rather than annual projects.

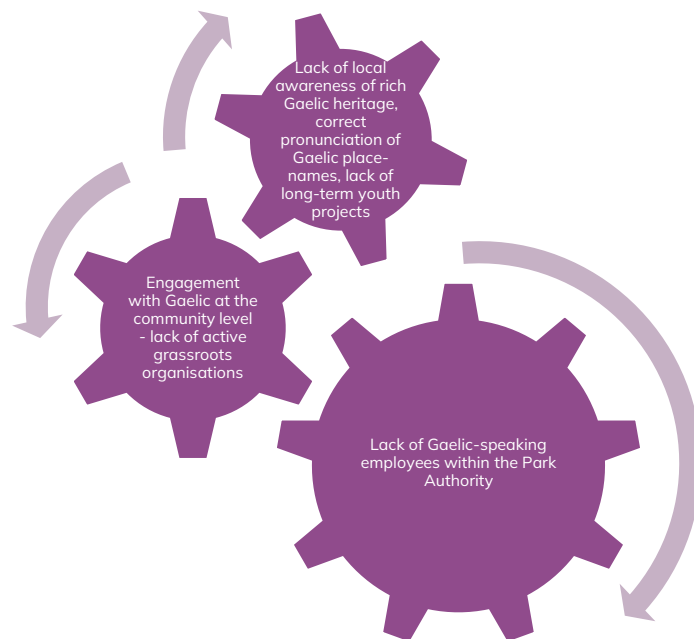


Figure 10: visual depiction of the current lacking relationship between Park Authority and community-level Gaelic action as highlighted by answers to Q6.

## 4.7 – Public interest in taking the plan forward

A total of 78 respondents answered Question 7. Respondents were provided with an open response box and given the prompt to share whether or not they ‘would be interested in helping take forward any aspects of the Gaelic Language Plan’ and asked to specify how. 72 of these responses were in English and six were in Gaelic.

29 of the responses to Q7 were positive. 13 of these respondents said they would be interested in taking forward some aspect of the Gaelic Language Plan, though not all specified what they had in mind. One respondent offered financial support; one Gaelic-speaking respondent offered linguistic support; one outdoor instructor offered their expertise; one Gaelic-speaking respondent offered to work for the Park Authority; one Gaelic grassroots organisation, *Fèis Spè*, offered support for ‘any initiatives promoting Gaelic in the area’; three respondents offered to volunteer their time; one respondent offered to encourage others to learn Gaelic; one respondent offered to promote the cause across universities and other educational institutions; two respondents offered to start learning Gaelic; three respondents who are not residents of the National Park offered distance support; one respondent who works with *Fèis Spè* and *Fèis Rois* offered to help with anything music- and education-related; one Gaelic-speaking respondent who is a Ranger in the Bays of Harris offered to network and train fellow Rangers working within the Park Authority area.

38 of the responses to Q7 were negative. 35 of these negative responses were the respondents saying ‘No’; one respondent said they were ‘not sufficiently fluent’, one respondent said that the Gaelic Language Plan is ‘political box ticking which will alienate many local people from the Park Authority’, and one respondent said that if public money is to be spent on Scottish traditions it should go to ‘shinty clubs and piping / fiddle lessons’ rather than Gaelic.

Eight of the responses to Q7 were suggestions for improvement. three respondents encouraged the production of more place-names resources, signs or plaques; one respondent suggested that Rangers should be trained to promote and implement Gaelic in their daily work; one respondent voiced their desire for more surveys and public voice to be sought ‘about the implementation of parts of the Gaelic Language Plan’; one respondent asked the Park Authority to signpost

people to community Gaelic classes in their locality; one respondent mentioned the existence of a small but tightly-knit Gaelic speakers' circle operating in Kingussie which is not widely known about; one respondent suggested Gaelic sessions to be hosted at the Highland Wildlife Park to get the public to engage with Gaelic; one respondent asked for increased provision of Gaelic Medium Education, particularly in early years.

## 4.8 – Other comments

A total of 59 respondents answered Question 8. Respondents were provided with an open response box and given the prompt whether there was 'anything else they would like to share about our draft Gaelic Language Plan'. 52 of these responses were in English and seven were in Gaelic.

14 of the responses to Q8 were positive. Predominantly, these respondents praised the plan (including one email response from a representative of Highlands and Islands Enterprise), wished the Park Authority luck in its fulfilment, and one Gaelic-speaking respondent encouraged the Park Authority not to listen to people who '*cuireas sìos air a' chànan agus rud sam bi a tha ga bhrosnachadh*' (put the language and any activity done to promote it down).

18 of the responses to Q8 were negative. There was a large degree of overlap with the negative comments outlined in earlier sections, and most of these negative comments said that the Gaelic Language Plan or Gaelic revitalisation was a 'waste of money', 'waste of precious resources', or that Gaelic 'shouldn't be a priority for the Park Authority'. One respondent said that Gaelic is 'irrelevant in Deeside and Angus where Doric would be more important'.

11 of the responses to Q8 were further suggestions for improvement. Five respondents expressed concerns about whether the plan would be fulfilled, with two encouraging the Park Authority not to be 'scared to say anything controversial about why Gaelic disappeared from the Cairngorms in the 20<sup>th</sup> century' and that this history has to be talked about more widely.

Two respondents raised issues with the wording of the Gaelic Language Plan; one of these asked for clarification of what is meant by 'memoranda of understanding and other grant mechanisms with the Cairngorms Business Partnership, Growbiz, Countryside Learning Scotland [et al.] to ensure Gaelic is reflected in work to promote business collaboration and in the development of green and rural skills'. The other respondent raised issues with the Gaelic translation of the Gaelic Language Plan where multiple English calques are used,

with phrases like '*dualchas cultarail*' / '*dualchas nàdair is cultarail*' which do not work in Gaelic.

One respondent shared the work which is currently being done by *Fèis Spè* and introduced the possibility of further collaboration between the Park Authority and the *Fèis*. One Gaelic-speaking respondent highlighted the urgent need for more *faicsinneachd* (visibility) of Gaelic within the Park Authority, saying that it is currently minimal; another Gaelic-speaking respondent highlighted the need for Gaelic-speaking jobs within the Park Authority, as has already been highlighted in the comments under previous questions.

## 5. Recommendations

1. The majority of respondents agree with the strategic priorities outlined in the Park Authority's Gaelic Language Plan, which are modelled on the priorities set out in Bòrd na Gàidhlig's National Gaelic Language Plan 2023-28. It is recommended that these priorities remain unchanged.
2. The consultation suggests that the majority of respondents found the Park Authority's Gaelic Language Plan to be clear and easy to understand. At the same time, some believed the plan to be 'wordy' and felt that, even if priorities were set out clearly, it was less clear how the Park Authority would support their fulfilment and monitor progress. It is recommended that the wording of some of the responses to the plan's objectives – the 'actions / timing' – are modified to be more measurable.
3. The majority of respondents believe that the Gaelic Language Plan helps safeguard and promote Gaelic language and culture. The introduction to the Gaelic Language Plan makes it clear that Gaelic has been an integral part of the cultural and linguistic tapestry of the entire Cairngorms National Park area for at least a thousand years. One of the Park Authority's strategic priorities is promoting a positive image of Gaelic. Many respondents drew attention to the fact that there is still a level of disconnect between the relevance of Gaelic in the Cairngorms beyond the linguistic domain and the public, whether resident or visiting. It is recommended that the actions proposed for the objective of 'Promoting a positive image of Gaelic' are strengthened.
4. There were some 29 respondents who were interested in taking forward some parts of the Gaelic Language Plan. Some of these respondents identified themselves as being residents of the National Park. It is recommended that the Park Authority sets up a framework through which interested community groups and individuals could coordinate their efforts and revitalise community Gaelic classes and events.
5. The most common theme among all comments was the need for more educational opportunities with Gaelic language and culture. While education lies outwith the Park Authority's remit, it is evident that there is an appetite for Gaelic among adults and within the outdoor industry as well as increased provision of Gaelic Medium Education in the Cairngorms National Park area. It is recommended that the Park Authority formally or informally supports the setup of community Gaelic classes for adults in the National Park area.



6. Another commonly-raised theme was the lack of Gaelic capacity within the Park Authority itself, and the lack of any permanent jobs within the Park Authority for which Gaelic would be an essential criterion. It is recommended that the Park Authority reviews the job requirements for at least one of its positions to being a Gaelic-essential job and encourages more existing staff to achieve a conversational level of Gaelic ability.