

ANGUS COUNCIL

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 9 OCTOBER 2018

BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE PLAN (2018 – 2024)

REPORT BY SHARON FAULKNER, HEAD OF HR, DIGITAL ENABLEMENT, IT & BUSINESS SUPPORT

ABSTRACT

This report presents a British Sign Language (BSL) Plan (2018 – 2024) as required by legislation.

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) adopts the British Sign Language Plan (2018 – 2024) as outlined in Appendix 1 of this report.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS LOCAL OUTCOMES IMPROVEMENT PLAN/CORPORATE PLAN

This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within the Angus Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and Locality Plans:

- Local Outcome 5: More opportunities for people to achieve success
- Local Outcome 6: We have improved the health and wellbeing of our people and inequalities are reduced.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The aim of the Scottish Government is to make Scotland the best place in the world for BSL users to live, work and visit. This means that D/deaf (persons whose first language is BSL) and Deafblind BSL users will be fully involved in daily and public life in Scotland, as active, healthy citizens, and be able to make informed choices about every aspect of their lives.

3.2 The British Sign Language (BSL) Act 2015 requires public bodies in Scotland to publish action plans every six years showing how they will promote and support BSL. The first BSL National Plan (2017 – 2023) came into effect on 24 October 2017, and local authorities have had a year to develop and align their own BSL Plans to the National one.

3.3 We will report progress on our actions in our BSL Plan, publishing it in both English and BSL, by 24 October 2020, and will renew it every 6 years, in line with the statutory requirement.

4. CURRENT POSITION

4.1 Under equalities legislation, the council is required to produce information and communication in alternative formats, including BSL, on request. The new legislation requires a more proactive approach to BSL, including its tactile form, in the following key areas:

- Communication
- Early years
- School education
- Training, work and social security
- Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Culture and the Arts

- Justice
- Democracy
- Transport

Our BSL Plan includes all these key areas.

Ring-fenced funding from the Scottish Government has been given to all 32 local authorities to implement BSL requirements.

5. RISK IMPLICATIONS

Failure to produce a British Sign Language Plan will result in a breach of the legislation.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with the terms of this report.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and is attached as Appendix 2.

8. CONSULTATION

An internal short-term BSL working group was established, which also included representatives from ANGUSalive and the Angus Health & Social Care Partnership. Each of the key areas as listed above was represented.

There was widespread consultation with BSL users in collaboration with Dundee, and Perth & Kinross local authorities, NHS Tayside, and Dundee and Angus College: a joint engagement event took place in both May and June 2018. The outcomes from these events have been used to develop our BSL Plan.

There was also consultation with other partners such as Deaflinks and North East Sensory Service. Members of the Angus Disability forum, which also includes employees, was also consulted.

NOTE: No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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List of Appendices:

BSL Plan (2018 – 2024). The Plan is also available in BSL at

https://www.angus.gov.uk/community_empowerment/angus_british_sign_language_draft_action_plan