

ANGUS COUNCIL

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 30 APRIL 2024

BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE PLAN (2024 – 2030)

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

**1. ABSTRACT**

- 1.1 This report presents a British Sign Language (BSL) Plan (2024 – 2030) as required by legislation.

**2. ALIGNMENT TO THE COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICIES**

- 2.1 This report contributes to the following priorities contained within the Angus Council Plan 2023-2028:

**Caring for our People**

- Reduce inequalities in all our communities
- Provide the best start in life for children
- Create more opportunities for people to live well and achieve their personal goals
- Improve physical, mental health and wellbeing

**3. RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Committee adopt the British Sign Language Plan (2024 – 2030) as outlined in Appendix 1 of this report.

**4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The aim of the Scottish Government is to make Scotland the best place in the world for BSL users to live, work, visit and learn. This means that BSL users, deaf 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.

- 4.2 The British Sign Language (BSL) Act 2015 requires certain public bodies in Scotland, including local authorities, to publish BSL Plans every six years, showing how they will promote and facilitate the promotion of BSL in Scotland. The second BSL National Plan (2023 – 2029) came into effect in October 2023, and local authorities have had six months to produce their own local BSL Plans.

- 4.3 An internal, short-term BSL working group was established, which also included, ANGUSalve and the Angus Health & Social Care Partnership. The key areas as listed at 5.1 below were broadly represented. The aim of the working group was to provide updates on developments in BSL over the last six years and identify any ambitions for the next six years. Information is as detailed in the BSL Plan as attached at Appendix 1.

We will report these developments in our BSL Plan 2024 - 2030, publishing it in both English and BSL, by 6 May 2024, and will renew it every six years, in line with the statutory requirement.

**5. CURRENT POSITION**

- 5.1 Under equalities legislation, the council is required to produce information and communication in alternative formats, including BSL, on request. The BSL legislation requires a more proactive approach to BSL, including its tactile form. The National BSL Plan 2023 – 2029 sets out the following key areas:

- Delivering the BSL National Plan 2023 - 2029
- BSL Accessibility
- Children, Young People & their Families
- Access to Employment
- Health and Wellbeing
- Celebrating BSL Culture
- BSL Data
- Transport
- Access to Justice
- Democratic Participation

5.2 One of these key areas is an additional, new section to the National BSL Plan 2018 - 2024, which is BSL Data, consequently we are unable to provide any update on this section from our own, original BSL Plan. We have, however, added this section to our new Plan. For the other key areas, several of the headings have changed but the content is very similar to the original National Plan and our own Plan. Our new BSL Plan 2024 - 2030 includes all these key areas, aligning them to the National BSL Plan 2023 – 2029.

## **6. PROPOSALS**

- 6.1 To adopt a BSL Plan 2024 – 2030, which aligns to the National Plan 2023 – 2029 as appropriate.
- 6.2 To work with the Scottish Government to share information and knowledge of the usage and development of BSL, as per the National Plan.
- 6.3 To collaborate with BSL users over the period of our six-year Plan to improve the outcomes for BSL users in Angus.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

## **8. RISK MANAGEMENT**

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

## **9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

## **10. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT, HUMAN RIGHTS AND FAIRER SCOTLAND DUTY**

- 10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and is attached.

## **11. CONSULTATION (IF APPLICABLE)**

- 11.1 Consultation took place with BSL users in collaboration with Dundee City, and Perth & Kinross local authorities, and NHS Tayside: two joint engagement events took place in January and February 2024. The outcomes from these events have been used to develop our BSL Plan 2024 – 2030.

The Directors of Finance and Legal, Governance and Change have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

**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:

Appendix 1 – British Sign Language Plan (2024 – 2030)

Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment