



Promotion of the Irish Language in Dublin City

Introduction

Dublin City Council plays a vital role in strengthening the usage and vibrancy of the Irish language within its administrative area. This report outlines the Council's role with regards the promotion and development of Irish language.

The demand for Irish language services within Dublin City is increasing and it permeates all our public services from business, tourism, community life, to our physical interactions with our citizens to our virtual citizen engagement platforms. Dublin City Council is positioning itself as the lead local authority with regards innovating in the promotion and development of opportunities to speak the Irish language.

Dublin City Council's commitment to the Irish language is evident through its strategic plans and new approaches to strengthen the usage and vibrancy of the Irish language.

With the Dublin City Council's flagship language innovation initiative, Gaeilge365, the City Council is taking a leadership role in creating best practice around how a local authority can deliver on the legislative and policy objectives in relation to the Irish language by supporting more people to speak Irish on a daily basis

As Dublin continues to evolve, Dublin City Council remains dedicated to nurturing the language and nourishing its vitality for generations to come.

I Overview of the Irish Language in Dublin City

1. Key Statistics

- Research from *Your Dublin, Your Voice* in 2022 shows 61% of Dubliners want to speak Irish more regularly.
- According to Census 2022:
 - 162,400 people who live in Dublin can speak Irish, this is a 2% increase since 2006.
 - 6,054 people who live in Dublin speak Irish everyday outside of the education system, this is a 22% decrease since 2006.
 - An additional 10,735 people who live in Dublin speak Irish outside of the education system on a weekly basis.
 - 58,312 people who live in Dublin report speaking Irish less often outside of the education system.

- 16,500 people who live in Dublin report speaking Irish very well. 50,000 people who live in Dublin report speaking Irish well. 92,000 people who can speak Irish reported not being able to speak the language very well.

II Irish language related objectives from the Council's Key Corporate Strategies

1. Corporate Plan 2020-2024

The corporate goals and objectives include enhancing Irish language services in the city. The Council commits in this plan to improving services in Irish. This includes communication, documentation, and interactions with the public. It also includes promoting Irish language and cultural activities within the community.

2. City Development Plan 2022-2028

The City Development Plan emphasises the need to invest in cultural facilities within local communities and to support the development of new facilities as part of larger projects.

It also supports the establishment of an Irish Language Quarter and to create vibrant spaces where Irish Language and traditional arts can thrive.

3. Cultural Strategy 2016–2021:

This strategy acknowledges Dublin's rich cultural heritage and the need to adapt to change. It prioritises cultural diversity, inclusion, and collaboration and positions culture as central to human development and Dublin's quality of life. It also focuses on creativity, community building, and economic empowerment through culture.

III Official Languages Act 2003 & 2021:

Dublin City Council adheres to the provisions of this Act, which requires public bodies to provide services through the medium of Irish. The Irish Development Unit at Dublin City Council coordinates and implements these statutory requirements. Dublin City Council's Irish Language Scheme outlines services available in Irish.

Key requirements of the 2021 Act include:

- At least 20% of **advertising** by public bodies must be in the Irish language. Additionally, 5% of the advertising budget must be allocated to advertising in Irish through "Irish language media," which includes any media where at least half of the content is created in Irish⁴
- **Staff Recruitment and Training:** 20% of public sector bodies recruits should be fluent Irish speakers by 2030.

National 20 Year Strategy for Irish Language 2010 - 2030

The government's strategy aims to grow the number of people speaking Irish daily by 2030. It places specific strategic importance on Dublin and the need to provide opportunities for the normalised use of the language.

IV Dublin City Council delivering and innovating on the Irish language

The growing policy and legislative framework in relation to the Irish language saw Dublin City Council lead several initiatives in 2022:

1 BÁC le Gaeilge Project:

BÁC le Gaeilge is a joint venture between the Dublin City Council and Conradh na Gaeilge, with funding from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. Our goal is to have Irish more seen and heard throughout the city. We encourage the use of Irish in businesses and communities.

We also provide advice, offer suggestions and support materials to the community to assist Irish language networks functioning in the city.

BÁC le Gaeilge shares information on events that take place throughout the city and we also support the creation of Irish language networks / groups.

2 Lá Mór na Gaeilge (Irish Language Street Festival):

This is an annual event co-ordinated jointly by Conradh na Gaeilge and Dublin City Council. It celebrates Irish language and culture. The events included workshops, music, dance, and community engagement in Parnell Square. Attendance at the event has grown substantially.

V Gaeilge365 – The Irish Language Innovation Unit

Based on the success of these projects, in 2023, Dublin City Council established a flagship pilot project called Gaeilge365 – The Irish Language Innovation Unit. The aim of this project is for Dublin City Council to take a leadership role in the local authority sector and create a best practice around how a local authority can deliver on the legislative and policy objectives in relation to the Irish language by supporting more people to speak Irish on a daily basis.

Gaeilge365 Objectives

Gaeilge365 aims to increase the number of opportunities to speak Irish created and supported by the Council 10x by 2027.

This initiative embraces a start-up mentality and is underpinned by the belief that by strengthening opportunities to speak Irish we can bridge the disconnect between the large numbers of people who want to speak Irish more regularly but who simply don't have the opportunities to do.

The initiative is fully aligned with the objectives of the National 20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language and seeks to increase the amount of people who speak the Irish language daily outside of the education system.

Gaeilge365 Structure

Gaeilge365 is the first innovation unit which operates through the medium of Irish in the whole public sector. The project is funded by Dublin City Council with the support of Creative Ireland. The project has one full-time employee. The employment is facilitated by Conradh na Gaeilge. Core to Gaeilge365's ethos is to ensure that all projects are measurable, replicable and scalable, allowing Dublin City Council to create a toolkit of proven language innovations which can be scaled both within our administrative area and outside of it.

Gaeilge365 Approach

Gaeilge365 has four key pillars: **Cumasú**, **Cruthú**, **Cruinniú** and **Comhordú**.

Cumasú focuses on building the capacity of Council staff to capitalise on the opportunities which exist to leverage the Irish language to deliver excellence in public service.

Key **Cumasú** projects include:

- An Chomhairle Chraiceáilte, an innovation training programme for staff members to identify opportunities to strengthen the Irish language through Council services. So far 13 staff members have undertaken the programme. Among the opportunities which have been identified and are being developed; *TurasÓir*, which aims to capitalising on a €7.3m economic opportunity by providing language experiences for the 5 million Irish language learners living outside of Ireland and *An Amharclann Cainte*, a participative theatre experience in the heart of the library which inspires families to enjoy speaking Irish together regardless of their level. Discover more about An Chomhairle Chraiceáilte by [watching this video](#) and learn more about the innovations from [this document](#).
- Irish language classes: since kicking off Gaeilge365 has increased the volume of staff engaged in Irish language classes from an average of 15 a year to over 200 staff expressing an interest in undertaking classes in 2024.

Cruthú focuses on delivering excellence in leveraging the Irish language as a resource which strengthens the city. We are piloting these public facing initiatives through our range of cultural services

Key **Cruthú** projects include:

- *Spraio na Sráide*, a community arts programme which uses the power of the Irish language to bring the community together on a street by street basis to create arts experiences for their neighbours.

Cruinniú focuses on building relationships with likeminded organisations to grow opportunities to speak Irish across the city.

Key **Cruinniú** projects to date include:

- Craiceáilte: 99.86% of all voluntary groups in Dublin operate through the medium of English. Dublin City Council have teamed up with Gael Linn to develop a programme to support 2nd level students to develop new Irish language voluntary groups. Craiceáilte will be delivered to 150 students across 8 schools in 2024.
- International opportunities, there is a growing global interest in the Irish language. Over 30 universities outside of Ireland are teaching the Irish language, Dublin City Council is actively engaging with universities in this space to build employment pathways for Irish speaking graduates from outside of Ireland who wish to work in

an organization who offer opportunities to use the language in their daily work. We are also engaging with organizations engaged in the revival of other minority speaking languages with a view to building and sharing best practices.

Comhordú focuses on ensuring that the Council is positioned to maximise the internal and external opportunities which the Irish language provides.

Key **Comhordú** examples include:

- 20% public sector recruits, identifying opportunities to engage with young Irish speakers and building outreach programmes like Craiceáilte which position Dublin City Council as an employer of choice for young Irish speakers who wish to have impactful careers.

VI Gaeilge365 Future Aspirations

Looking ahead, Dublin City Council aims to achieve the following in strengthening the Irish language:

Boost Daily Speakers

- Scale up our work and approach with Gaeilge365 to deliver on the aims outlined in the Corporate Plan and the 20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language and to support an increase in the amount of people speaking Irish on a daily basis in our administrative area.

Supporting Language Acquisition

- Building robust support programs for Dublin citizens who want to learn or relearn the Irish language.
- As outlined by the City Development Plan, support the continued growth of the Gaelscoil movement.

Great Irish Languages Services Are Great Public Services

- Continue to build and execute exciting pipeline of impactful public sector innovations which leverage the power of the Irish language to deliver real and meaningful results for our citizens and our city as a whole.

Irish Language Infrastructure:

- Creating more public spaces where Irish is actively used and celebrated.
- Integrating Irish into urban design and planning.

Collaboration and Innovation:

- Partnering with other cities, institutions, and language advocates.
- Exploring innovative ways to promote Irish in a digital age.

Conclusion

In summary, Dublin City Council actively promotes the Irish language through its schemes, strategic plans, community and strategic partner engagement, and compliance with language obligations.

By fostering an innovative approach to the promotion and development of opportunities to speak the Irish language, the Council is positioning itself at the vanguard of local authorities, as it contributes to the preservation and vitality of Gaeilge in the heart of the capital city.

The Irish Development Unit is available for inquiries.

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