**COMHAIRLE NA GAELSCOLAÍOCHTA (CnaG)**

**APPROVED BUSINESS PLAN - 2023 to 2024**

**Draft DE Strategic Priority - C**HAMPIONING the needs and aspirations of all our children and young people and the positive impact of education.

| **1**  **NUMBER** | **2**  **WHAT WE WILL DO AND BY WHEN** | **3**  **HOW WILL WE KNOW IF ANYONE IS BETTER OFF?** |
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| C1 | Throughout 2023/24, CnaG, in collaboration with DE, EA and other children’s authorities, will work to shape and support educational policies with a view to improving the wellbeing of children and young people as outlined in the Children’s Services Co-operation Act (NI) 2015, and will provide a report to DE when requested. | Irish-medium pupil wellbeing appropriately supported through the provision of resources and support through the medium of Irish.  Irish-medium needs reflected in all policies and initiatives relating to the wellbeing of children and young people. |

**Draft DE Strategic Priority - H**ELPING all our children and young people by supporting their well-being and learning.

| **1**  **NUMBER** | **2**  **WHAT WE WILL DO AND BY WHEN** | **3**  **HOW WILL WE KNOW IF ANYONE IS BETTER OFF?** |
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| H1 | During 2023/24, provide advice, guidance and support to Irish-medium Principals, Irish-medium Unit leaders, practitioners and Governors as necessary. | Increased participation and engagement in the meetings of the Irish-medium Principals’ Forum each term, identifying and disseminating examples of best practice and sharing resources, research and training suitable or recommended within the Irish-medium or immersion context, influencing positive outcomes among Irish-medium pupils.  Increased engagement with Irish-medium practitioners on individual schools and across clusters of schools via consultation events, CnaG website, social media and monthly bulletin to share best practice, influencing positive outcomes among Irish-medium pupils.  Positive links established with national and international bodies working in an immersion language environment and best practice disseminated within the Irish-medium sector to improve practice.  Sharing of best practice and relevant research at Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta’s annual conference in September 2023 to promote positive outcomes among Irish-medium pupils. |
| H2 | During 2023/24, continue to advocate with relevant bodies for suitable SEN support for Irish-medium pupils to ensure that the specific needs of Irish-medium sector are reflected in future policies and strategies and work towards the delivery of long-standing recommendations re SEN provision in Irish-medium Education. | Effective dissemination of all research and recommended practice to inform and improve support for Irish-medium pupils with SEN.  Geographical, sectoral and linguistic inconsistencies addressed at Area Planning level to increase Specialist Provision in Mainstream in the Irish-medium context to ensure placement for all pupils requiring specialist provision.  Enhanced and bespoke support available from EA including an increase in support staff with expertise in the immersion context to effectively support IM pupils with SEN.  Effective representation on EA SEND PRG to ensure needs of Irish-medium pupils with SEN are reflected in out-workings of that group and IM pupils are appropriately supported. |
| H3 | During 2023/24, work with the Irish-medium sector and other relevant stakeholders to begin to implement recommendations contained in A Fair Start report. | Effective dissemination of all Irish-medium based research undertaken in relation to A Fair Start will increase an awareness and understanding of issues faced within Irish-medium Education.  Increased engagement with relevant stakeholders regarding A Fair Start implementation.  Increased bespoke support available to Irish-medium sector from relevant stakeholders.  Irish-medium sector will be considered in the implementation of the general recommendations of the policy as well as the Irish-medium specific recommendations. |
| H4 | During 2023/24, advocate on behalf of the Irish-medium sector with DE, EA, CCMS, CCEA and all other relevant stakeholders including active participation on relevant stakeholder groups. | All guidance and policies are Irish-medium proofed and take cognisance of the specific needs of the Irish-medium sector.  Increased confidence within Irish-medium sector that particular needs and challenges of sector are adequately reflected in policies, strategies and resources.  Political parties, children's support organisations and other educational bodies have increased understanding and are more aware of the specific needs of the Irish-medium sector and are more likely to support CnaG in advocating for the rights of children in Irish-medium Education. |

**Draft DE Strategic Priority – I**NSPIRING all our children and young people to make a positive contribution to society.

| **1**  **NUMBER** | **2**  **WHAT WE WILL DO AND BY WHEN** | **3**  **HOW WILL WE KNOW IF ANYONE IS BETTER OFF?** |
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| I1 | Throughout 2023/24, CnaG will encourage and promote Irish-medium Education and support DE in fulfilling its statutory duty to encourage and facilitate the development of Irish-medium Education, and will provide a report to DE when requested. | Increased awareness and understanding in DE on the benefits of immersion education and the nuanced needs of Irish-medium sector, as a result of continued engagement, advocacy by CnaG.  Increased amount of specific references to Irish-medium Education in all DE policies/strategies as a result of advocacy by CnaG.  By a date specified by DE, a report provided to DE detailing evidence that this commitment has been achieved, and information provided on the impact of this action on the Irish medium Education sector.  Increased awareness of local IM provision across all localities via a marketing and awareness raising campaign in local press and on social media.  Increased numbers/% of pupils attending sustainable Irish-medium schools. |
| I2 | Throughout 2023/24, CnaG will support DE in fulfilling its statutory duty to encourage, facilitate and support the development of Integrated Education and will provide a report to DE when requested. | By a date specified by DE, a report provided to DE detailing evidence that this commitment has been achieved, and information provided on the impact of this action on the Integrated Education sector.  Full participation in the Review of Education, which formed a central part of the New Decade, New Approach deal, including recruitment of practitioners to inform working groups.  Full participation in the Steering and Working Groups associated with the implementation of the IE Act.  We can measure the success of this action through the development of Irish-medium Education within the integrated sector. Continue to support the first IME/IE provision in East Belfast and explore options for expanding other provision of this kind. |
| I3 | **Shared Education**  Throughout 2023/24, CnaG will exercise its power to encourage and facilitate shared education, in line with legislation and DE’s Sharing Works Policy, through the following key actions:-   * Advocate for sufficient flexibility in future Shared Education Initiatives such as Peace Plus to encourage more engagement from and with the Irish-medium sector; * Continue to engage with the Shared Education DE/EA teams and other education/sectoral bodies where appropriate to help address any barriers to Irish-medium engagement in Shared Education; * Assist with wider efforts designed to further advance and promote Shared Education across the education system through implementation of the Mainstreaming Strategy including, relevant support for IM schools; Participation in any new Shared Education stakeholder forums that are established;   and will provide a report to DE when requested. | Sufficient flexibility in Peace Plus criteria to allow for optimal engagement from Irish-medium sector.  Increased engagement from Irish-medium sector in the Shared Education initiatives and changes implemented, where necessary, to encourage increased participation from Irish-medium sector.  Greater awareness of Irish-medium Education within other education sectors e.g. bilingual sharing methods referenced, promoted and in practice across partnerships with IM schools.  Increased utilisation of Shared Education initiatives and professional development opportunities to enhance capacity in Irish-medium schools.  Report submitted to DE detailing evidence of how this commitment has been achieved and information on the impact of the actions.  CnaG will play an active role in supporting the implementation of the Mainstreaming Strategy within IM schools and will form part of stakeholder fora as resources allow. |

**Draft DE Strategic Priority –** Meeting the **L**EARNING needs of our children and young people and developing their knowledge and skills, enabling them to fulfil their potential.

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| L1 | During 2023/24, ensure provision of a quality Irish-medium pre-school support service through the following key actions:-   * Monitor progress against Service Level Agreement between CnaG and Altram quarterly to ensure stated commitments are achieved. * Secure funding to extend the Altram contract to ensure continuity of service during 2023/24 and beyond. * Representation on the DE Irish-medium Early Years’ Group to ensure delivery of targets, including the creation and delivery of bespoke Irish-medium language and methodology training in conjunction with Altram. | Inspection reports on IM Pre-school settings will continue to show improvement and all settings have met their statutory and regulatory obligations.  Increased levels of satisfaction and competence amongst members of voluntary Irish-medium nursery school committees as a result of ongoing support delivered in conjunction with Altram.  High level representation at PEG and Child-care Partnership meetings and bespoke needs of the Irish-medium EY sector reflected in all associated policies/out-workings of same.  Increased numbers of pupils attending Irish-medium pre-schools as a result of an annual and targeted marketing campaign about the availability and benefits of Irish-medium Education. |

**Draft DE Strategic Priority – D**ELIVERING an effective, child-first, collaborative and high-quality education system.

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| D1 | During 2023/24, maintain full engagement and participation at all levels of the Area Planning processes to fully represent the needs of the sector in collaboration with other educational partners in the Area Plan. | High-level representation and contribution to the AP structures. To ensure that the specific developmental needs of Irish-medium Education are reflected in area plans moving forward.  Increased understanding of specific needs of IM sector in relation to AP via facilitation of school visits with DE officials.  Continue to increase the overall number and percentage of children being educated in sustainable Irish-medium schools. |
| D2 | During 2023/24, recruit, engage and manage a number of external, professional associates to undertake research, training, collaborative and associated work for Irish-medium Education sector. | Enhanced capacity and expertise available to complement the skills/knowledge of CnaG staff in order to better advocate and support the IM sector in areas such as area planning, accommodation, teacher provision, educational support, feasibility studies for new provision etc...by a range of professional associates with expertise in the nuances of the IM sector. |
| D3 | During 2023/24, provide timely, high-quality advice and recommendations to DE on Irish-medium education particularly in relation to policy development, research and consultations. | Evidence based responses provided to all relevant DE consultations and requests for information within required timeframes.  Engagement in relevant forums within DE relating to Irish-medium Education. Policies and schemes from DE which are more reflective of needs of Irish-medium sector. Increased awareness of those needs within DE. Increased confidence with Irish-medium sector that their needs are reflected. |
| D4 | During 2023/24, assist the recruitment, training and continued development of governors of school settings at all levels in Irish-medium Education in conjunction with EA. In particular:   * Assist schools to have full complement of Governors, high level of training received, and bespoke Irish-medium training achieved with high levels of participation. * Provide ongoing support to governors and work with EA to ensure that every Irish-medium school has relevant governing documents and policies in place. * Work with EA to disseminate to all Irish-medium schools a model Scheme of Management and advocate for training in the use of the Scheme. | Greater confidence amongst IM Governors in relation to their role as employers in IM schools via publication of Scheme of Management, for Other Maintained schools which includes IM schools, and subsequent training.  Reduced numbers of Governor vacancies across the IM sector.  Increased capacity among IM governors via access to training, including bespoke IM training.  Increased co-operation with educational partners regarding recruitment and retention of Governors, signposting to EA support and increased levels of confidence in boards of governors. |
| D5 | Throughout 2023/24, work closely with the Department’s Investment and Infrastructure Directorate to address the accommodation needs of the Irish-medium Education sector. | Attendance at bi-monthly meetings (EOT) and quarterly meetings (IID) regarding Irish-medium schools in which prioritised work is discussed with the aim to progress it.  Accommodation needs assessed and addressed via an agreed Action Plan.  Advocacy to DE/EA for needs to be met in relation to outstanding major capital projects and ongoing maintenance issues affecting schools; site searches for new and existing provision requested.  CnaG’s Accommodation Survey disseminated across all relevant stakeholders and collaborative work undertaken with DE to highlight and create an agreed Action Plan to address the needs. |
| D6 | During 2023/24, advocate for adequate numbers of teachers for Irish-medium Education to meet increasing demand. | Schools will be able to meet their staffing needs and be capable of providing a wide range of subject choices.  Teacher training model will provide appropriately equipped teachers for the emerging Irish-medium sector.  Sufficient supply of teachers would be provided with consideration given to schemes such as those in other jurisdictions e.g. funding schemes. |