

Professor Wilson McLeod

Dear Committee Members

I am pleased to see that the Committee will be considering the draft National Gaelic Language Plan at its next meeting and taking evidence from representatives of Bòrd na Gàidhlig. This Plan is extremely important in guiding the direction of Gaelic development policy and it is very helpful to have the input of the Scottish Parliament at this stage in the plan development process.

In general, the briefing note regarding the Plan prepared by SPICe gives a useful overview of the issues at hand. I am concerned, however, that the briefing gives undue weight to a controversial and, in my view, very misleading recent study on Gaelic policy, the 2020 book *The Gaelic Crisis in the Vernacular Community*. It is important that members of the Committee recognise that the analysis presented in this book and summarised in the briefing have not been widely accepted by experts and professionals working in the field. In particular, the book's claim (quoted on p. 7 of the briefing) that 'current policy provision displays a general bias in favour of Gaelic learners and potential future secondary bilingual speakers at the expense of existing vernacular speakers and their communities' is not supported by the evidence and gives a seriously distorted view of the situation. These arguments have been carefully refuted by myself and others working in the field and it is unfortunate that the briefing does not give a rounded view of current thinking in this policy area. The briefing also presented the book's proposal to establish a Gaelic Community Trust without making clear that this has also attracted significant criticism.

I would be very pleased to provide more information on this point if that would be helpful.

Kind regards

Wilson McLeod

An t-Ollamh Wilson McLeod  
Ceiltis agus Eòlas na h-Alba  
Oilthigh Dhùn Èideann

Professor Wilson McLeod  
Celtic and Scottish Studies  
University of Edinburgh