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**REPORT TO: COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE ON 26 JUNE 2018**

**SUBJECT: MORAY DRAFT BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE PLAN 2018 - 2024**

**BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 The Communities Committee is invited to approve the draft British Sign Language (BSL) plan for the Moray Council 2018 – 2024 for consultation with D/deaf and Deafblind BSL users in Moray and those who work with them.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (G) (13) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the formulation, supervision, implementation and review of the policies and practices of the Council in relation to its arrangements for promoting, fostering and maintaining equal opportunities.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 The Communities Committee is invited to consider and approve the draft BSL plan for the Moray Council 2018 – 2024 for consultation.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 BSL is a recognised language and is the first and preferred language of many deaf people in the UK. The British Deaf Association estimates that there are just over 12,500 BSL users in Scotland and 7,200 of these are Deaf. There is a distinction between those with a hearing loss who communicate ways other than through BSL. These are referred to as “deaf” with a small d. Those people who identify culturally as being deaf and part of the Deaf community are referred to as “Deaf” with a capital D. When reference is made to both groups the term D/deaf is used.
- 3.2 The BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 requires public bodies listed in the schedule of the Act to publish BSL plans by October 2018. These must:
- Involve BSL users (including those who use the tactile form of the language) and those who represent them;
  - Ensure that the consultation on the draft plan is accessible to D/deaf and Deafblind BSL users; and
  - Be published in BSL as well as in English in both draft form and in final form.

- 3.3 On 24 October 2017, the Scottish Government published its BSL National Plan 2017 – 2023. It was developed through extensive consultation with D/deaf and Deafblind BSL users and those who work with them. The BSL National Plan provided a template for public bodies to use for their plans.
- 3.4 Moray's draft BSL plan is based on the template and put together following internal consultation and a consultation meeting facilitated by North East Sensory Services. It is attached in **Appendix 1**.
- 3.5 The official consultation starts with the presentation of the Moray Council's draft BSL plan to the Communities Committee at this meeting. The presentation will be facilitated by 2 BSL interpreters. The consultation will last until 31 July. During this time the presentation of the BSL plan will be available through the Moray Council's webcast. Consultees will be able to submit their views by email, text, in BSL video or in writing. Contact details for the consultation are given in the draft plan.
- 3.6 Following the consultation, the draft plan will be amended and presented to the Communities Committee on 25 September 2018 for approval. Following approval it will be published in text and in BSL format.
- 3.7 The actions from the final BSL plan will be incorporated into the services plans for each relevant service in order to facilitate the progress report which will need to be published in 2020.

#### **4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

**(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))**

The BSL plan will contribute to the Council's priority of ensuring caring and healthy communities.

**(b) Policy and Legal**

Publication of a BSL plan, developed in consultation with D/deaf and Deafblind BSL users is a legal requirement under the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015.

**(c) Financial implications**

The costs for interpretation and translation of the draft plan, the final plan and the consultation process are met by the Scottish Government.

**(d) Risk Implications**

There are no risks associated with this report.

**(e) Staffing Implications**

Customer-facing staff will need to undergo training in Deaf awareness. It is expected that this training will take approximately 1 hour. There will be no additional staff required for the implementation of the plan.

**(f) Property**

Publicly accessible council buildings will need to have publicly accessible WiFi. This will enable BSL users to have access to free online BSL interpretation through ContactScotland when accessing council services

**(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact**

The BSL plan will assist in eliminating discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and fostering good relations for D/deaf and Deafblind BSL users, their families and those who work with them.

**(h) Consultations**

There has been internal consultation with Caroline Howie and Alison Davidson (Democratic Services), Sarah Marshall (Additional Support Needs manager), Helena Jones (Educational Support Officer Additional Support Needs), Paul Duncan (Teacher Sensory Education Service), Margaret Kidd (Customer Contact Manager), Donald MacRae (Public Transport Unit manager) who are all in agreement with the actions in the BSL Plan relating to their services.

**5. CONCLUSION**

**5.1 The Communities Committee is invited to consider and approve the draft BSL plan for the Moray Council 2018 – 2024 for consultation.**

Author of Report: Equal Opportunities Officer

Background Papers:

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