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**Report To:** Policy and Resources Committee      **Date:** 4 June 2024  
**Report By:** Corporate Director Education,  
Communities and Organisational  
Development      **Report No:** PR/18/24/RB/KB  
**Contact Officer:** Morna Rae      **Contact No:** 01475 712065  
**Subject:** Draft British Sign Language Plan 2024/30

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## **1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

1.1  For Decision       For Information/Noting

1.2 The purpose of this report is to seek approval of the Council's draft British Sign Language (BSL) Plan 2024/30 which is attached as Appendix 1. Appendix  
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## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes that the Council was required to develop and publish a BSL Plan 2024/30 by 6 May 2024.
- 2.2 It is recommended that the Committee approves the draft BSL Plan 2024/30 which has been published on the Council's website.
- 2.3 It is recommended that the Committee notes that the Council will contribute, as appropriate, to the Scottish Government's National Progress Report on its BSL Plan 2023/29 at the mid-point of its delivery.

**Ruth Binks**  
**Corporate Director - Education, Communities and Organisational Development**

### **3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

- 3.1 The results from Scotland's 2011 Census indicated that there are 212 people aged three years or over who use BSL in the local area. (The 2022 Census statistics for language are expected in Summer 2024.)
- 3.2 The BSL National Plan 2023/29 sets out Scotland's ambition to be the best place in the world for BSL signers to live, work, visit and learn. The document includes 45 actions that the Scottish Government will deliver by 2029 to help it make progress towards that goal.
- 3.3 The Scottish Government has made a commitment to produce a National Progress Report on its BSL Plan 2023/29 at the mid-point of its delivery and the Council will contribute to that document, as appropriate.

#### **3.4 Legislative setting**

The BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 requires the Council to develop and publish a BSL Plan 2024/30. The deadline for publication of the Plan 2024/30 is six months after the publication of the BSL National Plan 2023/29 i.e. 6 May 2024. In light of that timescale, the draft BSL Plan 2024/30 has been published on the Council's website, pending approval by the Committee.

- 3.5 The Council's BSL Plan 2024/30 comprises around 30 improvement actions, grouped under the following nine priority areas of the BSL National Plan 2023/29:

- BSL Accessibility
- Children, Young People and their Families
- Access to Employment
- Health and Wellbeing
- Celebrating BSL Culture
- BSL Data
- Transport
- Access to Justice
- Democratic Participation.

#### **3.6 Staff training**

In partnership with the West College Scotland, Council staff have the opportunity to attend a *BSL for Customer Service* training course. The aims of the course are to build learners' confidence when communicating in BSL and outline strategies to understand and provide straightforward information to customers and service users who use BSL. Since 2020, a total of 75 employees have attended the training and feedback has been very positive. Further courses are planned for delivery in 2024/25.

### **4.0 PROPOSAL**

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Committee notes that the draft BSL Plan 2024/30 was published on the Council's website by the deadline of 6 May 2024.
- 4.2 It is proposed that the Committee approves the draft BSL Plan 2024/30.
- 4.3 It is proposed that the Committee notes the requirement for the Council to contribute to the Scottish Government's National Progress Report on its BSL Plan 2023/29.

## 5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO
Financial		X
Legal/Risk	X	
Human Resources		X
Strategic (Inverclyde Alliance Partnership Plan 2023/33/Council Plan 2023/28)	X	
Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty and Children/Young People's Rights and Wellbeing	X	
Environmental and Sustainability		X
Data Protection		X

## 5.2 Finance

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The following financial implications are outlined for information only.

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/(Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
02400 000 61002	Corporate Policy	2024/25	£2,000	n/a	Recurring budget

## 5.3 Legal/Risk

The delivery of the BSL Plan 2024/30 will support the fulfilment of the Council's obligations under The BSL (Scotland) Act 2015.

## 5.4 Strategic

The matters referred to in this report are of relevance to the following Inverclyde Alliance Partnership Plan 2023/33 Theme:

### Theme 5: A thriving place

- Easy access to attractive and safe public spaces, and high-quality arts and cultural opportunities.

The matters referred to in this report are of relevance to the following Council Plan 2023/28 Themes:

**Theme 1: People**

- Our young people have the best start in life through high quality support and education.

**Theme 3: Performance**

- High quality and innovative services are provided, giving value for money.

**5.5 Equalities**

This report has been considered under the Corporate EIA process with the following outcome:

X	Yes – Assessed as relevant and an EIA is required and will be made available through the following link:  <a href="https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/equality-impact-assessments">https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/equality-impact-assessments</a>
	No – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, assessed as not relevant and no EIA is required. Provide any other relevant reasons why an EIA is not necessary/screening statement.

**6.0 CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 With support from the British Deaf Association Scotland, a consultation event was held on 29 January 2024 to gather views on the Council’s proposed BSL Plan 2024/30. Attendees received an update on the BSL National Plan 2023/29 and were advised that the Council wanted to devise a BSL Plan for the period 2024/30. A facilitated discussion then followed between attendees, Council staff and staff from NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde.
- 6.2 In addition to the engagement event on 29 January 2024, stakeholders were invited to provide their views via email, letter or by sending a BSL video to the Council.
- 6.3 The appropriate Council Services were involved in the devising of the draft BSL Plan 2024/30, following which a further engagement event was held on 26 April 2024 with representatives of local BSL users.
- 6.4 The draft BSL Plan 2024/30 was later circulated for consideration to the Council’s Elected Members, as well as the Corporate Equalities Group and the Staff Disability Forum. The feedback received has been reflected in the document attached as Appendix 1.

**7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1 The Scottish Government’s BSL National Plan 2023/29 is available to view here:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/bsl-national-plan-2023-2029/>

**Inverclyde Council**  
**British Sign Language Plan 2024/30**

Appendix 1

**Inverclyde Council**

**Draft British Sign Language (BSL) Plan 2024/30**

Draft

**Inverclyde Council**  
**British Sign Language Plan 2024/30**

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## Inverclyde Council

### British Sign Language Plan 2024/30

#### Introduction

Inverclyde is located on the West coast of Scotland and is one of the most attractive places in Scotland to live, work and visit, with breath-taking scenery, excellent transport links to Glasgow and Edinburgh, some of the best walking and sporting activities in Europe and an impressive school estate.

The main towns of Greenock, Gourock and Port Glasgow sit on the Firth of the Clyde. The towns provide a marked contrast to the coastal settlements of Inverkip and Wemyss Bay, which lie to the South West of the area, and the picturesque villages of Kilmacolm and Quarrier's Village, which are located further inland and offer a further dimension to Inverclyde's diversity, particularly in social, economic and physical terms.

A strong sense of community identity exists in Inverclyde and in local neighbourhoods in particular. Local citizens are rightly proud of Inverclyde and its history which is steeped in centuries of maritime and industrial endeavour.

Inverclyde's population in 2022 was estimated to be 78,400 while the results from Scotland's 2011 Census indicated that there are 212 people aged 3 years or over who use BSL<sup>1</sup> in the local area.

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<sup>1</sup> Whenever we refer to BSL users, we mean D/deaf and/or Deafblind people (those who receive the language in a tactile form due to sight loss) whose first or preferred language is BSL.

## Inverclyde Council

### British Sign Language Plan 2024/30

#### Background to Inverclyde Council's BSL Plan 2024/30

The BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 promotes the use of BSL in Scotland and requires Inverclyde Council to develop a BSL Plan for the period 2024/30 which will outline how it will promote and raise awareness of the language.

Inverclyde Council's first BSL Plan covered the period 2018/24. The Council's second BSL Plan sets out improvement actions that we will deliver between now and 2030.

This document broadly follows the BSL National Plan 2023/29<sup>2</sup> which was published on 6 November 2023 and developed in consultation with the BSL community and representative organisations for the BSL community. The National Plan 2023/29 includes 45 actions that the Scottish Government will deliver by 2029 to help it make progress towards its ambition of making Scotland the best place in the world for BSL users to live, work and visit.

The improvement actions in our BSL Plan 2024/30 are framed around the same long-term goals as the National Plan 2023/26 and are therefore grouped under the following themes:

- BSL Accessibility
- Children, Young People and their Families
- Access to Employment
- Health and Wellbeing
- Celebrating BSL Culture
- BSL Data
- Transport
- Access to Justice
- Democratic Participation.

The Scottish Government has made a commitment to produce a National Progress Report on its Plan 2023/29 at the mid-point of its delivery and the Council will make a contribution to that document, as appropriate.

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<sup>2</sup> [BSL National Plan 2023/29](#)



## Inverclyde Council

### British Sign Language Plan 2024/30

#### Section 1: BSL Accessibility

The Council acknowledges the following long-term goal in the BSL National Plan 2023/29:

- ***To remove accessibility as a barrier for BSL users in all aspects of life, recognising the importance of having accessible information in the right format at the right time, utilising technology and increasing people's awareness of communication tools.***

Between now and 2030, Inverclyde Council will:

- Improve access to our information and services for BSL users, including making our website more accessible to BSL users.
- Promote the use of the Scottish Government's nationally-funded BSL online interpreting video relay services *contactSCOTLAND-BSL* to staff and local BSL users.
- Look at offering BSL and deaf awareness training more widely to Council employees, including Education Services' staff.
- Explore the provision of formal, certified BSL training for front-line Inverclyde Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) staff who could come into contact with BSL users. Training would start at the basic level, followed by Levels 1 and 2, with the aim of upskilling staff to communicate with BSL users in their first language.

**Inverclyde Council**

**British Sign Language Plan 2024/30**

**Section 2: Children, Young People and their Families**

The Council acknowledges the following long-term goal in the BSL National Plan 2023/29:

- ***the Getting it right for every child approach will be fully embedded, with a Deaf or Deafblind child and their family offered the right information and support at the right time to engage with BSL. We will strengthen partnerships between relevant organisations to overcome barriers for BSL users and Deaf/Deafblind children to ensure they have the support they need at all stages of their learning, so that they can reach their full potential.***

Between now and 2030, Inverclyde Council will:

- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve access to early years' services for parents whose child is diagnosed as D/deaf or Deafblind by developing information about BSL and deaf culture for service providers who support parents, such as health visitors.</li> </ul>               |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist families of D/deaf and Deafblind children by ensuring that they have access to BSL resources as early as possible in their child's life.</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop BSL resources and advice within key programmes such as <i>Bookbug</i> so that parents can be supported to interact with their child during this critical developmental phase.</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In conjunction with partners, make the annual <i>Celebration of Sign</i> event a bigger and more widely publicised initiative across the Council.</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with the Scottish Qualifications Authority to promote the suite of Awards in BSL and work towards the development in Inverclyde of BSL qualifications up to Level 6 of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Network.</li> </ul>                |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include BSL video links for school information on the Moorfoot Primary School/Garvel Deaf Centre and Clydeview Academy's websites, and explore how we can include information in BSL on the information screens in school reception areas.</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publicise the <i>contactSCOTLAND-BSL</i> website to enable parents to make contact with their child's school.</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise awareness of and access existing resources in Inverclyde primary schools of BSL as an option in the 1+2 languages programme and offer taster sessions in other local schools.</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the promotion of on-line BSL tutorials that all local schools could access.</li> </ul>   |

## Inverclyde Council

### British Sign Language Plan 2024/30

#### Section 3: Access to Employment

The Council acknowledges the following long-term goal in the BSL National Plan 2023/29:

- ***BSL users will receive person-centred support to develop their skills, consider what route to employment is right for them and enter into the workforce so that they can fulfil their potential, and improve Scotland's economic performance. They will be provided with support to enable them to progress in their chosen career.***

Between now and 2030, Inverclyde Council will:

- Work with partners who deliver employment services, and with employer groups already supporting employability, to help signpost them to specific advice on the needs of BSL users.
- Raise awareness locally of the UK Government's *Access to Work* scheme with employers and with BSL users (including those on Modern Apprenticeships) so that they can benefit from the support it provides.
- Encourage and support BSL users to consider a career in culture and the arts.

## Inverclyde Council

### British Sign Language Plan 2024/30

#### Section 4: Health and Wellbeing

The Council acknowledges the following long-term goal in the BSL National Plan 2023/29:

- ***BSL users will have access to the information and services they need to live active, healthy lives, and to make informed choices at every stage of their lives.***

Between now and 2030, the Inverclyde HSCP will:

- Develop complementary information in BSL about local provision, as appropriate.
- Make arrangements for an information event for both BSL users and hearing staff on the use of *contactSCOTLAND-BSL*.
- Work in partnership with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde to raise awareness of NHS support for BSL users to ensure they can access services to support their health and wellbeing.

Between now and 2030, Inverclyde Council will:

- Take steps to improve access to information about sport, and to local sports facilities and sporting opportunities.
- Work closely with organisations for deaf people at both a local and national level to direct BSL users to sporting opportunities in our communities.

## Inverclyde Council

### British Sign Language Plan 2024/30

#### Section 5: Celebrating BSL Culture

The Council acknowledges the following long-term goal in the BSL National Plan 2023/29:

- ***BSL users will have full access to the cultural life of Scotland, and equal opportunities to enjoy and contribute to culture and the arts, and are encouraged to share BSL and deaf culture with the people of Scotland.***

Between now and 2030, Inverclyde Council will:

- Enable BSL users to take part in culture and the arts as participants, audience members and professionals.
- Increase information in BSL about culture and the arts on relevant websites and at venues by:
  - working in partnership with providers of cultural events and activities across Inverclyde to increase the availability of information in BSL about culture and the arts to help promote opportunities and information to the deaf community; and
  - exploring the use of technology to enhance the experience of BSL users when visiting exhibitions or accessing museum collections.
- Improve access to the historical environment, culture events and performing arts and film for BSL users.

**Inverclyde Council**

**British Sign Language Plan 2024/30**

**Section 6: BSL Data**

The Council acknowledges the following long-term goal in the BSL National Plan 2023/29:

- ***to strengthen the evidence and data on the BSL community in Scotland to better inform decision making in public policy and service design.***

Between now and 2030, Inverclyde Council will:

- Work in partnership with local and national agencies to analyse existing evidence about BSL users to identify and fill key information gaps and strengthen our knowledge base.

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## Inverclyde Council

### British Sign Language Plan 2024/30

#### Section 7: Transport

The Council acknowledges the following long-term goal in the BSL National Plan 2023/29:

- ***BSL users will have safe, fair and inclusive access to public transport and the systems that support all transport use in Scotland.***

Between now and 2030, Inverclyde Council will:

- Provide information in BSL about the Council's home to school transport provision.
- Publicise the Young Person's National Entitlement Cards for people aged 11-25 years in BSL with the aim of promoting engagement with the initiative and the uptake of free travel for all under 22 years olds.

## Inverclyde Council

### British Sign Language Plan 2024/30

#### Section 8: Access to Justice

The Council acknowledges the following long-term goal in the BSL National Plan 2023/29:

- ***BSL users will have fair and equal access to the civil, criminal and juvenile justice systems in Scotland.***

Between now and 2030, Inverclyde Council will:

- Take steps to deliver Theme 4: *A supportive place* in the Inverclyde Alliance Partnership Plan 2023/33 which includes the outcome *Public protection and community safety are improved through targeting our resources to reduce the risk of offending and harm.*
- Take steps to deliver Theme 1: *People* in the Inverclyde Council Plan 2023/28 which includes the outcomes *Our young people have the best start in life through high quality support and education;* and *Our most vulnerable families and residents are safeguarded and supported.*
- Provide support to *the Developing the Young Workforce* programme whose impact is measured by progression to positive destinations.
- Provide administrative support to the Inverclyde Children's Panel Members - and the Area Support Team - who make legal decisions about the care and protection of children and young people in the local area.
- Ensure the availability of appropriately trained Interpreters to support communication when members of the BSL community are involved with Inverclyde Justice Services.



## Inverclyde Council

### British Sign Language Plan 2024/30

#### Section 9: Democratic Participation

The Council acknowledges the following long-term goal in the BSL National Plan 2023/29:

- ***BSL users will be fully involved in democratic and public life in Scotland, as active and informed citizens, as voters, as elected politicians and as board members of our public bodies.***

Between now and 2030, Inverclyde Council will:

Take opportunities to promote the *Access to Elected Office Fund* locally, which can meet the additional costs of BSL users wishing to stand for selection or election in local or Scottish Parliament elections by:

- providing information on, and signposting to, the *Access to Elected Office Fund*, which is run by Inclusion Scotland and funded by the Scottish Government, through the Council's website at [Democracy and Elections - Inverclyde Council](#);
- including information on the *Access to Elected Office Fund* in Nomination Packs; and
- taking steps to raise awareness among Elected Members of *contactSCOTLAND-BSL*.