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**REPORT TO: MORAY COUNCIL ON 31 OCTOBER 2018**

**SUBJECT: BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE (BSL) PLAN**

**BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 The Council is invited to approve the British Sign Language (BSL) Plan for Moray.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Council in terms of Section II (13) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the approval of council reports and strategies of a corporate nature.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Council approves the BSL Plan for Moray.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The draft British Sign Language (BSL) Plan for Moray was approved for further consultation by Communities Committee on 26 June 2018 (para 5 of the minutes refer). The consultation was conducted during July and August of 2018 and the feedback has been incorporated into the final BSL plan for Moray. A copy of the plan is attached in **Appendix I**. Throughout the plan and this report the term BSL user means 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 British Sign Language.
- 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 A BSL version of the draft plan was made available through the webcast of the Communities Committee meeting on 26 June. Consultees were invited to submit their views by email, SMS, in BSL video or in writing. No comments

were received through those means. In addition, three meetings were held with BSL users with the support of the Deaf Club and North East Sensory Services. The feedback from those meetings have been incorporated in the final version of the draft. Generally, people were positive about the actions in the plan but a number of additional actions were suggested. These have been included in the final plan. BSL users also welcomed the use of BSL interpreters at the committee meeting. However, some felt that the language used in the plan was at times too difficult for BSL users to follow. It was also recommended that the BSL video of the final version should be signed by a Deaf BSL user. A Deaf BSL user has been contacted through the Deaf Club and has agreed to sign the BSL plan and to comment on the level of the language used.

- 3.4 A BSL version of the final plan, signed by a Deaf BSL user, has been produced and will be posted on the Moray Council's website. Copies of the video will be distributed to BSL users in Moray through the Moray Deaf Club, libraries and access points.
- 3.5 The various council services have been consulted on the actions relating to their service and they have been agreed. The actions from the BSL plan will be incorporated into the service plans for each relevant service to monitor progress on the plan. A report on progress 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 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 in-house training will take approximately 1 hour. There will be no additional staff required for the implementation of the plan.

**(f) Property**

Council buildings that are open to the public 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. This means that BSL users have access to council services without the need to make a prior appointment and without the need to book a BSL interpreter at a minimum 2-hour call out fee.

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

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

**(h) Consultations**

A consultation with BSL users in Moray was held during July and August of 2018. This took place over three sessions, facilitated by the Moray Deaf Club and North East Sensory Services.

**5. CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 That the Council considers the recommendation set out in Section 2 of the report in regard to the BSL Plan for Moray which is designed to improve access to Moray Council's information and services for BSL users, their families and those that work with them.**

Author of Report: Equal Opportunities Officer

Background Papers:

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