

ULSTER SCOTS AGENCY

BUSINESS PLAN AND BUDGET 2008

Introduction

This Business Plan describes the work, which the Ulster-Scots Agency proposes to undertake during 2008 in terms of implementation of the various programmes and projects set out in the Agency's Corporate Plan 2008 –2010. It builds on the success of previous Corporate and Business plans to further develop ongoing work and to ensure the Agency meets its legislative remit. The plan will enable the Agency to fulfil its mission to promote the study, conservation, development and use of Ulster-Scots as a living language; to encourage and develop the full range of its attendant culture; and to promote an understanding of the history of the Ulster-Scots”

OVERVIEW OF WORK TO DATE

The Ulster-Scots Agency programme of work outlined in past Corporate and Business Plans has been based on four strategic themes namely:

- Linguistic Development
- Culture
- Education
- Public Awareness and Understanding of Ulster-Scots

The Linguistic aspect of our work has over a number of years been resourced through grants to the Ulster Scots Language Society. However with the appointment of a Director of Language towards the end of 2005 the Agency was able to become more proactive. In 2006 the Agency supported the first ever Ulster Scots summer schools. These were essentially pilot projects which proved most successful and form a significant part of our plans for the future. Additionally we commenced work on publishing Ulster Scots writers with the first book featuring the works of the early 19th century poet Sarah Leech from Donegal, and we propose to continue this very important publishing effort.

The Agency through its grant aid and sponsorship schemes continues to support groups and organisations in the development of Ulster-Scots culture. Over the last few years the major areas of growth have been in dance and musical tuition. We have been encouraged by the variety of projects that groups are initiating and becoming involved with and we hope to increase this level of activity even further. Again over the last year we have been more proactive, in partnership with the community, in organising Agency led events.

As a result of funding from the Irish Youth Foundation we employed a Youth Development Officer on secondment for one year in 2006 to work with young people in inner city areas; this has been an important initiative for the Agency which must be further developed.

The Agency is actively engaged with the community to establish effective and meaningful ways to assist the community to fulfil its potential

The Agency has produced a range of information leaflets and other publications, and hosts a number of websites. We are very aware of the importance of communication and we will build on this success over the next three years.

The Agency has put in place a public relations strategy which continually strives to ensure that the public are informed of Ulster-Scots issues. It is realistic, however to acknowledge that much work remains to be done. The Agency has made rapid progress over the last few years to meet the various targets required under Corporate Governance and we are determined to continue to do so.

The targets and objectives set out in this Business Plan will build on the work previously undertaken.

The Agency recognises that there are challenges to be met if it is to achieve its objectives. These challenges are summarised as follows:

- Lack of public awareness.
- Erosion of the language.
- The linguistic debate about the language, locally and in Scotland.
- The future of the Ulster-Scots language.
- Increasing homogenization and globalization of culture

Through the implementation of this plan the Ulster-Scots Agency will contribute to a revival of awareness and appreciation of the rich and diverse linguistic and cultural heritage of our society.

The Agency recognises the level of resources required if the Agency is to fulfil its remit and provide high quality service on linguistic and cultural issues to an ever increasing community demand, realising the Ulster Scots potential and this plan has been written accordingly.

Accordingly, this Plan is based on a budget allocation of £3,315,000 for 2008 which shall be allocated by the respective British and Irish Governments.

In the table below the budget allocation is broken down for the 2008 year into the Agency's key current strategic themes and Staff/Running Costs.

2008 Ulster Scots Agency Programme Expenditure

Strategic Themes	Profiled Budget
Marketing	£465,000
Serving the Community	£1,500,000
Working with Others	£500,000
Commitment to a First Class Service / Staff / Running Costs	£850,000
Total	£3,315,000

The 2008 Budget has been profiled to produce a planned breakdown based on experience and monitoring of the Agency budget.

The Corporate Plan for 2008 -2010 is designed to build on the success of Agency support for community initiatives with an Ulster Scots dimension which can assist in establishing community cohesion.

The Corporate Plan is built on the following strategic themes:

Marketing

The Ulster Scots Agency has at its core a promotional remit. Promotion comes in many forms and it is accepted that every aspect of the Agency's work involves promotion whether it be through publications, grant assisted activity or delivering a service to other organisations. However central to all of this is a marketing and information strategy that involves the optimum use of resources to inform and educate people about Ulster Scots both in general and more specific terms.

Serving the community

The Agency recognises the need to protect and grow our cultural capital and is extremely conscious of the importance of cultural activity to people. The Ulster Scots community is at a stage of development that requires careful nurture and a coherent strategy to enable that community to fully develop and achieve its potential.

Working with others

If the Agency is to succeed in encouraging as many people to engage in Ulster Scots activities either as participants or audience/spectators it is essential to establish partnerships with key organisations.

The Agency recognises that it alone cannot meet the needs of the Ulster Scots community and we are therefore committed to building relationships with

Government Departments, Statutory and voluntary Agencies and others who have a role to play

Commitment to a first class service

The Agency considers itself to be a service provider. To ensure that we offer a first class service to our stakeholders and partners we will strive to ensure that our processes and procedures operate effectively and efficiently.

PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES FOR 2008

This Business Plan for 2008 is aligned with the Corporate Plan 2008 – 2010 in relation to the themes; however the allocation of the budget between the strategic themes of the Agency has of necessity been profiled to best meet the evolving business needs of the Ulster Scots Community. This Plan defines the programme of work, which will translate these themes into actions. The resources, objectives, key deliverables, targets and impact associated with the programme are outlined in the Plan which is based on a budget of £3,315,000 for 2008.

The breakdown of budget into strategic themes is as follows:

Marketing	£465,000
Serving the Community	£1,500,000
Working with Others	£500,000
Commitment to a First Class Service	
Staff/Running costs	£850,000*
Total	£3,315,000

(Plus grant assistance from SEUPB under the Peace II Programme measure 5.2. - to complete the project commenced in 2007 by May 2008)

*Included in this amount is money payable to DFP to cover the Accruing Superannuation Liability Charges (ASLCs) calculated on agreed contribution ratios for pay budgets and staffing complements. The Irish Exchequer in the South proposes to meet its pension liability for these staff on a pay as you go basis in line with its normal method of meeting these obligations.

This ASLC figure is based on the staffing complement in post in November 2007 and will increase with the recruitment of staff in line with the staffing review recommendation.

The Plan will be subject to review during the course of 2008 to ensure it remains relevant, realistic and achievable. The Board will undertake this on a quarterly basis and progress reports will be presented to the sponsor Departments. The Board will also monitor progress against targets and objectives and regular progress reports will be presented to sponsor Departments.

1) **Marketing**

Aim:

The Ulster Scots Agency has at its core a promotional remit. Promotion comes in many forms and it is accepted that every aspect of the Agency's work involves promotion whether it be through publications, grant assisted activity or delivering a service to other organisations. However central to all of this is a marketing and information strategy that involves the optimum use of resources to inform and educate people about Ulster Scots both in general and more specific terms. The Agency has developed a comprehensive Communications strategy which encompasses all aspects of promotion and this will provide the template for delivery.

Financial Allocation from the 2008 Budget:

£465,000

Objectives:

- Engage in advertising campaigns through a variety of mediums to promote general awareness, by theme or specific event.
- Organise events to showcase Ulster Scots.
- Maximise the potential of Agency websites and the use of information technology.
- Publish information leaflets, CDs DVDS etc.
- Publish a regular newspaper and contribute articles to other publications.
- Maintain a good working relationship with the media.
- Issue press releases and have personnel available for interviews as necessary.
- Conduct briefing meetings for opinion formers and key figures.
- Organise Ulster Scots Community Radio Stations.
- Support Ulster Scots programming on TV and Radio.

Targets for 2008:

- Publish a minimum of 8 editions of the Ulster Scot newspaper during the year
- Produce one CD or DVD by October 2008.
- Conduct one major marketing campaign to highlight a specific element of Ulster Scots' language, culture or heritage.
- Organise one showcase events within the year.
- Interactive website development and the streaming of broadcast programmes.
- Organise five community radio stations on a short term licence basis by September 2008.
- Produce two information or historical leaflets and reprint existing leaflets as necessary.
- Participate at two major sporting or other general events by showcasing Ulster Scots.
- Organise two seminars by September 2008 to assist local groups to be more effective in marketing their events.

Impact:

Increased awareness and understanding of the history, culture, heritage and language of the Ulster Scots.

Measure:

Survey of the public's awareness and understanding of the Ulster Scots history, language and culture.

(2) Serving the Community

Aim:

The Agency recognises the need to protect and grow our cultural capital and is extremely conscious of the importance of cultural activity to people. The Ulster Scots community is at a stage of development that requires careful nurture and a coherent strategy to enable that community to fully develop and achieve its potential.

We will continue to work with community organisations to ensure they fulfil that potential in linguistic activity, music, dance, literature, drama and the visual arts, helping people to unlock their creativity.

The development of active participation by community groups, organisations and individuals in linguistic and cultural activity will be a major feature of the Agency's work over the period of this plan.

To ensure this the Agency will work with and provide financial assistance through grant aid or sponsorship to a wide variety of Ulster Scots groups, community organisations and individuals in line with our Financial Assistance Scheme.

We will also provide sustained training opportunities which will deliver programmes to improve community infrastructure and build capacity within the Ulster Scots community.

In addition to the financial support provided to community groups, organisations and individuals provided directly by the Agency we will work with these groups to assist them in drawing down funding from Government Departments and other funding bodies for Ulster Scots activities.

Financial Allocation from the 2008 Budget:

£1,500,000

Objectives:

- The growth and development of musical tuition including dance both in the community and through the education system.
- Support for language projects.
- The provision of Ulster Scots literature in the community, libraries and the education system.
- Encourage and promote opportunities for people to engage in a range of activities such as storytelling, drama and re-enactment.
- Support research into Ulster Scots history, heritage and the wider cultural resource both at academic and community level. This will include research into the impact Ulster Scots and the Diaspora made on the world and the impact of migration to the “new world” on those who stayed in Ulster.
- The provision of opportunities for performers to excel in their chosen field and to showcase the available talent in appropriate arenas and venues.
- The development and expansion of “Summer Schools” and “After Schools Clubs”
- The provision of training and support to increase the capacity and skills of voluntary groups and organisations
- Encourage more young people to engage in Ulster Scots activity.
- Exploration of the links between Scotland and Ireland including language, history and culture
- The establishment of a database of performers etc that can be provided to groups.

Targets for 2008:

- To monitor activity and target potential areas where there is limited cultural activity and develop a programme to target cultural and community groups in those areas with grant aid and sponsorship to support a greater geographic spread of events and by December 2008 increase first time applicants in areas currently under-represented by 10% based on 2007 figures.
- Provide support for young people to develop their skills in Ulster Scots music and culture which will increase the number of young people engaged in Ulster Scots activity by 7% by December 2008. **The base line will be the number of young people engaged during 2007.**
- Provide support for 30 language based summer schools (with cultural input) to be held in 2008.
- Provide support for music and dance tuition which will increase the number of people engaged in tuition by 5% (based on 2007 figures) by December 2008.
- Organize a major Ulster Scots festival by September and engage with and support the community to deliver five community festivals during 2008 including one in each area served by a Development Officer.
- Plan and implement two conferences / seminars by October 2008 to address confidence and capacity building measures in the Ulster Scots community.
- Publish or reprint two pieces of Ulster Scots literature by November 2008 and distribute to libraries.
- Roll out a series of storytelling opportunities across thirty libraries or schools by December 2008.
- Provide support for six after schools clubs by June 2008.
- Provide support for two drama or re-enactment projects by November 2008.
- Provide support for a research programme on the Ulster Scots Diaspora by December 2008.
- Evaluate customer satisfaction in relation to Agency assistance towards cultural development.
- Provide training opportunities for performers to excel in their chosen field.
- Provide an opportunity for new talent to participate in a showcase performance

- Plan and implement eight seminars to provide advice on funding opportunities and related training to equip groups to avail of funding.
- Assist five Ulster Scots groups each year to access other sources of funding for major projects.

- Develop two community events by August 2008 that specifically add to the visitor experience

Impact:

Increased growth in the number and activities of Ulster-Scots groups, greater participation on Ulster Scots cultural and linguistic activities and better public awareness of the unique nature of the Ulster-Scots community

Measure:

Through the medium of the Omnibus Survey and other possible sources, monitor the level of participation in, and the level of awareness of Ulster-Scots activities. Use internal management statistics to monitor activity levels.

Following a review of the work of the Ulster-Scots Heritage Council (USHC) and representation from DCAL, the Agency approved core funding for USHC for a 3 year period commencing 1st June 2005. The Agency will make available funding of up to £250,000* to the USHC for 2008. The Council will continue to engage in vital work in terms of representation, capacity building and developing community cohesion in addition to the ongoing project work such as the provision of speakers and materials, exhibitions, festivals etc. A review of the work of the Council will be carried out by February 2008

* This is subject to Agency budget and satisfactory review of the work of the Heritage Council.

3) Working with Others

Aim:

If the Agency is to succeed in encouraging as many people to engage in Ulster Scots activities either as participants or audience/spectators it is essential to establish partnerships with key organisations.

The Agency recognises that it alone cannot meet the needs of the Ulster Scots community and we are therefore committed to building relationships with Government Departments, Statutory and voluntary Agencies and others who have a role to play.

The Agency will provide advice to Ministers and Government Departments North and South and to the North/South Ministerial Council on issues of policy and strategy.

It will be a facilitator for the mainstreaming of Ulster Scots.

There is a need for Ulster Scots to be available within the formal education system as part of the curriculum and the Agency will work with the relevant Departments and organisations North and South to deliver this. It is recognised that the Agency will not have responsibility for the development of language programmes to examination level in schools and ultimately to degree level. The Agency will therefore focus on history and heritage. Initially this will be a feature of the history curriculum but will also cross into other themes such as geography and citizenship. It is not intended that the Agency be other than a persuader for this though where appropriate the Agency may make resources available for this to be achieved.

The Agency will also work with individual schools, colleges and universities to promote academic study of Ulster Scots.

It is widely recognised that cultural tourism is a vitally important component to the economy of both jurisdictions. It is equally important in the growth and development of communities. The Agency will therefore work with Tourism Ireland, NITB, Failte Ireland and all relevant agencies to improve the visitor experience by supporting Ulster Scots activity which will add value to visitor and resident alike.

Ulster Scots influence is all around us including “built heritage”. The Agency will therefore engage with organisations such as the Environment and Heritage Service to develop greater awareness of this aspect of the heritage.

During the period of this plan we will witness the 400th anniversary of one of the defining moments in our shared history – The Plantation of Ulster. The Agency will draw upon the experience from the anniversaries of The Hamilton and Montgomery Settlement and The Flight of The Earls to provide leadership in commemorating this anniversary and will work with local Councils and voluntary and statutory bodies to ensure that the commemorations are appropriate and timely.

The Agency recognises the important role to be played by the Ulster Scots Heritage Council and will provide core funding to that organisation during the period of this plan.

We have a close working relationship with colleagues in Foras na Gaeilge and this is evidenced in the various joint projects organised by the Language Body.

Financial Allocation from the 2008 Budget:

£500,000

Planned expenditure as follows:

Objectives:

- Explore issues around migration. Key partners may include the Ulster Historical Foundation and the Centre for Migration Studies but will also involve the community, academics and academic Institutions.
- Work with Government and other agencies to increase awareness of the impact of the Ulster Scots on the built heritage and landscape.
- Engage with the community and Statutory Bodies to create and develop Ulster Scots content to the visitor experience.
- In relationship with organisations such as the Arts Council the Agency will contribute to the development of art in public places.
- Work with the Education Authorities to aid the development of Ulster Scots history in the curriculum.
- Work with Government Departments, Statutory Agencies and other bodies to highlight the relevance and importance of Ulster Scots to the work they are engaged in.
- The organisation of joint projects with Foras na Gaeilge under the umbrella of the Language Body each year.

Targets for 2008

- Contribute to one major conference or seminar on migration by December 2008.
- Provide support for one piece of public art to be established by November 2008.
- A measured improvement in the amount of Ulster Scots material on the curriculum.
- Support a project which considers the impact of the Ulster Scots on the built heritage by October 2008.

- Support a project which considers the impact of Ulster Scots on industrial heritage by November 2008.
- Organise an “Ulster Scots Book week” by June 2008.
- Ensure that the tourism product contains an Ulster Scots element.
- Increase the Ulster Scots element in Museums.
- Organise three projects during 2008 as the Language Body.

Impact:

Greater awareness within the community of the impact of the Ulster Scots .

Measures:

Survey of the public’s awareness and understanding of the Ulster Scots history, language and culture and their impact on the landscape.

4 COMMITMENT TO A FIRST CLASS SERVICE

Aim:

To provide support to the Board in its work in taking forward the Mission of the Ulster Scots Agency through the Corporate and Business Planning process and to provide effective and efficient financial and administrative systems for the Agency.

The Agency considers itself to be a service provider. To ensure that we offer a first class service to our stakeholders and partners we will strive to ensure that our processes and procedures operate effectively and efficiently.

The Agency is part of the North /South Language Body and as such recognises and accepts the need to ensure that all its policies, actions and programmes comply with the overall policies and legal requirements of the Government of the United Kingdom and the Government of the Republic of Ireland.

Staff / Running Costs

Financial Allocation from the 2008 Budget:

£850,000

Objectives:

- Increase the overall level of client satisfaction.
- Ensure that all correspondence is dealt with effectively and efficiently within the timescales prescribed.
- Ensure that all legislative requirements are met on time.
- Increase overall client satisfaction with the grant application process
- Corporate and business plans.
- Annual report.
- Annual accounts and their audit.

- Systems of internal control – including internal audit.
- Ongoing review of the manual of procedures.
- Provide efficient and effective support to the Board.
- Staff management and appraisal procedures.
- Staff and Board member training.

Targets for 2008:

- Draft Annual report prepared by March 2008.
- Draft Annual accounts prepared for audit by March 2008.
- Business Plan for 2009 completed and agreed by September 2008.
- Manual of procedures reviewed and updated by October 2008.
- Ongoing compliance with statutory requirements within agreed timescales.
- Review systems to evaluate activities to demonstrate value for money by September 2008.
- Review systems to evaluate satisfaction levels of staff service delivery by June 2008.
- Completion of all staff appraisal reports by June 2008.
- Review of staff training plan for the Agency by March 2008.
- Review and evaluation of Information and Communication manager and Education Officer roles by October 2008.
- Achieve 80% overall client satisfaction.
- All correspondence to be acknowledged within five working days.
- Process 90% of all grant applications within three weeks of receipt of completed application.
- Achieve 90% client satisfaction with the grant application process.

Impact

To increase effectiveness and efficiency and to ensure that the Agency achieves its mission to the satisfaction of its stakeholders

Measure

Survey of stakeholders. Including client satisfaction survey.

The staffing structure, which the Agency has in place is:

- 1 CEO (Grade 7)
- 3 Directors – Culture, Language and Education and Corporate Services (DP)
- 4 Development Officers (SO)
- 1 Finance and Administration Manager (SO)
- 1 Information and Communications Officer (S O)
- 1 Education Project Officer (EO1)
- 1 Grants Officer (EO2)
- 1 Finance Officer (EO2)
- 1 Personal Assistant (AO)
- 1.5 Administrative Officers (AO)- - 1 based in Belfast 0.5 based in Raphoe
- 2 Project Officers (EO1) and 1 Admin Officer for SEUPB project (No charge to the Agency)

Ulster Scots Agency

Franklin House

Brunswick Street

BELFAST BT2 7GE

2007

