



Business Plan 2022

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1. Introduction

This Business Plan describes the key elements of the work which the Ulster-Scots Agency proposes to undertake in 2022 in furtherance of the strategic priorities and objectives set out in the Agency's Corporate Plan 2020-2022.

Vision

The vision of the Ulster-Scots Agency is that the rich, vibrant identity and global impact of the Ulster-Scots community should be recognised, respected and embraced at home and abroad.

Mission

The mission of the Ulster-Scots Agency is to inspire and empower people and communities in Ulster to embrace their Ulster-Scots identity, build kinship with those outside Ulster who share our identity and friendship inside Ulster with those who do not.

Core Principles

The Agency is committed to excellence in everything that we do. In working to deliver on our Vision and Mission we will be guided by the following Core Principles:

Authenticity – the Ulster-Scots heritage that we develop and promote will be authentic and will be based on sound knowledge and research on Ulster-Scots language, heritage and culture.

Quality – we will seek at all times to present Ulster-Scots in the best possible way, so that we do justice to the fantastic richness of our Ulster-Scots heritage.

Capacity Building – in all of our activities we will work to involve the Ulster-Scots community sector, continuously seeking new opportunities to grow the sector and enhance its capacity.

Partnership – we will develop partnerships across the public, private and community sectors to maximise the skills and resources that can be secured to achieve our mission.

Mainstreaming - we will work to enhance the presence of Ulster-Scots culture and heritage within mainstream cultural institutions such as museums, galleries and heritage centres.

Equality of Opportunity – we will ensure that in the delivery of our work we promote equality of opportunity and good relations.

Poverty – we will look for opportunities to deliver on our mission in ways which can make a difference in disadvantaged communities and ensure that economic barriers do not prevent people from enjoying Ulster-Scots activities.

Social Inclusion – we will look for opportunities to ensure the engagement of those who might be at risk of social exclusion, including young people, the elderly, women and rural communities.

North/South – our remit covers the development and promotion of Ulster-Scots in both Northern Ireland and Ireland; and we will ensure that appropriate attention is paid to the development of Ulster-Scots in the border counties of Ireland, where there is a rich, but underdeveloped Ulster-Scots heritage.

East/West – relationships with Scotland and North America are key to maximising the potential of Ulster-Scots language, heritage and culture. Having due regard to resource constraints, we will seek to develop initiatives on an East/West axis which have a positive impact on Ulster-Scots here.

2. Review of Progress against 2021 Business Plan

In common with organisations in all walks of life, the work of the Ulster-Scots Agency was significantly impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic in 2021. The Agency worked throughout the year to deliver as much of our core activity as possible, adapting to the changed environment and supporting the Ulster-Scots community. Some of the key impacts of the situation and the Agency's response to it are set out below.

Inspire

Covid-19 had a significant impact on our promotional activity during 2021, with significant disruption to face to face activities. Visitor numbers at the Discover Ulster-Scots Centre, heavily reliant on US visitors, are expected to be down by at least 75%. Many community showcases, including the traditional picnic programme in the Border Counties, could not proceed. Instead, we adapted our approach by increasing the amount of digital material across our channels and for the first time delivered a campaign of radio advertising. An awareness raising campaign around the Census in Northern Ireland saw advertising in 17 newspapers, radio and online, resulting in more than 30,000 people taking our When o Wurds language quiz. Meanwhile, our promotional video on St Patrick's Scottish heritage received over 15,000 views on Facebook and Twitter.

Activities in relation to the Centenary of Northern Ireland were greatly scaled back due to the pandemic, nevertheless the Agency delivered a diverse range of projects, including support for the restoration of the Gamble Library at Union Theological College, the first seat of Northern Ireland's Parliament; a significant historical display on the Ulster Covenant, Northern Ireland's Birth Certificate; support for schools to participate in the Department of Education's NI 100 Art Competition and perhaps the most visually impactful event of the Centenary, our Drums for Ulster event, which saw over 140 Lambeg drummers in a massed display at Parliament Buildings, Stormont. We also worked with Monaghan County Council and the Ulster-Scots Community Network to deliver an important project researching the impact of partition on the Ulster-Scots community in Donegal, Cavan and Monaghan.

2021 has seen an encouraging resurgence in Ulster-Scots writing and this growing interest has been reflected in the work of the Agency, with an increase in language projects, particularly in the digital space, as well as traditional publications. It is intended to consolidate this through the continued development of Ulster-Scotch Leid Week, which will be delivered using a blended approach and build on the success of previous years.

All Agency learning programmes delivered in schools have been severely affected by school closures and other consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic including Music and Dance Tuition Grants; Flagship Schools; Afterschool Clubs; School Workshops; and School Twinning.

As some restrictions ease and schools have the opportunity to manage risk in more flexible ways, we have seen an increase in applications for the 2021/22 Music and Dance tuition grant programme. Other school-based programmes have experienced similar increase in demand which is very encouraging and demonstrates that interest in delivering learning about Ulster-Scots culture remains. The Agency has adopted a flexible approach by offering face-to-face tuition to those schools wishing to take up the offer and distance learning opportunities for others. We continue to offer schools flexibility where possible.

Our programme of developing high quality multimedia learning resources for both school and adult audiences continues, and this development work has not been adversely affected by Covid-19 restrictions/consequences in the same way as programmes requiring face-to-face interactions. Resources launched during the year included digital walking tours and visits to Ulster-Scots heritage sites, a suite of short cookery films by tv cook Paula McIntyre and a suite of short films on the Lambeg drumming tradition, featuring the world renowned percussionist Dame Evelyn Glennie.

Empower

Activity in local communities was severely disrupted for much of the year, particularly in the Border Counties, where public health restrictions only really started to lift in the autumn. Restrictions in Northern Ireland started to lift in the summer, but not soon enough to avoid significant disruption to our traditional musical calendar, with band contests and other performances largely cancelled. The unprecedented support provided to around 640 groups through our Covid-19 Resilience Funds in the early part of 2021 helped with financial stability in that period, the ability to maintain a level of activity at home and the Covid precautions necessary to begin a safe recovery now that restrictions have been lifted.

Relaxation of restrictions did not however deliver an instant bounce back. Summer schools were at 50% of the 2019 level. Applications for music and dance tuition in the community returned to 80% of normal. While we had the same number of applications for community festivals, most were smaller in scale and several were subsequently rescheduled to 2022. In an effort to stimulate activity, we opened a small events grant in July with capacity to support 150 groups. By the end of September, we had supported 50 groups and expect that to rise to 100 by year end.

Even though they can now restart, groups are still dealing with the financial impact of the pandemic. To help with this, we reallocated funds from the small events grant to offer a further Covid fund to support groups in the Border Counties and are working with the Department for Communities on a further fund for groups in Northern Ireland, which we expect to open late in 2021 for delivery in the first half of 2022. The direct support that the Agency provides to communities through funding the Ulster-Scots Community Network and our three successful Community Impact Projects in West Tyrone, South Down and North/West Belfast has been vital in supporting groups and stimulating recovery and they will be integral as we continue to work towards normality.

Engage

Travel restrictions as a result of the public health situation had a significant impact on our outreach work to both Scotland and the United States, which has been greatly scaled back and restricted to online contact. The autumn did however see a significant success when the Agency worked with the Northern Ireland Assembly branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to support the CPA's 50th British Isles and Mediterranean Region Conference. Parliamentarians from around the UK, Isle of Man, Channel Islands, Malta, Gibraltar and the Falkland Islands were engaged with a varied programme of Ulster-Scots content and we anticipate that this will serve as a catalyst for a range of projects in the future.

3. Proposed 2022 Budget

This business plan is based on a baseline budget of £2,757,660. This reflects the fact that in June 2021, Sponsor Departments agreed an increase of 11.73% in the baseline budget of the North South Language Body which equated to £274,272 for the Agency. The budget, including the uplift has been profiled against our key work areas as follows:

	2021 Budget (£)	2022 Proposed Budget (£)
Serving the Community	880,450	880,450
Partnership Working	80,874	51,500
Marketing	144,645	168,322
Education	241,179	211,700
Uplift Serving the Community	176,000	88,000
Uplift Partnership	30,000	0
Providing a First Class Service	995,786	1,030,531
Uplift Additional Staff Costs	0	186,973
Total	2,548,934	2,617,476
Additional Pension Contributions DFC	46,748	38,439
Total Budget	2,595,682	2,655,915

DFC	1,958,448	2,001,546
DTCAGSM	637,234	654,369
Total Budget	2,595,682	2,656,915

The Agency currently has an approved staff complement of 15.77 posts:

- CEO (G7 equivalent)
- 3 Directors (DP equivalent) – Corporate Services; Education & Language; and Development
- 4 Development Officers (SO equivalent)
- 3 SO Corporate Staff (HR/Office Manager; SO Accountant; and Information, Communication & Marketing Manager)
- 3 EO2s (Grants/Marketing/Finance)
- 2 AOs (Admin/Grants)

During the course of 2022, and subject to securing the necessary approvals, we are proposing a review of senior management grading and an increase of 4 FTE to the existing staff complement to 19.77 posts:

- CEO (G5 equivalent)
- 4 Directors – Policy & Research (G7) Corporate Services; Education & Language; and Development (Currently DP but to be reviewed)
- 1 Policy Officer (DP)
- 6 Development Officers (SO equivalent)
- 3 SO Corporate Staff (HR/Office Manager; SO Accountant; and Information, Communication & Marketing Manager)
- 3 EO2s (Grants/Marketing/Finance)
- 2 AOs (Admin/Grants)

4. Strategic Priorities for 2022

The Agency's priorities in 2022 will be threefold. First, we will continue to support the Ulster-Scots cultural community to recover from the impact of the global pandemic. Second, we will continue to adjust to the new cultural landscape that is being formed as a result of the New Decade, New Approach agreement, including the commitment to establish an Office of Identity; a commissioner's office to look after Ulster-Scots; and a legal duty on the Department of Education to promote Ulster-Scots in the education system. Third, we will increase the breadth and depth of the Ulster-Scots movement by bringing new groups into the organised sector and enhancing the capacity at the core of the sector to support a larger cadre of groups. We will make use of additional baseline resources to increase the capacity of the Ulster-Scots Agency and key community and cultural groups within the sector to bring about this positive change, as well as building on the success of existing initiatives.

Our programme of activity for the year is built around the Strategic Aims of our 2020-2022 Corporate Plan, *Inspire*, *Empower* and *Engage*.

SA1 – Inspire

The Agency will deliver a range of projects and programmes that will identify, interpret and animate Ulster-Scots language, heritage and culture. By doing so we will seek to inspire those of all ages to learn more about their Ulster-Scots identity. We will reach out to groups across Ulster, particularly those who we have been able to fund for the first time during the pandemic, to encourage them to broaden their involvement in Ulster-Scots.

Using new baseline resources we will expand our Learning and Language team to provide, for the first time, officers dedicated to language promotion and supporting youth development, which will in turn create space for other posts to focus on the new post-NDNA educational environment. We will continue to work with colleagues in the education system to be as supportive as we can in ensuring that where possible, young people do not lose out on the opportunity to learn about Ulster-Scots language, heritage and culture, while looking for new and innovative ways to bring Ulster-Scots into the classroom. These resources will also give us capacity to develop Ulster-Scotch Leid Week, which continues to grow from strength to strength and maintain language promotion activities throughout the year.

We will continue to support projects which provide for the preservation and promotion of Ulster-Scots heritage assets; and the development of facilities and resources that help to explain Ulster-Scots in all its forms. We will also continue to engage with the Decade of Centenaries, in particular by marking the centenary of the premiership of Andrew Bonar Law, the Ulster-Scot who played a key role in the foundation of Northern Ireland and became UK Prime Minister in 1922.

SA2 – Empower

The Agency will continue to equip individuals and groups with knowledge and skills to engage with Ulster-Scots language, heritage and culture through a variety of projects and programmes. As well as supporting the recovery of Summer Schools, festivals and community-based tuition, we will complement these established programmes by embedding two new interventions that were developed during 2021, namely the Small Event Grant and the new Youth Providers Grant, which will be broadened beyond headquarters organisations to local community level.

We will work to expand the capacity of the Ulster-Scots Community Network, the umbrella organisation for the Ulster-Scots community sector, to support the recovery of the Discover Ulster-Scots Centre, help the organisation to provide increased support to its members and maximise impact in terms of community development activity. We will broaden the footprint of our successful Community Impact Programme, which supports development workers in local communities, with the addition of a fourth project; and build on its success by launching a sister programme, the Cultural Impact Programme, which will support development workers in cultural organisations that are repositories of Ulster-Scots culture or heritage.

The establishment of a new policy and research capability within the Agency will give us greater capacity to consult with the Ulster-Scots community, vital in the context of National Minority Status, and also to engage with organisations across the public sector to raise awareness of the needs and the rights of the Ulster-Scots community and work effectively with the new Commissioner.

SA3 – Engage

The Agency will deliver a range of projects and programmes through which we will reach out, locally and globally, to enhance friendship with people in Ulster whose primary identity is not Ulster-Scots: and foster kinship with people beyond Ulster who share our identity. We will deliver a programme of outreach to other cultural minority communities in Northern Ireland to raise awareness of Ulster-Scots and promote mutual respect.

We will continue to build positive working relationships with our kin in Scotland across the breadth of our shared language, heritage and culture, not least our growing collaboration with Hawick Reivers Festival in the Scottish Borders, which also opens up exciting opportunities to transform awareness of Ulster-Scots at home in County Fermanagh.

We will work to revitalise our US collaborations, which have been impacted by significant travel disruption in the last two years, by building on the success of our online approaches and seeking opportunities for direct outreach when resources and public health allow. We will also build on the success of our

involvement with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in 2021 to raise greater awareness among key influencers and the wider community about the strong Ulster-Scots links to Canada, New Zealand and Australia, which are often overshadowed by our enormous connection to America.

SA1 – Inspire

The Agency will identify, interpret and animate Ulster-Scots language, heritage and culture.

	Activity	Measure	Target Date	Responsible Officer	Corp. Plan Target
1.1	Deliver a programme of activity in relation to Ulster-Scots Language Week.	1 programme	December 2022	R Hanna	CPSA1.13
1.2	Deliver a programme of activity in relation to key dates in the Ulster-Scots cultural calendar.	1 programme	December 2022	J Purse	CPSA1.14
1.3	Support a programme of activity in relation to the Centenary of Bonar Law’s Premiership.	1 programme	December 2021	I Crozier	CPSA1.4
1.4	Develop a promotional programme for Ulster-Scots around national and international awareness days.	1 programme	December 2022	J Purse	CPSA1.14
1.5	Support a programme of large scale heritage projects promoting aspects of Ulster-Scots language, heritage and culture.	1 programme	December 2022	Director of Development / CEO	CPSA1.16
1.6	Deliver an outreach programme to new groups.	1 programme	December 2022	Outreach Officer	CPSA2
1.7	Deliver a programme of learning asset development on aspects of Ulster-Scots language, heritage and culture.	6 assets	December 2022	R Hanna	CPSA1

	Activity	Measure	Target Date	Responsible Officer	Corp. Plan Target
1.9	Deliver a programme of Blue Plaques around Ulster celebrating significant Ulster-Scots figures.	1 programme	December 2022	J Purse	CPSA1
1.10	Deliver an annual programme of printed promotional activity.	1 programme	December 2022	J Wallace J Purse	CPSA1
1.11	Deliver an annual programme of online promotional activity.	1 programme	December 2022	J Purse	CPSA1.1
1.12	Deliver an annual programme of radio advertising.	1 programme	December 2022	J Purse	n/a
1.13	Support primary schools via the Ulster-Scots Flagship School Programme.	Make 5 new Flagship Schools' awards	December 2022	G Blair	CPSA1.9
1.14	Deliver a North/South School Twinning Programme.	1 programme	December 2022	G Blair	CPSA2.14
1.15	Support 3 schools to become Ulster-Scots Schools of Excellence	Award status to 3 primary schools	December 2022	R Hanna	CPSA1.10
1.16	Deliver a programme of Ulster-Scots Afterschool Clubs in Primary Schools.	1 programme	December 2022	G Blair	CPSA2.12
1.17	Deliver a programme of educational workshops to schools.	1 programme	December 2022	G Blair	CPSA2.13
1.18	Support a programme of Ulster-Scots music/dance tuition in schools.	1 programme	December 2022	J Wallace	CPSA2.16

	Activity	Measure	Target Date	Responsible Officer	Corp. Plan Target
1.19	Support a programme of Ulster-Scots language projects.	1 programme	December 2022	G Blair	CPSA1.7
1.20	Support a programme of partnerships for the preservation and/or promotion of Ulster-Scots heritage assets.	1 programme	December 2022	Director of Development / D McCallum	CPSA1.16

SA2 – Empower

The Agency will equip individuals and groups with knowledge and skills to engage with Ulster-Scots language, heritage and culture.

	Activity	Measures	Target Date	Responsible Officer	Corp. Plan Target
2.1	Deliver Core Funding Programme	1 programme	December 2022	D McCallum	CPSA2
2.2	Deliver Community Impact Grant Programme	1 programme	December 2022	D Reaney	CPSA2.4
2.3	Deliver Music & Dance Tuition Grant Programme	1 programme	December 2022	D Reaney	CPSA2.1
2.4	Deliver Community Festivals Grant Programme	1 programme	December 2022	D Reaney	CPSA2.3
2.5	Deliver Summer School Grant Programme	1 programme	December 2022	D Reaney	CPSA2
2.6	Deliver Small Events Grant Programme	1 programme	December 2022	D Reaney	CPSA2
2.7	Deliver Covid Recovery Programme in Northern Ireland	1 programme	August 2022	D Reaney	CPSA2
2.8	Deliver a programme of talks/webinars on Ulster-Scots language to schools and community groups.	1 programme	December 2022	G Blair	CPSA2.6
2.9	Deliver a programme of new exhibitions on Ulster-Scots language, heritage and culture.	1 programme	December 2022	J Purse	CPSA1
2.10	Support the promotion of Ulster-Scots through a programme of community radio broadcasting.	2 broadcast periods.	December 2022	G Blair	CPSA2.9

	Activity	Measures	Target Date	Responsible Officer	Corp. Plan Target
2.11	Deliver 2 heritage projects in ROI border counties.	2 projects delivered.	December 2021	Director of Development	CPSA1
2.12	Support 250 learners in achieving recognised qualifications in music and dance.	250 accredited learners	December 2021	J Wallace J Wallace D Reaney	CPSA2
2.13	Deliver a programme of events to mark the achievements of Ulster-Scots learners.	1 programme	December 2021	J Wallace	CPSA2
2.14	Develop one new significant teaching and learning experience available to all schools in Northern Ireland.	1 resource	December 2021	R Hanna	CPSA1
2.15	Develop and deliver 2 courses (multi-week) about Ulster-Scots culture & heritage in community settings	2 courses developed/delivered	December 2022	R Hanna	CPSA1
2.16	Deliver a programme of outreach to public sector organisations	1 programme	December 2021	I Crozier	CPSA1

Additional Targets in respect of Approved Baseline Budget Uplift

	Activity	Measures	Target Date	Responsible Officer	Corp. Plan Target
2.17	Develop and implement an annual Research Programme	1 Programme	December 2022	Policy & Research Team	n/a
2.18	Develop and implement an annual Consultation Plan	1 Programme	December 2022	Policy & Research Team	n/a
2.19	Develop and implement an annual Advice and Guidance programme	1 Programme	December 2022	Policy & Research Team	n/a

2.20	Develop and implement an annual Language Action Plan	1 Plan	December 2022	Language Development Officer	n/a
2.21	Develop and implement an annual Youth Development Plan	1 Plan	December 2022	Youth Development Officer	CPSA2
2.22	Deliver Youth Grants Programme	1 Grant Programme	December 2022	Youth Development Officer	CPSA2
2.23	Increase Community Impact Programme by 25%	1 new project funded	July 2022	Derek Reaney	CPSA2.4

SA3 – Engage

The Agency will reach out locally and globally, to enhance friendship with people in Ulster whose primary identity is not Ulster-Scots: and foster kinship with people beyond Ulster who have Ulster-Scots roots.

	Activity	Measures	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)	Corp. Plan Target
3.1	Deliver a programme of outreach to other cultural minority communities.	1 Programme	December 2022	Director of Development	CPSA3.6
3.2	Deliver a series of projects in relation to the Border Reivers.	2 projects	December 2022	Director of Development D Reaney G Blair	CPSA3
3.3	Lead/participate in 2 collaborative projects with partners in the United States.	Lead/participate in 2 projects	December 2022	R Hanna	CPSA3.4
3.4	Deliver an East/West School Twinning Programme.	1 Programme	December 2021	G Blair	CPSA3.1
3.5	Deliver a programme of East/West relationship building.	1 programme	December 2022	Director of Development	CPSA3.3
3.6	Deliver a programme of activity in relation to the Ulster-Scots diaspora in the Commonwealth.	1 Programme	December 2021	Director of Development	CPSA3

5. Monitoring and Reporting

Each activity and target within this Business Plan has an identified owner within the organisation. Targets will be incorporated into the annual work plans of individual members of staff or staff under their command. Each member of staff will complete a monthly progress report to their line manager detailing progress against agreed targets. Directors will submit a monthly progress report to the Chief Executive.

The Board of the Ulster-Scots Agency will receive regular reports on progress against Business Plan targets.

Sponsor Departments will receive regular progress reports against Business Plan targets within the context of the agreed SLA and regular Accountability Meetings; and regular reports will be submitted for the consideration of the North-South Ministerial Council through periodic Language Sectoral Meetings.

Annually the Agency will issue reporting on performance through the Annual Report and Accounts.