

SUB/1656 /2016

From: [REDACTED]

Languages Branch

Date: 13 December 2016

1. Special Advisor
2. Minister

GAELTACHT BURSARY SCHEME (GBS) 2017

Issue: Decision Required on whether to run a Gaeltacht Bursary Scheme in 2017 and bid for funding.

Timing: Routine

FOI Implications: In the event of a request for disclosure of information contained in this submission under the FOI Act, the request would be considered in the context of the relevant provisions of the legislation, including any relevant exemptions that may be applicable

Presentational Issues: The Gaeltacht Bursary Scheme has attracted media attention in the past and is likely to continue to do so. [cleared by Press Office-CM-201016]

Financial Implications: £55k

Legislation Implications: [N/A]

Equality implications: [N/A]

Executive Referral: [N/A]

Communities Committee: [N/A]

Recommendation: That you indicate your preferred option in relation to the Gaeltacht Bursary Scheme.

Detail

The Gaeltacht Bursary Scheme has been running since 2012. The scheme aims to help adults and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds across communities to access summer courses in the Irish language that they could not otherwise afford to attend. The continuation of the scheme requires your approval and is subject to resources being available in 2017/18.

Background

2. A total of 510 applications for the scheme were received in 2016 which is a significant increase on previous years. Of the applications received, 316 met the criteria (ie households on specified social security benefits) and, of these, 100 were awarded a bursary and 97 of these took up the bursary and went on to study in the Gaeltacht.
3. A summary of the uptake to the Gaeltacht Bursary Scheme since it launched in 2012 is detailed in the table attached at **Appendix 1**.
4. The Post-Project Evaluation of last year's Gaeltacht Bursary Scheme indicates a positive impact on the language ability of those who attended courses. Student feedback showed that 96% students strongly agreed that they had improved upon their fluency in Irish, and that 94% now feel they have a better understanding of the Irish language and culture.
5. Without departmental funding the majority of the 96 students who completed the course would not have been able to afford to take part in the scheme. Of the 100 successful applicants this year, 73 were in receipt of social security benefits, and 23 were receiving tax credits (in work benefits). This illustrates that without government intervention it is highly likely that at least 73% of successful applicants would not have been able to afford to pay for the course and accommodation, as their parents are solely reliant on social security benefits.

Financial Implications

- 6 Líoifa and therefore the Bursary Scheme does not have an opening budget and it has been normal practice to submit monitoring bids throughout the year to fund its activities, with the Gaeltacht Bursary Scheme being the most significant cost. Although the courses offered in different colleges are of differing lengths and prices, the average cost of a three week placement is £500 per student with 100 places costing approximately £55k.

Discussion of Options

7. There are 3 possible options to consider:-
 - Option 1 - Do nothing – i.e. no scheme;
 - Option 2 - Introduce a limited scheme;
 - Option 3- Continue with a full 100 place scheme.
8. **Option 1** - means that there would be an impact on our progress towards getting 20,000 people signed up to Líoifa – one of the criterion for application to the scheme is that the young person must be registered with Líoifa and have pledged to improve their learning of Irish. This means that each year we have an influx of young people signing up to the scheme. The scheme also contributes to PfG Outcome 5 (We are an innovative, creative society, where people can fulfil their potential); Outcome 9 (We are a Shared Society that respects diversity); and Outcome 14 (We give our children and young people the best start in life) – discussed further below.
9. **Option 2** – a limited scheme – for example - 50 places at a cost of £27k – this would help contribute to our achievements of our 20,000 target and also the PfG Outcomes number 5, 9 and 14.
10. **Option 3** – a 100 place scheme at a cost of £55k – this would significantly contribute to achievement of the Líoifa target and the PfG outcomes.

Conclusion

11. The advantages of running the Gaeltacht Bursary Scheme are many. Every year children, parents and teachers are encouraged to sign up to Líofo, bringing the initiative closer to its target of 20,000 people by 2020. It would also help the department in achieving indicator 27 of the (Draft) Programme for Government, which is to improve cultural participation. The particular outcomes that the Gaeltacht Bursary Scheme will contribute to, as outlined above, are as follows.

- We are an innovative, creative society, where people can fulfil their potential (Outcome 5).
- We are a shared society that respects diversity (Outcome 9).
- We give our children and young people the best start in life (Outcome 14).

The disadvantages of not running the Gaeltacht Bursary Scheme, include the potential for negative media attention, and less young people and adults able to afford to attend the Gaeltacht to improve their Irish this year.

12. It would be helpful if Minister could indicate whether or not you would wish to have a Bursary Scheme in place for 2017 and if so, the maximum number of places which could be offered i.e 100 or 50 places at a cost of £55k or £27k.

Recommendation

That you indicate your preferred option in relation to the Gaeltacht Bursary Scheme.



[Redacted]

[Redacted]

cc: List

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Press Office

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

DfC Languages

Deputy Secretary's Office CCG

DfC Permanent Secretary Support

Year	Number of applications received	Number of full bursaries offered	Number of part bursaries offered	Number who completed course	Spend
Summer 2012	48	42	0	37 / 42	£ 20, 050
Summer 2013	132	84	16	92 / 100	£ 43, 727
Summer 2014	247	135	0	123 / 135	£ 53, 575
Summer 2015	361	100	0	96 / 100	£ 44,430
Summer 2016	510	100	0	97 / 100	£44,736

-----Original Message-----

From: private.office@communities-ni.gov.uk
[mailto:private.office@communities-ni.gov.uk]

Sent: 19 December 2016 09:36

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: Submission Decision SUB-1656-2016 : GAELTACHT BURSARY SCHEME (GBS) 2017

Classification: Official

Timing: Routine

Reference: SUB-1656-2016

Subject: SUB-1656-2016 : GAELTACHT BURSARY SCHEME (GBS) 2017

To: [REDACTED]

Date: 19/12/2016

Minister has seen your submission and indicated his preferred option in relation to the Gaeltacht Bursary Scheme. Minister has commented "No scheme".