

A Statement from the Committee (2018) can be read [here](#)

We have reached a crucial point of historic significance regarding the future of the Irish language and our Gaeltacht status in the North Mayo Gaeltacht. We have arrived at a crossroads, where we must ask ourselves the following questions; do we want to retain our Gaeltacht status? What would we like to do to ensure that the Irish language survives in our area? We must decide how we would like to proceed and act accordingly, after which there can be no turning back.

We are at the start of a long road. This plan is the cornerstone of the process, or perhaps the road map for our journey. We must have courage and patience in what will be an ongoing, slow, phased and long-term process. We will be adding to and building on our achievements and on lessons learned. This process involves intense, ambitious and often extraordinary efforts which are complex but achievable, provided we stay the course.

Ultimately, we must be honest and measured in what we hope can be realistically achieved to strengthen the state and status of the Irish language in our area. It would be unrealistic to assume that the solution to every problem lies within this plan, or that the Irish language will dramatically improve overnight – unrealistic aspirations which give rise to disappointment, cynicism and frustration in the community.

This is a gradual structured process, with appropriate training and expertise, co-ordinated, phased and consistent implementation, diligence, dedication and a positive attitude we can have a positive impact on Irish language use in our community. By implementing this realistic and community-based language plan we hope to support and strengthen the Irish language in our Gaeltacht community over time.

Active individual participation as well as the appropriate supports from state agencies are very important factors in any language planning process. An appropriate structure must be developed to facilitate and increase this participation as part of this process. It must be emphasised that proper financial and human resources will be required to move the process forward in North Mayo.

There is a strong link between language planning and the overall development of a viable community (e.g. community, cultural, social, infrastructural and economic development) so that (i) individuals can remain in their homeplace and raise a family there (ii) the community is not severely disadvantaged but on a par with other communities (Mac Donnacha, 2000:20 i Ní Dhúda 2014a:81) and (iii) the community is sustainable and viable in economic and social terms.

An active, positive, organized and informed group of people can achieve a huge amount collectively. This marks the first time that there has been widespread participation and effective co-operation between organisations and parishes on one

committee for the benefit of language planning in this area. Even so, we face great challenges in this large, widely-dispersed region in relation to the promotion of both community development and language planning. We now have a measured plan with realistic objectives which we hope to implement with a 'bottom up' approach in co-operation with the community and the various organisations working in the region.