



Foras na Gaeilge

Representation from Foras na Gaeilge in response to Consultation on the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner's Provisional Recommendations

Consultation opened 27 July 2021. Closing date 21 September 2021 at 23.59

Date: 20 September 2021

Background

Foras na Gaeilge, the body responsible for the promotion of the Irish language throughout the whole island of Ireland, was founded on the second day of December 1999.

In the Good Friday Agreement, it was stated that a North/South Implementation body be set up to promote both the Irish language and the Ulster Scots language.

Under the auspices of this body, Foras na Gaeilge will carry out all the designated responsibilities regarding the Irish language. This entails facilitating and encouraging the speaking and writing of Irish in the public and private arena in the Republic of Ireland, and in Northern Ireland where there is appropriate demand, in the context of part three of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages. The staff of Bord na Gaeilge, An Gúm (Publishers), and An Coiste Téarmaíochta (Terminology Committee) and their activities have all been transferred to the new body.

Foras na Gaeilge is proud of its role in advising administrations, North and South, as well as public bodies and other groups in the private and voluntary sectors in all matters relating to the Irish language as well as the supportive projects it undertakes with grant-aiding bodies and groups throughout the island of Ireland.

The functions of Foras na Gaeilge:

- promotion of the Irish language
- facilitating and encouraging its use in speech and writing in public and private life in the South and, in the context of Part III of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, in Northern Ireland where there is appropriate demand;
- advising both administrations, public bodies and other groups in the private and voluntary sectors;

- undertaking supportive projects, and grant-aiding bodies and groups as considered necessary;
- undertaking research, promotional campaigns, and public and media relations;
- developing terminology and dictionaries;
- supporting Irish-medium education and the teaching of Irish.

Reference on specific in Consultation

5.5 I have to date received a representation that both districts and wards should be named in Irish or bilingually with English or in a trilingual naming convention with both English and Ulster Scots. I have not included this in my provisional recommendations; I would invite further representations on this issue in the course of the wider public consultation that is now open.

Response to specific in Consultation

With regard to the statutory duty placed upon Foras na Gaeilge i.e., “...*facilitating and encouraging the speaking and writing of Irish in the public and private arena in the Republic of Ireland, and in Northern Ireland where there is appropriate demand, in the context of part three of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages.*” Please be advised that Foras na Gaeilge recommends that both districts and wards should be named in Irish or bilingually with English.

This recommendation aligns with and is in the context of Part III Article 10 of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (relating to the Irish Language in N.I.) which states that local authorities must enable and facilitate the use of traditional place names.

Given that it is reasonable to assume that the vast majority of placenames within Northern Ireland are derived from the Irish Language Foras na Gaeilge therefore proposes as above.

Please be advised that Foras na Gaeilge makes the above proposal with regard to all local authority areas in Northern Ireland.

End