



Business Plan 2015

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1. Introduction

This Business Plan describes the work which the Ulster-Scots Agency proposes to undertake in 2015 in furtherance of the strategic priorities and objectives set out in the Agency's Corporate Plan 2014-2016.

The Ulster-Scots Agency has reviewed its Vision and Mission to reflect the work of the Agency so that we can better demonstrate delivery against our fundamental role. Our Strategic Aims have been revised so that they more accurately reflect the work of the Agency and are more closely aligned to staff and financial structures within the organisation.

Vision

The vision of the Ulster-Scots Agency is that Ulster-Scots should flourish as a rich, vibrant and growing culture with a global legacy that is recognised at home and abroad.

Mission

The Ulster-Scots Agency will inspire, educate and empower people to understand and enjoy their Ulster-Scots identity, while working to continuously improve the governance, financial performance and customer focus of the organisation.

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 culture, heritage and language.

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, culture and heritage. 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 2014 Business Plan

In 2014 the Ulster-Scots Agency provided grant aid to a large number of community based groups for a range of Ulster-Scots activities including music and dance tuition, summer schools and community festivals. This investment allowed individuals of all ages to learn about Ulster-Scots language, heritage and culture; and to learn skills which would allow them to participate in a range of Ulster-Scots activities.

The Agency relocated to new premises in the Cathedral Quarter, Belfast where it can integrate fully into the cultural landscape of the city. Ulster Scots was promoted at several large scale public events throughout the year including the Ballyclare Mayfair, Siege of Carrickfergus, Scotch Quarter festival and other events in conjunction with North Down Borough Council, Carrickfergus Borough Council and Ards Borough Council. In addition Ulster Scots was promoted at Titanic Maritime Festival, Northern Ireland Countryside festival and the Dalriada Festival.

The Agency delivered an extensive range of projects as part of the Derry-Londonderry UK City of Culture year, including publications, showcases, community festivals and tuition projects. Among the highlights were the Ulster and European Highland Dance Championships in April and the Walled City Tattoo in August, which attracted more than 12,000 visitors to the city. As part of the 2014 Burns Celebrations, the Agency delivered a “Burns Evening” in Belfast in conjunction with the Ulster Orchestra at what proved to be success which built upon the previous year’s concert.

Ulster-Scots was promoted in the Houses of Parliament at the Northern Ireland showcase in February. A group of school children were taken to Scotland as part of the East/West Primary school twinning based around a Maritime theme, a further trip was made based around a linguistic theme.

Demand for Ulster-Scots in schools around Ulster continued at a high level. The Agency’s Fair Faa Ye drama toured 30 schools, while school workshops were delivered in 36 schools. 11 educational fairs were delivered, while 20 schools enrolled to take part in an innovative new STEAM programme, delivering ICT programmes in primary schools through the medium of Ulster-Scots completed in year. The Juvenile pipe band delivering pipe and drum tuition to up to 60 students progressed on schedule throughout the year with outcomes of the tuition being displayed at many of the Agency’s own and collaborative events.

The Agency continued to assist the development of capacity within the Ulster-Scots community at grassroots level through our funding of the Ulster-Scots Community Network; and supported other key Ulster-Scots community organisations including the Ulster-Scots Language Society in Belfast; Ullans Speakers Association, Ballymoney and Monreagh Ulster-Scots Heritage Centre at Carrigans, County Donegal, through its programme of core funding.

3. Proposed 2015 Budget and Efficiency Plan

3.1 This business plan is based on an indicative budget for the Agency for 2015 of £2,449,114. This is the 2013 indicative budget of £2,662,080 less 8%. Should the Sponsor Departments impose further cuts in our 2015 budget, the targets set out in this Business Plan will have to be re-visited. The budget has been profiled against our key work areas as follows:

	2014 Indicative Budget (£)	2015 Proposed Budget (£)
Serving the Community	983,989	976,377
Providing a First Class Service	950,799	921,115
Marketing	188,352	195,654
Partnership Working	166,614	165,522
Education	185,980	190,446
	2,475,734	2,449,114

3.2 The Agency currently has 15.77 staff in post and one vacancy, as set out below:

- CEO (G7 equivalent)
- 3 Director (Education/Language) (Corporate Services) and one vacancies (Community/Promotion)
- 4 Development Officers (SO equivalent)
- 3 SO Administration Staff (Finance, Accountant & Information, Communication & Marketing)
- 4 EO2s (Grants/Marketing/Finance)
- 2 AOs (Admin/Grants)

3.3 Details of the Agency's efficiency plan for 2015 are set out in Annex B attached. The Agency made considerable savings in staff costs during 2014 due to posts not being filled. However, it should be appreciated that as a small organisation the scope for further savings in running costs is limited and that the reductions may result in some level of reduced programme expenditure.

4. Strategic Priorities for 2015

The Agency's statutory remit is the "Promotion of greater awareness and use of Ullans and Ulster-Scots cultural issues, both within Northern Ireland and throughout the island".

During 2015 we will undertake a programme of work based around four strategic themes, which reflect those contained in our Corporate Plan 2014-2016:

SA1 – Inspire

The Agency will identify, interpret and animate Ulster-Scots heritage, language and culture. We will achieve this by the launch of our new Discover Ulster-Scots brand and associated web portal to give new prominence to Ulster-Scots heritage within visitor attractions in Northern Ireland, Ireland, Scotland and America, and building on it throughout the life of this business plan and the remainder of the corporate plan. We will also launch our new Ulster-Scots Hairtlan programme, which will give recognition to geographical areas with a strong mix of Ulster-Scots culture, heritage and language; and act as a catalyst for further development of Ulster-Scots in those areas. Forthcoming historic anniversaries will provide good opportunities to highlight the impact of Ulster-Scots on events here and the Agency will work with a range of stakeholders to maximise the opportunity that these present, particularly around Great War anniversaries and the 700th Anniversary of the arrival of the Bruces in Ireland in 2015. Throughout the plan period we will build the bank of resources that we have available to promote knowledge and understanding of Ulster-Scots language, heritage and culture by creating new websites, exhibitions and publications.

SA2 – Educate

The Agency will work to ensure that learning about Ulster-Scots culture, heritage and language is integrated throughout the education system. We will develop quality, innovative opportunities for learners to engage with Ulster-Scots at pre-school, primary, post primary and third level institutions. In primary schools we will continue to provide opportunities for children to engage with Ulster-Scots culture, heritage and language. We will also provide encouragement and recognition for primary schools through the award of Ulster-Scots Flagship School status. In all of our educational work the Agency will focus on quality learning outcomes and strong evaluation in order to demonstrate the positive impact that Ulster-Scots can have within the learning environment.

SA3 – Empower

The Agency will equip individuals and groups with knowledge and skills to engage with Ulster-Scots heritage, language and culture. People of all ages will be given the opportunity to discover Ulster-Scots at Summer Schools and Festivals run by local groups with the support of Agency grant aid. We will also work with local partners to develop a series of Summer/Winter schools focussed on particular aspects of Ulster-Scots language, culture or heritage.

We will build the capacity of 3 Ulster-Scots communities by providing grants for full-time community development worker projects. Two important Ulster-Scots communities of interest will also be strengthened through the development of action plans for Ulster-Scots music and dance.

Local groups will be supported through training in communications/media and grant administration.

SA4 – Improve

The Agency will work to continuously improve the governance, financial performance and customer focus of the organisation. Improvements in governance will continue throughout the Plan period. We will aspire to maintain an overall satisfactory rating from Internal Audit in the year

We will respond to the challenging financial climate by enhancing our level of partnership activities; seeking additional resources to develop small capital projects; and more robustly using our role as the statutory authority for Ulster-Scots to unlock mainstream resources for the promotion and development of Ulster-Scots language, heritage and culture.

The relocation during 2014 to new, smaller premises in central Belfast, will provide opportunities for synergies within the Ulster-Scots sector and collaboration within the wider arts and heritage sectors.

The efficiency and effectiveness of our grant-making operations will be increased through the development of an improved grant database and the completion of a review of our Financial Assistance scheme by the end of 2015.

SA1 – Inspire

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

	Activity	Target Date	Responsible Officer	Corp. Plan Target
1.1	Include 20 additional heritage sites on the Discover Ulster-Scots web portal.	June 2015	C Holmes	SA1/1
1.2	Launch one Ulster-Scots Hairtlan area.	June 2015	D Reaney	SA1/2
1.3	Support the operation of the Ulster-Scots visitor centre in Belfast.	September 2015	C Holmes	SA1/3
1.4	Develop a programme of activity around the 700 th anniversary of the arrival of the Bruces in Ireland 2015.	December 2015	D Reaney	SA1/4
1.5	Develop a programme of activity around Ulster and the Great War	April 2015	C Holmes	SA1/5
1.6	Develop 3 touring exhibitions on aspects of the Ulster-Scots language, heritage and culture.	June 2015	C Holmes	SA1/6
1.7	Promote Ulster-Scots at 5 large scale public events in partnership with local councils and at 3 large scale public events in partnership with the private/community sector.	November 2015	C Holmes	SA1/7
1.8	Produce 5 publications on aspects of Ulster-Scots language, heritage and culture and develop 2 heritage trails on aspects of Ulster-Scots language, heritage and culture.	December 2015	C Holmes	SA1/8
1.9	Publish 6 Editions of the Ulster-Scot newspaper along with 12 E-Bulletins	December 2015	C Holmes	SA1/10
1.10	Deliver a series of 5 Blue Plaques around Ulster celebrating pivotal figures from Ulster Scots history.	December 2015	M Hanna	SA1/11

SA2 – Educate

The Agency will work to ensure that learning about Ulster-Scots culture, heritage and language is integrated throughout the education system.

	Activity	Target Date	Responsible Officer	Corp. Plan Target
2.1	Support 20 primary schools in the Ulster-Scots Flagship School programme and a further 30 introductions to Ulster-Scots at Afterschool Clubs in Primary Schools supported by 20 one off school workshops.	December 2015	J Wallace & G Blair	SA2/1
2.2	Deliver a touring drama in 30 Primary Schools.	December 2015	G Blair	SA2/2
2.3	Develop 2 East/West primary school twinnings	December 2015	G Blair	SA2/3
2.4	Deliver Ulster-Scots music/dance tuition in 36 schools and drumming tuition to a minimum of 60 students as part of the Juvenile Pipe Band project with aspirations of achieving formal accreditation for 30 students and showcasing the talents throughout the island.	December 2015	J Wallace & G Blair	SA2/4
2.8	Deliver 20 Ulster-Scots workshops in schools	December 2015	G Blair	SA2/8

SA3 – Empower

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

	Activity	Target Date	Responsible Officer	Corp. Plan Target
3.1	Deliver programmes of funding for Ulster-Scots music/dance tuition, Summer Schools, Community Festivals, Core Funded Groups, Ulster-Scots Impact Groups.	December 2015	D Reaney, M Hanna	SA3/1
3.2	Deliver training in grant administration training to 100 groups, communication/marketing training to 20 groups,	September 2015	D Reaney, M Hanna	SA3/2
3.3	Develop and deliver 6 illustrated talks on Ulster-Scots culture and heritage to community groups, Develop 2 illustrated talks on Ulster-Scots language, Deliver 20 talks on Ulster-Scots language to schools and community groups.	December 2015	D Reaney, M Hanna	SA3/3
3.4	Support exhibitions on Ulster-Scots culture and heritage in 30 venues and on Ulster-Scots language and literature in 5 venues	December 2015	D Reaney, M Hanna	SA3/4
3.5	Support the promotion of Ulster Scots with 2 FUSE FM Broadcasts and developing 6 short films promoting Ulster-Scots language.	December 2015	G Blair	SA3/5
3.6	Develop 2 heritage projects in East Donegal.	December 2015	D Reaney, M Hanna	SA3/6

SA4 – Improve

The Agency will work to continuously improve the governance, financial performance and customer focus of the organisation.

	Activity	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)	Corp. Plan Target
4.1	Ensure meeting of statutory obligations.	Monthly	Staff Officer Accountant	n/a
4.2	Continuous Improvement in Governance arrangements	August 2015	I Crozier	n/a
4.3	Improve the IT operations of the Agency	December 2015	D McCallum	n/a
4.4	Undertake yearly review of progress against Corporate Plan.	September 2015	D McCallum	n/a

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 workplans 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 bi-monthly reports on progress against Business Plan targets.

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

Annex A

Business Plan 2015 Proposed Budget Allocation

North South Body	Approved Budget 7%			Proposed Change			Proposed Budget 1%		
	2014			+/-			2015		
€1 = 0.81 GBP	Current	Capital	Total	Current	Capital	Total	Current	Capital	Total
Programme									
1. Serving the Community	983,989		983,989	7,612		7,612	976,377		976,377
2. Working With Others	166,614		166,614	1,092		1,092	165,522		165,522
3. Marketing	188,352		188,352	-7,302		-7,302	195,654		195,654
4. Education	185,980		185,980	-4,466		-4,466	190,446		190,446
Total Programme Expenditure	1,524,935		1,524,935	-3,064		-3,064	1,527,999		1,527,999
Pay Costs	554,662		554,662	-39,199		-39,199	593,861		593,861
Pension Costs	68,403		68,403	49,160		49,160	19,243		19,243
Non Pay Administration Costs	327,734		327,734	19,723		19,723	308,011		308,011
Total Administration Costs	950,799		950,799	29,684		29,684	921,115		921,115
Overall Total Expenditure (Programme & Administration)	2,475,734		2,475,734	26,620		26,620	2,449,114		2,449,114
<i>Proportion payable by NI representing X%</i>	1,856,801		1,856,801	19,965		19,965	1,836,835		1,836,835
<i>Proportion payable by IRL representing X%</i>	618,934		618,934	6,655		6,655	612,279		612,279
Existing/Projected Staff Numbers (FTE)	15.77						16.77		

Annex B

Efficiency Programme										
The Body will realise total efficiencies of £319,000 / €393,000 from 2014-2016 as shown in the Total Efficiency Table below.										
Planning Exchange Rate €1= £0.81										
		Sterling		Euro						
<u>Total Efficiency Targets</u>	Baseline & Total Efficiencies	2014 Efficiency Savings 7%	2015 Efficiency Savings (Cumulative) 1%	2016 Efficiency Savings (Cumulative) 4%	<u>Total Efficiency Targets</u> (4% p.a., 12% cumulative)	Baseline & Total Efficiencies	2014 Efficiency Savings	2015 Efficiency Savings (Cumulative)	2016 Efficiency Savings (Cumulative)	
	£`000s	£`000s	£`000s	£`000s	€`000s	€`000s	€`000s	€`000s	€`000s	
Baseline	2,662	2,476	2,449	2,343	Baseline	3,286	3,056	3,023	2,892	
Total Efficiencies Required		186	213	319	Total Efficiencies Required		230	263	393	

Annex C

The areas that have been targeted as a means of realising cash releasing efficiencies are summarised in the first column of the table below and the monitoring arrangements and measures that will be put in place to ensure efficiency savings are delivered without impacting on targets and service delivery are detailed in the final column.				
EFFICIENCY PROGRAMME SUMMARY TABLE - exchange rate used throughout for planning purposes - €1 = £0.81				
	Sterling	Euro		
Details of efficiencies	2015 Savings £'000s	2015 Savings €'000s	Responsible Officer	Monitoring arrangements / measures to ensure forecast level of savings are delivered without a detrimental impact on priority services.
(a) Admin				
1. Pay Costs	-39	-48	Director of Corporate Services	Monthly forecasting, monthly financial reporting.
2. Pension Costs	49	61	Director of Corporate Services	Monthly forecasting, monthly financial reporting.
3. Non Pay Administration Costs	20	24	Director of Corporate Services	Monthly forecasting, monthly financial reporting.
(b) Resource				
1. Marketing	-7	-9	Marketing Manager	Monthly forecasting, monthly financial reporting.
2. Serving the Community	7	8	Development Officers/CEO	Monthly forecasting, monthly financial reporting.
3. Working with Others	1	1	Development Officers/CEO	Monthly forecasting, monthly financial reporting.
4. Education	-4	-6	Education Officers	Monthly forecasting, monthly financial reporting.
(c) Capital				
1	-	-		
2	-	-		
Total Savings	27	32		
Savings-NI contribution	20	25		
Savings-Irish contribution	7	8		