



E-SGOIL ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2023-24

Report by Chief Officer, Education and Children's Services

PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of the Report is to inform members of e-Sgoil impact during Session 2023-24.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 During 2023-24 e-Sgoil has further developed a broad range of programmes to support schools and learners from across Scotland. Live, interactive learning sessions covering all levels of the curriculum (including Gaelic Medium Education) have been positively evaluated.
- 2.2 e-Sgoil's Evidence of Impact Report for 2023-24 provides a comprehensive overview of programme activity and impact for the past session and can be viewed at [e-Sgoil Evidence of Impact 2024](#).
- 2.3 e-Sgoil attracted a significant amount of additional funding during financial year 2023-24. The total income for the year totalled £2,187,578. £935,576 of this total was spent locally within the Comhairle area.
- 2.4 e-Sgoil continues to support Comhairle schools to broaden their curricular offer and ensure greater resilience during periods of staff absence.
- 2.5 e-Sgoil has continued to generate additional employment opportunities for a significant number of staff based across the local authority area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 **It is recommended that the Comhairle note the Report.**

Contact Officer: Steven Graham, e-Sgoil, Tel: 01851 822850

Appendix:

1. e-Sgoil Highlights
2. e-Sgoil Local Spend
3. Courses & Programmes
4. e-Sgoil Footprints
5. e-Sgoil Gaelic/Gaidhlig SQA Results

Background Papers: [e-Sgoil Evidence of Impact 2024](#).

IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The following implications are applicable in terms of the Report.

Resource Implications	Implications/None
Financial	None
Legal	None
Staffing	None
Assets and Property	None
Strategic Implications	Implications/None
Risk	None
Equalities	UNCRC Article 28 – Right to education UNCRC Article 29 – Goals of education
Corporate Strategy	2.1.3 – Schools are centres of lifelong learning and key assets to the community 3.1.1 – The Gaelic language, natural heritage and culture of our communities is supported and promoted.
Environmental Impact	None
Consultation	None

BACKGROUND

5.1 This Report provides members with an annual update of e-Sgoil activity and impact on both a local and national level.

DETAIL

- 6.1 e-Sgoil continues to deliver the live elements of the Scottish Government’s National e-Learning Offer (NeLO) and has maintained an ongoing dialogue with the Learning Directorate on taking forward the 2021 manifesto commitment to establish a National Digital Academy. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar continues to retain a lead role in terms of innovative digital delivery across Scotland.
- 6.2 e-Sgoil continued to expand the scope and scale of its activities during session 2023/24, developing and offering live, interactive learning sessions delivered by GTCS registered specialist teachers. Programmes cater for all levels of the 3-18 curriculum: Early Years, P2 – S3 Broad General Education (BGE), S4-6 Senior Phase, including the provision of study support for National Qualifications at National 4 / 5, Higher and Advanced Higher levels. In addition, e-Sgoil offers tuition for teachers and other education practitioners across Scotland who are learning Gaelic alongside other adults.
- 6.3 e-Sgoil's Evidence of Impact Report for 2023/24 was published in June 2024 and provides a comprehensive overview of programme activity for the past session. It can be viewed at [e-Sgoil Evidence of Impact 2024](#).
- 6.4 e-Sgoil’s management team was again successful in attracting significant amounts of funding from a range of external organisations for last session. £1.5 million was received to deliver the live element of the National e-Learning Offer, with additional funding from the Scottish Government, Northern Alliance, Education Scotland and the Corra Foundation. e-Sgoil also derived income from invoicing other organisations for teaching time totalling £329,032. This resulted in a well-received, national programme of live offers to complement the work being done by schools in supporting the needs of all learners. (Appendix 1) £935,576 has been spent locally with staff employed across all areas of the Western Isles. This additional funding, which has been sourced to supplement normal budgets,

represents a significant cash injection into the local economy. (Appendix 2) Over the course of the last four years e-Sgoil has contributed £3.7 million to the local economy, with £448,587 of this total going towards Comhairle salary costs out with e-Sgoil.

- 6.5 e-Sgoil delivered timetabled classes in 2023/24 into 2 out of 4 Comhairle Secondary schools, ensuring that learning was not impacted by local staffing challenges. Almost all Comhairle Primary schools also benefitted from being able to access a range of online curricular inputs in both Gaelic and English. (Appendix 3) A significant number of staff based across the local authority area have benefitted from being able to access additional employment opportunities through e-Sgoil. National learner and staffing footprints also demonstrate the widespread impact of e-Sgoil operations. (Appendix 4)
- 6.6 The Depute Head Teacher (Gaelic/Gàidhlig Medium) post is now fully funded by the Scottish Government NeLO grant. This post facilitates inter-authority collaboration, curricular innovation and provides greater resilience to the Gaelic Medium curriculum in schools. The scope and scale of the Gaelic team's 3-18 provision, plus adult learning activities has continued to develop with significant impact on SQA national qualification uptake, especially for Gaelic learners. (Appendix 5)
- 6.7 Evening and Easter Study Support continues to be in high demand with 24,400 webinar registrations received last session from 5888 S4-6 learners representing 332 schools. The Study Support programme consists of online webinars providing live, interactive consolidation and revision for 54 groups covering 26 subjects across Nat 4, Nat 5, Higher and Advanced Higher levels.
- 6.8 i-Sgoil, the e-Sgoil programme that caters for extremely vulnerable interrupted learners from P2 – S6 who do not attend school for prolonged periods, continues to attract a high number of referrals from across the country. A broad range of subjects is on offer, allowing for young people to re-engage with learning. In addition to core subjects, i-Sgoil staff can provide pastoral support, facilitate virtual work experience and host partner inputs from organisations such as Skills Development Scotland. Currently 3 Comhairle learners are part of the i-Sgoil programme with other referrals awaiting processing.
- 6.9 Adding value to what is being offered by schools both locally and nationally is a key feature of e-Sgoil provision. This takes the form of expanding the range of subjects on offer in schools and co-ordinating inputs from more than sixty partner organisations and employers through the Developing the Young Workforce programme, DYW Live. This partnership bridges the gap between the classroom and the workplace and has been particularly well received by schools across Scotland.
- 7.0 e-Sgoil was awarded grant funding in September 2023 through the Scottish Government's UNCRF Innovation Fund. This funding supports a project where external 'creative catalysts' work with groups of children and young people who are most at risk of having their rights compromised and unrealised. Gaelic Medium secondary pupils from across the 4 Comhairle secondary schools make up one of these groups. Final project findings and recommendations are expected early in 2025.
- 7.1 e-Sgoil continues to offer Comhairle staff a range of opportunities for professional development in digital pedagogy and other aspects of the wider curriculum. This can take the form of team teaching with an on-line colleague, observing or facilitating sessions being delivered remotely by teachers or partner agencies. Working within e-Sgoil has provided a number of Comhairle teaching staff with opportunities to further develop leadership experience. This builds capacity within the workforce and has enabled career progression.
- 7.2 Enabling teachers to live and work in their own local communities continues to be a main driver for e-Sgoil and the Education Department. Every attempt is made to ensure that teachers with capacity, who

agree to deliver on-line, in addition to delivering face-to-face lessons in local schools are afforded opportunities to derive further income through teaching for e-Sgoil.

- 7.3 All e-Sgoil operations are quality assured in line with best practice: observations, data analysis, stakeholder feedback, monitoring of planning, moderation etc. e-Sgoil has been subject to local, national and international scrutiny since its inception, and this is to be welcomed as ultimately it leads to improvements in the learner experience.

CONCLUSION

- 8.1 e-Sgoil's impact at a national level is an example of how the periphery can be at the centre in a digital world. Partnership working approaches and Comhairle backing have been key factors behind continued growth. e-Sgoil seeks to support the Scottish Government's ambition to establish a National Digital Academy which further develops much of the NeLO work done to date.