



Identity and Language (Northern Ireland) Bill [HL]

HL Bill 11 of 2022–23

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On 7 June 2022, the second reading of the [Identity and Language \(Northern Ireland\) Bill \[HL\]](#) is scheduled to take place in the House of Lords.

Among other things, the bill would:

- require specified public authorities to have due regard to “national and cultural identity principles” (as defined in the bill) when carrying out functions in Northern Ireland
- create an Office of Identity and Cultural Expression to promote awareness of the national and cultural identity principles and monitor public authorities’ compliance with their duty
- provide for the official recognition of the status of the Irish language in Northern Ireland and require the appointment of an Irish Language Commissioner to promote its use by public authorities
- require a commissioner be appointed to promote the language and culture associated with the Ulster Scots and Ulster British tradition
- require the Northern Ireland Department of Education to encourage and facilitate the use and understanding of Ulster Scots

The measures in the bill were agreed by the five main political parties in Northern Ireland, and by the UK and Irish governments, as part of the ‘New decade, new approach’ deal published in January 2020.

As the measures relate to devolved matters for Northern Ireland, it was intended that the Northern Ireland Assembly and executive would take the legislation forward. However, as the legislation had not been progressed in Northern Ireland, the UK government has now acted on its commitment to legislate on the matter instead.

Sinn Féin and Irish language groups have been calling on the UK government to intervene and have welcomed the bill’s introduction. However, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) has criticised the government for introducing legislation on the subject before dealing with their concerns about the current operation of the Northern Ireland Protocol. These concerns have also led to the DUP blocking the formation of a new Northern Ireland executive following assembly elections on 5 May 2022. In addition, the Ulster Scots Language Society has expressed reservations about the legislation, believing it will provide greater benefit to the Irish language than to Ulster Scots.

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1. Background

The [Identity and Language \(Northern Ireland\) Bill \[HL\]](#) would implement the commitments in the ‘New decade, new approach’ agreement relating to language and cultural identity.¹

1.1 ‘New decade, new approach’ agreement

The ‘New decade, new approach’ (NDNA) agreement was published on 9 January 2020, and represented a deal agreed by the five main Northern Ireland political parties: the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), Sinn Féin, the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), and the Alliance Party.²

The agreement followed talks in 2018 and 2019 to restore the Northern Ireland executive, which had not been able to function since the resignation of the deputy first minister in January 2017. The political talks included the UK government and the Irish government. The Northern Ireland executive was restored on 12 January 2020 following the publication of the agreement.

The deal covered a range of subjects, including the running of the executive, the legacy of the Troubles and language and culture. In addition, the deal included a commitment by the UK government about protecting Northern Ireland’s place in the UK internal market. For example, it stated:

The government welcomes the consensus reached by all the parties recently on the protections they wish to see for trade between Northern Ireland and Great Britain under the protocol. The government is absolutely committed to ensuring that Northern Ireland remains an integral part of the UK internal market, in line with the clear guarantee in the protocol that Northern Ireland remains in the customs territory of the United Kingdom.³

This bill deals with the language and cultural measures set out in the deal. Legislation on the executive has already been passed (Northern Ireland (Ministers, Elections and Petitions of Concern) Act 2022) and a bill dealing with the legacy issues was introduced in the House of Commons on 17 May 2022: ‘[Northern Ireland Troubles \(Legacy and Reconciliation\) Bill](#)’. Further information on this legislation and recent developments surrounding the Northern Ireland Protocol can be found in:

- House of Lords Library, ‘[Northern Ireland \(Ministers, Elections](#)

¹ HM Government, ‘[New decade, new approach](#)’, 9 January 2020.

² HM Government, ‘[New decade, new approach](#)’, 9 January 2020.

³ HM Government, ‘[New decade, new approach](#)’, 9 January 2020, p 47.

- [and Petitions of Concern\) Bill](#)’, 5 November 2021
- House of Commons Library, ‘[Northern Ireland Troubles \(Legacy and Reconciliation\) Bill 2022–2023](#)’, 20 May 2022
- House of Commons Library, ‘[Northern Ireland Protocol](#)’, 17 May 2022

On language and culture, the agreement stated that the Northern Ireland executive would “sponsor and oversee a new framework both recognising and celebrating Northern Ireland’s diversity of identities and culture, and accommodating cultural difference”.⁴ The agreement specified that this would comprise:

- An Office of Identity and Cultural Expression to promote cultural pluralism and respect for diversity, build social cohesion and reconciliation and to celebrate and support all aspects of Northern Ireland’s rich cultural and linguistic heritage.
- Legislation to create a commissioner to recognise, support, protect and enhance the development of the Irish language in Northern Ireland and to provide official recognition of the status of the Irish language in Northern Ireland. The legislation will also repeal the Administration of Justice (Language) Act (Ireland) 1737 [which requires court proceedings to be in English].
- Legislation to create a further such commissioner to enhance and develop the language, arts and literature associated with the Ulster Scots/Ulster British tradition and to provide official recognition of the status of the Ulster Scots language in Northern Ireland. The legislation will also place a legal duty on the [Northern Ireland] Department of Education to encourage and facilitate the use of Ulster Scots in the education system.⁵

The three commitments above represent the main measures set out in the Identity and Language (Northern Ireland) Bill.

1.2 Subsequent developments

Northern Ireland

The language and cultural elements of the deal are devolved matters for Northern Ireland.⁶

⁴ HM Government, ‘[New decade, new approach](#)’, 9 January 2020, p 15.

⁵ HM Government, ‘[New decade, new approach](#)’, 9 January 2020, pp 15–16.

⁶ [Explanatory notes](#), p 12.

The deal required three draft bills to be published on the day of the formation of the executive and presented to the Northern Ireland Assembly for consideration within three months of the restoration of the institutions.⁷ The draft bills were published in January 2020 but the deadline for consideration was not met.⁸

Legislation to implement the language and culture aspects of the deal has not progressed in the Northern Ireland Assembly since then. When Arlene Foster resigned as first minister of the executive with effect from June 2021, Irish language legislation formed part of the executive formation talks between Sinn Féin and the DUP.⁹ Sinn Féin said it would not support a new DUP first minister unless Irish language legislation was introduced by the next assembly election in May 2022. During the negotiations, Sinn Féin said it had asked Northern Ireland Secretary Brandon Lewis to introduce legislation at Westminster, stating that it was the “only way forward to finally resolve” the dispute. However, Sammy Wilson (DUP MP for East Antrim) said the UK government “must not interfere in devolved issues at the behest of Sinn Féin”.

In February 2022, Northern Ireland’s then first minister, the DUP’s Paul Givan, resigned his post, citing the DUP’s opposition to the workings of the Northern Ireland Protocol, which it asserts has effectively created a border in the Irish Sea.¹⁰ His resignation meant that the deputy first minister, Sinn Féin’s Michelle O’Neill, also had to leave her post. The move ultimately resulted in the Northern Ireland executive being unable to function fully in the run-up to the scheduled assembly elections in May 2022.

The assembly elections were held on 5 May 2022. These returned Sinn Féin as the largest party, with 27 seats, followed by the DUP, on 25 seats. The Alliance Party had 17 seats, the UUP had 9 and the SDLP had 8.¹¹

However, the Assembly has yet to form a new executive since the elections. This is due to the DUP’s refusal to elect a new speaker until its continuing concerns with the Northern Ireland Protocol are resolved.¹² Explaining this stance to the Assembly on 13 May 2022, Paul Givan stated that the “Irish Sea border has fundamentally undermined the Belfast Agreement [and] has changed our relationship with the United Kingdom”.¹³ He said that his party

⁷ HM Government, ‘[New decade, new approach](#)’, 9 January 2020, p 37.

⁸ Office of the Legislative Counsel in Northern Ireland, ‘[Final combined legislation for publication](#)’, January 2020.

⁹ BBC News, ‘[Irish language talks back on at Stormont](#)’, 17 June 2021.

¹⁰ BBC News, ‘[Givan resignation triggers fresh political crisis in Northern Ireland](#)’, 3 February 2022.

¹¹ BBC News, ‘[Northern Ireland Assembly election results 2022](#)’, accessed 30 May 2022.

¹² BBC News, ‘[Northern Ireland Protocol: Assembly Speaker blocked by DUP for second time](#)’, 30 May 2022.

¹³ Northern Ireland Assembly, ‘[Official report](#)’, Friday 13 May 2022.

had “received a mandate in the assembly election to remove the Irish Sea border” and that would need to be respected.

Other parties were critical of the actions of the DUP, with the former deputy first minister, Michelle O’Neill, saying they were denying democracy and obstructing the executive from serving the public and properly supporting public services.¹⁴

Under new laws brought into force by the Northern Ireland (Ministers, Elections and Petitions of Concern) Bill, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland would have to appoint a date for new assembly elections if a first minister and deputy first minister is not appointed within 24 weeks.

Further information on the Protocol and its impact on Northern Ireland politics can be found in the House of Lords Library briefing: [‘Impact of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland on recent political developments in Northern Ireland’](#), 28 February 2022.

Westminster

The UK government has put on record its commitment to legislate for the language and cultural measures of the NDNA deal if the Northern Ireland Assembly failed to do so. Explaining the government’s stance in March 2022, Brandon Lewis stated:

Ultimately, if the parties can suddenly come together and find a way to deliver this where it should be delivered, at the executive, all the better. We said that we would deliver this if it was not delivered by the executive, and I stand by that commitment.¹⁵

The bill was formally announced by the UK government in the Queen’s Speech on 10 May 2022 and then introduced in the House of Lords on 25 May 2022.¹⁶ In a press release to accompany the bill’s publication, Brandon Lewis stated:

The introduction of this bill represents a significant milestone, not just in the continued delivery of NDNA, but in laying down a new cultural framework for the people of Northern Ireland. This legislation is carefully balanced, as negotiated by all parties, to ensure everyone in Northern Ireland benefits.

¹⁴ Northern Ireland Assembly, [‘Official report’](#), Friday 13 May 2022.

¹⁵ House of Commons Northern Ireland Affairs Committee, [‘Oral evidence: Work of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland’](#), 28 March 2022, HC 161 of session 2021–2, Q 266.

¹⁶ Prime Minister’s Office, [‘Queen’s Speech 2022: Background briefing notes’](#), 10 May 2022.

Not only will the legislation faithfully deliver on the measures within NDNA, it will also, importantly, ensure the principles of respect and tolerance, as stated in the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement, continue to be realised.¹⁷

The government also announced plans to legislate to make changes to the protocol if a negotiated solution with the EU could not be found, although this bill was not included in the Queen’s Speech. Liz Truss, the foreign secretary, told the House of Commons on 17 May 2022 that she would introduce legislation “in the coming weeks” to “lessen the burden on East-West trade and to ensure the people of Northern Ireland are able to access the same benefits as the people of Great Britain”.¹⁸ Ms Truss argued that the lack of support for the protocol in the unionist community was the reason the Northern Ireland executive had not been fully functioning since February, and that there was agreement among all of Northern Ireland’s political parties that changes needed to be made to the protocol. She said the government was clear that proceeding with the bill would be “consistent with our obligations in international law—and in support of our prior obligations in the Belfast Good Friday Agreement”. She said that the UK remained open to further talks with the EU in parallel to introducing the legislation. In response, European Commission Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič said the EU stood ready to continue discussions with the UK government to identify joint solutions, but if the UK went ahead with a bill “disapplying constitutive elements of the protocol”, the EU would “need to respond with all measures at its disposal”.¹⁹

Reaction

The bill’s publication was welcomed by Sinn Féin. Its leader, Mary Lou McDonald, said it would “finally see the repeal of archaic anti-Irish legislation and replaced with official recognition of the Irish language to enable people to access public services and the courts through Irish”. She urged Westminster to pass the legislation by the summer recess.²⁰

Speaking after the bill’s announcement in the Queen’s Speech, the DUP leader, Sir Jeffrey Donaldson, criticised the government for acting on the matter (and on the legacy issues) before addressing concerns about the protocol:

¹⁷ Northern Ireland Office, [‘UK Government acts on identity and language legislation for Northern Ireland’](#), 25 May 2022.

¹⁸ [HC Hansard, 17 May 2022, cols 545–7.](#)

¹⁹ European Commission, [‘Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland: Statement by Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič following today’s announcement by the UK foreign secretary’](#), 17 May 2022.

²⁰ Politico, [‘UK to make Irish an official language in Northern Ireland’](#), 25 May 2022.

What the government do must be balanced. It must take account of the concerns of the Unionist community as well as the concerns of others. Currently, the legislation coming forward reflects the concerns of others, but it does not reflect the concerns of the members in this House who represent the Unionist community or the wider community. I reiterate my commitment to lead my party into the political institutions. I will do so as soon as the government take decisive action to deal with the protocol and remove the Irish Sea border.²¹

However, he has welcomed recent government commitments to introduce legislation “to deal with the protocol and the Irish Sea border, and to protect the Belfast/Good Friday agreement”.²²

Paula Melvin, president of the Irish language group Conradh na Gaeilge, welcomed the bill’s announcement, but expressed some caution about its progress:

The Irish language community has been fighting for these rights for decades and in that regard to see the Irish language be afforded official status here for the first time is indeed historic. We want to pay tribute to all of those activists and community pioneers who have been advocating for language rights down through the years. This day belongs to them. But let’s be clear, this is only the beginning of the legislative journey for this bill [...] Until we see this bill fully enacted and indeed implemented in practice, we will continue to push ahead with the campaign.²³

Anne Smyth, chair of the Ulster Scots Language Society, has expressed concerns about the bill, believing it may actually hinder the promotion of Ulster Scots:

It actually adds another layer of sectarianism to Ulster politics and Ulster society. They are basically trying to hand responsibility over to academics and civil servants. I don't see us having a voice in that group and we haven't had a voice for quite some time.²⁴

She also feared the legislation would give too much power to Irish-language

²¹ [HC Hansard, 10 May 2022, cols 57–8.](#)

²² [HC Hansard, 25 May 2022, col 289.](#) For further information, see: BBC News, ‘[Northern Ireland Protocol: Government’s pledge a good start—Democratic Unionist Party](#)’, 17 May 2022.

²³ Conradh na Gaeilge, ‘[“Historic day” for Irish language community as Acht Gaeilge finally to be “introduced” in Westminster](#)’, accessed 31 May 2022.

²⁴ BBC News, ‘[Irish language and Ulster Scots bill introduced at Westminster](#)’, 26 May 2022.

activists to “insist on maximum representation for Irish at every turn”.²⁵

1.3 Statistics on language use and knowledge

The most recent official data on language use in Northern Ireland is from the country’s 2011 census.²⁶ It returned data from 1,735,711 residents and 703,275 households.

The census found that 96.9% of residents reported English as their main language, followed by Polish (1%), Lithuanian (0.4%) and then Irish/Gaelic (0.2%).²⁷

Regarding knowledge of Irish and Ulster Scots, the following table shows the reported proficiency of respondents:

Table: Knowledge and use of Irish and Ulster Scots²⁸

Level of proficiency:	Irish	Ulster Scots
Understand but cannot read, write or speak	4.0%	5.3%
Speak but do not read or write	1.4%	0.6%
Speak and read but do not write	0.4%	0.5%
Speak, read, write and understand	3.7%	0.9%
Other combination of skills	1.0%	0.8%
Have some ability	10.7%	8.0%
Have no ability	89.4%	91.9%

2. Overview of the bill

2.1 Legislative competence

The language and cultural identity provisions set out in the bill are devolved matters for Northern Ireland.

There is a convention that Westminster will not normally legislate on

²⁵ Politico, ‘[UK to make Irish an official language in Northern Ireland](#)’, 25 May 2022.

²⁶ Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, ‘[Census 2011: Key statistics for Northern Ireland](#)’, December 2012. Although the 2021 census has now been conducted, results on language use have yet to be published.

²⁷ Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, ‘[Census 2011: Key statistics for Northern Ireland](#)’, December 2012, p 17. Figures are rounded to one decimal place.

²⁸ Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, ‘[Census 2011: Key statistics for Northern Ireland](#)’, December 2012, p 18. Figures are rounded to one decimal place.

matters that are within the legislative competence of a devolved assembly.²⁹ Therefore, a legislative consent motion may be sought for the bill from the Northern Ireland Assembly. However, as emphasised in a briefing by the Northern Ireland Assembly’s research and information service, the bill can be passed without the Assembly’s consent:

The UK Parliament retains the right to legislate in any aspect of devolved competence, with or without consent, as it is the sovereign parliament.³⁰

2.2 Provisions

The bill is made up of 11 clauses, split across three parts.

Part 1: National and cultural identity and language

This part would make made a number of amendments to the Northern Ireland Act 1998 aimed at supporting and promoting different languages and cultures in Northern Ireland.

Clause 1 would require specified public authorities in Northern Ireland to have due regard to certain “national and cultural identity principles” when carrying out their functions. The application of this to different public authorities in Northern Ireland could be varied by regulations made by the first minister and deputy first minister, and approved by the Assembly.

The bill details the principles as follows:

- the principle that everybody in Northern Ireland is free to:
(i) choose, affirm, maintain and develop their national and cultural identity, and (ii) express and celebrate that identity in a manner that takes account of the sensitivities of those with different national and cultural identities and respects the rule of law
- the principle that public authorities should encourage and promote reconciliation, tolerance and meaningful dialogue between those with different national and cultural identities with a view to promoting parity of esteem, mutual respect and understanding, and cooperation

The bill also clarifies that a “reference to a person’s national and cultural identity is a reference to a person’s religious belief, political opinion or

²⁹ [Explanatory notes](#), p 12.

³⁰ Northern Ireland Assembly Research and Information Service, ‘[Legislative consent motions: January 2020–November 2021](#)’, 1 December 2021, p 2.

racial group”.

Clause 1 would also establish the Office of Identity and Cultural Expression, which would have the following key aims:

- promote cultural pluralism and respect for diversity in Northern Ireland
- promote social cohesion and reconciliation between those with different national and cultural identities
- increase the capacity and resilience of people in Northern Ireland to address issues related to differences in national and cultural identity
- support, and promote the celebration of, the cultural and linguistic heritage of all people living in Northern Ireland

The office would need to promote and monitor compliance with the principles in this clause and would have a number of powers to assist with this. For example, it could commission guidance, research or educational programmes.

Clause 2 would provide for the official recognition of the Irish language in Northern Ireland. However, it stresses that nothing in the clause would affect the status of the English language in Northern Ireland.

The bill explains it would achieve official recognition of the Irish language by:

- providing for the appointment of an Irish Language Commissioner
- providing for the development of standards of best practice relating to the use of the Irish language by public authorities
- requiring public authorities to have due regard to such standards

The commissioner would need to be appointed jointly by the first minister and deputy first minister. Further information on the appointment conditions for the commissioner, and information on staffing and financial support, are set out in schedule 2 of the bill.

The commissioner’s main aim would be to “enhance and protect the use of the Irish language” by public authorities in Northern Ireland when delivering services. To achieve this, the clause would require the commissioner to publish, and review, the best practice standards. Public authorities would also have to publish plans setting out the steps they would take to comply with their duty to have regard to the standards.

In addition, the clause would introduce a complaints procedure for people affected by a public authority’s failure to comply with its obligations. The

commissioner would have the power to investigate the complaint, or would need to set out reasons to the complainant why they were not investigating it. The commissioner would also need to communicate with the complainant and the public authority about their progress and any outcome when investigating a complaint. If they found that the public authority failed to comply with its obligations, they could set out steps for how the public authority should remedy this and must lay the report on the complaint before the Assembly.

Clause 3 would require the first minister and deputy first minister to jointly appoint a commissioner for the “enhancement and development of the language, arts and literature associated with the Ulster Scots and Ulster British tradition”. Further details on their appointment terms and support are set out in schedule 3.

The commissioner would be required to:

- promote awareness of Ulster Scots services provided by public authorities in Northern Ireland
- provide appropriate advice or guidance to public authorities on developing and encouraging relevant language and culture, and on the effect and implementation of specified international agreements
- investigate complaints

The complaints procedure is similar to that set out in clause 2.

The commissioner would have to consult relevant public authorities when preparing guidance. In addition, the first minister and deputy first minister would be able to direct the commissioner on how they should carry out their functions.

Clause 4 would repeal the Administration of Justice (Language) Act (Ireland) 1737, which requires court proceedings to be in English. This would allow Irish (or other languages) to be used in court proceedings when deemed necessary.

Clause 5 would require the Northern Ireland Department of Education to “encourage and facilitate the use and understanding of Ulster Scots in the education system”.

Part 2: Powers of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland

Clauses 6 and 7 would allow the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to take the same action allowed to be taken by any Northern Ireland minister or department in relation to clauses 1 to 3 of this bill. For example, it would

allow them to appoint a commissioner.

The clauses would also allow the secretary of state to direct a Northern Ireland minister, department or relevant authority to take action (or not to take action) in relation to the identity and language provisions covered by the bill. These directions would need to be laid before Parliament.

Clause 7 specifies that the exercise of the powers granted by clause 6 without referral to the Northern Ireland executive should not be considered relevant when determining what ministers or departments can do:

The fact that a matter has not been brought to the attention of, or discussed and agreed by, the Executive Committee of the Assembly is to be disregarded when determining what a Northern Ireland minister, Northern Ireland department or identity and language authority could do for the purposes of [clause 6].

A Northern Ireland minister, Northern Ireland department or identity and language authority must comply with a direction [...] irrespective of whether any matter has been brought to the attention of, or discussed and agreed by, the Executive Committee of the Assembly.

It also prevents ministers or civil servants from being called to give evidence to the Assembly where they have carried out a power or direction in relation to clause 6, unless they were working for one of the new language and identity authorities and it relates to that work.

Part 3: Miscellaneous provisions

Clauses 8 to 11 contain miscellaneous provisions, including consequential amendments, territorial extent and commencement arrangements.

The legislation would apply to Northern Ireland only and the provisions in parts 1 and 2 would come into force on a date specified by the secretary of state in regulations.

3. Additional information

3.1 Draft strategies for Irish and Ulster Scots

Alongside its legislative proposals, the NDNA agreement required the Northern Ireland executive to publish and consult on a draft Irish Language Strategy and a draft Ulster Scots Language, Heritage and Culture Strategy.³¹

³¹ HM Government, '[New decade, new approach](#)', 9 January 2020, p 36.

Although these strategies have not been published or agreed, two expert advisory panels were set up to provide recommendations for the strategies.³²

Both panels published their reports in March 2022, alongside two ‘call for views’ consultations:

- Northern Ireland Department for Communities, ‘[Irish language strategy expert advisory panel recommendation report](#)’, 7 March 2022
- Northern Ireland Department for Communities, ‘[Ulster Scots language, heritage and culture strategy expert advisory panel recommendation report](#)’, 7 March 2022

The reports include detailed recommendations for how the languages and cultures should be developed and promoted over the coming years. This includes recommendations relating to education and representation in public services. In addition, both reports set out key goals or visions for the strategies to achieve:

Irish language strategy: Key goals

- That 500,000 people have knowledge of Irish by 2042, with progress in this respect measured through the census every 10 years.
- That the Irish language is the main language of 20,000 people by 2042, with progress in this respect measured through the census every 10 years and through the household survey annually.
- That the Irish language is the everyday language of (figure to be inserted, based on the 2021 census) people by 2042, with progress in this respect measured through the census every 10 years and through the household survey annually.
- That the Irish-medium education community be developed and that 10% of the wider school population be in Irish-medium education by 2042.

Ulster Scots strategy: Vision statement

- Education—[...] Ulster-Scots has an ever-growing place in the curriculum and formal studies.
- Academic research and development—Academic research is central to accessing all our cultural wealth and empowering the

³² Northern Ireland Department for Communities, ‘[Irish language strategy and Ulster-Scots language, heritage and culture strategy](#)’, accessed 31 May 2022.

- next generation to add to it.
- Community and cultural life—The opportunity to participate and contribute to Ulster-Scots providing a vibrant cross-generational community life with proper facilities, programmes, and inclusion.
 - A modern everyday language—Ulster-Scots is written and spoken, in public and private, more than ever.
 - Media—whatever the form, you will find regular and positive representations of Ulster-Scots and new creative content for us and by us.
 - Public space—We have a name, it is Ulster-Scots. We have a story. Both will be found within our museums, interpretative centres, and public realm.
 - Rights framework—The Ulster-Scots identity with its status as a national minority, enjoys its full rights protections.
 - Connectedness—Deepening connections and re-connections with Scotland and our diaspora.
 - Economic contribution and benefits—Ulster-Scots in its various manifestations contributes to advance Northern Ireland's economy.

3.2 Further reading

- House of Commons Library, '[Northern Ireland: Key issues](#)', 8 March 2022
- British Council Northern Ireland, '[Language trends: Northern Ireland](#)', 2021 (relates to language in schools)
- Economist, '[How Ulster Scots and the Irish language got Northern Ireland's government back](#)', 18 January 2020

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