

SEA SCREENING REPORT (COVER NOTE)

PART 1

To: SEA.gateway@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
or
SEA Gateway
Scottish Executive
Area 1 H (Bridge)
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh EH6 6QQ

PART 2

An SEA Screening Report is attached for the plan, programme or strategy (PPS) entitled:

Green Networks in Highland: Supplementary Guidance

The Responsible Authority is:

The Highland Council

COMPLETE PART 3 or 4 or 5

PART 3

Screening is required by the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. Our view is that:

- an SEA is required** because the PPS falls under the scope of Section 5(3) of the Act and is likely to have significant environmental effects
- an SEA is required** because the PPS falls under the scope of Section 5(4) of the Act and is likely to have significant environmental effects
- an SEA is not required** because the PPS is unlikely to have significant environmental effects

PART 4

- The PPS does not require an SEA under the Act. However, we wish to carry out an SEA on a voluntary basis. We accept that, because this SEA is voluntary, the statutory 28 day timescale for views from the Consultation Authorities cannot be guaranteed.

PART 5

- None of the above apply. We have prepared this screening report because:

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PART 6

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PART 7

Signature (electronic signature is acceptable)	
Date	20/05/2010

SEA SCREENING REPORT - KEY FACTS

Responsible Authority	The Highland Council
Title of PPS	Green Networks in Highland - Supplementary Guidance
Purpose of PPS	The guidance will define, outline benefits, describe methodology for identifying, discuss delivery methods and set goals and outcomes for green networks in Highland with a focus on the A96 Corridor.
What prompted the PPS (e.g. a legislative, regulatory or administrative provision)	The supplementary guidance was prompted by Scottish Planning Policies focus on Green Networks and the Highland Council's commitment from their Main Issues Report for the Highland wide Local Development Plan to include policy and create supplementary guidance on Green Networks
Subject (e.g. transport)	Town Planning
Period covered by PPS	2010 onwards
Frequency of updates	As required
Area covered by PPS (e.g. geographical area – it is good practice to attach a map)	The entire Highland Council area except that where planning is delegated to the Cairngorms National Park Authority.
Summary of nature/content of PPS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Definition of Green Networks 2. Describe the benefits of green networks. 3. Identify a set of green network principles and a concept map. 4. Discuss delivery methods. 5. Set goals and outcomes for a green network in the A96 corridor
Are there any proposed PPS objectives?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Copy of objectives attached	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Date	20/05/10

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Our determinations regarding the likely significance of effects on the environment of Highland Coastal Development Strategy and Coastal Classification is set out in Table 1.

TABLE 1 – LIKELY SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

TITLE OF PPS		
Green Networks in Highland: Supplementary Guidance		
RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY		
The Highland Council		
Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment (1(a), 1(b) etc. refer to paragraphs in Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005)	Likely to have significant environmental effects? YES/NO	Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)
1(a) the degree to which the PPS sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources	Yes	The guidance will, in tandem with policy in the emerging Highland wide Local Development Plan, ensure that the green infrastructure for an area is considered as important as the harder infrastructure such as roads and rail. The framework will specifically set the context for delivery of a green network in the A96 corridor, this will include mapping of certain features including designated sites, other more locally important sites and also projects such as the Inverness-Nairn Coastal Trail.
1(b) the degree to which the PPS influences other PPS including those in a hierarchy	Yes/No	The guidance will be influenced by Scottish Government Planning Policy and the emerging Highland wide Local Development Plan, and other related plans policies and strategies including the open space in new residential development: interim supplementary guidance, the Highland Council Play Strategy, Highland Physical Activity and Sport Strategy and the Highland Healthy Weight Strategy. In the short to medium term it is unlikely that this guidance

		will influence any other PPS until the review of the Open Space in New Residential Development: Interim Supplementary Guidance, at this time it is likely to have some influence over this review in order to produce a succinct set of supplementary guidance dealing with the issue of wider open space planning.
1(c) the relevance of the PPS for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	Yes	One of the aims of the PPS is to ensure the benefits of green networks to true sustainable development is fully understood in terms of Social, Environmental and Economic.
Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment (1(d) etc. refer to paras in Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005)	Likely to have significant environmental effects? YES/NO	Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)
1(d) environmental problems relevant to the PPS	Yes	The most relevant environmental problems which can be identified are the fragmented habitat and recreation networks in Highland area. With this in mind it is likely that that the guidance will have a positive impact on the following SEA issues in the longer term: biodiversity/flora and fauna (greater opportunity for habitats to be protected and for them to grow), human health (would raise awareness of opportunities to take part in physical activities), soil (lower opportunity for soil sealing), water (reduced risk of flooding as green infrastructure can provide for natural drainage), Air (green infrastructure identified as part of a green network can act as a “green lung” for newly developed areas), Climatic Factors (green networks can highlight opportunities for active travel both within and outwith settlements), Cultural Heritage (green network could identify certain cultural features which are part of the green network), and Landscape (green networks can allow for integration of new development into a landscape leading to a lesser impact on the local landscape). Significant negative environmental affects are unlikely.
1(e) the relevance of the PPS for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, PPS linked to waste management or water protection)		The guidance would be produced inline with the Planning Etc (Scotland) Act 2006. It will need to consider the European Directives on habitats and species as well as the UK and Scottish interpretations of these Directives and other national policy.
		The guidance will be applied to all relevant new developments and the wide area which is

2 (a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	Yes	unlikely to be developed on an ongoing basis, therefore the probability of a positive effect on the environment will be high. It is unlikely that once implemented the guidance will be revoked therefore it is unlikely that the effects will be reversed.
2 (b) the cumulative nature of the effects	Yes	By applying the guidance to all new developments, the cumulative nature of the effects should ensure an increase in the connectivity of green infrastructure which can have significant benefits on the environment.
2 (c) transboundary nature of the effects (i.e. environmental effects on other EU Member States)	No	Not Applicable
2 (d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)	No	It is not envisaged that there would be a risk to the environment or human health as a result of this guidance.

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment (2(e), 2(f) etc refer to paras in Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005)	Likely to have significant environmental effects? YES/NO	Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)
2 (e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	Yes	As the PPS will apply to the whole Highland Council area except that covered by the Cairngorms National Park, however there will be a focus on the green network for the A96 corridor, therefore it is likely that the benefits will be wide spread with more significant benefits in the A96 corridor. While this is the case it is likely that these significantly positive effects will be in the longer term.

<p>Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment (2(e), 2(f) etc refer to paras in Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005)</p>	<p>Likely to have significant environmental effects? YES/NO</p>	<p>Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)</p>
<p>2 (f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or (iii) intensive land-use. 	<p>Yes</p>	<p>(i) This approach is likely to benefit the special natural characteristics of the area by encouraging development of the area to fully consider how it integrates with the green infrastructure in the landscape.</p> <p>(ii) The guidance will be used to work towards improved environmental standards in terms of greater connectivity of green networks giving benefits to the flora and fauna of the area and the wider natural heritage.</p> <p>(iii) This guidance is unlikely to have an impact on intensive land use.</p>
<p>2 (g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The guidance is likely to ensure that there is no significant impact on areas or landscapes which have a recognised protection status as these will be part of the green network which through policy in the emerging Highland wide Local Development Plan we will be aiming to enhance and protect.</p>

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A summary of our considerations of the significant environmental effects of the Managing Waste in New Developments guidance note are given below:

TABLE 2 – SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

The guidance will, in tandem with policy in the emerging Highland wide Local Development Plan, ensure that the green infrastructure for an area is considered as important as the harder infrastructure such as roads and rail. The framework will specifically set the context for delivery of a green network in the A96 corridor, this will include mapping of certain features including designated sites, other more locally important sites and also projects such as the Inverness-Nairn Coastal Trail.

It is not anticipated that there will be any significantly negative effects on the environment resulting from this supplementary guidance, therefore the role of the Strategic Environmental Assessment will be to maximise the positive impacts that the guidance may have. The policy framework which will set the local context for the Supplementary Guidance will be included within the Highland wide Local Development Plan which will sit above this document and is subject to a separate Strategic Environmental Assessment.

When carrying out a Strategic Environmental Assessment for this Supplementary Guidance the following topics will be considered (expected impact of guidance in brackets) :

- biodiversity/flora and fauna (greater opportunity for habitats to be protected and for them to grow);
- human health (would raise awareness of opportunities to take part in physical activities);
- soil (lower opportunity for soil sealing);
- water (reduced risk of flooding as green infrastructure can provide for natural drainage);
- Air (green infrastructure identified as part of a green network can act as a “green lung” for newly developed areas);
- Climatic Factors (green networks can highlight opportunities for active travel both within and outwith settlements);
- Cultural Heritage (green network could identify certain cultural features which are part of the green network); and
- Landscape (green networks can allow for integration of new development into a landscape leading to a lesser impact on the local landscape).