

Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance

Strategic Environmental Assessment

October 2010



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SEA ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT – COVER NOTE

To:

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PART 2

An Environmental Report is attached for [name of PPS]:

Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance

The Responsible Authority is:

The Highland Council

PART 3

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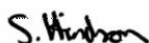
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PART 4

Signature

(electronic
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is acceptable)



Date

7th October 2010

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Non-technical Summary

This Environmental Report has been prepared to fulfil the requirements of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. The report provides a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance and has been produced by The Highland Council as the responsible authority.

The aim of the Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance is to help promote greenspace linkages and to safeguard and enhance wildlife corridors in and around new and existing developments. Green Networks already exist in this area and comprise important habitats and recreation opportunities. The guidance reflects the policy advice given in Scottish Planning Policy, and will supplement The Highland Council's Highland wide Local Development Plan. This guidance will work with other Council guidance including Open Space in New Residential Developments: Supplementary Guidance, Indicative Forest and Woodland Strategy, Highland Core Path Plans and The Highland Access Strategy to deliver Green Networks across Highland.

A significant number of relevant plans, programmes and strategies have been identified through this SEA and they have influenced the production of this guidance ensuring it addresses the most significant issues.

Through the SEA two options were identified for the progress of the guidance. These were production of Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance and a "do nothing" approach where reliance would be placed on the Highland wide Local Development Plan policy and other national guidance. Both of these were assessed against a total of 10 SEA objectives covering the following SEA topics: biodiversity, flora and fauna; population; human health; water; climatic factors; material assets; cultural heritage; and landscape. Through consultation with the Consultation Authorities (SEPA, SNH and Historic Scotland) it was determined that SEA topics of soil and air could be scoped out.

The SEA assessments have been used to ensure the preferred approach delivers maximum benefit to the environment, this has been done through changes to the guidance. It is not anticipated that there will be any significantly adverse affects arising from the production of this guidance.

This Environmental Report has been produced following comment from the consultation authorities at the Screening (May 2010), Scoping (June 2010) stages.

Expressions of opinion are now sought from the Consultation Authorities and any other interested part by 5pm, 3rd December 2010. You can make an expression of opinion by e-mail (devplans@highland.gov.uk), post (Development Plans, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness, IV3 5NX) or fax (01463 702298).

Introduction

Purpose of this Environmental Report and key facts

As part of the preparation of Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance, The Highland Council is carrying out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). SEA is a systematic method for considering the likely environmental effects of certain PPS. SEA aims to:

- integrate environmental factors into PPS preparation and decision-making;
- improve PPS and enhance environmental protection;
- increase public participation in decision making; and
- facilitate openness and transparency of decision-making.


SEA is required by the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. The key SEA stages are:

Screening	determining whether the PPS is likely to have significant environmental effects and whether an SEA is required
Scoping	deciding on the scope and level of detail of the Environmental Report, and the consultation period for the report – this is done in consultation with Scottish Natural Heritage, The Scottish Ministers (Historic Scotland) and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency
Environmental Report	publishing an Environmental Report on the PPS and its environmental effects, and consulting on that report
Adoption	providing information on: the adopted PPS; how consultation comments have been taken into account; and methods for monitoring the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the PPS
Monitoring	monitoring significant environmental effects in such a manner so as to also enable the Responsible Authority to identify any unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage and undertake appropriate remedial action.

The purpose of this Environmental Report is to:

- provide information on Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance
- identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects of the Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance and its reasonable alternatives;
- provide an early and effective opportunity for the Consultation Authorities and the public to offer views on any aspect of this Environmental Report.

The key facts relating to Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance are set out below:

Name of Responsible Authority	The Highland Council
Title of Plan, Program or Strategy (PPS)	Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance
What Prompted the PPS	There is a need to bring a local context to the concept of Green Networks which have been raised in both Scottish Planning Policy and National Planning Framework 2. This Supplementary Guidance will provide additional guidance above that contained in Policy 75 of the Highland wide Local Development Plan to facilitate the delivery of a Highland Green Network.
Subject	Town Planning
Period Covered by the PPS	2010 onwards
Frequency of Updates	The guidance will be updated whenever necessary to inform the development of area local development plans or whenever opportunities arise to deliver elements of the green network.
Area Covered by PPS	 <p>The map shows the Highland Council area. A large green-shaded region represents the 'Area covered by HwLDP'. A smaller grey-shaded region in the southeast represents 'Cairngorms National Park will produce a separate LDP'.</p>
Purpose and/or Objectives of PPS	The aim of the Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance is to help promote greenspace linkages and to safeguard and enhance wildlife corridors in and around new and existing developments.
Contact Point	Simon Hindson, Planner Simon.hindson@highland.gov.uk (01463) 702261
Consultation	You can make comments on this Environmental Report from the 8 th October 2010 – 3 rd December 2010

SEA activities to date

The table below summarises the SEA activities to date in relation to Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance.

SEA Action/Activity	When carried out	Notes (e.g. comment on data availability, particular issues or any advice from the Consultation Authorities that has now been taken into account)
screening to determine whether the PPS is likely to have significant environmental effects	May 2010	Determined that SEA will be required. Determination notice placed in Press and Journal newspaper Friday 18 th June 2010
scoping the consultation periods and the level of detail to be included in the Environmental Report	June 2010	Consultation authority comments and how they have been taken on board for this Environmental Report (ER) included as an appendix to this ER
Outline and objectives of the PPS	July 2010	
relationship with other PPS and environmental objectives	July 2010	
environmental baseline established	July 2010	
environmental problems identified	July 2010	
assessment of future of area without the PPS	July 2010	
alternatives considered	August 2010	
environmental assessment methods established	August 2010	
selection of PPS alternatives to be included in the environmental assessment	August 2010	
identification of environmental problems that may persist after implementation and measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and offset any significant adverse effects	September 2010	
monitoring methods proposed	September 2010	
consultation timescales	October 2010	8 th October 2010 – 3 rd December 2010
notification/publicity action	October 2010	Advertised in Press and Journal on 8 th October 2010

The Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Highland wide Local Development Plan assesses the policy framework for Green Networks in Highland. A consultation on this SEA runs from 24th September 2010 to 3rd December 2010. A copy of this SEA is available online:

http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/developmentplans/localplans/HW_LDPOtherAssessmentsandInformation.htm.

Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance Context

Outline and objectives of Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance

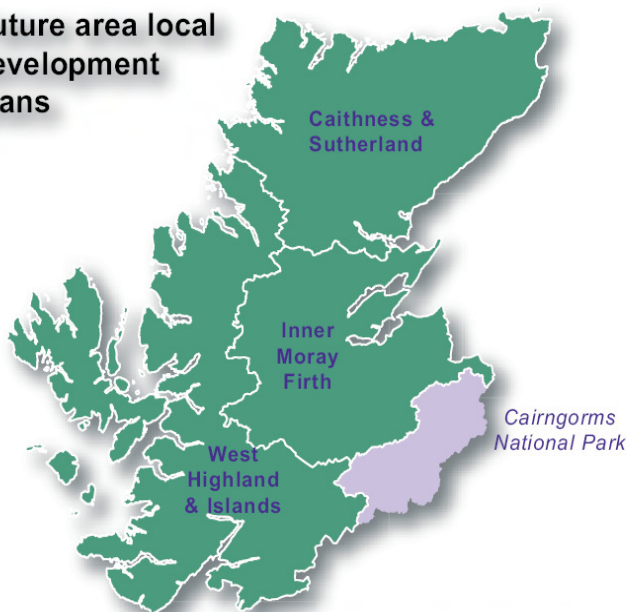
Schedule 3 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires that the Environmental Report includes “an outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan or programme”. The purpose of this section is to explain the nature, contents, objectives and timescale of the Highland wide Local Development Plan.

To ensure that a Highland Green Network can be delivered The Highland Council, working with partners, have decided to produce statutory Supplementary Guidance under the Planning Etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 and associated secondary legislation. The guidance will set out principles of a green network and also demonstrate how they can be delivered. The guidance will set the context for development

The guidance extends over an area of 26,484 square kilometres and is an area of high quality natural environment and diverse historic background. It has a population of 217,440 and at 8.2 persons per square kilometre, is sparsely populated compared with other regions in Scotland. A large proportion of the land area is identified as “fragile” in terms of remoteness and scarcity of population. To facilitate the safeguarding of this outstanding natural environment green networks can be used to avoid fragmentation of habitats, facilitate joining up habitats and provide better opportunities for responsible access to the outdoors.



Future area local development plans



The Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance will inform the production of the Highland wide Local Development Plan and also the three area Local Development Plans – one for the Inner Moray Firth area, one for the Caithness and Sutherland area and one for the West Highland and Islands area. Ultimately the aim is to create and retain up-to-date plan coverage on a five year cycle informed by reviews/additions to the Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance where appropriate.

CONTEXT

Relationship with other plans, programmes or strategies and environmental objectives

Table 1 lists the plans, policies and strategies which are relevant to the Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance and which may affect or influence its content. The contents of each plan, policy and strategy along with the relationship to the Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance and likely environmental impacts, is also summarised.

Table 1. Plans, programmes, strategies and environmental objectives to be analysed in the Environmental Report for their relationship with Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance

International		
EC Directive on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (2001/42/EC)	The objective of this Directive is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development. Aims to identify and mitigate significant environment effects arising from certain plans and programmes.	The Directive requires that an SEA be carried out on documents such as this and an Environmental Report produced.
European Climate Change Programme (2005)	The European Commission's main instrument to discuss and prepare the further development of the European Union's climate policy. To identify and develop all the necessary elements on an EU strategy to deliver the EU Kyoto Protocol commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 8% below 1990 levels by 2008-2012.	The guidance should promote choice and raise awareness of the need for change; and aim to reduce the need to travel. The Council will promote active travel.
EC Directive establishing a framework for Community action in the Field of Water Policy Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)	The Water Framework Directive is designed to integrate the way we manage water bodies across Europe. It aims to protect and enhance our water environment, promote sustainable water consumption, reduce water pollution and lessen the effects of floods and droughts.	The Strategic Environment Assessment will consider the implications of a green network on the water environment and how its can benefit the existing environment and reduce risk of flooding.
The Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development (2002)	Principles of international commitment to sustainable development reaffirmed. Aims to strengthen and improve Government at all levels to fulfil commitment to sustainable development.	The guidance will take into consideration the principles of sustainable development and seek to reflect these within the overarching objectives of the strategy and individual projects.
Agenda 21(1992)	Agenda 21 underlines the growing awareness of the need to adopt a balanced and integrated approach to environment and development issues. Agenda 21 contains a broad range of qualitative objectives that relate to sustainable development. These include a requirement for countries to adopt integrated strategies to ensure compliance with legislation relating to sustainable development, to promote the use of renewable energy systems and to build public environmental awareness.	The guidance will reflect the principles of sustainable development, and will make reference to the Council's development policy planning guidance – Planning for Sustainability in the Highlands.
EC Directive On Public Access to Environmental	Enforces the right of the public to view environmental information held by public	The Highland Council is required to ensure that all environmental

Information (2003/4/EC)	authorities.	information relating to the guidance is made available to the general public.
UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters. 'The Aarhus Convention' Adopted June 1998	Acknowledges the need for public participation in environmental issues and grants the public rights to access to justice and information on the environment.	Public involvement in the formulation of the guidance should be actively facilitated. Consultations should incorporate the views and suggestions of local residents, business groups, council representatives and government.
The Convention on Biological Diversity (1992)	International commitment to maintaining the world's biodiversity. Three main goals established – the conservation of biological diversity; the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits from the use of genetic resources. Requirement for each country who has signed the declaration to develop national strategies, plans or programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.	Adequate consideration of impacts affecting biodiversity with support for more detailed assessment at the local level where appropriate will be recommended.
The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat 'The Ramsar Convention' Adopted February 1971	An international treaty that provides the framework for national and international co-operation for the conservation of wetlands primarily to provide a habitat for birds.	The guidance must recognise the legal status of any 'Ramsar' protected site and reflect its ecological importance in its biodiversity objectives.
EU Soil Thematic Strategy (Consultation stage)	The emerging Soil Strategy aims to reduce soil pollution, erosion, compaction and sealing of soil. It also aims to protect the role of soil in storing CO ₂ , avoiding water pollution and preserving biodiversity. Protection of the sustainable production of food and renewable resources is a further aim.	The Strategy highlights soil protection as an issue and implicates soil degradation as a forthcoming issue in relation to land use.
European Landscape Convention (2000)	Promotes the protection, management and planning of European landscapes and organises European co-operation on landscape issues.	The Convention directs the way in which European designated landscapes issues should be taken into consideration.
EC Air Quality Framework Directive	Sets new air quality standards for previously unregulated air pollutants. Includes sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, particulate matter, lead and ozone pollutants.	The guidance should consider the strategic approach to air quality in Highland and the contribution green networks could make to this.
European Biodiversity Framework	Promotes the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, emphasising education, training and awareness raising, species identification, monitoring and exchange of information.	The guidance should be implemented with regard to the Biodiversity Duty that is stated in the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004
European Framework on Sustainable Development	Promotes coherent and cost-effective policy making; technological innovation; stronger involvement in civil society; and business in policy formation. Strategies for Sustainable Economic support progress in respect of the local environment.	The guidance will promote efficient resource use, and sustainable travel through a number of the topics. Sustainable development would be considered a cross cutting theme.
European Spatial Development Perspective	Emphasises the importance of achieving, equally throughout the EU, economic and social cohesion, as well as the conservation	This will influence the delivery of all of the Objectives of the guidance.

	and management of natural resources and cultural heritage. It stresses more balanced competitiveness of the European Community.	
Kyoto Protocol (1992)	United Nations international treaty on climate change. The Protocol entered into force in February 2005. Developed countries that have ratified the Protocol are committed to reducing their emissions of greenhouse gases. Commitment signed by 38 countries (plus the EU) to introduce legally binding targets to limit or reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 5% of 1990 levels in the period 2008-2012. The UK has committed to an 8% reduction.	The guidance will take account of targets of reducing CO2 emissions and consider measures to reduce the need to travel and promote more sustainable and active forms of transport.
Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC	The Water Framework Directive is designed to integrate the way we manage water bodies across Europe. It aims to protect and enhance our water environment, promote sustainable water consumption, reduce water pollution and lessen the effects of floods and droughts.	In terms of degradation of water quality the guidance will make reference to the guidance in The Council's Designing for Sustainability in the Highlands.
The Convention on Biological Diversity (1992)	The objectives of this Convention, to be pursued in accordance with its relevant provisions, are the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and by appropriate transfer of relevant technologies, taking into account all rights over those resources and to technologies, and by appropriate funding. Its short-term aim is to significantly reduce global biodiversity loss by 2010.	The guidance should be implemented with regard to the Biodiversity Duty that is stated in the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004
EC Directive on the Assessment and Management of Flood Risks - 2007/60/EC	requires Member States to assess if all water courses and coast lines are at risk from flooding, to map the flood extent and assets and humans at risk in these areas and to take adequate and coordinated measures to reduce this flood risk.	The guidance will ensure any policy on flooding complies with this directive and the way in which the Directive is being implemented by both SEPA and the Scottish Government.
EU Thematic Strategy on Air Pollution (2005)	sets objectives for reducing certain pollutants and reinforces the legislative framework for combating air pollution via two main routes: improving Community environmental legislation and integrating air quality concerns into related policies.	The guidance will take this strategy into consideration when assessing any impact on air quality.
UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992)	achieve stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. Such a level should be achieved within a time frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner.	The guidance will consider the role it has to play with regard to climate change esp. Reduction of greenhouse gases.

<p>EU Wild Birds Directive (79/409/EEC)</p>	<p>Protection scheme for all of Europe's wild birds, identifying 194 species and sub-species. Provides a framework for the conservation of wild birds in Europe. The Directive requires the identification of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) to conserve rare or vulnerable species. Aims to sustain populations of naturally occurring wild birds by sustaining areas of habitats in order to maintain populations at ecologically and scientifically sound levels.</p>	<p>Adequate consideration will be given to the impacts affecting biodiversity, with support for more detailed assessment at the local level where appropriate. The guidance must ensure that the ecological value of important SPAs is not undermined.</p>
<p>EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EC)</p>	<p>Aims to ensure biodiversity by conserving natural habitats of wild flora and fauna. It requires Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) to be identified which form a network of protected areas called Natura 2000 along with SPAs. Projects are only permitted on such sites under exceptional circumstances. Also aims to maintain, or restore, in a favourable condition designated natural types and habitats of designated species.</p>	<p>Ensure that the guidance is mindful of the list of sites of the natural habitats and species and take appropriate steps to avoid the deterioration of these habitats and avoid disturbance of scheduled, scarce or rare species. Ensure that schemes pursuant to the guidance do not result in damage to special areas of conservation. The guidance will also consider Article 10 features as these are key to the creation of a green network.</p>
<p>SE Circular EU Habitats and Birds Directive (2000)</p>	<p>EU Nature conservation policy is based on two main pieces of legislation – the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive. Its priorities are to create the European ecological network (of special areas of conservation) called NATURA 2000, and to integrate nature protection requirements into other EU policies such as agriculture, regional development and transport.</p>	<p>The Local authority should be aware of the NATURA 2000 sites and protect the setting of these areas from unsympathetic development through the creation of the guidance.</p>

National		
SEA Good Practice Guidelines (ODPM) 2005	The guidelines are designed to assist practitioners responsible for plans and programmes requiring SEA, explain the role of the Environment Agency in the process and promote good practice approaches.	The Council will use these guidelines to inform how best to carry out an environmental assessment on qualifying plans and programmes.
Forestry Commission (2004) The UK Forestry Standard: The Government's Approach to Sustainable Forestry	The two central aims of the Standard are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The sustainable management of our existing woods and forests; and - A steady expansion of tree cover to increase the many diverse benefits that forests provide. 	The guidance will include areas of semi-natural and amenity woodland in the green network where appropriate.
Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended)1981	This Act is the principle mechanism for the legislative protection of wildlife in Great Britain. The Local Plan will aim to protect designated areas and priority habitats from development influences.	There are a number of SSSIs in the area. The guidance should recognise their statutory importance and strive to ensure they are adequately protected. Schedule 1, 5, and 8 species are likely to thrive in green networks therefore consideration should be given to them through the guidance.
UK Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996	Offers protection for rare wild mammals throughout the UK, including species such as red squirrels, bats and otters.	The guidance will consider the location of habitats when mapping a conceptual green network
UK The Protection of Badgers Act 1992	UK legislation offering specific protection to badgers and their setts. It is an offence to wilfully kill, injure or mistreat a badger. Their setts are also protected from obstruction, destruction, damage and, when active, disturbance. Any work within 30 metres of a badger sett may require a licence from SNH/Scottish Government, and if destruction of the sett is unavoidable, a licence will definitely be required from SNH/Scottish Government beforehand.	Badger habitats will be considered as part of the green network.
UK Climate Change Bill	The UK Climate Change Bill sets a target of 60% CO ₂ reduction by 2050. The Bill is currently moving through the House of Commons. A Climate Change Committee has been created to take forward the actions in the Bill. Scotland will have certain devolved powers in implementing a Climate Change Bill for Scotland.	The guidance will take a strategic approach to how a green network can play a part in reducing carbon emissions.
UK Biodiversity Action Plan 1995 and 1999	It is the UK Government's response to the Convention on Biological Diversity signed in 1992. It describes the UK's biological resources and commits the government to a detailed plan for the protection of these resources. It currently has 391 Species Action Plans, 45 Habitat Action Plans and 162 Local Biodiversity Action Plans with targeted actions, a major review of the Priority Species and Habitats are underway, and will be completed in late 2008.	The guidance should be implemented with regard to the Biodiversity Duty that is stated in the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004
Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (2000 – amended 2003)	Describes the plans drawn up by the Government and devolved administrations to improve and protect ambient air quality in the UK in the medium-term. Standards set for 8 main air pollutants of particular concern to human health: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Benzene; - 1,3-butadiene; - Carbon Monoxide; - Lead; 	The guidance will have regard to the implications of different policies on air quality and promote measures which reduce the need to travel and encourage the development and uptake of more sustainable options. The guidance should seek to

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nitrogen Dioxide; - Ozone; - Particles (PM10); and - Sulphur Dioxide <p>Local authorities are charged with drawing up their own strategies to tackle the air quality objectives in their areas. Standards are to be achieved between 2003 and 2008.</p> <p>The standards are purely health based and objectives are to be derived from these, taking account practically, technical feasibility, and economic factors.</p>	ensure that air pollution within the area is managed and where possible, steps are taken to alleviate air quality problems.
Scotland National		
The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005	The Act ensures that during the preparation of a qualifying plan or programme, there will be the carrying out of an environmental assessment. The SEA process that should be followed by a responsible authority is also outlined.	The Council will follow the procedure outlined in the Act when carrying out an environment assessment on a plan or programme.
Scottish Executive et al (2005) Securing the Future. The UK's shared framework for sustainable development	Sets out the guiding principles that have to be adhered to in order to achieve the goal of sustainable development. The following principles set out the framework for all sustainable development policy within the UK: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Living within environmental limits - Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society - Achieving a sustainable economy - Promoting good governance - Using sound science responsibly 	The guidance should adhere to the five principles in order that all policies are sustainable. The emphasis within the strategy is on balancing all aspects of sustainability, and this should be considered within the guidance.
Scottish Executive: Choosing Our Future Scotland's Sustainable Development Strategy (2005)	This document sets out the action that will be taken in Scotland to turn the shared priorities set out in the UK Framework for sustainable development into action. It has six key priorities; sustainable consumption and production, climate change and energy, natural resource protection and environmental enhancement, sustainable communities, learning to live differently and delivery.	The guidance will take account of objectives relating to sustainable development. Measures for reducing the need to travel and a shift to active and public transport will positively contribute to these indicators.
Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003	Part 1 of the Act introduces: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - statutory right of responsible access; - reciprocal obligation on owners to manage their land responsibly; - places a duty on local authorities to uphold access rights and to maintain core paths; Part 2 introduces: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - community's right to buy Part 3 introduces: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - crofting community right to buy 	The guidance needs to be aware of community land ownership and liaise with communities in order to assess if there are any allocations that may be required for the community's benefit. The guidance will also take into account local paths that need to be maintained, improved and safeguarded from development.
Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006	Act of the Scottish Parliament to make further provision relating to town and country planning; to make provision for business improvement districts; and for connected purposes.	The guidance will be produced using the guidance set out in this Act and also the secondary legislation of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Development Planning) Regulations 2009
Scottish Outdoor Access Code (2003)	The Scottish Outdoor Access Code, which aims to support the access provisions of the Land Reform Act, is based on three key principles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - respect the interests of other people 	The guidance should contribute to the development of core path networks alongside the core

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - care for the environment - take responsibility for your own actions 	path plan. The guidance will identify paths that play a key part in a green framework.
Scottish Executive (2000) Rural Scotland : A New Approach	Provides strategic confirmation of key issues such as establishing National Parks, Land Reform Act (ownership and access), water quality, planning and farming and notes their contribution to environmental quality. The main environmental objectives are to maintain the quality and diversity of Scotland's natural and cultural heritage.	The guidance should endeavour to maintain and enhance water quality, and safeguard amenity woodland and important croft land in order to protect the local landscape and maintain the natural heritage of an area.
Scottish Executive (2006) Rural Development Programme for Scotland 2007-2013 The Strategic Plan	The consultation paper sets out key themes and priorities for the Rural Development Strategy for Scotland. The Strategy will guide the use of European Union Funds and other resources for rural development in the 2007-13 Scotland Rural Development Programme. The Strategy will form part of a UK National Strategy Plan which must be submitted to the European Commission. The three proposed themes for the strategy are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - underpinning performance and quality in the agriculture food processing and forestry sectors - enhancing rural landscapes and the natural heritage - promoting a more diverse rural economy and thriving communities. 	The three themes of the strategy support SEA objectives through the promotion of rural economic development and communities, natural heritage and landscape enhancement. The guidance will seek to improve facilities for local communities, whilst acknowledging the need to maintain the local landscape and will plan for maintaining the natural heritage of the region.
Scotland's Biodiversity (2004) It's In Your Hands. A Strategy for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in Scotland	Vision: 'It's 2030: Scotland is recognised as a world leader in biodiversity conservation. Everyone is involved; everyone benefits. The nation is enriched' Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - conserve what we have - sustain healthy ecosystems - create networks and connections - engage more people - promote sustainable development The strategy also underlines the need to promote understanding and appreciation of natural heritage.	Sets out the overall approach to biodiversity conservation and enhancement which the guidance should contribute towards. The guidance should identify key species and habitats, and give adequate consideration to the impacts affecting biodiversity with support for more detailed assessment at the local level where appropriate.
Scottish Biodiversity List http://www.biodiversityscotland.gov.uk	List of most important areas for biodiversity including habitats and species present in Scotland.	The guidance will consider the potential affect of green networks on species and habitats in this list.
Scottish Historical Environment Policy (2008) (HS)	The Scottish Historic Environment Policy sets out Scottish Ministers' policies, providing direction for Historic Scotland and a policy framework that informs the work of a wide range of public sector organisations.	The guidance will take into consideration the SHEP when built and cultural heritage of elements of the green network are being discussed.
Scottish Executive(2001) A Forward Strategy for Scottish Agriculture	The Strategy sets out the national vision for the agricultural and land management sector, responding positively to contextual change and providing a more viable future for the industry. It aims to make the industry more prosperous by establishing better connections with the market. It views agriculture as an integral part of rural development and emphasises the importance of environmental stewardship.	The guidance should take account of the concerns and opinions of local crofters, farmers, estate managers and landholders in the provision of a green network.
The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations	Under the Regulations, competent authorities i.e. any Minister, government department, public body, or person	The guidance will have regard to the EC Habitats

1994 (as amended)	holding public office, have a general duty, in the exercise of any of their functions, to have regard to the EC Habitats Directive.	Directive.
Scottish Executive (2001) Potential Adaptation Strategies for Climate Change in Scotland	Identifies a full range of potential adaptation strategies for Scotland, including those specifically relating to agriculture, forestry, fishing and biodiversity. Emphasises the importance of flexible resource management and the need to move on from defining conservation objectives on the basis of single species or fixed locations as these may no longer be achievable. The strategy notes that: 'the fragmented and often overlapping nature of policies for forestry, agriculture and biodiversity impedes appropriate adaptation strategies. In the medium-term, drivers of change from agriculture, from mitigating greenhouse gas emissions, from sustainability issues and from the protection of biodiversity may lead to a blurring and perhaps complete removal of the distinctions between policies for forestry, agriculture and biodiversity.'	The guidance will take account of the Scottish share and consider measures from the transport sector which would positively contribute to the targets, for example reducing the need to travel and encouraging modal shifts to more sustainable methods.
Scottish Executive (2003) Let's Make Scotland More Active	The Strategy focuses on the need to increase physical activity amongst Scotland's population and sets targets of achieving 50% of adults and 80% of children meeting at least the minimum recommended levels of physical activity by 2022.	The guidance will promote the development of facilities (e.g. cycle, footpaths and sports centres) that encourage local populations to become more active, throughout a green network. The guidance will take into account health related impacts of different strategies and seek to promote more active travel.
Scottish Executive (2003) Improving Health in Scotland The Challenge	Addresses wider health issues and aims to improve life expectancy. Also aims to reduce health inequalities between deprived and affluent people. Aims to 'mainstream' health policy so that it becomes an integral part of wider public sector policies. To achieve the required 1% annual increase, the strategy focuses on ensuring that physical activity is encouraged across the population as a whole, and targeting specific communities for basic changes in activity levels.	The guidance will seek to identify the development of facilities (e.g. cycle, footpaths and sports centres) that encourage local populations to become more active. The guidance will take into account health related impacts of different strategies and seek to promote more active travel.
Delivering a Healthy Scotland Meeting the Challenge: Health Improvement In Scotland Annual Report (2006)	Aims to improve health and narrow the health inequalities gap, with a strategy to achieve a more rapid rate of health improvement. Report illustrates progress and actions on health improvements and how it contributes to key cross cutting government themes, e.g. sustainable development, social justice and community regeneration. Makes reference to the ways in which sustainable development supports health improvement and vice versa, in particular maintaining and increasing levels of green spaces in and near towns for recreation and enabling walking and cycling; funding initiatives that promote non car based travel.	Take measures in the guidance to promote health lifestyles. For example protect accessible green spaces to encourage physical recreation/ active travel.
Forestry Commission Scotland (2004) Framework Document for Forest Enterprise Scotland	The purpose of Forest Enterprise Scotland is to manage the national forest estate to deliver economic, environmental and social objectives of the Scottish Forestry Strategy. Guiding principles include: - sustainable forest management	The guidance and the SEA process will take account of the principles outlined, in relation to particular issues concerning community access to forests for

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - delivering the Scottish Forestry Strategy - helping to deliver other Scottish Executive agendas - efficiency and effectiveness 	recreational purposes.
Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) and SNH (2003) Habitat Networks for Wildlife and People	Aims to enrich the natural heritage of Scotland by the creation of woodland networks through linking woodlands, old and new, to form a more continuous woodland cover. This benefits wildlife by providing wider and more sustainable habitats and should enhance opportunities for people who live near, work in or simply enjoy woodlands. Proposes methods by which woods and forests can be linked and suggests woodland should be viewed as an integral part of the wider landscape rather than as individual stands of trees.	The guidance should aim to complement this strategy by encouraging an increase in woodland cover and the creation of forest crofts and woodland walks.
Water Environment and Water Services (Scotland) Act 2003 (WEWS)	<p>The Act translates the EC Water Framework Directive into the Scottish context. It includes a number of key commitments relating to Scotland's water environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishing River Basin Management districts; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - preparing River Basin Management Plans - regulation of controlled activities (including those likely to cause pollution to the water environment, those involved in abstraction, and those from construction on or near water). <p>The Act aims to prevent further deterioration of water quality and has given Scottish Ministers powers to introduce regulatory controls over activities in order to protect and improve Scotland's water environment. That is, wetlands, rivers, lochs, transitional waters (estuaries and saline lagoons), coastal waters and water under the ground (groundwater).</p>	The guidance will reflect the Act in the development of adequate drainage systems. Future expansion of local water provision or abstraction and wastewater handling to cope with expected population increases will require close consultation with SEPA and Scottish Water.
The Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2005 (CAR)	<p>Brings into effect the regulation of the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • abstractions from surface and groundwater; • impoundment of rivers, lochs, wetlands and transitional waters; • groundwater recharge; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - engineering in rivers, lochs and wetlands; - engineering activities in the vicinity of rivers, lochs and wetland which are likely to have a significant adverse impact upon the water environment; - activities liable to cause pollution; - direct or indirect discharge of certain substances to groundwater; and • any other activities which directly or indirectly are liable to cause a significant impact upon the water environment. 	The Regulations apply across the water environment to provide a holistic approach to pollution control and protection of the water environment. Any activities that may fall within the remit of these regulations will require close consultation with SEPA and the receipt of appropriate licences.
Flood Prevention and Land Drainage (Scotland) Act 1997	<p>The introduction of the Flood Prevention and Land Drainage (Scotland) Act 1997 instigated changes to the responsibilities and duties of Local Authorities in Scotland.</p> <p>In respect of this Act the flooding referred to is the flooding of land, not being agricultural land. Flooding of agricultural land falls out with the requirements of the Act. The implications on The Highland Council of this Act impose the following additional requirements:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Assessment of watercourses, from time to time for the purpose of ascertaining whether any such watercourse is in a condition likely to flood. b) A duty to maintain watercourses, which are in a condition likely to cause flooding, or where works would substantially reduce the likelihood of such 	The guidance should take account of flood plains and areas at risk of flooding from SEPA's flood risk maps. Flood plains may form a significant part of the green network.

	<p>flooding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notification of Local Authorities out with the area. Where it appears to The Highland Council that any watercourse in the area is in a condition which is likely to cause flooding, out with the area, the Council shall notify the local authority for the area in which the land is situated. • Reports shall be published, at two year intervals. 	
Forestry Commission Scotland: Scottish Forestry Strategy, 2006	<p>This document sets out a framework for taking forestry through the first half of this century. It sets out a vision for a forestry sector that is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • diverse and strong • in tune with the environment • employing many people in a wide range of enterprises • providing the many other services and benefits that people need, now and for the future. 	The guidance should take account of forestry issues.
Scottish Executive Trunk Road Biodiversity Action Plan (TRBAP) (2000)	<p>Sets the Scottish Executive's commitment to protecting Scottish biodiversity on the trunk road network. The purpose of the document is twofold:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to assist in the delivery of biodiversity targets and objectives as set down in the Scottish Local Biodiversity Action Plans. - to raise awareness of biodiversity in all engineers, managers, planners, designers and ecologists working on the Scottish Trunk Road network. 	The guidance should take account of any recommendations and actions outlined within the Trunk Road Biodiversity Action Plan.
Scotland's Scenic Heritage (1978) Countryside Commission for Scotland	<p>this report sets out the results of a review conducted to identify areas of unsurpassed attractiveness which must be conserved as part of our national heritage.</p>	The guidance will take this into consideration when working toward the plan objectives of Quality Environment in Highland.
Scottish Climate Change Bill	<p>The aim of the Bill is to establish a framework to enable more actions to reduce Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change. The Bill is currently out for consultation and The Highland Council have submitted a response</p>	The guidance will take into consideration the provisions of the act.
Meeting the Needs, Priorities, Actions and Targets for Sustainable Development in Scotland (2002)	<p>Prioritises responsible resource use; Encourages energy conservation and promotes use of power from renewable sources; Ensures the provision of better land use planning, alternative service delivery and sustainable transport systems.</p>	The guidance will promote sustainable travel
Scottish Executive Policy Statement for Scotland - Designing Places	<p>Sets out the Scottish Governments Policy to encourage well designed places throughout Scotland</p>	The guidance will take the provisions of Designing Places into consideration when mapping the conceptual network and setting principles.
Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act	<p>Sets out a series of measures which are designed to conserve biodiversity and to protect and enhance the biological and geological natural heritage of Scotland. Places a general duty on all public bodies to further the conservation of biodiversity.</p>	The guidance will take into consideration the measures proposed in the Act
Physical Activity and Sport Strategy	<p>Aims to increase and maintain the proportion of physically active people in Scotland. Sets targets to achieve 50% of adults aged over 16 and 80% of all children aged under 16 who meet the minimum recommended level of physical activity by 2022 through building healthy public policy. Creating supportive environments, strengthening community action, developing personal skills and directing health services</p>	The guidance will take into consideration the Physical Activity and Sport Strategy and will help to implement this through promotion of open space for use for physical activity.

	at the people who need it most.	
Scottish Biodiversity Action Plan 2005-8 and 2008-2011	Its aim is to conserve biodiversity for the health, enjoyment and wellbeing of the people of Scotland now and in the future. It will do this by a number of measures; 1. Species & Habitats: To halt the loss of biodiversity and continue to reverse previous losses through targeted action for species and habitats, 2. People: To increase awareness, understanding and enjoyment of biodiversity, and engage many more people in conservation and enhancement, 3. Landscapes & Ecosystems: To restore and enhance biodiversity in all our urban, rural and marine environments through better planning, design and practice, 4. Integration & Co-ordination: To develop an effective management framework that ensures biodiversity is taken into account in all decision making, 5. Knowledge: To ensure that the best new and existing knowledge on biodiversity is available to all policy makers and practitioners.	The guidance should be implemented with regard to the Biodiversity Duty that is stated in the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004
Draft River Basin Management Plan for the Scotland River Basin District (2008)	The draft river basin management plans (below) will ensure that statutory agencies, private organisations, public sector bodies and individuals work together to create a final plan that addresses all aspects of water management.	The guidance will make sure that the recommendations and findings of the RBMP will be taken into consideration when working to formulate policies on the water environment.
Changing out Ways - Scotland's Climate Change Programme (2006)	The Scottish Executive is committed to playing its full part to tackle climate change. Key elements of this programme are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - presenting a vision for Scotland and how we are to move forward - quantifying Scotland's 'equitable contribution' in carbon terms - setting a Scottish target for carbon emission reductions - demonstrating Scotland's achievements so far - setting out new actions and future directions across the main sectors - responding to the inevitable consequences of climate change 	The guidance will support active and public transport, and will highlight the need for the provision of locally important pedestrian and cycle paths.
State of Scotland's Greenspace (2009)	The State of Scotland's Greenspace 2009 reveals for the first time the extent of urban greenspace in Scotland. It also provides information on the different types of greenspace and charts local authority work on greenspace audits and strategies.	The guidance will consider the findings of this report.
Scottish National Planning Policy Tier		
National Planning Framework for Scotland 2	This is the governments land use element of its economic strategy and sets out how each part of Scotland can play its part in making Scotland the best small country in the world.	The guidance must take into account the information within NPF2
Scottish Planning Policy (2009)	This sets out national policy, the purpose of the planning system and the objectives for core parts of the planning system	The guidance will have regard to the SPP to ensure the guidance meets with the Scottish Governments view on green networks
PAN 42 Archaeology - The Planning Process & Scheduled Monument Procedures (1994)	Advice on national planning policy matters related to the relationship between the planning process and schedule monument procedures.	Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance will have due regard to the contents and provisions of the PAN in the formulation of the guidance.

PAN 43 Golf Courses and Associated Developments (1994)	Golf course proposals will be assessed on the demand for such development in the area and their ability to fit into the landscape.	The development and design of golf courses can provide attractive green, open spaces. However, such development will impact on biodiversity. The guidance should therefore consider the role of golf courses in a green network
PAN 44 Fitting New Housing Development into the Landscape (1994)	House building is likely to continue to be the most widespread urban land use change for many years ahead. Recycling disused and vacant land as brownfield sites for new housing remains a national priority and can provide for a large part of these needs. Demand for new housing is high in many settlements, and development may threaten the character or identity of a place. A cumulative loss of landscape quality has already become apparent. Suburban housing estates, often devised with little appreciation of local character or a sense of place, have taken shape around the fringes of many towns.	Development Plans will advocate sensitive siting and design of new development within existing settlements, where possible. The guidance will set out how green networks can help to integrate development into the landscape.
PAN 51 Planning, Environmental Protection and Regulation (1997)	The environment and land use of Scotland provide the basis for sustaining life, economic development and social well-being. A range of specific environmental protection regimes are designed to safeguard the natural and built environment. They operate alongside the land use planning system which aims to ensure that development takes place in suitable locations and is sustainable, while also providing protection from inappropriate development.	Locations where there are special environmental protection concerns should be set out in the guidance if they are to form part of the green network.
PAN 60 Planning for Natural Heritage (2000)	Complements SPP on Natural Heritage, with examples of good planning practice in relation to natural heritage from across Scotland highlighted in a number of cases. Provides advice on how development and the planning system can contribute to the conservation, enhancement, enjoyment and understanding of Scotland's natural environment, and encourages developers and planning authorities to be positive and creative in addressing natural heritage issues.	The guidance will consider the implications of this PAN on the development of a green network.
PAN 61 Planning and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (2001)	Planners have a key role in highlighting the need for Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) and co-ordinating SUDS projects.	The guidance should set out how SUDS can play a role in the formulation of a green network.
PAN 65 Planning and Open Space (2008)	Gives advice on the role of the planning system in protecting and enhancing existing open spaces and providing high quality new spaces. Supports NPPG 11: Sport, Physical Recreation and Open Space. Also sets out how local authorities can prepare open space strategies and gives examples of good practice in providing, managing and maintaining spaces. The advice relates to open space in settlements: villages, towns and major urban areas. A key aim of the PAN is to raise the profile of open space as a planning issue.	The green network will aim to protect areas that are valued; and ensure provision of appropriate, quality, open spaces in, or within easy reach of, new development.
PAN 68 Design Statements (2003)	One of a series of advice notes which addresses design in more detail and should be read in conjunction with them. It explains what a design statement is, why it is a useful tool, when it is required, and how it should be prepared and presented. The PAN does not introduce a prescriptive approach. It seeks to ensure that local authorities and applicants become more confident in preparing them.	The green network will encourage the good general design of built development and will offer guidance on specific areas where the high quality of design is particularly relevant in order to fit development sensitively

	The aim is to see design statements used more effectively in the planning process and to create places of lasting quality.	in to the landscape.
PAN 69 Planning and Building Standards Advice on Flooding (2004)	Provides background information and best practice advice in support of Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) 7: Planning and Flooding. The SPP aims to prevent future development which would have a significant probability of being affected by flooding or which would increase the probability of flooding elsewhere. The PAN takes as a starting point the responsibilities of local authorities and developers in ensuring that future development is not located in areas with a significant risk of flooding, including functional flood plains. However, there are circumstances where development would benefit from selecting designs, forms of construction and materials which may help to minimise the effects of a flood event on the property.	The guidance will consider role flooding will play in a green network.
PAN 72 Housing in the Countryside (2005)	This PAN aims to create more opportunities for good quality rural housing which respects Scottish landscapes and building traditions.	The guidance should consider how housing in the countryside could contribute to the green network.
PAN 79 Water and Drainage (2006)	Development Plans guide the future development and use of land in the long term public interest. Local Plans play a key role in identifying suitable locations for development in the context of an overall settlement strategy. Provision of water and waste water is an important consideration in the delivery of public policy objectives, including those set out in development plans.	Issues relating to water and drainage should not be viewed in isolation but considered in relation to the objectives of the guidance.
PAN 83 Masterplanning	This will offer guidance on how to formulate a Masterplan for a given area.	The guidance should set out the role the green network needs to play in the masterplanning of major development sites.
European Protected Species, Development Sites and the Planning System: Interim Guidance for Local Authorities on Licensing Arrangements (2001(Amended 2006))	Clarifies the interim licensing arrangements which currently apply in cases where European protected species are present on any site which is the subject of a development proposal.	The guidance should consider this interim guidance when bringing forward Green Network principles.
Regional		
A Smart, Successful Highlands and Islands (Highlands and Islands Enterprise, 2005)	This is an enterprise strategy for the Highlands and Islands. Its central aim is to realise the populations' full potential on a sustainable basis, and outlines the strategic objectives of strengthening communities, developing skills, growing businesses and making global connections. In particular it addresses the issues of remoteness, affordability of housing, unique cultural and natural assets, lower than average incomes, increasing rural populations and balancing growth, and increasing business development.	The guidance will reflect the need to build communities' prospects for a sustainable future, through land allocations for business and housing (emphasising affordable housing), protecting and enhancing natural and built heritage, and encouraging (where appropriate) the use of renewable energy.
The Highland Council's Planning for Sustainability in the Highlands DPPG (2006)	This is a guidance note in support of sustainable design. It offers advice on designing in a sustainable way to maximise the benefits which new development can provide while aiming to reduce the carbon footprint that this will create.	All new Local Development Plans for the Highlands will now place a requirement on planning applicants to demonstrate, by means of a Sustainable Design Statement, that their proposals take account of sustainable design practice. The guidance

		will describe the role it has to play with respect to this.
Highland Council Local Transport Strategy (2000)(currently being reviewed)	The Highland Council prepare a Local Transport Strategy and implement the policies, plans and projects to improve and manage the Highland transport system.	This document will be utilised to enable and encourage active transport improvements in a green network.
City of Inverness Greenspace Strategy	Sets out a long term vision for protecting and enhancing greenspace within the city. Sets out the importance of greenspace in Inverness and the positive impacts it can have on health, economy, environment, education and tourism.	Should be implemented with regard to the Biodiversity Duty that is stated in the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 and will deliver towards the objectives within the guidance to help create a healthier Highland.
A96 Corridor Master plan	An implementation scheme covering the overall phasing, infrastructure, funding, developer contributions protocol and deliver mechanisms for expansion and development eastwards of Inverness to the border with Moray.	The guidance is to update the green framework section of this masterplan
Highland Climate Change Strategy	A requirement of being a signatory to Scotland's Climate Change Declaration, the Climate Change Strategy will set out Highland Councils actions to mitigate the causes of Climate Change and adapt to its likely impacts. The Strategy will be developed during the term of this administration.	This will be taken into consideration when bringing forward the guidance and consider the role a green network has to play.
Inverness Local Plan	Sets the strategy and land use framework for the development of land and protection of the environment in the Inverness area	The guidance will supplement guidance already in the Local Plan.
Ross and Cromarty East Local Plan	Sets the strategy and land use framework for the development of land and protection of the environment in the Ross and Cromarty area	The guidance will supplement guidance already in the Local Plan.
Wester Ross Local Plan	Sets the strategy and land use framework for the development of land and protection of the environment in the Wester Ross area	The guidance will supplement guidance already in the Local Plan.
Sutherland Local Plan	Sets the strategy and land use framework for the development of land and protection of the environment in the Sutherland area	The guidance will supplement guidance already in the Local Plan.
Caithness Local Plan	Sets the strategy and land use framework for the development of land and protection of the environment in the Caithness area	The guidance will supplement guidance already in the Local Plan.
West Highland & Islands Local Plan	Sets the strategy and land use framework for the development of land and protection of the environment in the West Highland and Islands area	The guidance will supplement guidance already in the Local Plan.
Nairnshire local Plan	Sets the strategy and land use framework for the development of land and protection of the environment in the Nairnshire area	The guidance will supplement guidance already in the Local Plan.
Supplementary Planning Guideline on Residential Development Layout and Design	This is in preparation and will set out guidance on Residential layout and design	The guidance will consider the implications of this emerging guidance.
Supplementary Planning Guideline on Developer Contributions	This guidance is in preparation and will set out guidance on Developer Contributions	The guidance will consider the implications of this emerging guidance.
Open Space in New Residential Development: Interim Supplementary Guidance	This guidance sets standards for quantity, quality and accessibility of open space in new residential development	The guidance will tie with this guidance to provide a comprehensive approach to green network planning.
Highland Access Strategy	Aims to address the needs and aspirations of people of all ages and abilities to deliver a wide range of recreational and enjoyment of the environment benefits for walkers, cyclists, equestrians and paddlers. Thereby contributing to	The guidance will tie with this guidance to provide a comprehensive approach to green network planning.

	social inclusion, health improvements, sustainable transport and improvement to the overall quality of life by unlocking this potential and guiding the way in which the Council and its partners can take forward plans for access throughout the Highland Council area.	
Highland Area Tourism Strategy (partnership strategy)	Produced in 2006 by the Highland Area Tourism Partnership sets out a Strategy (until 2015) and Action Plan (3 year) which sets out how Highland tourism could be developed to achieve the Government's 50% growth target by 2015.	Tourism will be a strong influence and driver for the Highland green network
Highland Forest and Woodland Strategy	This document sets out the Council's aspirations for forestry and woodland in the Highlands. It provides guidance for developers and a focus for the Council's engagement with the private sector, the Forestry Commission and Forest Enterprise, in its role as consultee on forestry applications.	The contents of this document will influence the mapping of a green network.
Interim Housing in the Countryside Supplementary Guidance	Sets out policy guidance on how the current housing in the countryside policy should be applied.	The guidance will consider the role green networks have to play in successfully integrating houses in the countryside into the landscape
Sutherland Draft Core Path Plan	This document identifies the key strategic links which will provide for a system of paths and waterways ("core paths") sufficient for the purpose of giving the public reasonable access throughout their area and to the wider access resource	The guidance will tie with this guidance to provide a comprehensive approach to green network planning.
Lochaber Draft Core Path Plan	This document identifies the key strategic links which will provide for a system of paths and waterways ("core paths") sufficient for the purpose of giving the public reasonable access throughout their area and to the wider access resource	The guidance will tie with this guidance to provide a comprehensive approach to green network planning.
Ross and Cromarty Draft Core Path Plan	This document identifies the key strategic links which will provide for a system of paths and waterways ("core paths") sufficient for the purpose of giving the public reasonable access throughout their area and to the wider access resource	The guidance will tie with this guidance to provide a comprehensive approach to green network planning.
Skye and Lochalsh Draft Core Path Plan	This document identifies the key strategic links which will provide for a system of paths and waterways ("core paths") sufficient for the purpose of giving the public reasonable access throughout their area and to the wider access resource	The guidance will tie with this guidance to provide a comprehensive approach to green network planning.
Caithness Draft Core Path Plan	This document identifies the key strategic links which will provide for a system of paths and waterways ("core paths") sufficient for the purpose of giving the public reasonable access throughout their area and to the wider access resource	The guidance will tie with this guidance to provide a comprehensive approach to green network planning.
Inverness and Nairn Draft Core Path Plan	This document identifies the key strategic links which will provide for a system of paths and waterways ("core paths") sufficient for the purpose of giving the public reasonable access throughout their area and to the wider access resource	The guidance will tie with this guidance to provide a comprehensive approach to green network planning.
Highland Open Space Audit	A comprehensive audit of open space in Highland was carried out in Summer/Autumn 2009. The findings of this will be published in Autumn 2010. The audit considers the quality, quantity and accessibility of greenspace in Highland.	The guidance will take into consideration the audits findings.
Caithness Local Biodiversity Action Plan	Considers the habitats and species present in Caithness, lists the main issues, and highlights some projects that are already working to improve the biodiversity of the area. The Plan then identifies	The Guidance will have due regard to the provisions of the LBAP and will support their delivery.

	some opportunities for future projects that could help conserve and enhance the biodiversity of Caithness in the next five to ten years.	
Sutherland Local Biodiversity Action Plan	Considers the habitats and species present in Sutherland, lists the main issues, and highlights some projects that are already working to improve the biodiversity of the area. The Plan then identifies some opportunities for future projects that could help conserve and enhance the biodiversity of Sutherland in the next five to ten years.	The Guidance will have due regard to the provisions of the LBAP and will support their delivery.
Wester Ross Local Biodiversity Action Plan	Considers the habitats and species present in Wester Ross, lists the main issues, and highlights some projects that are already working to improve the biodiversity of the area. The Plan then identifies some opportunities for future projects that could help conserve and enhance the biodiversity of Wester Ross in the next five to ten years.	The Guidance will have due regard to the provisions of the LBAP and will support their delivery.
Ross and Cromarty East Local Biodiversity Action Plan	Considers the habitats and species present in Ross and Cromarty, lists the main issues, and highlights some projects that are already working to improve the biodiversity of the area. The Plan then identifies some opportunities for future projects that could help conserve and enhance the biodiversity of Ross and Cromarty in the next five to ten years.	The Guidance will have due regard to the provisions of the LBAP and will support their delivery.
Skye and Lochalsh Local Biodiversity Action Plan	Considers the habitats and species present in Skye and Lochalsh, lists the main issues, and highlights some projects that are already working to improve the biodiversity of the area. The Plan then identifies some opportunities for future projects that could help conserve and enhance the biodiversity of Skye and Lochalsh in the next five to ten years.	The Guidance will have due regard to the provisions of the LBAP and will support their delivery.
Lochaber Local Biodiversity Action Plan	Considers the habitats and species present in Caithness, lists the main issues, and highlights some projects that are already working to improve the biodiversity of the area. The Plan then identifies some opportunities for future projects that could help conserve and enhance the biodiversity of Caithness in the next five to ten years.	The Guidance will have due regard to the provisions of the LBAP and will support their delivery.
Inverness and Nairn Local Biodiversity Action Plan	Considers the habitats and species present in Inverness, lists the main issues, and highlights some projects that are already working to improve the biodiversity of the area. The Plan then identifies some opportunities for future projects that could help conserve and enhance the biodiversity of Inverness in the next five to ten years.	The Guidance will have due regard to the provisions of the LBAP and will support their delivery.
Badenoch and Strathspey Biodiversity Action Plan	Considers the habitats and species present in Badenoch and Strathspey, lists the main issues, and highlights some projects that are already working to improve the biodiversity of the area. The Plan then identifies some opportunities for future projects that could help conserve and enhance the biodiversity of Badenoch and Strathspey in the next five to ten years.	The Guidance will have due regard to the provisions of the LBAP and will support their delivery.
Caithness and Sutherland Landscape Character Assessment (1998)	LCA provides baseline information that can be used to guide landscape change - by feeding into development plans, decisions on development proposals, land management plans, indicative forestry strategies and agri-environment schemes.	The guidance will have regard to the principles of the LCA when identifying green networks and proposing green network principles.
Ross and Cromarty Landscape Character Assessment (1999)	LCA provides baseline information that can be used to guide landscape change - by feeding into development plans, decisions on development	The guidance will have regard to the principles of the LCA when identifying green networks and

	proposals, land management plans, indicative forestry strategies and agri-environment schemes.	proposing green network principles.
Inverness Landscape Character Assessment (1996)	LCA provides baseline information that can be used to guide landscape change - by feeding into development plans, decisions on development proposals, land management plans, indicative forestry strategies and agri-environment schemes.	The guidance will have regard to the principles of the LCA when identifying green networks and proposing green network principles.
Skye and Lochalsh Landscape Character Assessment	LCA provides baseline information that can be used to guide landscape change - by feeding into development plans, decisions on development proposals, land management plans, indicative forestry strategies and agri-environment schemes.	The guidance will have regard to the principles of the LCA when identifying green networks and proposing green network principles.
Lochaber Landscape Character Assessment (1998)	LCA provides baseline information that can be used to guide landscape change - by feeding into development plans, decisions on development proposals, land management plans, indicative forestry strategies and agri-environment schemes.	The guidance will have regard to the principles of the LCA when identifying green networks and proposing green network principles.
Ben Alder, Ardverikie, Creag Meagaidh Landscape Character Assessment 199)	LCA provides baseline information that can be used to guide landscape change - by feeding into development plans, decisions on development proposals, land management plans, indicative forestry strategies and agri-environment schemes.	The guidance will have regard to the principles of the LCA when identifying green networks and proposing green network principles.
Inner Moray Firth Landscape Character Area (1997)	LCA provides baseline information that can be used to guide landscape change - by feeding into development plans, decisions on development proposals, land management plans, indicative forestry strategies and agri-environment schemes.	The guidance will have regard to the principles of the LCA when identifying green networks and proposing green network principles.
Moray and Nairn Landscape Character Assessment (1998)	LCA provides baseline information that can be used to guide landscape change - by feeding into development plans, decisions on development proposals, land management plans, indicative forestry strategies and agri-environment schemes.	The guidance will have regard to the principles of the LCA when identifying green networks and proposing green network principles.
North East Highland, North Highland and West Highland River Basin Management Plans (Not yet published)	These river basin management plans (RBMPs) ensure that public sector bodies, businesses and individuals work together to protect the water environment and address significant impacts by co-ordinating all aspects of water management for the next 6 years.	The Guidance will have due consideration to the provisions of these area River Basin Management Plans.

As it can be seen in the table above, there is a wide range of international and national strategies which will influence the supplementary guidance. In addition there are a number of different local and regional plans, policies and strategies which the supplementary guidance may influence in order to deliver the vision set out in the guidance:

“The creation of a sustainable, connected network of high quality, fit for purpose greenspaces and green corridors which deliver benefits to the economic, environmental and social wellbeing of the whole area.”

Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment

General

The Highland Council extends over an area of 26,484 square kilometres and is an area of high quality natural environment and diverse historic background. It has a population of 217,440 and at 8.2 persons per square kilometre, is sparsely populated compared with other regions in Scotland. A large proportion of the land area is identified as “fragile” in terms of remoteness and scarcity of population.

Natural heritage designations cover a range of habitats in Highland. In terms of international designation there are 13 Ramsar sites and 91 Special Areas of Conservation (SACS). In addition there are 367 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) which cover important biological, geomorphological and geological areas. There are also 26 National Nature Reserves in Highland and in addition the Cairngorms National Park lies partly within the authority of the Highland Council. 16 National Scenic Areas are found within the Highland region and 46 Special Protection Areas. These natural heritage features are available at Appendix 1.

Areas which are considered to have special architectural or historic interest are designated as Conservation Areas. At present there are 30 Conservation Areas in Highland. Any building or structure which is considered to be of special architectural or historic interest is listed: Those of national importance are listed as “Category A”; those of regional importance “Category B”; and those of local importance listed as “Category C”. The number of listed building in Highland is 3014. They can be seen at Appendix 2.

There are 51 areas in Highland that are listed in the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes. National guidance requires the settings, as well as the gardens themselves, be safeguarded from unsympathetic development. The history of Highland region and relative remoteness, means that many archaeological features of all periods remain well preserved, including 1237 Scheduled monuments. These features have been identified on a map in Appendix 2 - Baseline Information Maps.

Most Highland soils are very shallow, often due to shallow parent materials. In some parts of Highland, soil erosion is becoming increasingly significant. Peat is very common throughout Highland and Caithness and Sutherland contain one of the largest and most intact areas of blanket bog in the world, supporting a distinctive wildlife community. A map showing the extent of the blanket bog is shown in Appendix 2.

With a large geographical area and a low population size, Highland region is not affected by air pollution from extensive road networks and heavy industries as in other parts of Scotland. The air quality is reflected by the extensive number of lichen communities of international importance.

The quality of the freshwater environment is also recognised internationally for its importance as a spawning ground for wild salmon and use by whiskey distilleries. The many lochs and rivers that characterise the area are important for local economies and provide the scenic backdrop that encourages so many tourists to the area.

The current state of the environment with regard to Green Networks

Green Networks provide opportunities to realise further value of ecosystems. Given the variety of habitats and species in Highland green networks play a role in maintaining the rich biodiversity of both large and small scale ecosystems. Highland has a rich habitat and species network consisting of over three quarters of the UK priority habitats (51) including Blanket Bog, native Pinewood and sheltered muddy gravels. These and other habitats support 455 species identified in the UK biodiversity action plan. Each Local Biodiversity Action Plan lists the habitats and species in the area covered by the plan and have summarised these in maps showing habitats distribution. Given the difficulty of mapping species due to frequent movement it is not practical to include the distribution of these in this section of the plan however the Local

Biodiversity Action Plans provide lists of habitats and species and identify areas where these species are most prominent.

Green Networks provide significant opportunity to mitigate the affects of climate change and facilitate species adaptation to it. This can be due to providing corridors for species movement and new habitats or through the creation of green lungs for urban areas and sequestration of carbon through the “green” habitats in Highland. One of the most prominent areas of “green” habitat in Highland is woodland which covers over 15% of the land area of Highland.

The Highland Council area currently has 3362km of Rights of ways, 3959km of promoted paths and 8831km of other paths identified within the Council area. The Highland Greenspace Audit has identified over 1354ha of formal open space which makes a significant contribution to green networks in and around settlements.

The key facts and the baseline information (included as Appendix 2 to this Environmental Report) collated for this Environmental Report has enabled us to identify some environmental problems in the Highland area with specific information related to green networks. Environmental problems that affect the area are identified in table 2 below. The some of the negative trends negative trends highlighted in this table are likely to continue if there is not additional guidance on Green Networks, supplementary to that in the highland wide Local Development Plan.

Table 2 Environmental Impacts Relevant to Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance

SEA Issue	Potential Environmental Impact resulting from Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance	Implications for Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance
Biodiversity, flora, fauna	Less stress on biodiversity and loss of habitat resulting from development. Modification of conflicts between designated areas and economic development. Vulnerability of rare and endangered flora and fauna to changes in climate should be reduced in the longer term. Likelihood of detrimental impact on local landscape character should be reduced. Reduced risk of loss of native woodland cover. Fragmentation of habitats.	The guidance needs to ensure that the principles of the networks clearly set out the aims for protection and enhancement of Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna. Sites of specific importance should be included in the mapping exercise of the green network. It is likely that there will be a significant impact on this SEA issue. Fragmentation of habitats can lead to the loss of connectivity and a reduction in species movement, reducing the ability for adaptation to climate change. The guidance should address this by including specific provision to tackle and reverse the fragmentation of habitats. This should be done at small scale and large scale to ensure the movement within neighbourhoods and also species migration can be safeguarded.
Population	Increasing population putting increased pressure on the natural environment in terms of increased recreational access to the outdoors.	The green network will identify opportunities to come into contact with the natural environment through better recreational access. The green network guidance will need to reiterate the need for responsible access to the outdoors. It is likely that in time there will be a significant impact on this SEA issue.
Human health	Increased opportunity for recreation. Green spaces can offer benefits in terms of social and mental health.	The guidance will promote the recreational benefits of a green network and set principles on recreation and leisure to facilitate a move to a healthier

		highland. It is likely that in the longer term there will be a significant impact on this SEA issue.
Soil	Limited impact on a reduction in soil sealing.	The guidance will identify the need to build green networks right through new developments therefore reducing soil sealing. The guidance will have very limited impact in this respect.
Water	Green networks will reduce surface water run-off, increase the lag time of rainfall entering the watercourse, reduce risk of flooding by providing integration with natural drainage solutions such as SuDS.	The guidance will highlight the benefits for the water environment, however it is likely that these will be limited.
Air	Green infrastructure identified as part of a green network can act as a “green lung” for newly developed areas.	The guidance will highlight this as a benefit however it is not likely that the guidance will have a significant impact in this respect.
Climatic factors	Green networks can highlight opportunities for active travel both within and outwith settlements. In green networks can help species adapt to climate change	The guidance will highlight the opportunity for active travel within the green network and the benefits it may bring with regard to climate change. It is likely that there maybe some significant impacts.
Material assets	Green networks can enable the development of additional active travel links	The guidance will identify a range of projects which may contribute to a more connected network of footpaths and cycle links. It is likely that there may be significant impacts resulting from this SEA issue.
Cultural heritage	Reduced risk of impact on the setting for cultural heritage features.	The green network could identify certain cultural features which are part of the green network and set out ways in which the green network can enhance/protect its settings.
Landscape	Avoid the degradation of local landscape character which may occur through new development.	The guidance can make linkages to other design guidance being produced to ensure that a green network can be a positive tool in enabling development to integrate better into the landscape.

The key facts and the baseline information (included as Appendix 2 to this Environmental Report) collated for this Environmental Report has enabled us to identify some environmental problems in the Highland area with specific information related to green networks. Environmental problems that affect the area are identified in table 2 above. The negative trends highlighted in this table are likely to continue if there is not additional guidance on Green Networks, supplementary to that in the Highland wide Local Development Plan.

Data Availability

Much data and information was available through the consultation authorities, the Scottish Government and there was a wealth of data on offer to the Highland Council to inform the baseline data for this Environmental Report. However, there are a number of factors which can limit the validity of this data:

- Some parts of Highland area have been more widely studied than others. Therefore, the quality and accuracy of information for some areas will be greater than for others;
- Collation of data has been prominently gathered on a Highland wide basis, including the Cairngorms National Park, therefore, it has proved difficult at times to dissect this information for the area covered by this guidance only;
- The data relevant to this Report is held in different forms. If information is held in databases and Geographic Information Systems it can be more easily queried than information which is only in the printed form in reports, books or even on websites.

Likely evolution of the environment without Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance

Schedule 3 of the Act requires that the likely evolution of the state of the environment without implementation of the PPS must be included in the Environmental Report.

If the Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance is not produced then the approach that would be taken for Highland would be to solely rely on the broad policy framework set out in the Highland wide Local Development Plan. This policy (proposed plan version) states;

“Green Networks should be protected and enhanced. Development in areas where green networks have been identified should seek to avoid fragmentation of a network and/or improve connectivity, where appropriate. The Council will identify green networks around regional and sub-regional centres using the methodology described in Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance. “

Without the Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance it is considered that the likely future changes to the area will be;

- Further fragmentation of habitats through development;
- Limited positive affect on species ability to adapt to climate change;
- Limited increase in human health through increased opportunity to access a connected network of paths, trails and open spaces;
- Limited opportunity for developments to consider green networks holistically if methodologies for their identification and key principles have not been set.

SEA Objectives

Scoping of SEA Topics

In accordance with Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 the Highland Council has considered whether the environmental effects (positive and negative) of the proposed Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance are likely to be significant. 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. From the environmental problems listed in Table 2 in above, there could be varying challenges relating to certain SEA issues. For this reason we consider the plan is likely to have significant effects (positive and negative) on some environmental issues at a strategic level. A summary of our conclusions is given in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Scoping of SEA issues

SEA issues	Scoped in	Scoped out	If scoped out, why
biodiversity, flora, fauna	X		
population	X		
human health	X		
soil		X	It is not considered that there will be significant impact on this SEA topic through this guidance. This is due to the way in which green networks will be developed over time. A positive impact is more likely to come through the implementation of the Open Space in New Residential Development: Interim Supplementary Guidance.
water	X		
air		X	It is not considered that there will be significant impact on this SEA topic through this guidance. While green infrastructure can improve air quality, its positive impact will be limited.
climatic factors	X		
material assets	X		
cultural heritage	X		
landscape	X		

Following the scoping of issues a number of SEA objectives were identified at the Scoping stage and following comment from the consultation authorities these have been refined.

1	Maintain and enhance designated wildlife sites, biodiversity, valuable habitats and protected species, avoiding irreversible losses.
2	Maintain, enhance and create green networks for wildlife and people.
3	Provide opportunities for people to come into contact with and appreciate nature/natural environments
4	Protect and enhance human health
5	Retain and improve quality, quantity and connectivity of publicly accessible open space.
6	Reduce vulnerability to the effects of climate change
7	Increase opportunities for recreational access to the outdoors and active travel
8	Protect and where appropriate enhance the cultural heritage
9	Conserve and enhance landscape character and scenic value
10	Protect and enhance the water and riparian environment

Assessment of environmental effects and measures envisaged for prevention, reduction and offset of any significant adverse effects

The purpose of this section is to predict and evaluate as far as possible the environmental effects of this Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance and its reasonable alternatives in accordance with Section 14 of the Act and to set out measures envisaged to prevent, reduce, and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment and maximise positive effects.

The baseline information from the previous sections is applied to consider whether the Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance and any reasonable alternatives are likely to have significant environmental effects (positive and negative).

Alternative to which SEA was applied

The reasons for selecting the alternatives below have been born out analysis of the baseline data collated as part of this Environmental Report, the current policies contained in the Highland Structure, the existing local plans, the emerging Highland wide Local Development Plan and national policy and guidance. This section will detail the alternatives:

Preferred Approach - Prepare Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance

The Council's preferred approach is to prepare green networks supplementary guidance to set the context for a Highland Green Network. The guidance would focus on the benefits of a green network and how a green network can be delivered. The Guidance would set principles to ensure that a green network which delivers benefits to the 3 elements of sustainability:

- Environment;
- Social;
- Economic

Alternative Approach – Do Nothing

The alternative approach is to not prepare guidance on creation of a Highland Green Network. This approach may lead to fragmentation of habitats, less co-ordinated approach to recreation and limited opportunities to protect and enhance the cultural heritage of the area. This alternative is considered reasonable as the Highland wide Local Development Plan and national policy seek to provide the protection and enhancement of green networks however without methodologies for identification of networks as promoted through the preferred option this alternative approach is made more unrealistic.

The two alternative approaches will be assessed against the SEA objectives set out on page 36.

Assessment Methodology

The reasonable alternatives described above have been assessed against the range of environmental issues set out in Schedule 3 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. Comments from the Consultation Authorities (SNH, SEPA and The Scottish Ministers (Historic Scotland)) have been taken into account regarding the methods, scope and level of detail as part of the work to produce this Environmental Report.

Assessment of Alternatives

As described in the scoping report for the Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance we will be using an assessment matrix for the assessment of the policy options. This has been adjusted following comment from the consultation authorities at the Scoping Report stage, through informal discussion and recent experience of SEA, to ensure a clearer path to the final decision on the approach which can be found in the supplementary guidance. The two main revisions from the scoping stage are:

- Inclusion of an additional SEA objective on the water environment
- Inclusion of a +/- score where it is likely that there may be positive and negative affects on the SEA objective.

Amendments have also been made to the considerations for the SEA objective to ensure that a balanced score for each SEA objective can be apportioned.

Assumptions may be made when assessing each of the approaches and these will be identified and recorded through the matrix again to make it clearer how the assessment has been carried out and the reasoning behind the final scores.

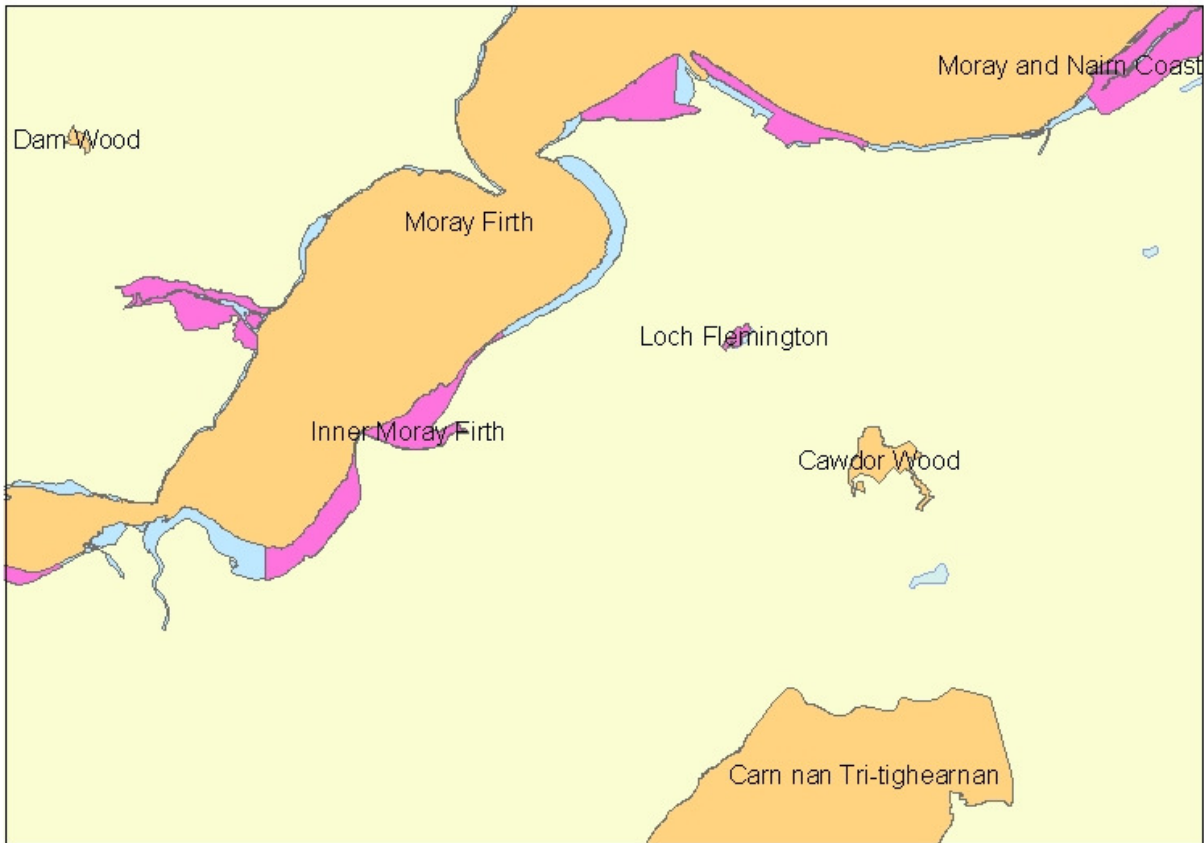
The Appendix 3 of this Environmental Report includes these assessments and also an interpretation of the matrix approach to make it clear what each section of the matrix means.

Highland wide Local Development Plan SEA

The Highland wide Local Development Plan has been subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment. As part of the Revised Environmental Report an assessment has been carried out on Policy 75- Green Networks. This policy sets the framework for this Supplementary Guidance. You can view the SEA for this online at <http://highland.gov.uk/developmentplans>.

Affect on Natura 2000 Sites

While this SEA will assess the guidance as a whole specific projects may be brought forward which may have an affect on Natura 2000 sites (Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas for Conservation (SAC) and RAMSAR). To ensure that these projects do not have an adverse affect on these sites a Habitats Regulations Appraisal will be carried out under Article 6(3) of the EC Habitats Directive. An example of where this may be necessary is the priority to “Realise the Potential of the Inverness-Nairn Coastal Trail...” as this may encourage more people to come alongside and into contact with the qualifying features of the Moray Firth SAC and Inner Moray Firth SPA. The Habitats Regulation Appraisal will be completed separately to this SEA and will list the sites, the reason for their designation, comments on any likely affects of the plan and threats/benefits of the guidance to named species will be noted. We will seek to work with the relevant Consultation Authorities to complete this appraisal. The image below shows the Natura 2000 sites around the Moray Firth. Appendix 2 shows these features for the whole of Highland.



Natura 2000 Sites around the Moray Firth

Assessment of Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance and its alternatives - Summary

The Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance and its alternatives were assessed using a matrix approach the framework shown earlier. A summary of the assessment findings is shown below (including commentary), and the full findings are shown in Appendix 3.

Preferred Approach

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Sensitivity (H/M/L)	Magnitude	
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term		Local	Regional
1	+	++	++	H	++	+
2	++	++	++	H	++	+
3	+	++	++	M	++	+
4	+	+	++	M	++	+
5	+	+	++	M	++	=
6	=	+	+	M	+	=
7	+	++	++	M	++	=
8	+	+	+	M	+	=
9	+	+	++	M	+	=
10	+	+	+	M	+	=

Summary of Assessment – Commentary

It is considered that this approach is likely to have a positive affect on all SEA objectives, with some SEA objectives being significantly positively affected by this guidance. The SEA has identified a number of areas where the guidance could be improved to ensure that a significantly positive affect is delivered on SEA objectives. This is likely to be through changes to the guidance itself. These are set out in the mitigation section of this Environmental Report.

The guidance is likely to have a positive affect on the majority of SEA objectives. This is due to co-ordinated approach to green networks offered by the guidance which will ensure that in the longer term there will be a significantly positive affect on the environment through delivery of the priorities which are set out in the guidance.

Alternative Approach

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Sensitivity (H/M/L)	Magnitude	
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term		Local	Regional
1	=	=	=	M	=	=
2	+/-	+/-	+/-	M	+/-	+/-
3	+	+	+	M	+	=
4	+/-	+/-	+/-	M	+/-	+/-
5	=	=	=	M	=	=
6	=	=	=	M	=	=
7	=	=	=	M	=	=
8	=	=	=	M	=	=
9	=	=	=	M	=	=
10	=	=	=	M	=	=

Summary of Assessment – Commentary

While it is not anticipated that this approach will have a negative affect on any of the SEA objectives it is considered that it does not offer opportunity to facilitate a cohesive approach towards green networks, thus not maximising the positive affects on each SEA objective. This has led to overall this approach being assessed to likely have a neutral affect. While other plans, policies and strategy may deliver benefits they are not delivered directly by this approach and this approach does not co-ordinate them to deliver cumulative benefit.

Assessment of alternatives - cumulative effects

As the Guidance has been assessed as a whole, the cumulative affects of each element of the guidance have effectively already been assessed. However, for completeness here a cumulative assessment of the element of the guidance which facilitates delivery of a green network and ensures it is a key consideration is under taken. The Principles for the Highland Green Network underpin the whole guidance and cumulatively contribute toward the positive affect the guidance is likely to have on the environment. Therefore this section seeks to identify the individual affects of each principle on the SEA objectives to demonstrate their cumulative affect.

Key:

Significant Positive Impact	No or minimal positive impact	Neutral Impact	No or minimal negative impact	Significant negative impact	Possible Positive and Negative Impacts	Unknown Impact
++	+	=	-	--	+/-	??

To work out the cumulative affect on each SEA objective, the following score has been assigned:

From assessment matrix	Score attributed
++	2
+	1
=	0
+/-	0
-	-1
--	-2

Once these scores have been attributed and calculated horizontally within the table the following grouping has been carried out to gague the cumulative affect on the SEA objective:

Calculated Score	Cumulative affect
15+	++
10-14	+
0-9	=
-1 - -9	-
-10+	--

How to read the table

The below table read horizontally will aid in identifying the cumulative effects of the green network principles in the Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance. The pages following these tables will highlight how this cumulative affect has been identified and if it is likely to be a negative affect how this can be mitigated.

SEA Objective	Green Network Principle																		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
1	+	+	=	+	=	+	=	++	=	=	=	=	++	+	+	+	=	=	=
2	++	+	=	++	++	+	+	+	+	+	=	+	++	+	++	+	++	+	+
3	=	+	=	+	=	+	+	+	=	=	=	=	+	+	+	+	++	+	++
4	+	+	=	+	+	=	=	=	=	=	=	+	=	=	=	=	++	++	++
5	++	++	=	+	+	+	+	=	+	+	=	=	++	=	=	=	=	=	++
6	+	=	=	+	=	+	+	=	=	=	=	=	++	=	++	=	+	+	+
7	+	+	=	+	+	+	=	=	=	=	=	=	+	=	+	=	++	++	=
8	+	+	=	+	=	+	+	=	=	=	++	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	++
9	+	+	=	+	=	=	+	+	++	++	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=
10	+	=	=	+	=	+	+	+	=	=	=	=	+	=	=	+	=	=	=

Assessment

Following is an assessment of the cumulative impacts on each SEA objective if the green network principles are brought forward:

SEA Objective 1

Maintain and enhance designated wildlife sites, biodiversity, valuable habitats and protected species, avoiding irreversible losses

It is anticipated that there may be a **positive cumulative affect** on this SEA objective if the green network principles are considered cumulatively. This is due to the positive affect that may be delivered through a number of the green network principles, however it is likely that Principle 8 which seeks to embed designated sites into the green network will have a significant affect as will Principle 13 which seeks to avoid further fragmentation of habitats which, in some cases, form part of the qualifying features of designated sites.

SEA Objective 2

Maintain, enhance and create green networks for wildlife and people

It is anticipated that there may be a **significantly positive cumulative affect** on this SEA objective if the green network principles are considered cumulatively. This is due to a number of green network principles directly addressing this SEA objective in detail including principle 1, 4, 5, 13, 15 and 17 which lead to a significant affect on this SEA objective individually and other principles which have a positive affect as they indirectly address the issue.

SEA Objective 3

Provide opportunities for people to come into contact with and appreciate nature/natural environments

It is anticipated that there may be a **significantly positive cumulative affect** on this SEA objective if the green network principles are considered cumulatively. A number of green network principles have a significant positive affect on this SEA objective with those related to access to the outdoors likely to have a significantly positive affect on this SEA objective, and others which seek to safeguard and imbed important natural features into the green network will contribute to an overall positive cumulative affect of these principles.

SEA Objective 4

Protect and enhance human health

It is anticipated that there may be a **positive cumulative affect** on this SEA objective if the green network principles are considered cumulatively. This is due to the green network principles specifically addressing the social element of the network which encourages a healthier lifestyle through the protection and enhancement of open space and access to the outdoors infrastructure.

SEA Objective 5

Retain and improve quality, quantity and connectivity of publicly accessible open space

It is anticipated that there may be a **positive cumulative affect** on this SEA objective if the green network principles are considered cumulatively. This is because a number of elements of the guidance seek to address the quality, quantity and accessibility of open space. It is recognised however, that without connection to the open space in new residential development: supplementary guidance that this guidance would likely have a limited affect on this SEA objective.

SEA Objective 6

Reduce the vulnerability to climate change

It is anticipated that there may be a **positive cumulative affect** on this SEA objective if the green network principles are considered cumulatively. A number of the green network principles are anticipated to have a positive affect on the SEA objective with two principles (13 and 15) directly addressing this SEA objective in terms of avoiding fragmentation of habitats which can contribute to species ability to adapt to climate change.

SEA Objective 7

Increase opportunities for recreation access to the outdoors and active travel

It is anticipated that there may be a **positive cumulative affect** on this SEA objective if the green network principles are considered cumulatively. A number of green network principles have a positive affect on this SEA objective with principle 17 and 18 directly addressing the issues surrounding this SEA objective by seeking to protect and enhance the a cohesive path network and promoting the path network primarily for recreation but also for active travel.

SEA Objective 8

Protect and where appropriate enhance the cultural heritage

It is anticipated that there may be a **neutral cumulative affect** on this SEA objective if the green network principles are considered cumulatively. While a number of the SEA objectives make a contribution towards protection and enhancement of the cultural heritage of the area it is anticipated that there will be limited opportunity to enhance the cultural heritage of the area through the green network principles and the guidance does not afford any additional protection above that offered by national policy and legislation.

SEA Objective 9

Conserve and enhance landscape character and scenic value

It is anticipated that there may be a **neutral cumulative affect** on this SEA objective if the green network principles are considered cumulatively. The green network principles generally support the conservation of landscape character, especially maintaining the local distinctiveness of areas through the protection of key views and green buffers at critical locations to ensure settlement distinction.

SEA Objective 10

Protect and enhance the water and riparian environment

It is anticipated that there may be a **positive cumulative affect** on this SEA objective if the green network principles are considered cumulatively. The green network principles are likely to have a positive affect on this SEA objective however the affects are limited as the water and riparian environment is not a prominent a feature of habitats in Highland as the more land based elements of a network, however their importance and contribution is recognised through the positive affect on a number of green network principles including principles 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 13 and 15.

Compatibility with other Plans, Programmes and Strategies

Each element of the guidance is anticipated to work together to ensure the delivery of a Highland Green Network. However, to deliver maximum benefit the guidance links to a number of other Plans, Programmes and Strategies which will facilitate the delivery of the Green Network. These are set out in the “Relationship with other plans, programmes or strategies and environmental objectives” section on page 12, with the most relevant being:

- Highland wide Local Development Plan;
- Open Space in New Residential Development: Interim Supplementary Guidance;
- Draft Core Path Plans;
- Regional Biodiversity Action Plan;
- Local Biodiversity Action Plans; and
- Access Strategy;
- Landscape Character Assessments; and
- Area Local (Development) Plans.

Measures envisaged for the prevention, reduction and offsetting of significant adverse effects

Schedule 3 paragraph 7 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires an explanation of “the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme.” The table below sets out any environmental problems that are likely to remain on implementation of the PPS and summarises proposed measures for the prevention, reduction and offset of significant adverse effects.

Measures envisaged for the prevention, reduction and offsetting of any significant adverse effects

The SEA Directive requires the use of mitigation measures that make recommendations to prevent, reduce or offset significant adverse effects. However as no significant adverse effects have been identified through the production of this Strategic Environmental Assessment – Environmental Report, it is important to highlight how the guidance has been modified to ensure that the potential positive effects have been maximised. Through carrying out this SEA it has ensured that the guidance does this in a number of ways. The key ways which were identified through the SEA assessment are outlined below:

- At least one green network principle to address each of the SEA topics which have been scoped into this assessment;
- Include a green network priority to facilitate the protection of protected species;
- Ensure opportunities are taken to maximise species ability to adapt to climate change;
- Recognise the protection already afforded to natural, built and cultural heritage features through legislation but also facilitate its protection;
- Consideration of green networks should be early in the design process;
- Recognise the importance of locally important features and the contribution they make towards the green network;
- Promote opportunities for enhancement of public health in a cohesive manner;
- Deliver maximum benefit to the provision of high quality, accessible, fit for purpose open space through ensuring it is a key element of the network;
- Maximise opportunities to reduce vulnerability to climate change through integration of appropriate natural infrastructure into the green network;
- Provide opportunities to deliver cohesive path networks through a green network priority.

These will be carried through into the draft version of the guidance to ensure that the key findings of this SEA are built into the guidance and the positive effects of the guidance can be maximised.

Monitoring

Section 19 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires the Responsible Authority to monitor significant environmental effects of the implementation of the Highland wide Local Development Plan. This must be done in such a way as to also identify unforeseen adverse effects and to take appropriate remedial action.

It is considered good practice for monitoring:

- fit a pre-defined purpose, help to solve problems, and address key issues;
- is practical and is customised to the PPS;
- is transparent and readily accessible to the public;
- is seen as a learning process and a cyclical process relating closely to the collation of the environmental baseline.

For this monitoring to be effective it will need to be linked to both the SEA Objectives and the Green Networks Objectives. The baseline data set out earlier in this report sets the scene for any monitoring which is to take place. Below is a monitoring framework, which replicates many of the monitoring indicators of that proposed for the Highland wide Local Development Plan. This is to ensure that the monitoring carried out on the Development Plan (including Supplementary Guidance) is practical and proportionate to facilitate effective review of the development plan in due course.

SEA Topic	What the guidance seeks to achieve	Monitoring Indicator	Responsible for Data Collation	Publication of Monitoring	Remedial Action
Water Quality	Improve Water Quality	Number of rivers “C” classification or below	SEPA	Annually	Review guidance and priorities and principles.
Biodiversity	Protection and enhancement of biodiversity in Highland	Number of applications granted within SPA, SAC, Ramsar, NNR, SSSI, Sites of Local Nature Conservation.	THC (Information and Research)	Annually	Review guidance and priorities and principles.
	Protected Species are not significantly disturbed		SNH	Annually	Review guidance and priorities and principles.
Climatic Factors	Reduction in Travel	% travelling to work/study by car	THC (Information and Research)	Biennially	Review guidance and priorities and principles.
		% travelling to work/study by public transport	THC (Information and Research)	Biennially	Review guidance and priorities and principles.
		% travelling to work/study by active travel	THC (Information and Research)	Biennially	Review guidance and priorities and principles.
Human Health	Improve accessibility to open space	Provision of open space (m ²)	THC (Information and Research)	Annually	Review guidance and priorities and principles.
		% of households within 1200m of open space	THC (Information and Research)	Annually	Review guidance and priorities and principles.
Cultural Heritage	Reduce number of buildings at risk	Number of buildings at risk	THC (Information and Research)	Annually	Review guidance and priorities and principles.
Landscape	Impact on quality of landscape	Number of planning applications granted within NSA and SLA in last 12 months	THC (Information and Research)	Annually	Review guidance and priorities and principles.
Material Assets	Protection and enhancement of public access	Number of planning applications granted which affect path identified in the core path plan	THC (Information and Research facilitated by access officers)	Annually	Review guidance and priorities and principles.

Next Steps

This Environmental Report will be subject to a 8 week consultation (08/10/10 – 03/12/10), where expressions of opinion on the report will be welcomed. The Revised Environmental Report will be available to view online and at Planning and Development Service Reception, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness, IV3 5NX. An electronic copy will be sent to the SEA Gateway.

Following this consultation the views will be collated and, where appropriate, alterations will be made and a Revised Environmental Report will be produced. Following this work it is anticipated that this guidance will be adopted as Interim Supplementary Guidance in March 2011.

Following this adoption as interim supplementary guidance a Strategic Environmental Assessment – Post Adoption Statement will be produced.

In time, the Green Networks: Supplementary Guidance will be adopted as Statutory Supplementary Guidance to the Highland wide Local Development Plan giving it equal weight in decision making as the Development Plan.