

SEA SCREENING REPORT (COVER NOTE)

PART 1

To: SEA.gateway@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

or

SEA Gateway
Scottish Executive
Area 1 H (Bridge)
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh EH6 6QQ

PART 2

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

Sustainable Design Guide – Supplementary Guidance

The Responsible Authority is:

The Highland Council

COMPLETE PART 3 or 4 or 5

PART 3

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

an SEA is required because the PPS falls under the scope of Section 5(3) of the Act and is likely to have significant environmental effects

an SEA is required because the PPS falls under the scope of Section 5(4) of the Act and is likely to have significant environmental effects

an SEA is not required because the PPS is unlikely to have significant environmental effects

PART 4

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

PART 5


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

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PART 6

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PART 7

Signature (electronic signature is acceptable)	
Date	24 September 2010

SEA SCREENING REPORT - KEY FACTS

Responsible Authority	The Highland Council
Title of PPS	Sustainable Design Guide: Supplementary Guidance
Purpose of PPS	To provide guidance to clients, architects and builders on how to develop high quality and sustainably-designed buildings which are essential to help us minimise long-term damage to the natural environment and support the social and economic fabric of the Highland area.
What prompted the PPS (e.g. a legislative, regulatory or administrative provision)	Produced to provide additional and more detailed information on the sustainable approach the Highland Council expects developers to take. Guide is supplementary to the Highland wide Local Development Plan.
Subject (e.g. transport)	Town Planning
Period covered by PPS	2010 onwards
Frequency of updates	As required
Area covered by PPS (e.g. geographical area – it is good practice to attach a map)	The entire Highland Council area, except that where planning is delegated to the Cairngorms National Park Authority.
Summary of nature/ content of PPS	<p>Provides advice and guidance on Sustainable Design. Outlines the minimum standards expected for the sustainable design, construction and use of new builds and the redevelopment of existing buildings. Includes the following topics:</p> <p>Layout, scale, proportion, materials, construction and finishing; Landscaping; Cultural heritage; Materials; Natural heritage; Enhancing wildlife; Energy efficiency; Renewable energy; Foul wastewater treatment; Flooding; Surface water runoff; Water conservation; Waste and recycling; Site management; Transport; Pedestrians and cyclists; Efficient use of land and existing buildings; Design for flexibility; Private amenity space; Accessibility of community facilities.</p>
Are there any proposed PPS objectives?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Copy of objectives attached	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO (Included in Table 2)
Date	24 September 2010

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Our determinations regarding the likely significance of effects on the environment of the Highland Council Sustainable Design Guide is set out in Table 1.

TABLE 1 – LIKELY SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

TITLE OF PPS		
Sustainable Design Guide: Supplementary Guidance		
RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY		
The Highland Council		
Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment (1(a), 1(b) etc. refer to paragraphs in Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005)	Likely to have significant environmental effects? YES/NO	Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)
1(a) the degree to which the PPS sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources	Yes	This guidance will not allocate sites, promote projects or other activities. The document will provide advice and guidance for developers on how projects [promoted/permitted through the Highland Council Development Plan] can be designed and built more sustainably to better protect and enhance the environment and the social/economic fabric of the Highland area. Its primary objective is the positive protection of the environment, and thus it is expected that the significant environmental effects will also be positive.
1(b) the degree to which the PPS influences other PPS including those in a hierarchy	No	The guidance will be influenced by Scottish Government Planning Policy and the Highland Council Development Plan, but the guidance itself is not likely to influence any other PPS.
1(c) the relevance of the PPS for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	Yes	The principal goal of this guidance is to promote sustainable development by setting minimum standards for developers to meet across a range of sustainable design issues.

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment (1(d) etc. refer to paras in Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005)	Likely to have significant environmental effects? YES/NO	Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)
1(d) environmental problems relevant to the PPS	Yes	Developments over recent years have generally been of poor quality and incorporate relatively few elements of sustainable design. As a result, resource usage and environmental impacts are higher than is desirable.
1(e) the relevance of the PPS for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, PPS linked to waste management or water protection)	Yes	A number of relevant EU strategies and policies developed under auspices of Article 174 of Lisbon Treaty, including the EU Sustainable Development Strategy.
2 (a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	Yes	Once the guidance is operational it is likely to have long-term, positive effects on resource usage and the environmental impact of development, as and when developments are brought before the Local Planning Authority for permission. Reversibility is not desirable given the positive impact the guidance should have, but some Sustainable Design features could be replaced or removed by the end-users.
2 (b) the cumulative nature of the effects	Yes	The cumulative effects of the guidance are likely to include an overall reduction in the area's energy, water and land use, as well as minimising the adverse environmental impacts of development such as flooding and light pollution across the Highland area.
2 (c) transboundary nature of the effects (i.e. environmental effects on other EU Member States)	No	Not Applicable
2 (d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)	No	It is not envisaged that there would be a risk to the environment or human health as a result of this guidance.

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment (2(e), 2(f) etc refer to paras in Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005)	Likely to have significant environmental effects? YES/NO	Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)
2 (e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	Yes	The guidance will apply to the whole Highland Council area except that covered by the Cairngorms National Park, with a population of some 217,000.
2 (f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to- (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or (iii) intensive land-use.	Yes	(i) This approach is likely to benefit the special natural characteristics of the area by encouraging development of the area to fully consider how development will integrate into and enhance the existing landscape. (ii) The guidance will be used to work towards improved environmental standards by setting minimum standards across a wide range of sustainable design elements; (iii) This guidance is unlikely to have an impact on intensive land use.
2 (g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status	No	The guidance is likely to ensure that there are no significant impacts on areas or landscapes which have a recognised protection status, as these will be positively protected through the general policies contained within the guidance's superior PPS – the Highland wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP) – which aims to enhance and protect these designations. (This supplementary guidance has to comply with the superior PPS i.e. the HwLDP).

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A summary of our considerations of the significant environmental effects of the Sustainable Design Guide: Supplementary Guidance are given below:

TABLE 2 – SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

The objectives of this guidance, in tandem with the policies contained within the Highland wide Local Development Plan, are to ensure that developments will:

1. Conserve and enhance the character of the Highland area;
2. Use resources more efficiently;
3. Minimise their environmental impacts;
4. Enhance the viability of Highland communities.

It is anticipated that any significant effects on the environment resulting from this supplementary guidance will be positive, as the guide sets out minimum standards which developers should meet or exceed to produce more sustainable buildings and minimise the adverse effects of development on the natural environment. Were this guidance not to be put in place, the long-term damage to the environment from development would likely be significantly more negative.

Thus the role of the Strategic Environmental Assessment will be to maximise the positive impacts that this guidance can have. The policy framework which will set the overall context for this guidance will be included within the superior PPS - the Highland wide Local Development Plan – which itself has been subject to a separate Strategic Environmental Assessment.