

**Sustainable Design Guide:
Supplementary Guidance**

Strategic Environmental Assessment

May 2011



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SEA ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT – COVER NOTE

To:

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or

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PART 2

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

Sustainable Design Guide: Supplementary Guidance

The Responsible Authority is:

The Highland Council

PART 3

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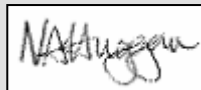
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PART 4

Signature

(electronic
signature
is acceptable)



Date

30th May 2011

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1. 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 Sustainable Design Guide: Supplementary Guidance and has been produced by The Highland Council as the responsible authority.

The aim of the Sustainable Design Guide: Supplementary Guidance is encourage the development of high quality and sustainably-designed buildings which will minimise impacts on the natural environment, help counter the effects of climate change and also promote greater use of local and renewable materials. The Sustainable Design guide 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 supplementary guidance, including Housing in the Countryside Siting and Design, Trees, Woodlands and Development, and Green Networks to deliver sustainable development 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 Sustainable Design Guide: 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 cultural heritage, air, population, human health and soil could be scoped out.

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

This Environmental Report has been produced following comment from the consultation authorities at the Screening (October 2011), Scoping (March 2011) stages.

Expressions of opinion are now sought from the Consultation Authorities and any other interested part by 5pm, 8th July 2011. 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).

2. Introduction

Purpose of this Environmental Report and key facts

As part of the preparation of Sustainable Design Guide: 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;
- 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: to enable the Responsible Authority to identify any unforeseen significant adverse effects at an early stage, and to undertake appropriate remedial action.

The purpose of this Environmental Report is to:

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

The key facts relating to Sustainable Design Guide: Supplementary Guidance are set out below:

Name of Responsible Authority	The Highland Council
Title of Plan, Program or Strategy (PPS)	Sustainable Design Guide: Supplementary Guidance
What Prompted the PPS	There is a need to bring a local context to the concept of Sustainable Design which has been raised both in Scottish Planning Policy and the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. This Supplementary Guidance will provide additional guidance above that contained in Policy 29 of the Highland wide Local Development Plan to support developments which promote and enhance the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the people of Highland.
Subject	Town Planning
Period Covered by the PPS	2011 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 incorporate new or updated sustainable building methods, techniques or technologies.
Area Covered by PPS	 <p>The map shows the Highland Council area. A large green-shaded region represents the area covered by the Highland Wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP). A smaller grey-shaded region in the southeast represents the Cairngorms National Park, with a note indicating it will produce a separate Local Development Plan (LDP).</p>
Purpose and/or Objectives of PPS	The aim of the Sustainable Design Guide: Supplementary Guidance is to encourage the development of high quality and sustainably-designed buildings which will minimise impacts on the natural environment, help counter the effects of climate change and also promote greater use of local and renewable materials.

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Consultation	You can make comments on this Environmental Report from the 6 th June 2011 – 8 th July 2011

SEA activities to date

The table below summarises the SEA activities to date in relation to Sustainable Design Guide: 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	September 2010	Determined that SEA will be required. Determination notice placed in Press and Journal newspaper Thursday 27 th January 2011
Scoping the consultation periods and the level of detail to be included in the Environmental Report	January 2011	Consultation authority comments have been taken on board for this Environmental Report (ER)
Environmental Report	May 2011	
Consultation timescales	June 2011	6 th June 2011 – 8 th July 2011
Notification/publicity action	June 2011	Advertised in Press and Journal on 6 th June 2011

The Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Highland wide Local Development Plan assessed the policy framework for Sustainable Design in Highland. A consultation on this SEA ran 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/HWLDPOtherAssessmentsandInformation.htm>.

3. Sustainable Design Guide: Supplementary Guidance Context

Outline and objectives of Sustainable Design Guide: 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”.

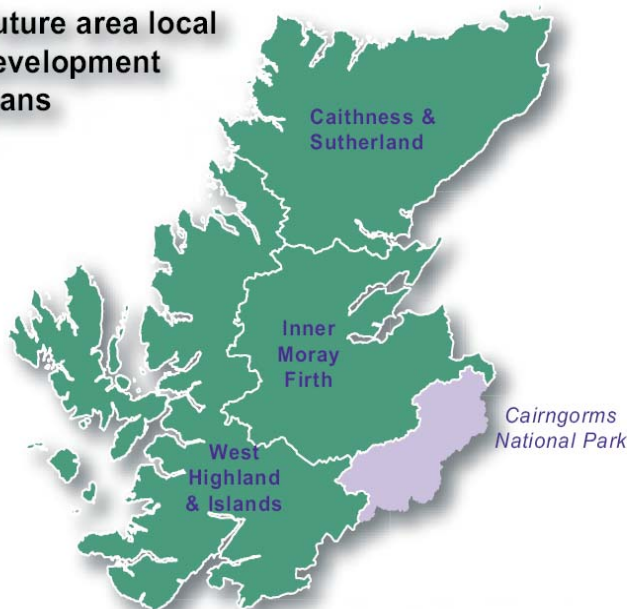
To ensure that sustainably-designed buildings can be delivered, The Highland Council, working with partners, have decided to produce statutory Supplementary Guidance under the Planning Etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 and associated secondary legislation. The guidance will set out principles for sustainable design and also demonstrate how they can be delivered. The guidance will set the context for development.

The guidance extends over an area of 26,484km² 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.



The Sustainable Design Guide is intended to encourage the development of high quality and sustainably-designed buildings which will minimise impacts on the natural environment, help counter the effects of climate change and also promote greater use of local and renewable materials. The key sustainable design issues/principles are summarised in a practical Sustainable Design Checklist which developers and architects will use to help prepare a Sustainable Design Statement to accompany their planning applications.

Future area local development plans




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

Relationship with other plans, programmes or strategies and environmental objectives

Table 1 lists the plans, policies and strategies which are relevant to the Sustainable Design Guide: Supplementary Guidance and which may affect or influence its content. The contents of each plan, policy and strategy along with the relationship to the Sustainable Design Guide: 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 Sustainable Design Guide: Supplementary Guidance

International		
		
<p>EC Directive on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (2001/42/EC)</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>The Directive requires that an SEA be carried out on documents such as this and an Environmental Report produced.</p>
<p>European Climate Change Programme (2005)</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>EC Directive establishing a framework for Community action in the Field of Water Policy Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>The Strategic Environment Assessment will consider the implications of new developments on the water environment and how water efficiency and sustainable drainage can benefit the existing environment and reduce risk of flooding.</p>
<p>The Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development (2002)</p>	<p>Principles of international commitment to sustainable development reaffirmed. Aims to strengthen and improve Government at all levels to fulfil commitment to sustainable development.</p>	<p>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.</p>

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 Information (2003/4/EC)	Enforces the right of the public to view environmental information held by public authorities.	The Highland Council is required to ensure that all environmental 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 sustainable design could make to this.

EC Birds and Habitats Directive	Protects all wild birds, their nests, eggs and habitats within the EC. Gives basis to classify Special Protection Areas (SPA's) to protect habitat and vulnerable bird species. Gives basis to classify Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's)	The guidance will take into consideration the requirements of the directive in its section on Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage. The Council will work closely with the appropriate agencies on this matter.
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 and management of natural resources and cultural heritage. It stresses more balanced competitiveness of the European Community.	This will influence the delivery of all of the Objectives of the guidance.
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.
EU Wild Birds Directive (79/409/EEC)	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.	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.
EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EC)	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.	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.
SE Circular EU Habitats and Birds Directive (2000)	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.	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.

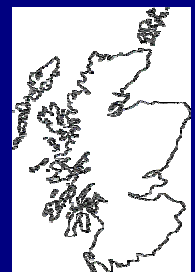
National



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.
UK Energy White Paper: Our Energy Future – Creating a Low Carbon Economy (2003)	This white paper proposes a new UK energy policy which addresses the threat of climate change and deals with the implications of reduced UK oil, gas and coal production.	The Council will use this proposed strategy to inform the development of the guidance, with particular emphasis on how it impacts on the energy efficiency of new builds.
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 Council will seek to protect and enhance existing woodland in line with this guidance.
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.
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 recognise the statutory importance of these species and strive to ensure they are adequately protected.
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, and if destruction of the sett is unavoidable, a licence will definitely be required from SNH beforehand.	The guidance will recognise the statutory importance of badger habitats and strive to ensure they are adequately protected.
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 new developments can play a part in reducing carbon emissions.

<p>UK Biodiversity Action Plan 1995 and 1999</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>The guidance should be implemented with regard to the Biodiversity Duty that is stated in the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004</p>
<p>Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (2000 – amended 2003)</p>	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Benzene; - 1,3-butadiene; - Carbon Monoxide; - Lead; - 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. The standards are purely health based and objectives are to be derived from these, taking account practically, technical feasibility, and economic factors.</p>	<p>The guidance will have regard to the implications of different policies on air quality and seek to ensure that air pollution within the area is managed and where possible, steps are taken to alleviate air quality problems.</p>

Scotland National



<p>The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>The Council will follow the procedure outlined in the Act when carrying out an environment assessment on a plan or programme.</p>
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<p>Scottish Executive et al (2005) Securing the Future. The UK's shared framework for sustainable development</p>	<p>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:</p> <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 	<p>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.</p>
<p>Scottish Executive: Choosing Our Future Scotland's Sustainable Development Strategy (2005)</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>The guidance will take account of objectives relating to sustainable development.</p>
<p>Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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</p>
<p>Scottish Executive (2000) Rural Scotland : A New Approach</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Scottish Executive (2006) Rural Development Programme for Scotland 2007-2013 The Strategic Plan</p>	<p>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:</p> <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. 	<p>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 address all these themes with regard to new developments within the Highland area.</p>

<p>Scotland's Biodiversity (2004) It's In Your Hands. A Strategy for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in Scotland</p>	<p>Vision: 'It's 2030: Scotland is recognised as a world leader in biodiversity conservation. Everyone is involved; everyone benefits. The nation is enriched' Objectives: - 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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended)</p>	<p>Under the Regulations, competent authorities i.e. any Minister, government department, public body, or person holding public office, have a general duty, in the exercise of any of their functions, to have regard to the EC Habitats Directive.</p>	<p>The guidance will have regard to the EC Habitats Directive.</p>
<p>Scottish Executive (2001) Potential Adaptation Strategies for Climate Change in Scotland</p>	<p>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.'</p>	<p>The guidance will take account of the Scottish share and consider measures which would positively contribute to the targets.</p>
<p>Forestry Commission Scotland (2005) Scottish Forestry Grants Scheme</p>	<p>The aim of the Scottish Forestry Grants Scheme (SFGS) is to help deliver the Scottish Forestry Strategy (SFS) by encouraging the creation and management of woods and forests to provide economic, environmental and social benefits.</p>	<p>The guidance supports the aim of managing existing woodland for economic, environmental and social benefits through, for example, the promotion of timber as a sustainable building material.</p>

<p>Forestry Commission Scotland (2004) Framework Document for Forest Enterprise Scotland</p>	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sustainable forest management - delivering the Scottish Forestry Strategy - helping to deliver other Scottish Executive agendas - efficiency and effectiveness 	<p>The guidance supports the aim of managing existing woodland for economic, environmental and social benefits through, for example, the promotion of timber as a sustainable building material.</p>
<p>Water Environment and Water Services (Scotland) Act 2003 (WEWS)</p>	<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; - 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>	<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.</p>
<p>The Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2005 (CAR)</p>	<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; - 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. 	<p>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.</p>

<p>Flood Prevention and Land Drainage (Scotland) Act 1997</p>	<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. 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> <ul 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 flooding. <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. 	<p>The guidance should take account of flood plains and areas at risk of flooding from SEPA's flood risk maps.</p>
<p>Forestry Commission Scotland: Scottish Forestry Strategy, 2006</p>	<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. 	<p>The guidance should take account of forestry issues.</p>
<p>Scotland's Scenic Heritage (1978) Countryside Commission for Scotland</p>	<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>	<p>The guidance will take this into consideration when working toward the plan objectives of Quality Environment in Highland.</p>
<p>Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 and delivery plan</p>	<p>The aim of the Act 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>	<p>The guidance will take into consideration the provisions of the Act.</p>
<p>Meeting the Needs, Priorities, Actions and Targets for Sustainable Development in Scotland (2002)</p>	<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>	<p>The guidance will take these targets and priorities into account, particularly with regard to energy efficiency and land-use planning.</p>

Scottish Executive Policy Statement for Scotland - Designing Places	Sets out the Scottish Governments Policy to encourage well designed places throughout Scotland	The guidance will take the provisions of Designing Places into consideration.
Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act	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.	The guidance will take into consideration the measures proposed in the Act
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.
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, for example, support the creation of energy efficient buildings which utilise local materials and resources in order to address issue of climate change.

Scottish National Planning Policy Tier



SCOTTISH
PLANNING
POLICY

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 sustainable development and design.
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 good design, siting and landscaping 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 taken into account in the guidance.
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 new developments.

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 management of increasing rainfall and potential flooding.
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 aim is to see design statements used more effectively in the planning process and to create places of lasting quality.	The guidance will encourage good and sustainable design of new buildings through a requirement for Sustainable Design Statements.
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 the role siting, design, SUDS and landscaping can play in addressing flood risks.
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 ensure that good, sustainable design is produced and is sympathetic to the local environment and landscape.
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.

As it can be seen in the tables above, there are a very wide range of international and national strategies which will influence this 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:

“To encourage the development of high quality and sustainably-designed buildings which will minimise impacts on the natural environment, help counter the effects of climate change and also promote greater use of local and renewable materials.”

Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment

The Highland Council extends over an area of 26,484km² 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Table 2 Environmental Impacts Relevant to Sustainable Design Guide: Supplementary Guidance

SEA Issue	Potential Environmental Impact resulting from Sustainable Design Guide: Supplementary Guidance	Implications for Sustainable Design Guide: Supplementary Guidance
Biodiversity, flora, fauna	Less stress on biodiversity and loss of habitat resulting from development. Mediation of conflicts between designated areas and 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. Reduced spread of invasive, non-native species.	The guidance needs to ensure that the principles of sustainable design clearly set out the aims for protection and enhancement of Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna. It is likely that there will be a significant positive impact on this SEA issue.
Population	No additional impact from developments adhering to the new guidance.	It is likely that there will not be a significant impact on this SEA issue.
Human health	Increased active travel opportunities.	There will likely be positive health benefits from increased opportunities for active travel, but these will likely be minor compared to those accruing under the Council's <i>Local Transport Strategy</i> . It is therefore unlikely that there will be a significant impact on this SEA issue.
Soil	No additional impact from developments adhering to the new guidance	It is likely that there will not be a significant impact on this SEA issue.
Water	The promotion of SUDS and sustainable design principles will reduce surface water run-off, increase the lag time of rainfall entering the watercourse and reduce risk of flooding by providing natural drainage.	The guidance will highlight the benefits for the water environment. It is likely that there will be a significant positive impact on this SEA issue.
Air	The promotion of the Considerate Constructors Scheme (CCS) is intended to reduce the impact on local air quality.	The guidance will highlight benefits of the CCS with regard to local air quality. It is likely that the guidance will have some limited positive impact in this respect.
Climatic factors	One of the primary drivers of the new guidance is to better respond to the local climate and climate change.	The guidance will highlight the opportunities to minimise developments' impact on climate change. It is likely that significant positive impacts will accrue.
Material assets	The promotion of energy and resource efficiencies in the guidance will help minimise the impact on existing infrastructure/material assets such as energy and water infrastructure.	The guidance will identify a range of approaches/efficiencies to minimise the impact on existing material assets. It is likely that there may be significant positive impacts resulting from this SEA issue.
Cultural heritage	No additional impact from developments adhering to the new guidance	It is likely that there will not be a significant impact on this SEA issue.

Landscape	Reduce the visual impact of development and avoid the degradation of local landscape character which may occur through new development.	The guidance can promote good siting, design and landscaping to ensure that a development integrates better into the landscape and minimises its impact. It is likely that there may be significant positive impacts resulting from this SEA issue.
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The key facts and the baseline information collated for this Environmental Report has enabled us to identify some environmental problems in the Highland area with specific information related to sustainable design. 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 sustainable design, 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.

4. Likely evolution of the environment without Sustainable Design Guide: 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 Sustainable Design: 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:

Policy 29 Sustainable Design

The Council will support developments which promote and enhance the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the people of Highland.

Proposed developments will be assessed on the extent to which they:

- are compatible with public service provision (water and sewerage, drainage, roads, schools, electricity);
- are accessible by public transport, cycling and walking as well as car;
- maximise energy efficiency in terms of location, layout and design, including the utilisation of renewable sources of energy and heat;
- are affected by physical constraints described in Physical Constraints on Development: *Supplementary Guidance*
- make use of brownfield sites, existing buildings and recycled materials;
- demonstrate that they have sought to minimise the generation of waste during the construction and operational phases. (This can be submitted through a Site Waste Management Plan);
- impact on individual and community residential amenity;
- impact on *non-renewable resources* such as mineral deposits of potential commercial value, prime quality agricultural land, or approved routes for road and rail links;
- impact on the following resources, including pollution and discharges, particularly within designated areas:

habitats	freshwater systems
species	marine systems

landscape	cultural heritage
scenery	air quality;

- demonstrate sensitive siting and high quality design in keeping with local character and historic and natural environment and in making use of appropriate materials;
- promote varied, lively and well-used environments which will enhance community safety and security and reduce any fear of crime;
- accommodate the needs of all sectors of the community, including people with disabilities or other special needs and disadvantaged groups; and
- contribute to the economic and social development of the community.

Developments which are judged to be significantly detrimental in terms of the above criteria will not accord with this *Local Development Plan*. Some development *proposals* must also demonstrate compatibility with the [Supplementary Guidance on Sustainable Design](#) through submission of a *Sustainable Design Statement*.

In the relatively rare situation of assessing development *proposals* where the potential impacts are uncertain, but where there are scientific grounds for believing that severe damage could occur either to the environment or the wellbeing of communities, the Council will apply the *precautionary principle*.

Where environmental and/or socio-economic impacts of a proposed development are likely to be significant by virtue of nature, size or location, The Council will require the preparation by developers of appropriate impact assessments. Developments that will have significant adverse effects will only be supported if no reasonable alternatives exist, if there is demonstrable over-riding strategic benefit or if satisfactory overall mitigating measures are incorporated.

Without the Sustainable Design Guide: Supplementary Guidance it is considered that the likely future changes to the area would include:

- An inconsistent approach to measuring the sustainability of new buildings resulting in a failure to maximise the benefits that sustainable design can bring to the Highland area;
- Reduced protection for biodiversity and habitats from the effects of development;
- Fewer opportunities for active travel;
- Increased risk of surface-water run-off and associated flooding;
- Increased risk that carbon emission reduction targets will not be met;
- Increased pressure on existing infrastructure/assets such as energy and water.

5. 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 Sustainable Design Guide: 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 guidance is likely to have significant effects on some environmental issues at a strategic level. A summary of our conclusions is given in Table 3 (over).

Table 3. Scoping of SEA issues

SEA issues	Scoped in	Scoped out	If scoped out, why
biodiversity, flora, fauna	X		
population		X	It is not considered that there will be significant impact on this SEA topic through this guidance. The guidance does not provide any new policies or proposals which would affect this topic.
human health		X	It is not considered that there will be significant impact on this SEA topic through this guidance. The guidance does not provide any new policies or proposals which would affect this topic.
soil		X	It is not considered that there will be significant impact on this SEA topic through this guidance. The guidance does not provide any new policies or proposals which would affect this topic.
water	X		
air		X	It is not considered that there will be significant impact on this SEA topic through this guidance. While the Considerate Constructors Scheme can improve air quality, its positive impact will be very limited and localized.
climatic factors	X		
material assets	X		
cultural heritage		X	This issue relies on the already assessed policies of the development plan to guide decision-making. It is therefore likely that the effects on the historic environment, while positive in nature, will not be significant.
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	Protect and enhance the water and riparian environment
3	Reduce vulnerability to the effects of climate change, particularly with reference to reducing the incidence of flooding
4	Increase efficient use of material assets
5	Value and protect the diversity and local distinctiveness of landscapes

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 Sustainable Design Guide: 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 Sustainable Design Guide: 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 Sustainable Design Guide: Supplementary Guidance

The Council's preferred approach at this time is to prepare the Sustainable Design Guide Supplementary Guidance to set the context for more the creation of more sustainable buildings. The guidance would focus on the benefits of sustainable design and how they can be delivered through the use of an easy-to-use checklist of **20 Sustainable Design Principles** based on the following:

1. Layout, scale, proportion, materials, construction and finishing
2. Landscaping
3. Cultural heritage
4. Materials
5. Natural heritage
6. Enhancing wildlife
7. Energy efficiency
8. Renewable energy
9. Foul wastewater treatment
10. Flooding
11. Surface water runoff
12. Water conservation
13. Waste and recycling
14. Site management
15. Transport
16. Pedestrians and cyclists
17. Efficient use of land and existing buildings
18. Design for flexibility
19. Private amenity space
20. Accessibility of community facilities

Alternative Approach – Do Nothing

The alternative approach is to not prepare guidance on sustainable design. This approach does not promote the efficient and effective use of resources or good design, setting and landscaping and would not likely produce the positive effects, with regard to the above SEA issues, anticipated from the publication of the Sustainable Design Guide.

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

6. 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 Sustainable Design Guide: 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 an additional SEA objective on the spread of non-native species.

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.

7. Assessment of Sustainable Design Guide: Supplementary Guidance and its alternatives - Summary

The Sustainable Design Guide: Supplementary Guidance and the alternative were assessed using a matrix approach the framework shown earlier. A summary of the assessment findings is shown below (including commentary).

Preferred Approach

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
1	+	+	++	++	++	Actively considers cross-cutting biodiversity, habitat and species issues.
2	++	++	++	++	+	Considers impacts on water environment across a range of issues including water use, water quality & flooding.
3	++	++	++	++	+	Considers the impacts of development on climate change and vice versa.
4	++	++	++	++	+	Pro-actively promotes the use of green building materials and energy efficiency in both construction and operation of buildings.
5	+	+	++	++	++	Actively considers cross-cutting natural, built and cultural heritage concerns.

Summary of Assessment – Commentary

It is considered that this approach is likely to have a positive effect on all SEA objectives, with some SEA objectives being significantly positively affected by this guidance. This is due to the cross-cutting and wide-ranging approach to sustainable design offered by the guidance which will ensure that in the medium-long term there will be a significantly positive effect on the environment through delivery of the priorities which are set out in the guidance.

Alternative 'Do Nothing' Approach

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
1	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	Without the guidance, biodiversity, habitat and species concerns remain as secondary external considerations and not integral to the formulation of development projects.
2	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	Without the guidance, the individual effects on the water environment are considered in isolation and not integral to the formulation of development projects.
3	+/-	=	=	=	=	Without the guidance, the effect of developments on climate change and vice versa is largely limited to the requirements of building standards.
4	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	Without the guidance, the use of green building materials and energy efficient approaches remain as secondary considerations and not integral to the formulation of development projects.
5	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	Without the guidance cross-cutting natural, built and cultural heritage concerns remain as secondary external considerations and not integral to the formulation of development projects.

Summary of Assessment – Commentary

While it is not anticipated that this approach will have an overall negative effect on any of the SEA objectives it is considered that it does not offer opportunity to facilitate a cross-cutting and comprehensive approach towards sustainable design, thus not maximising the positive effects on each SEA objective. This has led to the 'Do Nothing' approach being assessed to likely have a largely neutral effect. 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.

8. Assessment of alternatives - cumulative effects

As the Guidance has been assessed as a whole, the cumulative effects of each element of the guidance have effectively already been assessed. However, for completeness here a cumulative assessment of all twenty principles of the sustainable design guidance has been undertaken. These sustainable design principles underpin the whole guidance in the form of a checklist, and together they cumulatively contribute toward the positive effects the guidance is likely to have on the environment. Therefore this section seeks to identify the individual effects of each sustainable design principles on the SEA objectives to demonstrate their cumulative effect.

Key:

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

To work out the cumulative effect 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 gauge the cumulative effect on the SEA objective:

Calculated Score	Cumulative effect
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 twenty sustainable design principles contained within the checklist of the Supplementary Guidance (see *Appendix 1 for details*). The pages following these tables will highlight how this cumulative effect has been identified.

SEA Objective	Sustainable Design Principle																			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1	+	++	=	=	++	++	=	=	+	+	=	=	=	=	=	=	+	=	+	=
2	=	+	=	=	++	++	++	=	++	++	++	++	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=
3	=	=	=	++	=	=	++	++	=	++	++	++	+	=	++	+	=	=	=	+
4	+	=	=	++	=	=	++	++	+	=	=	++	++	+	++	++	++	+	=	+
5	+	+	+	=	++	+	=	=	+	+	=	+	=	=	=	=	++	=	=	=

9. Assessment

The following is an assessment of the cumulative impacts on each SEA objective if the Sustainable Design 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 effect** on this SEA objective if the sustainable design principles are considered cumulatively. It is likely that Principles 2, 4 and 5 - which deal with Landscaping, Natural Heritage and Enhancing Wildlife - will produce the strongest positive effects on this SEA Objective, as they have a specific and direct focus on biodiversity, species and habitats.

SEA Objective 2

Protect and enhance the water and riparian environment

It is anticipated that there may be a **significant positive cumulative effect** on this SEA objective if the sustainable design principles are considered cumulatively. This is due to the positive effect that may be delivered through the application of a number of key sustainable design principles, particularly principles 9-12 which deal with foul wastewater treatment, flooding, surface water runoff and water conservation.

SEA Objective 3

Reduce the vulnerability to climate change

It is anticipated that there may be a **significant positive cumulative effect** on this SEA objective if the sustainable design principles are considered cumulatively. A large number of the sustainable design principles (4,7,8,10-12,15) are anticipated to have a significantly positive affect on this SEA objective, dealing as they do both with the reduction in the effects of construction/use of buildings on exacerbating future climate change, whilst also looking to mitigate the effects of climate change.

SEA Objective 4

Increase efficient use of material assets

It is anticipated that there may be a **significant positive cumulative effect** on this SEA objective if the sustainable design principles are considered cumulatively. This is due to a number of the principles (4, 7, 8, 12, 13, 15-17) which directly addressing this SEA objective in terms of the efficient use of land, construction materials, energy, water and fuel for transportation as well as addressing waste and recycling issues.

SEA Objective 5

Value and protect the diversity and local distinctiveness of landscapes

It is anticipated that there may be a **positive cumulative effect** on this SEA objective if the sustainable design principles are considered cumulatively. The sustainable design principles generally support the conservation of landscape character, encouraging developments that make efficient use of land, fit with their surroundings and contribute positively to the natural environment within which they are set.

10. Compatibility with other Plans, Programmes and Strategies

Each element of the guidance is anticipated to work together to ensure the delivery of more sustainable buildings in the Highland area. However, to deliver maximum benefit, this guidance links to a number of other Plans, Programmes and Strategies which will facilitate the delivery of sustainable development. These are set out in the “Relationship with other plans, programmes or strategies and environmental objectives” section on page 13, and referenced within the sustainable design Checklist of the guidance itself, with some of the most relevant being:

- Highland wide Local Development Plan;
- Housing in the Countryside Siting and Design Guide Supplementary Guidance;
- Open Space in New Residential Development: Interim Supplementary Guidance;
- Trees, Woodland & Development Supplementary Guidance;
- Managing Waste in New Developments Supplementary Guidance;
- Regional Biodiversity Action Plan;
- Local Biodiversity Action Plans; and
- Landscape Character Assessments; and
- Area Local (Development) Plans.

11. 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.

The SEA Directive requires the use of mitigation measures that make recommendations to prevent, reduce or offset significant adverse effects. However no significant adverse effects have been identified through the production of this Strategic Environmental Assessment – Environmental Report, as the effects of this guidance will likely be positive or significantly positive on the five SEA Objectives.

12. 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 Sustainable Design Checklist. 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 which have been 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
Biodiversity, fauna and flora	Maintain and enhance designated wildlife sites, biodiversity, valuable habitats and protected species, avoiding irreversible losses	Number of applications granted within SPA, SAC, Ramsar, NNR, SSSI, and Sites of Local Nature Conservation.	THC (Information and Research)	Annually	Review guidance priorities and principles.
		Reported levels of damage to/loss of designated sites/species	SNH	Annually	Review guidance priorities and principles.
		Reported incidence of invasive, non-native species	SNH	Annually	Review guidance priorities and principles.
Water	Protect and enhance the water and riparian environment	Number of rivers "C" classification or below	SEPA	Annually	Review guidance priorities and principles.
		%age of new properties utilising water conservation technologies or design elements (e.g. Green Roofs, rainwater collection)	THC (Information and Research)	Annually	Review guidance priorities and principles.
Climatic Factors	Reduce vulnerability to the effects of climate change, particularly with reference to reducing the incidence of flooding	Number of properties affected by flood incidents	THC (TECS)	Annually	Review guidance priorities and principles.
		Number of developments in the floodplain	THC (Information and Research)	Annually	Review guidance priorities and principles.
	Reduction in carbon-intensive travel	%ages travelling to work/study by car, public transport and active travel modes	THC (Information and Research)	Annually	Review guidance priorities and principles.
Material Assets	Increase efficient use of material assets	%age of new properties which utilise materials from secondary or recycled sources, have low-embodied energy, or are from sustainable, renewable and/or local sources	THC (Information and Research)	Annually	Review guidance priorities and principles.
		%age of new properties utilising passive measures for energy efficiency	THC (Information and Research)	Annually	Review guidance priorities and principles.

SEA Topic	What the guidance seeks to achieve	Monitoring Indicator	Responsible for Data Collation	Publication of Monitoring	Remedial Action
Material Assets	Increase efficient use of material assets	%age of new properties utilising on-site low or zero carbon technologies	THC (Information and Research)	Annually	Review guidance priorities and principles.
Landscape	Value and protect the diversity and local distinctiveness of landscapes	Number of planning applications granted within NSA and SLA in last 12 months	THC (Information and Research)	Annually	Review guidance priorities and principles.

13. Next Steps

This Environmental Report will be subject to a 5-week consultation (06/06/2011 – 08/07/11), 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 also be sent to the SEA Gateway.

Following this consultation, the views expressed 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 August 2011.

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

In time, the Sustainable Design Guide: 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.

Appendix 1 – Sustainable Design Principles

Extract from Sustainable Design Guide “Checklist”:

Sustainable Design Checklist
<p>1. Layout, scale, proportion, materials, construction and finishing</p> <p>Will the appearance of the development be visually appropriate, complementing local character whilst reinforcing local distinctiveness (e.g. materials, road pattern etc) and be clearly integrated with the wider community?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Building materials and colour complement local characterB. Site layout, building style and scale enhance local characterC. Roof-scapes visually respect the local context (allowing for low carbon technologies where appropriate)D. Continuity of local building details such as simple and uncomplicated design of roofs, dormers, windows and doorsE. Potential for personalisation by prospective residentsF. Contemporary approach which reflects the local vernacular where appropriate.
<p>2. Landscaping</p> <p>Has a landscaping scheme been drawn up for the site which integrates the development into its setting and includes provision for public open space where appropriate, provides suitable public/private and site boundaries, and conserves the existing landscape and ecological assets?</p>
<p>3. Cultural heritage</p> <p>Are the culturally and archaeologically important features on the site and their settings known, and how will these be affected by the development?</p>
<p>4. Materials</p> <p>Which materials are from secondary or recycled sources, have low-embodied energy, and are from sustainable and/or local sources?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A: RoofB. External wallsC. Internal walls (including separating walls)D. Upper and ground floors (including separating floors)E. Windows
<p>5. Natural heritage</p> <p>Has an assessment been made of the site’s ecology and will the ecological value of the site be protected or recreated to equal quality and or enhanced?</p>

6. Enhancing wildlife

Will there be:

- A. No net loss in relation to habitats and species?
- B. A mixture of locally occurring species specified for planting and landscaping schemes?
- C. Any new links between habitats within the site or links to habitats outside the development boundary?
- D. An increase in important or sensitive habitats identified in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP), either by creating or restoring ecological value (as assessed by an ecologist), or support for a species identified in the LBAP?

7. Energy efficiency

What steps have been taken towards reducing CO² emissions through energy-efficient design for the proposed development?

- A. Minimising energy demand for the site through orientation and maximising passive solar gain
- B. Maximising the thermal efficiency of individual buildings through thermal mass, insulation, natural shelter, and appropriate glazing
- C. Minimising demand for water heating, space heating and cooling, lighting and power in individual dwellings through efficient equipment and controls.

8. Renewable energy

Has the energy demand for the development been calculated to determine:

- A. The amount of low or zero carbon technology e.g. wind, solar, hydro, photovoltaic (PV), Combined Heat and Power (CHP) that is practicable to meet the extant Building Standards CO² emissions reduction target.
- B. The % of total site energy demand that will be produced from on-site renewable energy technologies.
- C. Meeting the remaining energy demand efficiently, e.g. non-renewable or waste powered district heating and cooling.

9. Foul wastewater treatment

Will the development be connected to the public sewer; if not has a sustainable waste water treatment system been designed to avoid unacceptable damage to the water environment?

10. Flooding

What measures have been taken to ensure that the development will:

- A. Be free from significant risk of flooding;
- B. Not add to the area of land that requires flood prevention measures; and
- C. Not affect the ability of the functional floodplain to store or move flood waters?

11. Surface water runoff

Which of the following localised strategies for ensuring that runoff from the finished development does not exceed runoff from the previously undeveloped site have been proposed and designed in accordance with the SUDS Manual C697 published by CIRIA:

- A. Prevention of runoff at source – through simple design measures on individual buildings (e.g.; minimising paved areas) to allow water to return to the natural drainage system as near to the source as possible and not to contribute to runoff.
- B. Source control of runoff rate/volume - through control of the rate/volume of runoff generated close to source e.g.: rainwater harvesting systems, green roofs and individual soakaways for buildings.
- C. Site control of water management – water is managed from several areas e.g.: roofs and parking areas into one large soakaway or device such as an infiltration basin. This incorporates enhancing *biodiversity* and amenity, and is sized to allow incorporation of further developments in future.

12. Water conservation

How will the development sustainably meet the required water demands including through the use of:

- A. Water efficient appliances such as dual flush toilets, aerating taps, and water-efficient white goods;
- B. Rainwater collection for re-use;
- C. Green roofs.

13. Waste and recycling

Has suitably screened space been made available for the storage of waste and recyclables in or around each building including:

- A. Space for sorting and storing recyclable materials;
- B. Space for general waste storage;
- C. Space for composting organic kitchen and garden waste?

14. Site management

How will development of the site be undertaken in a manner which minimises disturbance to neighbouring properties and the environment including addressing:

- A. Noise pollution
- B. Light pollution
- C. Air pollution
- D. Construction waste
- E. Surface water run-off
- F. Soil handling
- G. Protection of trees
- H. Traffic movements
- I. Access

15. Transport

How does the development proposal make a positive contribution towards the improvement of the sustainable transport network by:

- A. Reducing car dependency;
- B. Promoting sustainable transport modes;
- C. Creating or linking to existing sustainable travel modes including the core path network, safe routes to schools and workplaces by cycle, pedestrian or public transport;
- D. Reducing the need to travel; demonstrated through a Transport Assessment where transport impacts are considered to be significant.

16. Pedestrians and cyclists

How close is the development to existing public transport networks?

What provision is made for secure cycle storage in new buildings and at associated local facilities including transport hubs?

17. Efficient use of land and existing buildings

How does the design ensure that:

- A. Disturbance to soils is minimised for example through minimising required earthworks.
- B. Where appropriate demolition materials will be re-used on-site, rather than transported off-site as waste materials.
- C. Existing redundant and derelict buildings are sympathetically converted and/or restored where appropriate.

18. Design for flexibility

Has flexibility been designed into all units to provide adaptability to changing needs?

- A. Has design to Lifetime Homes Standards been adopted?
- B. Has infrastructure been installed to allow for home working, e.g. telephone / WiFi for all developments?
- C. Does building structure and position allow for future extension?
- D. Have construction techniques been used which enable internal walls to be easily removed or re-positioned to create new spaces?

19. Private amenity space

Is there provision for private amenity space e.g.: private garden, balcony, roof terrace or patio, or a communal garden/courtyard which is easily accessible for occupants of designated properties, and does the size and type of area provided allow for:

- A. All occupants to sit outside at once;
- B. Safe access by those using wheelchairs or mobility aids;
- C. Growing fruit or vegetables;
- D. Composting of kitchen and garden waste;
- E. Drying washing.

20. Accessibility of community facilities

How far in miles is the development from the following facilities?

- A. Healthy facilities such as a surgery or pharmacy;
- B. Education facilities such as a crèche, primary and secondary schools;
- C. Shop;
- D. Bank, Post Office or cash machine;
- E. Leisure facilities such as a community centre or indoor sports facility.