

Strategic Environmental Assessment - Report Manual & Template

**Scottish Enterprise Grampian
Aberdeenshire Council
Aberdeen City Council**



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Table of Contents

Title Page i

Table of Contents ii

Introduction 1

Part 1: General Overview of the Environmental Report 1

 A - Preparing the Environmental Report 2

 B - Consulting on the Environmental Report and the Draft Plan 3

 C - Responses from Consultation authorities and the public 4

 D - Taking account of the consultation opinion 5

 E - Adopting Plan 6

 F - Providing information 7

 G - Monitor Plan 8

Part 2: Templates and Appendices11

 Table of Contents 12

 Non -Technical Summary 13

 Environmental Report Template 14

 Plan Context 17

 Scope and level of detail considered in this report 20

 Monitoring Framework 25

 Next Steps 26

 Appendices 27

Part 3: Quality Assurance31

Part 4: Notice for Consultation on Environmental Report & Draft Plan35

Part 5: Post-Adoption Templates36

 Information regarding the adoption of plan 37

 Post-Adoption SEA Statement 38

 References 40

 Further information 41

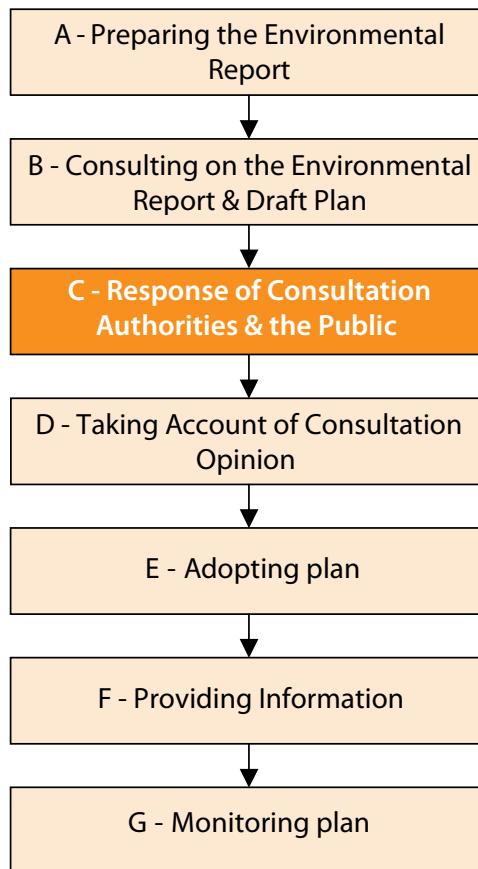
Introduction

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the environmental assessment of policies, plans¹, strategies and programmes. The environmental report is a major output in the SEA process. However, the preparation of the environmental report does not bring the SEA process to an end. The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 has additional processes from the time the environmental report is completed to the time your authority monitors the plan. The first part of this manual covers the overall process from the time you start compiling the environmental report to the time you start monitoring the adopted plan. The second part of this manual contains the environmental report templates and quality assurance checklist. Post-adoption templates are found at Part 5 of this manual.

Part 1: General Overview of the Environmental Report

The following flow chart numbered A – G explains the general overview of the SEA process from the environment report stage to the post-adoption stages.

General Overview of the Environmental Report



¹ Any subsequent reference to plan in this manual includes programmes and strategies

A - Preparing the Environmental Report

Schedule 3 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 provides a checklist of the issues you should cover in the environmental report (See the outlined box in Part 2 Section 1.3 – “The Non-Technical Summary” for details). Basically the scoping report and the consultation responses become the starting point of the environmental report. The framework adopted in the scoping report (to identify, describe and evaluate significant environmental effects of the plan and its reasonable alternatives) will guide the assessment. The details and efforts you put into the report will depend on your current knowledge of SEA; the nature of the plan; and the stage in the decision-making process at which the plan is. You should always avoid duplicating your effort for issues already dealt with in another report. For example, if certain issues have already been addressed in the strategic development plan, they should not be repeated in the local plan.

When the environmental report is completed, it is important to check it against the quality assurance checklist and scoring grades on pages 30 - 32. This ensures that the SEA process meets all legal and best practice requirements.

B - Consulting on the Environmental Report and the Draft Plan

As part of the SEA process, you are required to consult with the consultation authorities and the public on your environmental report and the draft plan. See Figure 2 below:

From Figure 2 above, you will be required, within 14 days of preparing the environmental report, to:

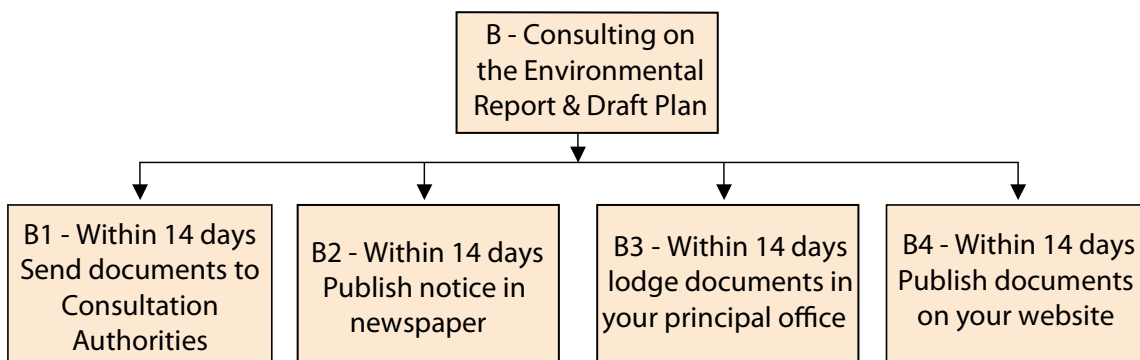
- B.1** send a copy of the relevant documents (i.e. environmental report and the draft plan) to the consultation authorities inviting their opinion on them;
- B.2** publish a notice in a circulating newspaper and on your website informing the public to express their opinion on the published environmental report and draft plan. The notice should cover information on:
- title of plan;
 - the address from which copies of the documents can be obtained or inspected;
 - invitation to the public to express their opinion on the documents;
 - the address to which responses should be sent; and
 - the period within which responses should be sent.
- (See the template for the notice at Appendix 3).

- B.3** lodge a copy of the relevant documents at your principal office for inspection by the public; and
- B.4** display a copy of the relevant documents on your website.

Some consultative authorities may prefer a hard copy of the relevant documents, rather than the electronic version of the documents. The particular preference of a consultation authority will be specified in their response letter on the scoping report. You should therefore refer to their response letter before you sent out the relevant documents. The contact address of the SEA Gateway is:

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

Figure 2: Consultation Requirements



C - Responses from Consultation authorities and the public

The minimum period for public consultation is always specified in the scoping report. Following the receipt of the opinion of the consultation authorities, you will be required under Section 15(3)(b) to advise the Scottish Ministers, through the SEA Gateway, regarding the period of consultation with the public. The period the Scottish Ministers consider to be adequate for the public consultation becomes the period for your public consultation (usually between 6 to 12 weeks). (See Sections E-F of the Scoping Manual and Templates for further details). The consultation authorities have expertise on different aspects of the environmental issues addressed in the report and will be able to advise you on what you need to add or delete from the report. The public may have expertise and concerns, which they will express in their response.

D - Taking account of the consultation opinion

The opinion expressed by the consultation authorities and the public can be very useful in improving the quality of the plan being prepared. In order to track these changes, the framework adopted in the scoping report, such as in Table 1 shown below, should be used to guide the documentation of the changes you make.

Table 1: Analysis of Comments

Organisation	Issue	Concern/ Comments	How addressed in the SEA Process	Page of SEA Report
e.g. Historic Scotland	Cultural Heritage	Consider splitting Cultural heritage and material assets in your report	Cultural heritage and material assets have been split	See 24
EPA	Air	Include PM ₁₀ in the indicators for air	PM10 is included	See Section 4
SNH	Biodiversity	Consider Habitat Fragmentation in cumulative effects assessment	Habitat Fragmentation considered in cumulative effects assessment	See Section 7

E - Adopting Plan

Since the SEA process is to improve the quality of the plan and to ensure that it protects the environment; you should make use of the consultation outcome and the findings in the environmental report to make changes to the plan before its adoption. Sometimes other issues beyond the control of local authorities may delay the adoption of the plan. The plan may well be subjected to public inquiry before its adoption. Whatever the process, the environmental team should not lose sight of the environmental implications of their actions.



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F - Providing information

Once the plan is adopted a number of post-adoption steps are required to conclude the SEA process. The essence of this stage is to provide information regarding the difference the SEA process has made to the plan.

You should therefore prepare a statement specifying: -

- how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan;
- how the environmental report has been taken into account;
- how opinions expressed during various consultations have been taken into account;
- the reasons for choosing the plan as adopted in the light of other reasonable alternatives; and
- measures you will take to monitor significant environmental effects.

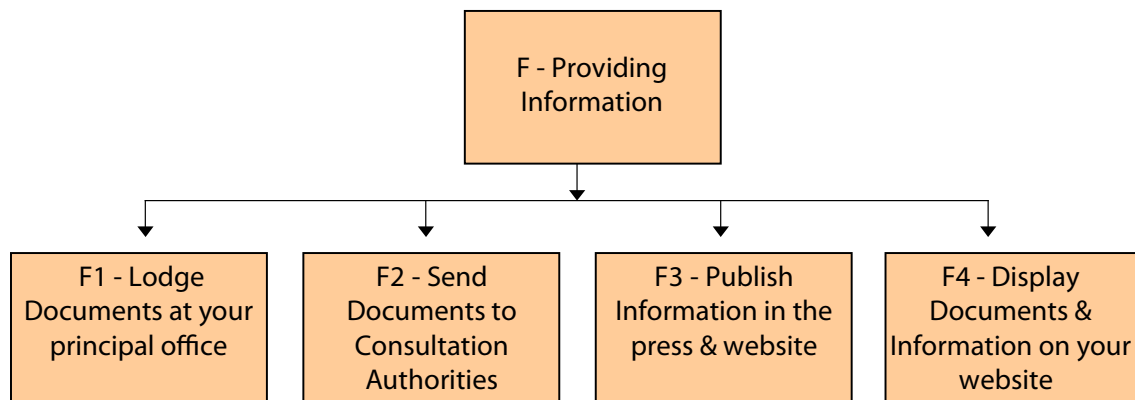
To convey this statement to the public, you are required to provide this information within a reasonable time of adopting the plan, as shown in Figure 3 below.

From Figure 3, you are required to:

- F.1 lodge the relevant documents (the finalised plan and environmental report) and the statement at your principal office;
- F.2 send the relevant documents (the finalised plan and environmental report) and the statement you prepared to consultation authorities;
- F.3 bring to the attention of the public information regarding the adoption in of the plan in a circulating newspaper and on your website; and
- F.4 display relevant documents and information regarding the adoption of the plan on your website.

(See the template for the public information at Appendix 4; and the template for the statement at Appendix 5).

Figure 3: providing information



G - Monitor Plan

Once the plan is adopted and the necessary information is provided, your authority should now monitor the significant environmental effects identified through the SEA process. The framework for monitoring used in the environmental report should be used to identify unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage so that the appropriate remedial action can be undertaken.





Part 2

Templates and Appendices to follow

Please take note that the explanation part of the document is completed.

The following template is a self contained document which can be adapted as a Environmental Report.



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Part 2

Environmental Report Template

Scottish Enterprise Grampian

Aberdeenshire Council

Aberdeen City Council



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Table of Contents

Title Page 10

1. Non-Technical Summary 12

1.1 Introduction: 12

1.3 The Non-Technical Summary 12

1.4 How to comment on the Report 12

2. The Environmental Report 13

2.7 Key facts relating to the [named plan/programme] 15

3. Plan Context 16

3.1 SEA Activities to date in relation to the {named plan} 16

3.5 Relationship with other plans and programmes 16

3.7 The Environmental Baseline (TaskA2). 17

3.10 Environmental Problems (TaskA3) 18

4. Scope and level of detail Considered in this report 19

4.1 Alternatives. 19

4.5 Scope in/out of SEA Issues. 19

4.7 Assessment Framework – SEA Objectives & Indicators (Task A4) 20

4.12 Cumulative Effect Assessment 23

4.13 Appropriate Assessment 23

4.16 Assessment of compatibility of plan options 23

4.18 Proposed Mitigation Measures 23

5. Monitoring Framework 24

5.2 Limitations and Difficulties in the assessment 24

6. Next Steps 25

6.1 Proposed Consultation Timescale & Anticipated Milestone 25

6.3 Framework for Analysing Consultees & their Comments. 25

7. Appendices. 26

1. Non-Technical Summary

1.1 Introduction:

1.2 Consistent with paragraph 10 of Schedule 3 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, the Aberdeen City /Aberdeenshire /Scottish Enterprise Grampian have prepared this non-technical summary for the [named plan/programme/strategy] covering the key issues, outcomes, topics and processes of the Strategic Environmental Assessment process listed at paragraph 1-9 of Schedule 3. The following sections discuss the summary under the appropriate headings.

1.3 The Non-Technical Summary

The Non-Technical Summary should cover the following bullet points

- An outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan or programme, and of its relationship (if any) with other relevant plans and programmes and environmental protection objectives.
- The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution without implementation of the plan or programme
- The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected
- Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as Natura 2000 sites
- The likely significant effects on the environment of “environmental issues” including
 - biodiversity (including fauna & flora)
 - population
 - human health
 - soil
 - water
 - air
 - climatic factors
 - material assets
 - cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage
 - landscape
 - the inter-relationship between the issues
- It should also cover the nature of impacts including
 - o short, medium and long-term effects;
 - o permanent and temporary effects;
 - o positive and negative effects; and
 - o secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects.
- mitigation measures
- an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives/options assessed
- a description of the assessment method
- statement of difficulties encountered in preparing the report - technical deficiencies or lack of know-how
- monitoring proposals

1.4 How to comment on the Report

1.5 If you would like to express your views on this environmental report, please send your comments to

Name of Officer
Aberdeenshire Council/Aberdeen
City Council/Scottish Enterprise
Grampian
Street number
Aberdeen
Post Code e-mail: Telephone
Fax number

2. The Environmental Report

2.1 In accordance with the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, the [name the service here] of Aberdeenshire Council/Aberdeen City Council/Scottish Enterprise Grampian have prepared this Environmental Report as part of the preparation of [named plan/programme]. This report is based on the scoping report on which the consultation authorities have already expressed their views. This report is being prepared to provide information on the [named plan/programme] and the SEA process; identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant environmental effects of the plan/programme and reasonable alternatives; and to provide an early and effective opportunity for the Consultation Authorities and the public to offer their views on any aspects of this report.

2.2 The EU Directive defines SEA as

- Preparing an Environmental Report on the likely significant effects of the draft plan/programme
- Carrying out consultation on the draft plan or programme and the accompanying Environmental Report
- Taking into account the Environmental Report and the results of the consultation in decision-making and
- Providing information when the draft plan or programmes is adopted showing how the results of the environmental assessment have been taken into account

2.3 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires the preparation of strategic environmental assessment for a wide range of plans

and programmes including [the named plan/programme]. The objective of the Act is to

- provide a high level of protection of the environment and to
- integrate environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans
- promote sustainable development.
- increase public participation in environmental decision making

2.4 The key stages of SEA are as follows

Screening Determining whether the plan/programme is likely to have significant environmental effect and whether SEA is required

Scoping Deciding on the scope and level of detail of the environmental report and the consultation period in consultation with the consultation authorities.

Environmental Report Publishing an environmental report on the plan and its environmental effects and consulting on it

Adoption Providing information on the adopted plan; providing information on how the consultation outcome has been taken into account and setting out the monitoring framework

Monitoring Monitoring significant environmental effects and taking appropriate remedial action for any unforeseen significant environmental effects

2.5 The Environmental Report required under the Act will inform the plan making process and provide an objective account of effects of the strategic action. Table 1 shows the links between the SEA process and the [plan/programme].

Stages of the plan	SEA Stages	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surveys required by TCP(s) Act 1997 publicise report to survey Publicise matters to be included in the plan Identify the Issues, develop vision and aims for the plan identify options, and prepare for consultation 	A	Setting the context and establishing the baseline
	A1	Identify the relevant plans, programmes and environmental protection objectives
	A2 A3	Collect baseline information Identify environmental problems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation on issues and Options 	A4	Develop SEA objectives
	A5	Consult on the scope of the SEA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare proposed plan 	B	Developing and refining alternatives and assessing effects
	B1	Testing the plan or programme objectives against the SEA objectives
	B2	Developing strategic alternatives
	B3	Predicting the effects of the draft plan or programme, including alternatives
	B4	Evaluating the effects of the draft plan or programme, including alternatives
	B5	Considering ways of mitigating adverse effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full public consultation on the proposed plan; pre-deposit consultations on emerging policies and proposals 	C	Preparing the Environmental Report
	C1	Preparing the Environmental Report
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revision and preparation of finalised plan Submission of structure plan to minister/deposit finalised local plan Consideration of objections and public inquiry 	D	Consulting on the draft plan or programme and the Environmental Report
	D1	Consulting on the draft plan or programme and the Environmental Report
	D2	Assessing significant changes
	D3	Decision-making and providing information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring plan implementation 	E	Monitoring implementation of the plan or programme
	E1	Developing aims and methods for monitoring
	E2	Responding to adverse effects



2.6 This section of the report covers this introduction, key facts about the plan/programme/strategy including the overview, name of authority, plan title, the reason why the plan is being drawn, plan subject, period covered, area coverage and frequency of future plan updates. Section 3 discusses the plan context including other relevant plans and programmes; environmental problems relevant to the plan; environmental baseline and SEA objectives. Section 4 looks at alternatives considered, assessment methods, the assessment of the plan and the alternatives as well as the mitigation framework for the plan. The Monitoring framework is addressed in Section 5 while the next steps are discussed in Section 6. The last section contains the appendices.

2.7 Key facts relating to the [named plan/programme]

Provide an overview of the plan/programme/strategy including the name of authority, title of plan, what prompted the plan, plan subject, period covered, plan area and frequency of updates

2.8 The Aberdeenshire/Aberdeen City Council/Scottish Enterprise Grampian is preparing this [specify the name of the plan or programme] as a legal requirement under Act/Regulation [specify the legal provision] or as an administrative requirement [Delete as appropriate]. The [named strategic action] is a [named sector or issue- e.g. transport] plan/programme/strategy covering the period 200X to 20XX. This plan/programme/strategy is subject to review every XX years or a soon as it has become necessary to do so.

You should provide an overview of the plan/programme/strategy here including its purpose and objectives

2.9 The key elements of the plan/strategy/programme include [vision, strategy, employment land, housing requirement, wildlife, landscape and land resources; communications network; and monitoring and review or something similar]. The plan/programme/strategy covers the [whole/part] of the [City/Shire/Region]. Essentially the plan seeks [to promote economic growth, integrates effective neighbourhood regeneration; incorporates viable accessibility and infrastructure proposals]/ develop a new transport strategy for the City/Region/Shire.

2.10 The plan/programme/strategy aims to [now state aim or purpose – an example is as follows: the optimise accessibility to jobs and services for all in an efficient, comfortable and safe manner whilst maintaining or enhancing environmental conditions in the City/Shire/Region].

2.11 The plan/programme/strategy's objectives include the following:

- List the plan/programme/strategy objectives here. An example will be 'to create a long-term sustainable frameworks of settlements'
- To integrate land use and transportation
- Etc and etc.

3. Plan Context

3.1 SEA Activities to date in relation to the [named plan]

	SEA Activity	When Carried Out	Notes ¹
1	Screening		
2	SEA Course 1		
3	Scoping		
4	Outline & plan objectives		
5	Relationship with other plans, programmes & environmental objectives		
6	Environmental baseline		
7	Environmental problems		
8	Evolution of the likely future environment without the plan		
9	SEA Course 2		
10	Alternative/options		
11	Assessment method established		
12	Selection of plan alternatives		
13	Likely problems after implementation & mitigation identified		
14	Monitoring method established		
15	Consultation timescale with consultative authorities		
16	Consultation timescale with the public		
17	Notification & publicity		
18	Adoption		
19	Post adoption action		

3.2 The issues that set the context for the plan have been addressed in SEA templates developed by Scottish Executive covering the following topics: -

- A1: Identify the relevant plans, programmes and environmental protection objectives
- A2: Collect baseline information
- A3: Identify environmental problems

3.4 Similar UK-wide Guidance (2005) further recommends that these early SEA stages, such as describing the baseline, identifying environmental problems and analysing links to other policies, should be carried out concurrently, and that they should inform each other. This is the approach adopted in this Scoping Report. The following section provides detailed analysis for this context.

3.5 Relationship with other plans and programmes

3.6 Table 1.1 below lists other plans, programmes and environmental

objectives (A1) relevant to the [named strategic action]. Detailed analysis of how they apply to the plan/ programme/strategy and SEA issues are shown at Appendix 1. [The shake up by the replacement of NPPGs with SPPs is resulting in many planning guidance updates.] OR [Changes in legislation, regulations, policies and guidelines continue to influence planning in this Sector/Service]. Consequently, any changes in policies will be tracked throughout the SEA process, keeping the process iterative and current. The relevant plans, programmes and environmental protection objectives discussed in this report are those ready at the time of completion this report. Those available at the date of adoption of the plan cannot be included in this report.

The following is an example of how other relevant plans; programmes and environmental objectives can be listed.

From the bullet points at Column 2 of Appendix 5.1, you can summarise the key points of the relevant plans, programmes and environmental protection objectives here. This section will look like the following:

From the analysis of the relevant plans, programmes and environmental protection objectives, we observe that the plan should emphasise the following: -

- Promotion of quality of life issues
- Ensuring more coherence and cost effectiveness in policy-making
- Supporting economic sustainability consistent with social progress and the environment

3.7 The Environmental Baseline (TaskA2)

3.8 The existing environmental baseline data have been collected from a wide range of sources, including national government/agency websites, consultation authorities, NESBReC, the 2001 census and from primary surveys.

Table 1.1: Other Plans, Programmes and Environmental Protection Objectives

	International Level
1	EC Habitat Directive
2	Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC
3	EC Birds Directive 79/409/EEC
4	Kyoto Protocol (1992)
	National Level
5	Securing the future – UK Government sustainability development strategy (2005)
6	Sustainable Communities Plan
7	NPPG1 - The Planning System (Revised June 2000)
8	Road Traffic Reduction Act 1997
9	UK Sustainable Development Strategy
	Regional level
10	North East Scotland Together – Structure Plan
11	Economic Growth Strategy for North East Scotland
12	North East Scotland Local Biodiversity Action Plan
13	Grampian Police Road Safety Plan
14	Grampian Health Strategy
	Local level
15	Development Plan
16	SPGs – List them

Environmental issues such as air, water, soil, climatic factors, landscape, cultural heritage, biodiversity and material asset set the context for the collection of the baseline data. The data is then presented in a table covering;

- The latest data for Aberdeen City/Aberdeenshire Council/Scottish Enterprise Grampian
 - Comparators: regional or national data against which Aberdeenshire /Aberdeen City/Scottish Enterprise Grampian's status are compared
 - Target where they exist;
 - Trends where they exists
 - Environmental problems – where the Aberdeenshire/Aberdeen City is doing badly compared with the comparators or targets
 - The sources of data
- 3.9 The detailed analysis of the baseline data is at Appendix 2.

3.10 Environmental Problems (TaskA3)

3.11 Environmental problems affecting the plan/programme/strategy were identified through [list the process – such as discussions with planning officers, member officer working groups, informal consultations, and an analysis of the baseline data]. They are summarised at Table 2.1 below.

Use the following table to list the problems relevant to the plan, programme or strategy. It might be useful to use the “environmental issues³” as guidance for listing issues and problems in the area. As already explained, the UK-wide guidance recommends that ‘SEA objectives and indicators’, ‘describing the baseline’, ‘identifying environmental problems’ and analysing links to ‘other policies’ should be carried out concurrently. It might therefore be useful to use the problems identified to promote policies and to devise key indicators. In the example below, two environmental problems have been identified based on “air” and “biodiversity” under “environmental issues.”

Table 2.1: Environmental Problems in Aberdeen City?Aberdeenshire?Region

Environmental Issues	Environmental Problems	Supporting Data	Key Indicator	Policy Measures Required
Air	Traffic congestion is seriously affecting the air quality		Air quality	Develop policies that limit traffic congestion
Biodiversity	Some woodlands are being fragmented	30% of Aberdeen City/Aberdeenshire/the Region's BAP priority habitats and species have action plans	Condition of SSSIs	Implementation of the BAPs shows what has been done, rather than the outcome. Concentrate on checking the condition of the SSSIs

³The term “environmental issues” is the name collectively given to air, water, soil, biodiversity, climatic factors, landscape, material assets, population and human health as well as cultural heritage (including architectural and archaeological heritage) in the EU Directive 2001/42/EC. In practice they are referred to as “SEA topics.”

4. Scope and level of detail considered in this report

4.1 Alternatives

4.2 The following shows how alternatives are identified and preferred alternatives chosen. In addition to the options developed in the plan/programme/strategy additional strategic alternatives/ options were developed through the analysis of

- The environmental problems identified
- Comments from informal consultation
- The sustainable ‘hierarchy of alternatives’ involving demand reduction/obviation, mode/type, location and implementation/ timing
- Pricing measures and
- Management measures

4.3 An initial assessment of [specify the appropriate number] alternatives has been undertaken against SEA objectives. Consideration is given to the alternatives that have significant environmental effects in relation to SEA objectives as well as technical, environmental, social, or financial feasibility of the process. Those alternatives that have significant environmental effects and are

feasible have been taken forward in this report for further assessment and evaluation. The following table shows the strategic alternatives taken forward for further assessment in the environmental report with justifications.

4.4 The following table shows the strategic alternatives not taken forward for further assessment. They are not technically, environmentally, socially, or financially feasible. Some of them have already been incorporated in the plan as a result of the Scoping process. Others appear not to have any significant effects on the plan. Table 3.2 shows the discarded alternatives with the corresponding justification.

4.5 Scope in/out of SEA Issues

4.6 From the initial appraisal, the environmental issues on which the plan is not likely to have any significant environmental effects have been scoped out of the assessment process. The environmental issues, which have positive and negative significant environmental effects, are scoped in for further consideration (See Tables 3.3 & 3.4 for details and justification). As a result of discarding some environmental issues, the corresponding SEA objectives and indicators have also been deleted.

Table 3.1: Plans & Alternatives Taken Forward & Justification

Plan & Strategic alternatives taken forward	Justification

Table 3.2: Plans & Alternatives Discarded & Justification

Plan & Strategic alternatives discarded	Justification

4.7 **Assessment Framework – SEA Objectives & Indicators (Task A4)**

4.8 Neither the SEA Directive nor the Scottish regulation specifically requires the use of objectives or indicators in the SEA, but they are very useful in describing, analysing and comparing environmental effects. SEA objectives state broad intention while the indicators become a benchmark against which the plan’s performance is measured.

4.9 The SEA objectives are separate from the plan or programme objectives although they can influence each other and even overlap. To fulfil the requirements of the SEA Directive, they must cover environmental issues including biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between them.

4.10 Table 3.5 lists the SEA objectives against which the Aberdeen City/ Aberdeenshire/Scottish Enterprise Grampian’s plan/ programme/ strategy have been assessed. In order to finalise the SEA objectives and indicators; further analyses of Aberdeenshire/Aberdeen City’s environmental problems, baseline data and other relevant plans, programmes and environmental protection objectives have been thoroughly analysed so as to inform the choice of SEA Objectives which are in this report. Further consultation exercises have also help to finalised them.

Table 3.3: Environmental Issues Scoped in

Environmental Issues	Scoped in	Justification
Air		
Climatic Factors		
Water		
Soil		
Population & Human Health		
Biodiversity (Fauna & Flora)		
Landscape		
Cultural Heritage (including archaeological and architectural heritage)		
Material Assets		

Table 3.4: Environmental Issues Scoped Out

Environmental Issues	Scoped Out	Justification
Air		
Climatic Factors		
Water		
Soil		
Population & Human Health		
Biodiversity (Fauna & Flora)		
Landscape		
Cultural Heritage (including archaeological and architectural heritage)		
Material Assets		

The following table of objectives and indicators are for illustration purposes only. The objectives will change depending on the type of plan being drawn up.

Table 3.5: SEA objectives & indicators

SEA Topics	Possible Objectives	Possible SEA Indicators
Biodiversity, fauna and flora	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid damage to designated wildlife and geological sites and protected species Maintain biodiversity, avoiding irreversible losses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reported levels of damage to designated sites/species Achievement of Biodiversity Action Plan targets
Population and human health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce and prevent crime, reduce the fear of crime Decrease noise and vibration Increase opportunities for indoor recreation and exercise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fear of crime surveys Number of people affected by ambient noise levels General resident perception surveys
Water and soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limit water pollution that do not damage natural systems Reduce contamination, and safeguard soil quality and quantity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality (biology and chemistry) of rivers Waste disposal of in landfill Contaminated land
Air	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limit air pollution to levels that do not damage natural systems Reduce respiratory illness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of days of air pollution Levels of key air pollutants/per sector and per capita Achievement of Air Quality Management Area
Climatic factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce greenhouse gas emissions Reduce vulnerability to the effects of climate change e.g. flooding, disruption to travel by extreme weather, etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electricity generated from renewable energy sources and CHP located in the area Flood risk
Cultural heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preserve historic buildings, archaeological sites and other culturally important features Value and protect diversity and local distinctiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of listed buildings and archaeological sites at risk Building impact: form and materials, internal environment, urban and social integration, character and innovation
Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the quality and quantity of publicly accessible open spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of population within 200m of parks and open spaces
Material assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote creation of fixed assets Enhance and promote commercial and industrial assets Protect residential, commercial and industrial properties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New developments No of existing buildings reused Flood defences Residential properties Industry properties Commercial properties

4.11 The plan's objectives, policies, strategies and the alternatives brought forward for further assessment have been assessed against SEA objectives agreed through the scoping process. Significant environmental effects of the plan have been predicted to determine whether the plan has negative, positive, uncertain or neutral effects. Furthermore,

the effects have been evaluated to determine the nature of their effect if any. If there are likely to be damages to the receptors their reversibility or irreversibility of effects, risks, duration (permanent, temporary, long-term, short-term and medium-term) and cumulative (direct, indirect, secondary) and synergistic effects have been gauged. Table 3.6 shows the framework used to assess effects of the plan/programme/strategy.

Table 3.6: Framework for assessing the [named strategic action].

The Plan	SEA Objective 1	SEA Objective 2	SEA Objective 3	...	Nth SEA Objective	Overall effect	Comments
Objective 1							
Objective 2							
Objective 3							
...							
Nth Objective							
Alternative Objective 1							
Alternative Objective 2							
Alternative Objective 3							
...							
Nth Alternative Objective							
Policy 1							
Policy 2							
Policy 3							
...							
Nth Policy Alternative							
Policy 1 Alternative							
Policy 2 Alternative							
Policy 3 Alternative							
...							
Nth Alternative Policy							
Overall Effects							
Key	++=very positive		+/- = mixed		?=uncertain		
	-- = very negative		0 = neutral				



document four

4.12 Cumulative Effect Assessment

4.13 A further framework for assessing cumulative and synergistic effects of the plan/programme/strategy is shown at Table 3.7 below

4.14 Appropriate Assessment

4.15 The report determines that the plan's policies and objectives are likely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites. Accordingly, an appropriate assessment of Natura 2000 sites has been carried as follows.

4.16 Assessment of compatibility of plan options

4.17 In order to determine the

consistency and compatibility of the plan objectives and policies, an internal compatibility assessment of the plan's objectives and policies has been undertaken using a framework shown in Appendix 5.3

4.18 Proposed Mitigation Measures

4.19 The SEA Directive requires that through mitigation measures, recommendations should be made to prevent, reduce or compensate for the negative effects of implementing the plan/programme/strategy. It also seeks to ensure that positive effects identified are enhanced. The proposed framework for mitigating significant environmental effects adopted in this report is at Table 3.8 below.

Table 3.7: Cumulative & Synergistic Effects of Plan and Options

Policies	Policy/ Option 1	Policy/ Option 2	Policy/ Option 3	Policy/ Option 4	Cumulative impacts
SEA Objective					
Biodiversity (Habitat fragmentation)					
Climate (Climate change)					
Water (Flooding)					
Landscape (Tranquillity)					

Key: + positive, - negative, 0 = neutral =? = uncertain

Table 3.8: Mitigation Framework

SEA Issue	Existing problem	Plan Impact	Mitigation Measures
Air			
Water			
Soil			
Climatic factors			
Biodiversity (flora and fauna)			
Population and Health			
Cultural Heritage			
Landscape			
Material Assets			

5. Monitoring Framework

5.1 The Aberdeenshire/Aberdeen City Council/Scottish Enterprise Grampian is required to monitor the significant environmental effects arising from the plan implementation. A monitoring report will therefore be integrated into the adopted plan to constantly monitor the significant environmental effects. The proposed framework for monitoring significant environmental effects is shown at Table 3.9 below.

5.2 Limitations and Difficulties in the assessment

The following is an example of what you could say. You should amend the statement below according to your circumstances and the facts of the case.

5.3 The environmental assessment process of the plan/programme by Aberdeenshire Council /Aberdeen City Council/ Scottish Enterprise Grampian is constrained by a number of factors which are summarised as follows:

- This is the first assessment undertaken since the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 came into force. There is little experience prior to undertaking this assessment. It therefore took some time getting my head over the process before undertaking the SEA.
- There were difficulties ob-

taining all the data for the baseline data. Even when some data were obtained, they did not cover trends and comparators. As the result there are some gaps in the baseline data. In most cases, data was either incomplete or dated. Because data collection is dependent on other officers within and outwith the council, this caused some delay because some officer did not have time to put the information together as early as possible

- There were some technical difficulties assessing cumulative and synergistic effects as well as undertaking appropriate assessment.
- Another difficulty revolves around the compilation of other relevant plan, policies, programmes and environmental protection objectives because of heated debates among colleagues as to what is relevant and what is not relevant to the scale of the plan
- There are difficulties compiling environmental problems in the area. Because the SEA is being carried out in parallel with the plan, the delays in the planning process adversely affect the timing of the SEA.

Table 3.9: Monitoring Plan

What needs to be monitored? (effects)	What sort of information is required? (Indicators)	Where can the information be obtained?	Are there gaps in the existing information and how can it be resolved?	When should the remedial action be considered?	Who is responsible for undertaking the monitoring?	How should the results be presented?	What remedial actions could be taken?

6. Next Steps

- 6.1 **Proposed Consultation Timescale & Anticipated Milestone**
- 6.2 Table 4.1 shows the remaining steps needed for the SEA of Aberdeenshire/ Aberdeen City/Scottish Enterprise Grampian and how these steps would be carried out and described in the Final SEA Report. From the proposed consultation timescale, the consultation period is a minimum of (6/8/10 or 12 weeks).
- 6.3 **Framework for Analysing Consultees & their Comments**

- 6.4 In order to track and analyse comments and suggestions from the consultation process, a framework for analysis is provided at Tables 4.2 and 4.3 below.

Table 4.1: Proposed Consultation Timescale and Methods

Expected date	Milestone	Comments
1/1/06-1/3/06	Consulting on the Environmental Report & Draft Plan	
1/5/06- 1/6/06	Collating views on the Consultation	
1/6/06 – 1/7/06	Take the appropriate action on the environmental report and the plan as the result of the consultations	
4 weeks	Finalise the environmental report and plan	
8 weeks	Adopt plan	
1 week	Draft Notice for Publication, Post-adoption Information & Statement	
2 weeks	Provide information	
5-8 weeks	Start monitoring the plan	

Table 4.2: People Consulted on the initial draft of the report

Source	List names

Table 4.3: Analysis of Comments

Organisation	Issue	Concern/ Comments	How addressed in SEA Process	SEA Report page [specify number]

7. Appendices.

7.1 Below are the appendices, which have been referred to throughout this scoping report.

Document	Requirements of the Plan	Implication for SEA	Relationship to plan
International European Strategy on sustainable development 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure a better quality of life for present and future generations Ensure future policy making is more coherent and costs effective , as well as promote technological innovation and stronger involvement of civil society and business in policy formulation Strategies for sustainable economic growth should support social progress and respect the local environment Contains target that the deterioration of EU's biodiversity should be stopped by 2010 	Applies to all SEA objectives	
National			
Regional			
Local			



document four

Appendix 5.2: Baseline data

SEA Topic	Indicator	Quantified information (For RAs)	Comparators and targets	Trend	Issues/ Constraints
Population & Human Health	% describing health as not good	5.8% 2001	England & Wales 9.2% in 2001	6.4% in 1999 getting better	Favourable situation. Lower than national average and getting better
Air					
Water					
Soil					
Biodiversity, fauna & flora					
Climatic factors					
Material assets					
Cultural heritage					
landscape					
Inter-relationship between them					



Part 3

Quality Assurance to follow

The following documents are two separate checklists against which the quality of the environmental report and the plan or strategy should be checked. The report should also be checked against the Scottish Executive Information Notes available on their website.



document four

Quality Assurance

Before the environmental report is completed, it will be very useful to scrutinise it against the quality assurance criteria proposed in the UK-wide SEA Guidance published in 2005 -

A Practical Guide to Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive

Quality Assurance checklist

The quality of the SEA process can be assured through the choice of a good SEA team, the collection of appropriate information, the use of effective prediction techniques, consultation, and integration of SEA findings into the plan or programme.

This section suggests a quality assurance checklist taken from the UK-wide SEA

Guidance published in 2005. It is intended to help test whether the requirements of the SEA Directive are met, identify any problems in the environmental report, and show how effectively the SEA has integrated environmental considerations into the plan-making process.

The checklist is designed to be used by anyone involved in the SEA in any capacity: Responsible Authorities which carry out SEAs, the Consultation bodies and other Consultees, inspectors, independent experts, and members of the public. It covers both the technical elements of the SEA and the procedural steps of the SEA process under the Directive. It can be applied at any stage of the SEA to check the quality of work carried out up to that point.

Quality Assurance checklist

Objectives and Context

- The plan or programmes purpose and objectives are made clear
- The environmental issues and constraints, including international and EC environmental protection objectives, are considered in developing objectives and targets
- Links with other related plan, programmes and [policies are identified and explained
- Conflicts that exist between SEA objectives, between SEA and plan objectives and between SEA objectives and other plan objectives are identified and described

Scoping

- Consultation authorities are consulted in appropriate ways and at appropriate times on the content and scope of the environmental report
- Assessment focuses on significant issues
- Technical, procedural and other difficulties encountered are discussed; assumptions and uncertainties are made explicit
- Reasons are made for elimination issues from further consideration

Alternatives

- Realistic alternatives are considered for the key issues, and the reasons for choosing them are documented
- Alternatives include 'do minimum' and/or business as usual scenarios whether relevant
- The environmental effects (both adverse and beneficial) of each alternative are identified and compared
- Inconsistencies between the alternatives and other relevant plans, programmes or policies are identified and explained
- Reasons are given for selection and elimination of alternatives

Baseline

- Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and their likely evolution without the plan or programme are described
- Environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected are described, including areas wider than the physical boundary of the plan areas where it is likely to be affected by the plan
- Difficulties such as deficiencies in information or methods are explained

Prediction and evaluation of likely significant environmental effects

- Effects identified include the types listed in the Directive (biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climate factors, material assets, cultural heritage and landscape), as relevant; other likely environmental effects are also covered, as appropriate
- Both positive and negative effects are considered, and the duration of effects (short, medium or long-term) is addressed
- Likely secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects are identified where practicable
- Inter-relationships between effects are considered where practicable
- The prediction and evaluation of effects makes use of relevant accepted standards, regulations and thresholds
- Methods used to evaluate the effects are described

Mitigation

- Measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the plan or programme are indicated
- Issues to be taken into account in project consent are identified

The Environmental Report

- Is clear and concise in its layout and presentation
- Uses simple, clear language and avoids or explains technical terms
- Uses maps and other illustrations where appropriate
- Explains the methodology used
- Explains who was consulted and what methods of consultation were used
- Identifies sources of information, including expert judgement and matters of opinion
- Contains a non-technical summary covering the overall approach to the SEA, the objectives of the plan, the main options considered, and any changes to the plan resulting from the SEA

Consultation

- The SEA is consulted on as an integral part of the plan-making process
- Consultation authorities and the public likely to be affected by, or having an interest in, the plan or programme are consulted in ways and at times which give them an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinions on the draft plan and the environmental report

Decision-making and information on the decision

- The environmental report and the opinions of those consulted are taken into account in finalising and adopting the plan or programme
- An explanation is given of how they have been taken into account
- Reasons are given for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of other reasonable alternatives considered

Monitoring measures

- Measures proposed for monitoring are clear, practical and linked to the indicators and objectives used in the SEA
- Monitoring is used, where appropriate, during implementation of the plan or programme to make good deficiencies in baseline information in the SEA
- Monitoring enable unforeseen adverse effects to be identified at an early stage (these effects may include predictions which prove to be incorrect)
- Proposals are made for action in response to significant adverse effects

Source: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister *et al.* (2005) *A Practical Guide to Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive*. London: ODPM Publications.

SEA Review Grades

A	Well performed, no important tasks left incomplete
B	Satisfactory and complete, only minor omissions and inadequacies
C	Just satisfactory despite the omissions and/or inadequacies
D	Parts well attempted but must on the whole be considered just
E	Unsatisfactory because of omissions and/or inadequacies
F	Unsatisfactory, significant omissions or inadequacies
G	Very unsatisfactory, important task(s) poorly done or not attempted
N/A	Not applicable, the review topic is not applicable in the context of the strategic action

Source: Therivel, R (2004) *Strategic Environmental Assessment in Action*. London: Earthscan Publications Ltd



Part 4

Notice for Consultation on Environmental Report & Draft Plan

The following template contains the wording for an advert which will appear in a circulating newspaper and on the Council's website. The template should be used when the public and the consultation authorities are being consulted on the environmental report and the plan/strategy.



document four

Notice for Consultation on Environmental Report & Draft Plan

NEWSPAPER/WEBITE

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL/ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL/SEG

[Named Strategic Action e.g. Local Plan alteration]

The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005

NOTICE under Section 16 (2)

[Aberdeen City Council/Aberdeenshire Council/SEG] has prepared the [named strategic action] in accordance with Section 8(1) of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. The environmental report has identified, described and evaluated the likely significant effect on the environment of the implementing the [named strategic action] and its reasonable alternatives.

Where to Obtain the Environmental Report, Draft Plan

A copy of the environmental report and the draft plan can be obtained from or inspected at:-

Aberdeenshire Council/Aberdeen City Council/Scottish Enterprise Grampian
Woodhill House/St Nicholas House
Street
Aberdeen
Post Code
Website:
www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/
www.aberdeencity.gov.uk

How to comment on the Report

If you would like to express your views on this environmental report and the draft plan please send your comments to

Name of Officer
Aberdeenshire Council/Aberdeen City Council/Scottish Enterprise Grampian
Street number
Aberdeen
Post Code
e-mail: Telephone Fax number

Closing Date

DD/MM/YYYY



Part 5

Post- Adoption Templates to follow

The following template contains the wording for a post-adoption advert which should appear on the Council's website and in a circulating newspaper.



document four

Information regarding the adoption of plan

NEWSPAPER/WEBITE

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL/ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL/SCOTTISH ENTERPRISE GRAMPIAN

[Named Strategic Action e.g. Local Plan alteration]

The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005

INFORMATION under Section 18 (1)(c)(ii)

In accordance with Section 18(1)(b), the Aberdeen City Council/Aberdeenshire Council/Scottish Enterprise Grampian would like to bring to the attention of the public of their adoption of the [named plan/programme] on DD/MM/YYYY.

Where to Obtain the Environmental Report, Draft Plan and Statement

A copy of the environmental report, the draft plan and the accompanying statement can be obtained from or inspected at:-

Aberdeenshire Council/Aberdeen City Council/Scottish Enterprise Grampian
Woodhill House/St Nicholas House (Reception)
Street
Aberdeen
Post Code
Website:
www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/
www.aberdeencity.gov.uk

Time

9.00 a.m.– 5.00 p.m.
Monday to Friday

Post-Adoption SEA Statement

Strategic Environmental Assessment Process

The Post-Adoption Statement is required under Section 18(3) of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. The statement should cover (a) how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan; (b) how the environmental report has been taken into account; (c) how the opinion expressed during consultations have been taken into account in adopting the plan; (d) reasons for choosing the plan in the light of other reasonable alternatives and (e) monitoring measures. Your statement could look like the following statement, which should be amended to suit the individual situation and facts.

[Aberdeen City Council/Aberdeenshire Council/the Scottish Enterprise Grampian] has prepared [insert title of plan/programme] which has been subject to a process of strategic environmental assessment (SEA), as required under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. This has included the following activities: -

- Taking into account the views of the Consultation Authorities regarding the scope and level of detail that was appropriate for the environmental report
- Preparing an environmental report on the likely significant effects on the environment of the draft plan which included consideration of:-
 - the baseline data relating to the current state of the environment;

- links between the plan and other relevant policies, plans, programmes and environmental objectives;
 - existing environmental problems affecting the plan;
 - the plan’s likely significant effects on the environment (positive and negative);
 - the mitigation measures envisaged;
 - an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives chosen;
 - monitoring measures to ensue that any unforeseen environmental effects will be identified allowing for appropriate remedial action to be taken.
- Consulting on the environmental report
 - Taking into account the environmental report and the results of consultation in making final decisions regarding the plan/ programme
 - Committing to monitoring the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan to identify any unforeseen adverse significant environmental effects and to taking appropriate remedial action. The key findings are as follows:

1) Effects of Environmental considerations & the environmental report on the plan

The following table summarises how environmental considerations have been integrated into [the plan] and how the environmental report has been taken into account in accordance with Section 18 (3)(a-b).

Table 1: Environmental Considerations & the Environmental Report

Environmental Considerations and Findings from Environmental Report	Integrated into Plan (Yes/No)	How Integrated/Taken into Account or Reason for not Being Taken Into Account

2) Consultation responses

The following table summarises how opinions expressed during consultation have been taken into account (including any consultation required with other EU member states) in accordance with Section 18(3)(c-d).

3) Reasons for adopting this plan in the light of other reasonable alternatives

Consistent with Section 18(3)(e), this plan is adopted in the light of other reasonable alternatives discussed in the Environmental report on the basis of the following reasons.

- In addition to protecting the environment, it promotes community cohesion and interconnectedness
- The plan is cost effective to monitor than other alternatives
- Etc.

4) Monitoring Measures

Section 18(3)(f) proposes the provision of information on the measures that are to be taken to monitor for any unforeseen environmental effects so that appropriate remedial action may be taken. The following are proposed action listed in the monitoring framework.

- Plan review
- Plan suspensions,
- Review of policies 4, 9 and 11 (these are examples)
- Use risk assessment

Conclusion

It is our view that the SEA has made a positive effect on the plan. It will enable the council to realise its goal of sustainable development, promote evidenced-based culture and transparency as well as supporting the community well being.

Table 2 – How consultation responses have been taken into account

Consultee / Respondent	Summary of Comments	How The Comment Was Taken Into Account In Making the Decision to Adopt The Final Plan/Programme
Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)		
Historic Scotland (HS)		
Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA)		
Dr & Mrs Green Environment		

References

HMSO (2004) *The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Scotland) Regulations 2004*. London: The Stationery Office Limited

HMSO (2005) *The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005*. London: The Stationery Office Limited

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister *et al.* (2005) *A Practical Guide to Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive*. London: ODPM Publications.

Partidario, R. & Clark, R. (1999) *Perspectives on Strategic Environmental Assessment*. London: CRC Press.

Scottish Executive (2003) *Environmental Assessment of Development Plans: Interim Planning Advice*. Edinburgh: Scottish Executive

Scottish Executive SEA Gateway (2005) SEA Templates (Trial Version with Integrated Guidance Notes) [online] Available from [http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/Sustainable Development / 14587](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/SustainableDevelopment/14587) (Accessed on November 4th 2005)

Therivel, R. *et al.* (1996) *The Practice of Strategic Environmental Assessment*. London: Earthscan Publications Ltd.

Therivel, R (2004) *Strategic Environmental Assessment in Action*. London: Earthscan Publications Ltd



Further information

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document four