

Directorate for the Built Environment

SEA Unit, 2-H Bridge Car Park Mail point 13, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ

T: 0131-244 7650 F: 0131-244 «Fax»
E: Johnathan.whittlestone@scotland.gsi.gov.uk



Date: 19 January 2010

Peter Shellard
Senior Planner in Planning & Environment Department of Dumfries &
Galloway Council



00469 Scoping - Dumfries and Galloway council - Local development plan

Dear Peter

With reference to the Scoping report you submitted to the SEA Gateway on 16 December 2009.

In accordance with Section 15(2) of the **Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005** the Consultation Authorities have now considered the Scoping report you submitted. The individual responses from the Consultation Authorities to your report are attached to this letter.

As the Consultation Authorities have now expressed their views on the proposed scope and level of detail of the report, you should refer to the Act to consider what your next step should be. You should of course take into account the opinions offered by the Consultation Authorities.

Note, in accordance with Section 15(3) of the **Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act**, (when agreed) you are required to formally write to advise the Scottish Ministers of the period of consultation you intend to specify, both for the public and the Consultation Authorities.

If you have any queries or would like me to clarify any points, please call me on 0131 244 7650.

Yours sincerely

Johnathan Whittlestone
SEA Gateway Officer



Our Ref: PCS105071/sco/LM
SG Ref: SEA00469

Andrew Maxwell
Service Manager Development Planning
Planning & Environment
Dumfries & Galloway Council
Newall Terrace
Dumfries
DG1 1LW

By email: sea.gateway@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

19 January 2010

Dear Andrew

**Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005
Dumfries & Galloway Council Local Development Plan – Scoping Consultation**

I refer to your Scoping consultation submitted under the above Act in respect of the Dumfries & Galloway Local Development Plan. This was received by SEPA via the Scottish Government SEA Gateway on 16 December 2009. As required under Section 15(2) of the Act, SEPA has considered the document submitted and comments as follows in respect of the scope and level of detail to be included in the Environmental Report (ER).

The Scottish SEA Toolkit (available for download at: www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/09/13104943/0) provides guidance to Responsible Authorities about the type of information that is expected to be provided at each SEA stage. SEPA has used the toolkit to inform this scoping response which is attached as Annex 1.

On completion, the Environmental Report and the Dumfries & Galloway Council Local Development Plan to which it relates should be submitted to the Scottish Government SEA Gateway (sea.gateway@scotland.gsi.gov.uk) which will forward it to the Consultation Authorities.

If you wish to discuss any of the content of this response, please do not hesitate to contact me on 01355 574 302 or via SEPA's SEA Gateway at sea.gateway@sepa.org.uk.

Yours sincerely,



Lorna Maclean
Senior Planning Officer (SEA)

Encs

Chairman
David Sigsworth

Chief Executive
Dr Campbell Gemmell

SEPA Corporate Office
Erskine Court, Castle Business Park, Stirling
FK9 4TR
tel 01786 457700 fax 01786 446885
www.sepa.org.uk

Annex 1: Comments on the Scoping Report

1. General Comments

We welcomed the opportunity to informally comment on the draft Dumfries & Galloway Local Development Plan. As discussed previously, generally, the scoping report provides clear and detailed information on the proposed scope and level of detail of the assessment and covers most of the aspects that we would wish to see addressed at this stage. Subject to the comments below, we are generally content with the scope and level of detail proposed for the ER.

2. Detailed Comments

Relationship with other Plans, Policies and Strategies (PPS)

We consider that the PPS listed in Appendix 1 provides a good start at providing a background framework to the development of the Plan. However you may want to consider whether the following PPS are relevant.

Climate Change

- Changing Our Ways – Scotland's Climate Change Programme (2006) which provides national interpretation of broader climate change objectives (www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/03/30091039/0);
- Tomorrow's Climate, Today's Challenge: UK Climate Change Programme (2006) which sets out measures to reduce emissions, targets every sector of the economy (www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/uk/ukccp/index.htm)

Material Assets (including waste management)

- Zero Waste Scotland, new policy and targets on waste management (www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/waste-and-pollution/Waste-1);
- SEPA Guidelines for Thermal Treatment of Municipal Waste (www.sepa.org.uk/waste/waste_regulation/energy_from_waste.aspx);
- EC Framework on Waste 75/442/EEC Waste Framework Directive which establishes a framework for the management of waste across the European Community (www.wasteonline.org.uk/resources/InformationSheets/Legislation.htm#75442);
- National Waste Plan 2003 which brings together Area Waste Plans and sets out an action plan for radical change to waste management in Scotland. Key challenges include reducing landfilled waste in line with EU targets and increasing recycling, composting and energy from waste (www.sepa.org.uk/pdf/nws/guidance/national_plan_2003.pdf);

It should be noted that The Climate Change (Scotland) Bill 2008 and the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Bill (2009) have been passed and are now the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 and the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009.

Baseline Information

It is noted that the relevant baseline data will be gathered for the ER and that the level of data will reflect the strategic nature of the Plan. While we support the approach of providing a summary of the information and direction to where more detailed information may be available in order to avoid duplication, please note that the Environmental Report should include a brief summary of the environmental characteristics of the plan area that are likely to be affected by the Plan.

Information SEPA holds

It is obvious from table 1 that you are already aware that much of the information we hold is readily available from our website. However, if you find difficulty locating anything please contact our Access to Information team (Telephone: 01786 457700).

In relation to provision of data, we hold significant amounts of environmental data, such as flood risk areas, waste data and watercourse classification, which may be of relevance to establishing the baseline and environmental problems for the Plan area. Some of this data is now readily available on our website and a copy of our publications list is available from www.sepa.org.uk/access/index.htm. Other local information may also be available from our Access to Information team.

Information of the waste data we holds is available from www.sepa.org.uk/waste/waste_data_menu.aspx. You may also wish to refer to the waste site capacity and infrastructure reports available on our website: national capacity reports: www.sepa.org.uk/waste/waste_data/site_capacity_infrastructure/national_capacity_reports.aspx and landfill capacity reports: www.sepa.org.uk/waste/waste_data/site_capacity_infrastructure/landfill_capacity_report.aspx.

In relation to flood risk then we would expect the plan preparation process to be informed and supported by a strategic overview of flood risk management issues, usually in the form of a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). Section 3 of SEPA's Technical Flood Risk Guidance for Stakeholders (available from www.sepa.org.uk/pdf/flooding/planning_flooding.pdf) provides guidance on how to do this with section 3.2 providing a range of relevant information sources for investigation including the Indicative River and Coastal Flood Map (Scotland) which is produced by us. The Flood Map provides an indication of the 1 in 200-year (0.5% annual probability) return period flood extent for both riverine and coastal flooding and provides a useful overview of flood risk for the area. This information could be supported and complemented by other easily derived or readily available information in relation to flood risk, for example information on historical flood events or the impact of flood alleviation schemes. Part of the SFRA could also be the identification of priority areas for more detailed analysis in the future.

Please note that a new monitoring and classification system for water bodies was introduced by the Water Framework Directive which is based on the ecological status rather than just water quality. The ecological status of a water body takes account of biological, physico-chemical, hydrological and morphological properties. For further details on the new classification system please refer to our website (www.sepa.org.uk/water/monitoring_and_classification.aspx).

Up-to-date information on bathing beaches is available from <http://apps.sepa.org.uk/bathingwaters/result.asp?id=233616>;

In addition to this there are other sources of information which may be useful and to try and help this work progress generally, we make the following suggestions.

The new website www.seaguidance.org.uk provides excellent baseline information on air, soil and water.

In relation to climatic factors you may find that the SNIFFER publication "A handbook of climate trends across Scotland" can provide useful information (www.sniffer.org.uk);

The Scottish Climate Change Impacts Partnership (SCCIP) website (www.sccip.org.uk) also offers free access to data on climate trends and their impacts on Scotland which might be helpful.

When considering the effects of climate change on flood risk the most recent climate change information for the UK as a whole is the United Kingdom Climate Change Impact 2009 (UKCIP09) study. This study produced four scenarios (ranging from 'Low Emissions' to 'High Emissions') of climate change, based upon different projected inputs of greenhouse gasses to the atmosphere over the course of the 21st Century. Further information can be found at www.ukcip.org.uk/.

A summary of the likely changes to the environment if the Plan is not implemented should be provided in the ER.

Alternatives

It is noted that the high level objectives for the LDP are already set and there are no reasonable alternatives to these highest level objectives. However alternatives at the level of the broad spatial strategy will be considered. We note that alternatives are still being considered. Any reasonable alternatives identified during the preparation of the plan should be assessed as part of the SEA process and the findings of the assessment should inform the choice of the preferred option. This should be documented in the ER.

Methodology for assessing environmental effects

It is understood that SEA assessment for the MIR will be carried out at 3 levels; an assessment of the recommended spatial strategy and alternatives to it, an assessment of the LDP policies and, an assessment of a compendium of candidate sites.

Please note that we would expect all aspects of the plan which could have significant effects to be assessed. This may include the plans themes, objectives, policies and proposals/actions as well as alternatives.

We are content with the proposed assessment matrix and welcome the use of questions to assist with the assessment of environmental impacts. We support the use of SEA objectives as assessment tools as they allow a systematic, rigorous and consistent framework with which to assess environmental effects.

We also welcome the compendium of candidate sites being assessed in terms of their general attributes prior to being assessed against the SEA objectives.

It is understood that the MIR will identify all reasonable alternative sites therefore it is less likely that new sites will come up at the proposed plan stage. We support this approach as this will help to highlight any significant environmental effects at an early stage in the plan making process. It is

noted that a revised ER is proposed to assess any issues or proposals which have come forward following the MIR.

Mitigation

SEPA would expect the Environmental Report to include full details of mitigation measures. SEPA considers that mitigation measures are a crucial part of SEA in that they offer an opportunity to not only address potential adverse effects of a plan, but also to make a plan even more positive than it already may be. These should follow the mitigation hierarchy: avoid, reduce, remedy or compensate for negative effects, and enhance where appropriate for positive effects. It would be helpful to set out all mitigation measures in a way that clearly identified: (1) the measures required, (2) when they would be required and (3) who will be required to implement them.

Monitoring

Although not specifically required at this stage, monitoring is a requirement of the Act and early consideration should be given to a monitoring approach particularly in the choice of indicators. It would be helpful if the ER included a description of the measures envisaged to monitor the significant environmental effects of the plan.

Next Steps

We are satisfied with the proposal for an 8 week consultation period for the ER.

Peter Shellard
Senior Planner
Planning & Environment Department
Dumfries & Galloway Council
Newall Terrace,
Dumfries,
DG1 1LW

Longmore House
Salisbury Place
Edinburgh
EH9 1SH

Direct Line: 0131 668 8924
Direct Fax: 0131 668 8765
Switchboard: 0131 668 8600
Alasdair.Mckenzie@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Our Ref: LDP/DUM
Our Case ID: 200902303

14 January 2010

Dear Peter

**Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005
Dumfries & Galloway Council: Local Development Plan
Scoping Report**

Thank you for consulting Historic Scotland on the Scoping Report for the environmental assessment of Dumfries and Galloway Council's Local Development Plan, received by the Scottish Government's SEA Gateway on 16 December 2009. I welcome that we have had the opportunity to discuss the approach to the assessment as it has developed over the previous months and the approach taken by your Council in facilitating early engagement with the consultation authorities and key agencies.

I have reviewed the Scoping Report on behalf of Historic Scotland in its role as a Consultation Authority under the above Act (section 15). This letter contains the views of Historic Scotland on the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the Environmental Report (part 1), and the duration of the proposed consultation period (part 2).

1. Scope of assessment and level of detail

- 1.1 The Scoping Report provides a clear outline of the proposed approach to the environmental assessment of the plan and subject to the specific comments set out below and the annex I am content with the scope and level of detail proposed for the assessment.

2. Consultation period for the Environmental Report

- 2.1 The next steps section states that the consultation period for the Environmental Report will take place over a period of at least 8 weeks and I am content with this.

None of the comments contained in this letter should be construed as constituting a legal interpretation of the requirements of the SEA Act. They are intended rather as helpful advice, as part of Historic Scotland's commitment to capacity-building in SEA. Please do not hesitate to contact me on 0131 668 8924 should you wish to discuss this response.

Yours sincerely



Alasdair M^cKenzie
Strategic Environmental Assessment Team Leader

Annex: Detailed comments on the Scoping report.

Consideration of Alternatives in the LDP

1. The section on alternatives helpfully clarifies how this issue will be addressed in the SEA. As you have noted there are no alternatives to producing and implementing the plan, however, in this situation reasonable alternatives within the plan are normally considered. I therefore welcome that this is the approach you will be taking forward.
2. As you have noted in section 3 and 5, alternatives to the spatial strategy can be considered at both a strategic level (looking at various growth options such as consolidation or dispersal etc) and again at a more detailed level for candidate sites. I note that alternatives will not be considered for each candidate site as in some cases there may not be any reasonable alternatives (section 5.25). In these situations there may be opportunities to combine or group assessments of individual sites, to provide a settlement or area wide perspective on environmental effects.
3. It is not clear from the report the extent to which alternative individual policies will be considered in the assessment and it would be helpful to clarify this in the environmental report. In the same way that alternative land allocations are considered it would be possible in many cases to consider alternative wording and emphasis for the policies contained in the LDP.

Baseline information

4. I understand from this section that the assessment will consider effects on scheduled monuments, listed buildings, gardens and designed landscapes, conservation areas and archaeological sites. I welcome the inclusion of planning application statistics as a means of monitoring the effects of the plan on these environmental assets. For information, Historic Scotland is responsible for the designation of sites on The Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes. Further information on these, including a database of current designations, can be found on our webpage:
<http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/index/heritage/gardens.htm>
5. Additionally, Historic Scotland can provide GIS datasets under licence for scheduled monuments, listed buildings and gardens and designed landscapes (contact hsgismanager@scotland.gsi.gov.uk). This information is also available to download from <http://hsewsf.sedsh.gov.uk/pls/html/db/f?p=500:1:8448412299472048421>).

SEA Objectives for the LDP (Table 2)

6. I note that SEA objectives will be used as an assessment tool and welcome this. SEA Objectives provide a robust and transparent framework for carrying out and documenting the assessment and I am content with those provided for the historic environment. The only revision we would suggest is that the land allocation level

objectives could be broken down further to help focus the assessment. For example:

- Will the allocation impact on any scheduled monument and/or its setting?
- Will the allocation affect any locally important archaeological site?
- Will the allocation impact on any listed building and/or its setting?
- Will the allocation affect a Conservation Area?
- Will the allocation affect a Garden and Designed landscape?

7. Splitting the topic into individual questions can assist the plan maker as it provides a systematic process for reviewing each allocation, highlighting the benefits and costs of each allocation. This method also assists in targeting any mitigation that may be required (e.g. specifying developer requirements for the allocation to protect the site/setting of a scheduled monument). Also, as with any matrix assessment approach it is important to provide a detailed commentary, particularly where significant effects are predicted, as this allows the reader to understand the thought process behind the conclusion.

Example matrix tables

8. I note that a series of abbreviations will be used to record information within the tables for the overall strategy, policies and land allocations. It would be useful to clarify whether or not Y or N indicates a *significant* environmental effect (as opposed to an effect that is not considered to be significant). Also, it would be useful to clarify what Q.6 Cost refers to (is this the environmental or a financial cost?).
9. I note that the matrix table contains a column to record information on social impact. Our view is that the SEA should focus on the environmental effects likely to arise from the implementation of the plan and that such considerations should only be introduced where there is a clear connection with environmental effects. Given that SEA should focus on the environmental effects arising from the implementation of the plan you may therefore wish to consider whether such information is appropriate.
10. As an amendment to the matrix tables you may wish to include a mitigation and/or recommendation column to briefly indicate where such measures are necessary and how these will be carried out.

SEA levels and Stages (para 5.11)

11. This section outlines how environmental effects will be considered at the Proposed Plan stage, which I agree can be achieved through a revised Environmental Report. It is important to bear in mind however that the proposed plan stage should not introduce any new or controversial elements as these should have already been subject to consultation at the MIR stage.

Appendix 1: Table of relevant plans, programmes and strategies

12. I welcome the inclusion of the [Scottish Historic Environment Policy](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/index/heritage/policy/shep.htm)¹ (SHEP) and the emerging SPP (*Historic Environment*) in this section. Simply for information, the SHEP has recently been updated to include a new policy on battlefields.
13. In addition to the key point indicated in the table for the SPP, the LDP should provide a framework for the protection, conservation and enhancement of all elements of the historic environment to allow the assessment of the impact of proposed development on the historic environment and its setting.

¹ <http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/index/heritage/policy/shep.htm>



Andrew Maxwell
Service Manager Development planning
Planning & Environment
Dumfries and Galloway Council
Newall Terrace
Dumfries
DG1 1LW

18 January 2010
Our ref: CNS/SEA/LDP/D&G/59207

Dear Andrew

Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005:

**Dumfries and Galloway Council Local Development Plan
SEA Scoping Report**

I refer to your scoping report, sent to the Scottish Government SEA Gateway on 16th December 2009. We have reviewed this in our role as a Consultation Authority in accordance with section 15(2) of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005.

Our general comments on the scope and level of detail to be included in the Environmental Report and on the duration of the proposed consultation period are set out below. Detailed comments are provided in the annex to this letter.

Scope of assessment and level of detail

Subject to the specific comments set out below and in the annex to this letter, Scottish Natural Heritage is content with the scope and level of detail proposed in the Environmental Report. The scoping report has been set out in logical and easy to read format. The inclusion of a glossary is appreciated. SNH has noted what it believes to be omissions or errors within the text and we have suggested several amendments or alterations. These are explained within the annex.

We are concerned the Scoping Report lacks clear reference or guidance about Natura 2000 sites within Dumfries and Galloway.

Consultation period for the environmental report

SNH notes that a period of 8 weeks is proposed for the consultation on the Environmental Report and agrees this is an appropriate length of time.

Yours sincerely

Chris Miles
Area Manager
Dumfries & Galloway

Enc..

ANNEX

Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005:

Dumfries and Galloway Council Local Development Plan SEA Scoping Report Response by Scottish Natural Heritage

(The numbering system used is the same as that used within the Scoping Report.)

context (other plans & environmental objectives)

4.3 refers to other Dumfries and Galloway Council plans, programmes or strategies which have undergone SEA. Missing from this is the Dumfries and Galloway Final Draft Core Path Plan SEA report which was assessed in October 2009.

baseline information

Table 1 lists all SEA issues and relevant sources of data.

Within the grouping 'Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna' SNH notes that there is no reference to:

Marine Consultation Areas Loch Ryan is a MCA as identified by SNH as deserving particular distinction in respect of the quality and sensitivity of the marine environment. This encourages coastal communities and management bodies to be aware of marine conservation issues in the area.

Geological Conservation Review Sites are non-statutory sites identified by the statutory nature conservation agencies as having national or international importance for earth science conservation on the basis of their geology, palaeontology, mineralogy or geomorphology. Information on these is available from SNH.

Within the grouping 'Water' there is an SEA Issue of Floodplains. SNH recommends that this be expanded to include coastal flooding as this is clearly intended in the data description.

Within the grouping 'Climatic Factors' SNH advises that information on 'Precipitation' can be obtained from SEPA.

Within the grouping 'Material Assets' SNH recommends that the region's paths be considered as being material within the context of the LDP. In our Draft Core Paths Plan scoping response to DGC in July 2009 we wrote:

"In the context of the CPP SNH believes that existing paths and routes within Dumfries and Galloway including those not featured in the CPP should be considered a material asset." Inclusion within the LDP SEA would, we believe, agree with the Scottish Government guidance re Material Assets (Chapter 10: SEA Objectives and Indicators) "to promote effective use of existing infrastructure".

'Within the grouping Cultural assets' We recommend that Dumfries and Galloway Arts Association is included as a data source for Art and community facilities

Within the grouping 'Landscape' SNH notes that:

SEA issue 'Gardens and Designed Landscapes' should not refer to SNH as a data source but instead to Historic Scotland.

Given their extent and prominence we also suggest that it may be appropriate to include significant scale wind farms/renewable development within this table and they could sit either in the Material assets or the landscape group. Data description could be size, number,

location and output of proposed, consented and constructed. Data source SNH or DGC. If this added it would need to feed through to Table 2.

significant issues.

4.8 We agree with the list of SEA issues to be scoped in and that there should be no exceptions.

4.10 We suggest that, a new bullet point be inserted concerning the issue of 'Landuse change'. This would cover issues about the balance of landuse that arises from conversion open ground to forestry or further large scale renewables development.

effects on Natura 2000 sites.

The SEA needs to reflect the requirement that the Conservation (Habitats etc.) Regulations 1994 as amended in 2007 require that development plans should be subject to appropriate assessment of their implications for Natura sites. In Dumfries and Galloway there are 7 Special Protection Areas and 17 Special Areas of Conservation.

The SEA Directive allows for a combined procedure to be adopted provided it fulfils both the requirements of the SEA Directive and the Habitats Directive. Consideration could be given to opportunities for sharing some aspects of the SEA process with the appropriate assessment process, though it is recognised that each has a different focus and requirements.

Wherever the appropriate assessment is undertaken as part of a SEA, it is important that it is clearly documented, in the right terms. It should be signposted in the SEA Environmental Report so that it is clear which parts of the Report and the process are intended to form the appropriate assessment. In particular, it will need to be clearly stated where the plan would, and would not, be likely to have significant effects on any European site, and in the case of the latter, whether it has been ascertained that the plan will adversely affect the integrity of any European site.

SEA objectives

The following comments relate to **Table 2 'SEA objectives for the LDP'**

There is no apparent way to assess whether or not an objective has been met. SNH suggests a fourth column headed '**Possible SEA indicators**' would be appropriate.

SEA Issue Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna refers to;

"spaces". SNH suggests that where this word occurs this be replaced by 'habitat' as being more appropriate and a better reflection of what is envisaged.

"provide respect for natural processes and systems" - we believe the phrase "work with the natural function and capacity of natural systems" would be more appropriate and a better reflection of what is envisaged.

SEA Issue Population and Human Health:

We recommend that support for the Core Path network should be noted within the column "Development management policy level SEA Objectives for D&G LDP."

We query the inclusion of the following because from their wording it is not clear what, if any, environmental effects are likely from these strategies or land allocations.

"Through strategy provide support for the development of a more balanced population structure"

"Through development management policy supports the development of sites for development which respect community identity."

"Through land allocations support the addressing of safety concerns"

"Through land allocations respect community identity"

“Through land allocations identify sites for a mix of housing types and tenures, including homes for families and affordable housing.”

SEA Issue Climatic Factors:

We recommend that the column “Land allocation level SEA Objectives for D&G LDP” should contain a sentence to the effect ‘*Through land allocations recognize the important role of peat and peat rich soils in carbon sequestration and the release of CO₂ by its disturbance.*’

SEA Issue Material assets:

We recommend that the column “Development management policy level SEA Objectives for D&G LDP.” contains a sentence to the effect ‘*Through development management policy ensures that the region’s natural heritage is maintained or enhanced by following sustainable development principles.*’

We recommend that the column “Land allocation level SEA Objectives for D&G LDP” should contain a sentence to the effect ‘*Through land allocations recognize and encourage establishment and maintenance of the Core Path Network.*’

If Renewables are added here or in landscape (see last comment on table 1) then this will require a development policy something like “*Through development management policy support the further development of renewables up to the point where there is landscape capacity to do so. Through the allocation of sites respect the qualities and capacity of the landscape to accommodate these and their associated infrastructure*”.

SEA Issue Landscape:

The column “Land allocation level SEA Objectives for D&G LDP” appears to refer only to the setting of settlements within landscapes. We recommend a sentence be included to the effect ‘*Through the allocation of sites provide for protection and, where appropriate, enhancement of qualities and values identified in, for example, the Dumfries and Galloway Landscape Character Assessment.*’

assessment methodology

We think the opening two sentences of paragraph 5.2 are wrong though agree with the final sentence which is a good summation of the relationship of SEA to LDPs. LDPs refer to spatial and strategic outcomes, SEA looks at the options which are available to deliver these outcomes – therefore we do not agree that “the objective sought by each process is very similar.” They are designed to be complementary and therefore we see no reason why “there could be a difficulty in their working well together”.

Paragraph 5.3 says that “In the MIR there should be an assessment of...” MIRs are to report on options, issues and alternatives. It is the function of the SEA process to assess the bullet points noted within 5.3. This is reflected in e.g. paragraph 5.14

Paragraph 5.8 refers to “SEA assessment for the MIR” – should this instead read: ‘for the LDP’?

Table 3: “Questions to assist with the assessment of environmental impacts”.

General – in some boxes “?” means “Uncertain”, in others “Unknown”. We suggest the use of symbols be standardized.

Table 6: Example etc.

We recognize that this is only an example of a matrix, however it should be noted that a flood risk of less than 1:1000 is a percentage risk of 0.1%, less than 1:200 is 0.5% and less than 1:100 is 1%.

Tables 7 Part of Matrix Summary for Assessment of Strategy

It is unclear how this is to be used.

“SEA Objectives” should sit in the same row as “LDP Strategy Elements”

Table 8: Matrix summary scoring scheme.

It is unclear how this is to be used.

This matrix depends on being able to see a coloured copy of a report. There are 3 disadvantages to this:

1. potentially unusable for colour blind,
2. it is reasonable to expect copies to be made on black & white photocopiers or printers,
3. you have to remember what a colour means.

We suggest a simple use of positive and negative numbers where 0 represents neutral.

Q1 Environmental effect?

As this table refers to “impacts” all work will have an effect on the environment. A qualifier such as ‘significant’ would be useful.

Q3. Direction?

Is this an assessment of the significance of an effect?

Q4. Scale?

At what scale is the effect being assessed? International, national, regional, local?

Q5. Response?

It is not clear what is meant by “None possible”.

Q6. Response cost?

Is this a measure of monetary cost or environmental cost?

At what scale is e.g. “high” cost being measured?

6.0 NEXT STEPS

6.1 there is a typing error: the diagram referred to is on (numbered) page 5 not 9.

The next stages are clearly laid out in this diagram but the indicative dates may need reviewed given the slippage in commencement of the SEA process.

SEA Environmental Report. At this time SNH are content with the proposed consultation period of 8 weeks; subject to the complexity of any issues which arise within the report.

Appendix 1**Table of Relevant Plans, Programmes and Strategies.**

Under ‘NATIONAL’ we suggest the inclusion of the Marine (Scotland) Bill which is currently going through the Scottish Parliament. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, “sea” includes any area submerged at mean high water spring tide and the waters of every estuary, river or channel, so far as the tide flows at mean high water spring tide.

As the LDP will cover the entire Dumfries & Galloway Council area down to the Low Water Mark there is clearly an area of overlap.