

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT 2005

Screening Determination of South Ayrshire Council
under section 8(1) of the Act re:

Supplementary Guidance: Housing Site Design Briefs

(Prepared for Proposed South Ayrshire Local Development Plan 2)

In accordance with the above-quoted legislation and having had cognisance of the Consultation Authorities' concurring views, this statement forms the screening determination of South Ayrshire Council; finding that the qualifying 'plan or programme' as named above is not likely to have significant environmental effects and as such that no environmental assessment is required.

The form overleaf comprises the statement of reasons for this determination, as required by section 8(2)(b) of the Act and as having applied the criteria specified in schedule 2 of the Act, such as they relate to the subject document.

STEP 1 – DETAILS OF THE PLAN

Responsible Authority:

South Ayrshire Council

Title of the plan:

Supplementary Guidance: Housing Site Design Briefs

What prompted the plan:

(e.g. a legislative, regulatory or administrative provision)

[Statutory review of the adopted South Ayrshire Local Development Plan](#)

Plan subject:

(e.g. transport)

[Town and country planning \(statutory\)](#)

Screening is required by the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005.

Based on Boxes 3 and 4, our view is that:

An SEA is required, as the environmental effects are likely to be significant: Please indicate below what Section of the 2005 Act this plan falls within

Section 5(3)

Section 5(4)

An SEA is not required, as the environmental effects are unlikely to be significant: Please indicate below what Section of the 2005 Act this plan falls within

Section 5(3)

Section 5(4)

Contact details:

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Date:

05.08.2019

STEP 2 – CONTEXT AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PLAN

Context of the Plan:

As formal statutory Supplementary Guidance (SG), this PPS will supplement parent *LDP policy: maintaining and protecting land for housing*, as contained in South Ayrshire Proposed Local Development Plan 2 (PLDP2). Its preparation is precipitated by a commitment in that policy to provide the guidance. Once adopted, the SG becomes part of the development plan and so in the plan hierarchy will thus enjoy its weight as the prime material consideration in decision-making. The SG supports the development of PLDP2-allocated housing sites as successful places by establishing design priorities for each site.

Description of the Plan:

Focus and direction: this PPS does not itself select nor formally allocate housing release sites; that matter is predetermined by PLDP2 and its full SEA. As the SG's design guidance is not overtly prescriptive but sets broad parameters, its 'powers' are thus confined to forming a material consideration as a yardstick / benchmark against which Development Management may assess matters of detail in future application-stage proposals. Its spatial/temporal scope is confined purely to the suite of PLDP2 allocated housing sites, for the duration of the plan period 2019-29. Its focus and remit is in seeking to ensure design issues like accessibility, site layout, building design, open space, landscaping and boundaries are all integral to the design process for the site and therefore that the design of housing developments recognise the locality of the site, and complement the features that characterise adjacent settlements.

What are the key components of the plan?

The SG singular subject matter lends a basic structure. Its introduction quotes the parent policy and states the SG's purpose. It proceeds directly to a schedule of consecutive site briefs, for each allocated housing site. Each brief comprises a site plan spatially illustrating layout, access and movement principles, alongside a tabulated framework of site design criteria; itemising principles under design topics including built design, site layout, landscaping, open space, access etc.

Have any of the components of the plan been considered in previous SEA work?

The core PPS 'component' dealt with are the housing site allocations made via PLDP2 itself, whose outcomes (ie tenets of the housing strategy, and allocations made via it) have had full SEA via Final ER: the housing strategy via a series of policy assessment matrices, and individual allocations via a Land Assessment Framework methodology respectively. Further, the provisions of PLDP2 and the SEA conclusions thereupon are highly current, dated June 2019. It is argued it is the land use allocated on a given site that bears fundamental prospects of significant environmental effects; that matter is pre-determined by PLDP2. By contrast, this SG remit is purely on design parameters to encourage high-quality outcomes on those sites (within the context of a land use already determined).

In terms of your response to Boxes 7 and 8 above, set out those components of the plan that are likely to require screening:

As above, singular structure means that excepting introductory text, the SG's sole component is the schedule of site briefs. Accordingly and to provide appropriate interrogation of the potential effects of the provisions articulated within those briefs, the screening assessment is divided to sub-components comprising the various topic areas of the design principles, as tabulated in the briefs, viz. design/layout, landscape/boundaries, open space, transportation/access and (anticipated liability for) education contributions.

**STEP 3 – IDENTIFYING INTERACTIONS OF THE PLAN WITH THE ENVIRONMENT AND
CONSIDERING THE LIKELY SIGNIFICANCE OF ANY INTERACTIONS (Error! Reference source not found.)**

Plan Components (Topics as tabulated within the framework of each brief)	Environmental Topic Areas										Explanation of Potential Environmental Effects	Explanation of Significance
	Biodiversity, flora and fauna	Population and human health	Soil	Water	Air	Climatic factors	Material assets	Cultural heritage	Landscape	Inter-relationship issues		
Design / layout	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	Effects mostly aesthetic rather than environmental. Thoughtful design and layout may slightly help sites to sit better in host landscape.	The direct environmental effect of these principles is minimal once isolated from the overarching context of the sites' allocation for residential use, and the intrinsic effects of same.
Landscape/boundaries	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	Thoughtful landscaping and boundaries may have minor effects in helping sites sit better in host landscape; 'soft'/green treatments may have some biodiversity value.	The direct environmental effect of these principles is minimal once isolated from the overarching context of the sites' allocation for residential use, and the intrinsic effects of same.
Open Space	✓	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	OS as a recreational resource benefits human health. OS planting may have some minor biodiversity benefit.	The direct environmental effect of these principles is minimal once isolated from the overarching context of the sites' allocation for residential use, and the intrinsic effects of same.
Transportation /access	x	✓	x	x	x	x	✓	x	x	x	Basic matters of site access and accessibility were considered at prior allocation stage (ie. SEA'd). SG principles encourage, at basic level, active travel and site permeability.	The direct environmental effect of these principles is minimal once isolated from the overarching context of the sites' allocation for residential use, and the intrinsic effects of same.
Education obligations	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	This is an exempt matter as contributions towards educational infrastructure is purely financial	N/A

STEP 4 – STATEMENT OF THE FINDINGS OF THE SCREENING

Summary of interactions with the environment and statement of the findings of the Screening:

(Including an outline of the likely significance of any interactions, positive or negative, and explanation of conclusion of the screening exercise.)

The screening process provides the following key findings on the interactions of the subject PPS with the environment:

Specifically, that the starting point for the SG is the prior allocation of a range of housing release sites as made by the PLDP2 itself; noting the PLDP2 precipitates the SG which will become a part of PLDP2 upon adoption. The SG itself is not prescriptive but sets broad parameters forming a material consideration as a yardstick for DM assessment of detail. The PLDP2, including the housing site allocations as sole focus of the SG, was fully and recently SEA'd to include strategic, policy and site-specific provisions.

It is argued that it is the actual allocation of sites, and the land use allocated on a given site, that bears fundamental prospects of significant environmental effects, and thus, this matter being the one pre-determined by PLDP2, by contrast the SG's subsidiary and non-prescriptive focus on advancing design parameters promoting successful site development is likely to bear minimal environmental effects.

This hypothesis is consolidated and reinforced by the findings of the subsequent screening exercise of the various design principle topics (which underpin the briefs) which finds,

- (a) The principles consistently and cumulatively affect few SEA environmental topics
- (b) The environmental topics affected are noted to exhibit consistently minor and beneficial effects
- (c) Isolating effects that are actually directly attributable to the design principles, as distinct from the overarching context of the effects intrinsic to the allocation of the sites for residential use, is difficult (ie. SEA of the act of residential site allocation assumes and considers consequent aspects, eg. open space provision); doing so to the extent feasible suggests direct effects are minimal

The resulting conclusion is that the provisions and implementation of this SG is not likely to have significant effects on the environment and that on this basis an SEA is not required.

When completed send to: SEA.gateway@scotland.gsi.gov.uk or to the SEA Gateway, Scottish Government, Area 2H (South), Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ.