

Scoping responses

| SEPA | |
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| The Scoping Report provides a clear summary of the proposed approach to the assessment and sets out appropriate information about the scope and level of detail of the assessment | Noted |
| This section gives a clear outline of the content of the plan and its objectives. | Noted |
| <p>Table 3.2.1 is well presented and SEPA welcomes the inclusion of a column showing how related plans, and programmes affect or are affected by the South Ayrshire Core Path Plan. In the preparation of the ER, consideration should be given to the relevance to the Plan of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and SEPA's Position Statement: Culverting of Watercourses (PS-06-02) available on our website, http://www.sepa.org.uk/wfd/guidance/engineering/index.htm.</p> <p>Consideration should also be given to the relevance of the neighbouring authorities Core Paths Plans.</p> | Water Framework Directive included within relevant Policy, Plans and or Programmes which may either be affected or effect the South Ayrshire Finalised Draft Core Path Plan. |
| It is noted that the Environmental Report will explain the selection process and the criteria used for assessment. | Completed |
| SEPA is satisfied that the appropriate SEA issues have been scoped into the assessment. | Noted |
| It would be useful if the SEA objectives could be linked with measurable targets or indicators which could be used to monitor any environmental impacts of the plan. The SEA targets can be derived from European and National plans such as the Water Framework Directive. | Under the monitoring component of the Env. Report indicators have been identified to assist in the future monitoring of the impact of the implementation of the Core Path Plan |
| The Directive requires that there is no deterioration in water quality. The new water body classification scheme required by the WFD is supported by measurements of a range of biological, physico-chemical, hydrological and morphological properties that contribute to the "status" of the water body. Other potential issues that could be reviewed in the assessment include any potential impacts on drainage and flooding, any potential impacts from works around watercourses and any potential impacts relating to the shoreline, erosion and deposition of sediment. | Noted |
| Reference could also be made to forthcoming River Basin Management Plans, produced for each defined River Basin District. These plans will set out, amongst other things, the environmental objectives (targets) for all waterbodies, present the Programme of Measures (actions) to achieve these objectives and display the monitoring programmes set up to assess progress. | Noted |
| In relation to the level of detail of assessment then SEPA would expect all aspects of the Plan, e.g. the Plans objectives, actions and sites, to be assessed. At present it is not clear that this will be the case. | Plans objectives together with each of the nominated routes have been assessed in relation to the 4scoped in Environmental Topics and their related SEA Objectives. |
| SEPA is satisfied that the level and method of environmental assessment undertaken is appropriate. Using a matrix to present the effects of the different options against the SEA objectives is a typical method of | Noted |

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| assessment. SEPA supports a comments column justifying the assessment of each option and the summary of the assessment. If the assessment identifies any adverse environmental effects it would be useful to have an additional column for mitigation measures. | |
| It is important to recognise that SEA is an ongoing process and keeping the baseline environmental information up to date is essential. SEPA welcomes the development of a set of indicators to monitor any environmental impacts of the plan. | See Comments previous relating to monitoring |
| SEPA is satisfied with a consultation period of 8 weeks. | Noted |
| HISTORIC SCOTLAND | |
| 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 in the annex, I am content with the scope and level of detail proposed for the environmental assessment. | Noted |
| My understanding from the Scoping Report is that the environmental assessment will consider the effects of the core path selection process and the paths included in the draft Core Path Plan. | Noted |
| <p>I note that the environmental assessment will consider the likely effects of the plan on the historic environment. Simply for information, the “historic environment” is defined in Section 16(3) of the Public Appointments and Public Bodies etc. (Scotland) Act 2003 as “... any or all of the structures and places in Scotland of historical, archaeological or architectural interest or importance”. SHEP 1 (para 2.3)¹ builds on this definition by identifying that the historic environment encompasses built heritage features (ancient monuments, archaeological sites and landscapes, historic buildings, townscapes, parks, gardens and designed landscapes, as well as marine heritage) and the context or setting in which they sit, and the patterns of past use, in landscapes and within the soil, and also in our towns, villages and streets. The historic environment also has less tangible aspects recognised as the historical, artistic, literary, linguistic and scenic associations of places and landscapes.</p> <p>I expect the environmental assessment to take cognisance of these features, both in the collection of baseline data and in considering the likely impact of the plan on the historic environment.</p> | Noted |
| <p>Impacts on historic environment features often depend on the land-take associated with infrastructure and supporting activities, and may be avoided through appropriate locational measures. Impacts on the historic environment should be considered in terms of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • direct i.e. loss and or damage to a feature of the historic environment • indirect e.g. effects on setting; changes to surface drainage patterns; removal of peat; etc | Noted |

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| <p>When undertaking the environmental assessment, you may find that some impacts are uncertain at the strategic level, for example due to dependence on locational factors. Where this is the case it is important to identify these issues and to be clear how they will be taken into account at the lower level, for example at project level, and who will be responsible for following them through.</p> | <p>Noted</p> |
| <p>I am content with the eight-week period proposed for consultation on the Environmental Report. Please note that, for administrative purposes, Historic Scotland consider that the consultation period commences on receipt of the relevant documents by the SEA Secretariat.</p> | <p>Noted</p> |
| <p>At the Environmental Report stage, I would prefer to receive paper copies of the report and the draft Core Path Plan, both of which should be sent via the Scottish Government Gateway in line with the procedures set out in the SEA Tool Kit (available at www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/09/13104943/45).</p> | <p>Noted</p> |
| <p>SCOTTISH NATURAL HERITAGE</p> | |
| <p>Section 3.4 states that there has been no cohesive approach to the identification and development of paths within the area, and should this continue there is the likelihood of paths in inappropriate places which do not meet the peoples needs. SNH would question this assertion and point to the development of paths and networks in South Ayrshire which have been provided over the years following consultation with landowners, interested stakeholders and the local authority itself. The Scoping Report makes reference to 111 paths to date covering a distance of approximately 109km. The Core Path Plan may no doubt build on what has been achieved so far, but it would be valuable to analyse the successes and failures if any, of these past initiatives in order to inform the Core Path Plan itself.</p> | <p>Item has been passed to writer of the Core Path Plan. Author of the plan has stated that while no formal analysis of the existing routes e.g. number of users per route was undertaken. Each nominated route was proposed by the general public, special interest groups and South Ayrshire Staff; then each was assessed using set criteria and considered by Local Access Panel.</p> |
| <p>We also recommend that in addition to linear routes, key recreation sites or 'honey pots' that provide a focus for recreational use and act as a gateway to the wider access network and other areas of significant green space, are included in the assessment process. Access to inland water should also be included here.</p> <p>In Section 4.2, which deals with the Scoping In/Scoping Out of SEA issues, justifications have only been given for scoping out. SNH feels that some thought should also be given to providing a justification for scoping in. An initial analysis at this stage would focus attention on those issues needing to be addressed in greater detail. This would hopefully provide guidance and an audit trail for the full assessment.</p> | <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> |
| <p>There are a number of areas of National and European designation in South Ayrshire (SSSI's and SPA's) which should be considered, and an assessment of likely significant effect will therefore need to be made. Accordingly we would recommend that, in the Environmental Report, any likely significant effects on Natura sites are highlighted in a separate section/paragraph, in addition to highlighting significant environmental effects. It should also be explained that these are required to be subject to an Appropriate Assessment. Schedule 3 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 sets out the information to be included in the Environmental Report.</p> | <p>Noted – However those routes that do go through protected sites etc. Follow existing roads, paths tracks and will not be subject to any form of improvement (exception being of erection of interpretive signage) as such it is considered that there will be no significant impact to the sites / areas.</p> |

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| <p>Likewise, the potential for the Core Path Network to impact on European Protected Species should be flagged up at an early stage and addressed in the Environmental Report. Reference should also be made on other protected species such as birds, badgers and water voles.</p> | <p>As above</p> |
| <p>The scoping report has suggested that Landscape will be scoped out. The justification states that this is appropriate because amongst other things, the majority of paths are in existence. We agree some existing paths which make up the core path plan may not result in any impact. However, upgrading core paths and thus altering the surface colour along with developing new paths do have the potential to impact on landscape at particular locations. We would recommend landscape impacts are included in the Environmental Report. In addition SNH feels that there may well be an opportunity for Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes to play a significant role in the formulation of the Core Path Plan where these are recognised as key recreation sites which provide a gateway to the wider network.</p> | <p>Comments noted however as mentioned above all proposed routes are currently in existence and there is no intention in the short to medium term to alter the surfaces of the paths or to undertake any form of works other than the installation of interpretive signage as such it has been decided to continue to scope out Landscape.</p> |
| <p>It is noted that a consultation period of 8 weeks is proposed. Bearing in mind the approaching Festive Season, SNH would suggest that this is revised upwards to provide a longer opportunity for scrutiny and comment.</p> | <p>Noted</p> |