Strategic Environmental Assessment
SCREENING REPORT

Strathard Land Use and Rural Development Framework
May 2021

STEP 1 – DETAILS OF THE PLAN

Responsible Authority:

Box 1.
Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority

Title of the plan:

Box 2.
Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority Strathard Land Use and Rural Development Framework – Planning Guidance

What prompted the plan:
(e.g. a legislative, regulatory or administrative provision)

Box 3.
There is no legislative requirement to prepare the Framework. It was prompted to give more detailed guidance to land use and planning decisions in the Strathard Community Council area. The Framework sits in the context of the Local Development Plan and National Park Partnership Plan.

Plan subject:
(e.g. transport)

Box 4.
Land Use – woodland, peatland, Planning - development

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 <u>not</u> 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)

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Date:

16th March 2021

STEP 2 – CONTEXT AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PLAN

Context of the Plan:	The Framework provides place based strategies for land use and development in the Strathard community council area. The Framework will become planning guidance providing additional guidance to what is already contained in the National Park Partnership Plan and Local Development Plan and other plans and strategies. These plans set the statutory policy context for determining applications in this area. These 'parent' plan policies have been subject to SEA and HRA as part of their preparation.
Description of the Plan:	The Strathard Framework brings together a wealth of information and research contained in other approved plans and strategies in relation to land use. It sets a long term vision for the area and the sub-areas. It presents existing information on land use in a holistic manner and is a community led document driven by community planning. It does not allocate land for development or land use change, but presents opportunities and ideas for land use change and development and the priorities for action in the context of the existing plans. Not all proposals require planning permission, for example improving the car park at Aberfoyle. Most proposals are given a location but not a definitive boundary or scale. It is suggestive rather than prescriptive.
What are the key components of the plan?	Box 7There is a vision, area based strategies with placemaking priorities for 5 areas of Strathard. The text and maps presented are indicative development ideas and safeguarded areas.
Have any of the components of the plan been considered in previous SEA work?	Yes, the National Park Partnership Plan underwent SEA as did the Local Development Plan, National Park's Core Paths Plan and Trees and Woodlands Strategy. This Framework will look to incorporate their actions at a Strathard context.
In terms of your response to Boxes 7 and 8 above, set out those components of the plan that are likely to require screening:	The potential development areas and potential areas for peatland restoration/invasives removal identified add an extra tier of local, small-scale proposals the details of which have not been subject to previous SEA work. Any potential areas for tree planting have previously been subject to SEA as part of the Trees and Woodlands Strategy and are not screened as part of this.

STEP 3 – IDENTIFYING INTERACTIONS OF THE PLAN WITH THE ENVIRONMENT AND CONSIDERING THE LIKELY SIGNIFICANCE OF ANY INTERACTIONS (Box 10)

Plan Components	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		
Land Use Changes – Peatland restoration	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	Potential for peatland restoration to have positive climate and, biodiversity impacts including water purification. These are localised and small-scale areas of peatland. .	Potential for environmental effects but they are positive effects. All potential areas identified are outside of designated sites. These suggestions still require landowner and/or tenant agreement, funding, and other feasibility checks. Accordingly consideration of any local environmental effects would be better assessed and mitigated when a project is taken forward.
Conversation projects – removal of invasive species, herbivore management	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	Potential for conservation projects to improve biodiversity and halt loss. Improving the ecological status of designated sites.	Potential for environmental effects but they are positive, small-scale, localised effects. Any environmental effects would be assessed and mitigated when a project is taken forward including any Habitat Regulations Appraisal that would be required to ensure no adverse effects on any European designated sites.
Flood Management – Engineered Scheme, Natural	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	Potential for positive and negative impacts on the water environment. The Aberfoyle Flood Alleviation Scheme,	As any flood projects comes under the Flood Act, consideration of any local environmental effects would be

Topic											Assessment	Mitigation / Comments
Flood Management											mentioned in the Framework, is managed as a separate project by Stirling Council and will be subject to its own environmental assessments. Natural Flood Management on the Duchray Water has the potential to improve habitats as well as downstream benefits for vulnerable communities.	better assessed and mitigated when a project is taken forward.
Active Travel / Public Realm Improvements including signage	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	Potential for air quality in Aberfoyle to improve if more people using active travel. Improvement to human health if more people take up outdoor recreation and benefit physically and mentally. The path networks can enhance the connection to the cultural heritage. The public realm improvements are already identified in the Local Development Plan that has been subject to SEA.	Potential for positive localised impacts but most paths are existing and need upgraded or small connections built that would be subject to a planning application. So as many may not come forward as planning applications and cumulative effects are likely to be very low. Any localised environmental effects would be best assessed and mitigated when an individual planning application is lodged.
Potential Areas of Development - Affordable housing, economic dev and tourism development	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	There are several potential developments that could help repopulate the area and revive the economy. These could have small-scale, localised, adverse effects unless the proposal / site specific mitigation is secured. Any development proposals that come forward identified in the Framework are likely to require planning permission and will be considered against the policies in the LDP (which has already been subject to SEA).	The potential development areas represent a range of possibilities, all small-scale (the largest being potential housing development for around 10 homes). Many of these suggestions still require landowner and/or tenant agreement, funding, and other feasibility checks. All suggestions accord with the guiding principle policies within the Local Development Plan, which has been subject to SEA. Any localised environmental effects would be best assessed and mitigated when an individual planning application is lodged.

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 Framework is a community inspired document assisted by Planning Aid Scotland and Architecture and Design Scotland.

The role of the forthcoming Strathard Framework is to provide a stronger, more climate responsive spatial framework that will provide clear guidance for those who live, visit and want to develop in the area. It will facilitate stronger integration of land use and planning decisions and can be used to secure funding and partnership working to enable projects to enhance the area to be supported. It will support the Local Development Plan (2017-2021) and all projects will accord with the LDP.

The Framework will be informed by other policies, plans and strategies, all of which have undergone SEA including the National Park Partnership Plan, Local Development Plan, Trees and Woodland Strategy, and Core Paths Plan.

The provisions of the Framework which haven't already been assessed through these present plans are not strategic in nature. They are a collection of potential development areas and land use changes that are small scale. Significant, cumulative or individual environmental effects are very unlikely. Any localised environmental effects are best assessed if and when the details of a particular project or planning application are known and tailored mitigation can be determined and secured.

So even though is does include large areas of land use change, particularly in relation to woodland creation, this has already been identified and assessed in the SEA for the Trees and Woodlands Strategy. Also the flood scheme is already a project underway by Stirling Council subject to its own project controls.

Following the assessment outlined above it was determined that the Strathard Framework will have no significant environment effects – it may have localised, small-scale impacts and some larger-scale positive impacts (e.g. peatland restoration). All projects and proposals will be screened at project development stage. For this reason a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required and it can be screened out.

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.

Completion guidance (Please delete before submission)

Link to SEA Guidance: http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0043/00432344.pdf

Box 1	Name of the organisation that is responsible for the plan.
	Note: The responsible Authority is any person, body or office holder exercising functions of a public Character. Where more than one authority is responsible for a plan they should reach an agreement as to who is responsible for the SEA. Where an agreement cannot be reached, the Scottish Ministers can make the determination (Extract from SEA Guidance: Glossary (Page 50)).
Box 2	Name of the plan.
	Note: The 2005 Act applies to plans which relate to matters of a public character. The term 'plan' within guidance also covers policy, programme and strategy (Extract from SEA Guidance: Glossary (Page 50)).
Box 3	In terms of screening, knowing why a plan is being produced is one of the key components in understanding whether the plan falls into Section 5(3) or 5(4) of the 2005 Act.
Box 4	The 2005 Act outlines the sectors as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town & country planning and land use.
Box 5	As well as briefly describing what the plan is intended to do and how it will achieve it, it is important to outline whether the plan sits within a hierarchy and its relationships with other plans and policies.
	Schedule 2 part 1 of the 2005 Act details criteria relating to a plan setting a framework for projects and other activities, and influencing other plans including those in a hierarchy.
	In terms of screening for likely environmental effects, knowing the context of a plan and where it will sit in a hierarchy of other plans is a key component in understanding the likely scope and remit of the plan and where the most appropriate assessment should take place. The description of the context should build on the information provided for Box 3 and contain sufficient information to allow those reading the screening report to understand the role of the plan in the wider policy context. Brief descriptive information such the relationship of the plan with overarching policy, links with other plans, and the influence on and from overarching ambitions or objectives should be considerations. This type of information can help paint a clear screening picture and whether an SEA of the plan is suitable in the circumstances.
Box 6	The description of the plan being screened has to contain sufficient information to allow those reading the notification to understand the objectives of the plan and how the Responsible Authority aims to deliver them. This may differ between spatial plans, policy based plans and aspirational plans (or a mix of these). The description should include:
	• The focus and direction of the plans – Including the 'powers' it will have,

	the direction, status and importance it may bring, the 'targets' it will set, the legislation it will initiate, etc.
	• Its spatial scope - i.e. will it be nationally, regionally or locally focused, will there be specific area, location or boundary outlined.
	• Its temporal scope – i.e. will it be introduced for a set period of time before the next iteration?
	• The individual components of the plan – Including policy areas and plan components that it will cover (e.g. the sectors covered in a plan, specific technologies that will be considered, any new restrictions to be introduced, or measures that could be considered intrinsic mitigations).
	• Any new powers the plan may be given or may give to other activities
	• The vision, objectives and aims of the plan where these are clear.
	It may also prove helpful to include other information in a summary, such as whether the plan is expected to improve or strengthen the current approach, the reason the plan is being prepared, who it would apply to and the timescale for delivery. This type of information should build upon that provided for Box 5 and can help paint a clear picture of whether screening is suitable in the circumstances.
Box 7	Information included in this section should clearly set out the components of the plan (e.g. policy areas covered or the relevant likely sections of the plan) and allow the reader to see which components of the plan are being considered in the screening process.
Box 8	Are you confident that all significant environmental effects arising from this plan have already been covered in earlier SEA work?
	Most plans sit in a wider policy hierarchy, influenced by and/or influencing other plans and policies within the hierarchy. In many cases, previous SEA work is likely to have been undertaken on other plans and policies, and these may be of relevance to the consideration of the likelihood of significant environment effects associated with the development of the plan.
	These assessments may have considered components of the plan, and in some cases, there may be the possibility of screening out certain components of a plan as these have been previously assessed (e.g. through SEA of an overarching policy, or assessment of a previous plan that includes several components duplicated within the current plan). It is essential to have full confidence that components have been previously assessed, to an appropriate level, prior to its removal from further consideration. Even a small deviation from previously assessed policy, changes in the sensitivity or knowledge of environmental receptors affected, and length of time since assessment are likely to result in the need for new assessment.
	Information included in this section should clearly identify the plan components and refer to the previous assessment work undertaken to demonstrate that they have been 'captured' in the SEA process in accordance with the requirements of the 2005 Act and the satisfaction of the Consultation Authorities.

Box 9	Based upon the content of Boxes 7 and 8, this section should identify the components of the plan that require screening. These components can then be taken forward into the next section of the screening process.
Box 10	Is the plan, and its components, likely to have potential interactions with the environment, either direct or indirectly?
	The next step in this approach is identifying the potential for interactions of the plan with the environment. A table such as that provided could aid in identifying the likely interactions of the policy and its components against each of the environmental topic areas set out in Schedule 2 of the 2005 Act. This step is aimed at helping Responsible Authorities to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of the 2005 Act and transparency in reaching their conclusions of the screening process.
	Note that the Responsible Authority should refer to and, where appropriate, address the criteria outlined within Schedule 2 of the 2005 Act in determining the likely significance of effects on the environment. Therefore, it is recommended that the Responsible Authority consider the probability, duration, frequency, reversibility, magnitude and spatial extent of any potential effects; the cumulative and transboundary nature of effects; the value and vulnerability of the area(s) likely to be affected; and risk to human health and the environment; amongst others. Further explanation of the criteria detail in Sections 1(a) – 1(e) and 2(a) – 2(g) is provided in the Scottish Government's SEA Guidance (Section 3.3: Making a Screening Determination, Available at http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2013/08/3355/3).
	Note the 2005 Act does not distinguish between positive and negative environmental effects and either, if significant, could trigger an SEA.
Box 11	Upon consideration of the previous sections, a Responsible Authority should make a finding on whether there is the likelihood of significant environmental effects associated with adoption of the plan.
	The information in this section should provide a summary of the likely interactions of the plan with the environment, and conclude whether the Responsible Authority consider that an SEA is required or not.
	If likely significant effects are identified by a Responsible Authority, then an SEA must be undertaken and the decision to do this advertised. The information presented at screening and Consultation Authority views on this can also help to inform the next stage of the SEA process (Scoping). Similarly, if no significant effects are identified a determination to that effect must be undertaken and then advertised.