

SEA SCOPING TEMPLATE – COVER NOTE

PART 1

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

PART 2

An SEA Scoping Report is attached for the plan, programme or strategy (PPS) entitled:

Drumnadrochit Futures: A Vision and Actions

The Responsible Authority is:

The Highland Council

PART 3

Please tick the appropriate box

The PPS falls under the scope of Section 5(3) of the Act and requires an SEA under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. **or**

The PPS falls under the scope of Section 5(4) of the Act and requires an SEA under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. **or**

The PPS does not require an SEA under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland)

Act 2005. However, we wish to carry out an SEA on a voluntary basis. We accept

that, as this SEA is voluntary, the statutory 5 week timescale for views from the Consultation Authorities cannot be guaranteed.

TEMPLATE – COVER NOTE

PART 4

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PART 5

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SEA SCOPING TEMPLATE

Contents of Scoping Report

Introduction

Key facts about Drumnadrochit Futures and description of PPS contents

Context of Drumnadrochit Futures

- Relationship with other PPS
- Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment (baseline)
- Environmental problems

Scope and level of detail proposed for strategic environmental assessment

- Alternatives
- Scoping in/out of SEA issues
- Methodology for assessing environmental effects

Next steps

- Proposed consultation timescales
- Anticipated milestones

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report is to set out sufficient information on Drumnadrochit Futures: A Vision and Actions to enable the Consultation Authorities to form a view on the consultation period and scope/level of detail that will be appropriate for the Environmental Report.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005.

KEY FACTS

The key facts relating to this PPS are set out below:

- **Name of Responsible Authority** - The Highland Council
- **Title of PPS** - Drumnadrochit Futures: a Vision and Actions
- **What prompted the PPS (e.g. legislative, regulatory or administrative provision)** - Legislative/administrative provisions. Drumnadrochit Futures derives from a community desire to set the context for Development Briefs committed as part of the Inverness Local Plan namely, Allanmore-Pitkerrald and the village centre; and their initiative to enable early consideration of the main issues and options to be addressed as part of the local development plan (review) and to establish a long term, spatial framework for the community, both of which will contribute towards the Main Issues Report and vision statement imperatives of the Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006.
- **Subject (e.g. transport)** - Town Planning. A “footprint” for development/infrastructure and environmental management.
- **Period covered by PPS** - 25+ years, indeterminate.
- **Frequency of updates** - Undetermined/Flexible. Potential to monitor and review as required to inform review of the local development plan on a five-yearly statutory cycle and/or to inform appropriate supplementary guidance.
- **Area covered by PPS** - The village of Drumnadrochit, an area of around 80ha.
- **Purpose of PPS** - Drumnadrochit future has been prepared to stimulate discussion with the community about the future of Drumnadrochit; to inform a choices and the local development plan. It provides a vision - deriving from collaborative working between community representatives and statutory/other agencies - looking 25 years ahead to 2030 and a summary of 10 key actions required to begin to bring about the vision. Drumnadrochit Futures has been circulated to all households to seek consensus on further discussion on the direction the village may take. Subject to approval, it may provide Supplementary Guidance in respect of matters which require early action.

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Relationship with other PPS and environmental objectives

It is considered that the SPG will have a relationship with other PPS which could affect or influence its content. The clearest links are with the Inverness Local Plan (Adopted 2006) due to it recommending that the area be an area for some expansion. The most relevant influential document is also the Inverness Local Plan and the emerging Highland Wide Local Plan. Following is a list of the PPS which have an influence or relationship to Drumnadrochit Futures: A Vision and Actions.

Plan/Programme	Objective/Requirements of Plan/Programme	How objectives/ requirements may be taken onboard
International Policy		
Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EEC	Requires Member states to achieve good ecological status of inland water bodies by 2015.	Prevent pollution to water courses
Convention on Biodiversity 1992	The Convention is aimed at the conservation of biodiversity.	Protection of biodiversity
European Biodiversity Strategy 1998	The strategy aims to anticipate, prevent and attack the causes of significant reduction or loss of biodiversity at the source.	Prevent loss of biodiversity and protect and enhance current biodiversity levels
Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC	The provisions of the Directive require Member States to introduce a range of measures including the protection of species listed in the Annexes	Protect habitats of protected species
Directive 1966/62/EC on ambient air quality and management	Establishes standards for air quality and sets limits for various pollutants.	Consideration of potential effects of proposals on pollution.
National Planning Policy		
SPP7: Planning and Flooding	The central purpose of this SPP is to prevent further development which would have a significant probability of being affected by flooding or which would increase the probability of flooding elsewhere.	Avoid development on flood plains
Designing Places: A Policy Statement on Design	Sets out the policy context for important areas of planning policy, design guidance, professional practice, and education and training.	Recognise the importance of design in the planning of new development
NPPG18: Planning and the Historic Environment	Development Plans to provide policies to conserve and enhance	Take account of the potential effects on the built heritage.

	the historic environment.	
SPP3: Planning for Homes	Sets out the Scottish Government's policy on how local authorities should make provision in development plans for new housing, taking account of identified need and demand.	Consider the identified need and demand for housing in the area
SPP15: Planning for Rural Development	This SPP sets out the approach, key messages and objectives that should underpin planning policies and decisions affecting rural areas.	Take into consideration the specific needs of rural communities.
NPPG14: Natural Heritage	Development Plans should set out policies to conserve and enhance designated natural heritage areas and the wider natural heritage.	Consider the implications on the wider natural heritage.
NPPG5: Archaeology and Planning	Plans should include policies for the protection, preservation and enhancement of all nationally important sites of archaeological and landscape interest and their settings and other remains worth preserving.	Take account of need to safeguard archaeological resources.
SPP17: Planning for Transport	Sets out the national policy on transport including reduction in car travel and the current road network	Take into consideration the aims and potential outcome of the policy with special regard to the Trunk Road.
Regional Policy		
Highland Structure Plan (Adopted 2001)	Sets out the broad principles on which individual planning decisions are made and gives a framework for local plans.	Take into consideration the policies and aims which encourage strategic growth of the Highlands as a whole
Local Policy		
Inverness Local Plan (Adopted 2006)	Sets out general policies and settlement specific land use planning policies for the area.	Take into consideration land use allocations already designated in the plan and any background policies.
Inverness and Nairn Local Biodiversity Action Plan (2004)	Identifies the main issues and threats to biodiversity in the Inverness and Nairn area	Take into consideration the rich biodiversity of the area.
Other Plans and Policies		
Inverness and Nairn Core Paths Network Plan (2008)	Sets out the policy context for important areas of planning policy, design guidance, professional practice, and education and training.	Take into consideration the core paths network in Drumnadrochit and look at developments which may be connected up using core paths

Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment

This section describes the current state of the environment in and around Drumnadrochit. It also includes the SEA objectives we propose to use in the SEA, plus suggested data sources and indicators. As the SEA for Drumnadrochit Futures progresses the following information will be reviewed, updated and expanded as necessary.

Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna

- **Protected Sites**
 - Urquhart Bay Woods (SAC) is on the edge of the area covered by Drumnadrochit Futures. There are no protected areas affected by the proposals set out in Drumnadrochit Futures.
- **Priority Habitats and Species**
 - There are no priority habitats or species that would be affected by the proposals set out in Drumnadrochit Futures
- **Existing Problems?**
 - Lack of information on biodiversity, flora and fauna in the area.

SEA Objectives	Key information	Source / Availability
Improve biodiversity avoiding irreversible losses	LBAP targets % achieved	THC
Provide opportunities for people to come into contact with and appreciate wildlife	Proportion of land designated for particular quality / amenity / biodiversity value % of population within x miles of site of high biodiversity value	SNH RSPB THC

Population and Human Health

- **Population Data and Trends**
 - The population of Drumnadrochit at the 2001 census was 813.
 - There may be significant growth in the population of Drumnadrochit if the proposals contained within Drumnadrochit futures are realised. In addition there is an expansion area to the West of Drumnadrochit which can take a large amount of housing. This is subject to a development brief which prevents unsustainable growth in the population of the area.

Age Data Trends

- Drumnadrochit has a slightly older population than the surrounding locality with a population of pensionable age and over at 2.58% higher than that of Inverness. In response to this it also has a higher population of young people (aged under 16), however this does mean that the working age population is considerably lower than that of Inverness at 5.48% less.

- The table below shows population profiles at a Highland Wide level (data was not available to a village scale).

Highland Area profiles (mid-2005 estimates)	Population Profile	Years of Healthy Life expectancy at Highland level	Population size % change 1994/2004
18.5% under 16	51.1% Females	68.9 for females	Highland +1.9%
63.9% aged 16-64	48.9% Male	66.2 for males	
17.5% aged 65+			

- As people are living longer, the level of health care provision needs to increase. The average age of people in the UK is quite high this means that in the future there will be greater pressure on the provision of services for an ageing population. Drumnadrochit Futures attempts to address this by making housing and services available for an older population as part of its vision for the future of the village.

- **Existing Problems?**

- Ageing population, Scotland wide health issues.

SEA Objectives	Key information	Source / Availability
Promote Healthy Living	SIMD	THC/GROS

Water

- **Water Sources**

- The main water supply for the village comes from Loch Nam Bat and the River Coiltie. This supply is delivered through separate treatment and storage plants at Upper Drumbuie and Boglashin respectively. Scottish Water intends to amalgamate these systems to supply Drumnadrochit from facilities at Glenconvinth/Loch Buich enabled by the strategic improvement to the Loch Assynt water supply.

- **Water Quality**

- The quality of the water in the Drumnadrochit area can be measured by the water quality of the two rivers which flow by Drumnadrochit, the River Enrick and River Coiltie. Both rivers are classed as 'Good' quality in SEPA's River Quality Classification Map.

- **Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems**

- The Council will promote the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS), in association with SEPA. Information on developments incorporating SUDS is not currently monitored but there is an intention to do so in the future. The Allanmore-Pitkerrald Development Brief which takes in an area of Drumnadrochit promotes the use of SUDS.

- **Ground Water**

- Information on ground water quality is not kept at a local level but has been kept at a national level since the 2005 Ground Water Directive.

- **Flooding**

- The development of Drumnadrochit is planned in such a way to avoid all flood plains as recommended by SEPA. However, developments within Drumnadrochit will still have to take into consideration the possibility of flooding outwith the designated flood plains due to surface run off etc.

- **Existing Problems?**
 - None - By not developing on the flood plains and taking into consideration the potential of increased risk of flooding in the future, there should be no negative impacts for water in the area and some positive effects in terms of provision of water supply and quality of water supply and treatment.

SEA Objectives	Key information	Source / Availability
Maintain Key Ecological Processes	River Quality Ground Water Quality	SEPA

Soil

- The area of Drumnadrochit has a mainly Podzol based soil with the majority of the Drumnadrochit Futures area being covered by a Humus-Iron Podzol.
- As with any development which involves developing the land, there is to be some element of soil sealing which may lead to an increase in surface run off. This however can be mitigated with the use of appropriate materials to provide a semi-permeable surface rather than total soil sealing which may occur through use of materials such as wet pour concrete.
- The proposals in Drumnadrochit Futures will attempt to not damage the soil quality of the area and where possible improve or maintain the current quality.
- **Existing Problems?**
 - None - Maintaining the quality of soil, and the use of appropriate materials should mitigate any potential future environmental impacts.

SEA Objectives	Key information	Source / Availability
Safeguard Soil Quality and Quantity	Amount of greenfield/brownfield land and proportion available for re-use	THC - Vacant and Derelict Land Survey

Air and Climatic Factors

- **Air Quality**
 - The quality of air in the area covered by Drumnadrochit Futures is of a high standard compared with National Standards. There are currently no areas in danger of breaching these in any area of the Highlands therefore there are no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) in the Highland Council area.
- **Nitrogen Dioxide**
 - The level of Nitrogen Dioxide in the area is again low and poses no threat to the environment.
- **PM10 Limits**
 - The level of PM10 concentration in Drumnadrochit is low and poses no threat to the environment.
- **Sources of Air Pollution**
 - The main source of air pollution in Drumnadrochit is from motorised vehicles as there is little in the way of industry in the area.
- **Existing Problems?**
 - None - Despite there being no current problems it is important to make sure that the quality of the air in the area does not deteriorate.

SEA Objectives	Key information	Source / Availability
Maintain Air Quality	No AQMA in Drumnadrochit	THC
Reduce the need to travel	Access to Key services	THC
Reduce reliance on private car use	Mode of Transport Road Traffic Reduction	THC
Encourage use of public transport	Numbers using the local public transport	THC/Public transport providers

Material Assets

Core Paths

The Core Path Plan for the area is Inverness and Nairn Core Paths Plan. While Drumnadrochit Futures is not going to secure any new paths or indeed the current paths it does promote access to each community using existing paths and promotes the idea of a multi-user network to improve connections between the smaller settlements which make up Drumnadrochit.

Existing Problems?

None- while there are currently no existing issues it is important to make sure that the material assets of Drumnadrochit are not compromised by any future developments in Drumnadrochit.

SEA Objectives	Key information	Source / Availability
Promote Healthy Living	Implementation of the Core Paths Plan for Drumnadrochit	THC
Reduce reliance on private car use for short journeys	Mode of Transport	THC

Cultural Heritage

Historic Environment

The Historic Environment in and around Drumnadrochit needs to be protected for the future as it has reference to our cultural past. A number of sites within Drumnadrochit are listed due to historic importance. These sites and the sensitivity of such sites as Urquhart Castle and Craig Mory Fort are covered by statutory designations and any proposals for development will aim to avoid the generation of pressure on these sites.

Natural Environment

The natural environment around Drumnadrochit includes a number of SSSI including Glenurquhart Bay Woods as well as other European, national and local designations. While access to this and other areas of natural environment are to be promoted it is important to make sure that the natural environment is not affected by any future development in Drumnadrochit. This includes areas outwith the "footprint" of the study area such as Glenurquhart Bay Woods. This would link in with the SEA objectives of

- Improve biodiversity avoiding irreversible losses; and
- Provide opportunities for people to come into contact with and appreciate wildlife

SEA Objectives	Key information	Source / Availability
Preserve the Cultural Heritage of the area	% Planning Applications within X distance of a Statutory/Non-Statutory designation such as SAC, SSSI, TPO, SAM or listed building.	THC/HS/SNH

Landscape

The landscape around is considered to be an Area of Regional Landscape Importance as identified in the Highland Structure Plan (Adopted 2001). The effects of development in such an area are manageable through regulation of the rate and location of development.

Existing Problems?

None

SEA Objectives	Key information	Source / Availability
Preserve the high quality landscape of the area	Planning Applications over X size in the area of regional landscape importance	THC

SCOPE AND LEVEL OF DETAIL PROPOSED FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Alternatives

Alternatives to this PPS have been considered. The alternatives are outlined here in order to set the context for the following two sections of this report, i.e. scoping of SEA issues and consideration of a framework for the assessment of environmental effects of the alternatives.

Alternative 1: Do not produce Drumnadrochit Futures and wait for production of the Inner Moray Firth Local Plan

Outline

This would have involved the document not being produced and development in the village continued to be guided by the Inverness Local Plan (Adopted 2006) until the production of the Inner Moray Firth Local Plan.

Possible Impacts

The village would continue to grow but without such a high level of community involvement guiding what they would wish to see in the village. Instead there may have been a developer led approach which may not have suited the Council's or the communities' vision for the future development of the village. This may have led to unsustainable growth of the village without proper consideration of the needs of the local community until the time when sites could be brought forward under the Inner Moray Firth Local Plan.

Why not chosen

While this is a reasonable alternative it is considered that the approach the Council has taken to be more suitable as it engaged the community early in the process. The site allocations may well be brought forward in a new local plan.

Alternative 2: Considering each site on its own merits

Outline

Another alternative is to consider the each development proposal on its own merits, bearing in mind what is set out in the relevant local plan.

Possible Impacts

Without an agreed set of principles/ community needs that apply, subjectivity in the decision making process is likely to result in a significantly different type of village to what the community believe is necessary.

Why not chosen

The results are likely to be similar to that of Alternative 1.

Alternative 3: Produce Drumnadrochit Futures

Outline

Produce a document which outlines a vision and actions which need to be taken in order to prepare for related services, infrastructure and amenities to be put in to place for sustainable growth of the village.

Possible Impacts

This would give the Council scope to work with the community to identify which services, infrastructure and amenities would be suitable for the future expansion of the village. This would give the Council and the community an insight into the work required for the new local plan for the area.

Framework for assessing environmental effects and measures envisaged for preventing, reducing and offsetting significant adverse effects

Scoping in/out of SEA Issues

In accordance with Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 The Highland Council has considered whether the environmental effects (positive and negative) of Drumnadrochit Futures: A Vision and Actions are likely to be significant. The act requires that the effects on the following issues be considered;

Biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage (including architectural and archaeological heritage) and landscape.

Drumnadrochit Futures may have an effect of the all of these issues to some extent therefore all of the above issues will be scoped in. It should be noted that whilst many of the issues will have a positive effect on the environment there may be some negative effects as well due to the general nature of development. Below is a table which sets out the SEA objectives. This is the way in which The Highland Council have chosen to use these to assess the environmental impact of Drumnadrochit Futures. This table is collated from the information presented earlier in the scoping report.

SEA Objectives	Key information	Source / Availability
Biodiversity Flora and Fauna		
Improve biodiversity avoiding irreversible losses	LBAP targets % achieved	THC
Provide opportunities for people to come into contact with and appreciate wildlife	Proportion of land designated for particular quality / amenity / biodiversity value % of population within x miles of site of high biodiversity value	SNH RSPB THC
Population and Human Health		
Promote Healthy Living	SIMD	THC/GROS
Water		
Maintain Key Ecological Processes	River Quality Ground Water Quality	SEPA
Soil		
Safeguard Soil Quality and Quantity	Amount of greenfield/brownfield land and proportion available for re-use	THC

Air and Climatic Factors		
Maintain Air Quality	No AQMA in Drumnadrochit	THC
Reduce the need to travel	Access to Key services	THC
Reduce reliance on private car use	Mode of Transport Road Traffic Reduction	THC
Encourage use of public transport	Numbers using the local public transport	THC/Public transport providers
Material Assets		
Promote Healthy Living	Implementation of the Core Paths Plan for Drumnadrochit	THC
Reduce reliance on private car use for short journeys	Mode of Transport	THC
Cultural Heritage		
Preserve the Cultural Heritage of the area	% Planning Applications within X distance of a Statutory/Non-Statutory designation such as SAC, SSSI, TPO, SAM or listed building.	THC/HS/SNH
Landscape		
Preserve the high quality landscape of the area	Planning Applications over X size in the area of regional landscape importance	THC

Methodology for Assessing Environmental Effects

SEA Regulations require that the significant environmental effects of a plan or programme are identified, described and evaluated. The likely significant effects on the environment will be described in the Environmental report and measures identified to avoid, reduce or mitigate any significant effects of the Plans. A panel of officers from the Planning and Development Section will undertake the SEA of the PPS. Officers will carry out the assessment against a framework of objectives to assess the potential impacts of the different actions proposed in the PPS. A matrix has been developed setting out environmental objectives for the strategy, with indicators and columns for carrying out the appraisal of potential impacts. This is included on the following pages and a key is contained below.

Significant Positive Impact	No or minimal positive impact	Neutral or Unknown Impact	No or minimal negative impact	Significant negative impact
++	+	?	-	--

Drumnadrochit Futures SEA Assessment Matrix

Objective	Questions	Time Scale			Impact	Scale		Comments
		Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Severity	Local	Regional	
1.	<p>Improve biodiversity and avoid irreversible losses</p> <p>Will it contribute to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity in Drumnadrochit?</p> <p>Will it have a detrimental effect on protected species?</p> <p>Will it contribute to improving and/or maintaining the favourable condition of designated sites of scientific and natural interest?</p> <p>Will it contribute to achieving local and regional biodiversity action plan targets?</p> <p>Will it have a detrimental effect on landscape character and/or statutory/ non-statutory designations?</p>							

2.	Provide opportunities for people to come into contact with and appreciate wildlife	<p>Will it promote the importance of the protected species of the area?</p> <p>Will it contribute to education of local people and tourists in terms of their understanding of the local wildlife?</p> <p>Will it provide or enhance access to areas of high biodiversity value?</p>							
3.	Promote healthy living	<p>Will it encourage a more healthy lifestyle for the residents within the village?</p> <p>Will it encourage walking and cycling?</p>							
4.	Maintain key ecological processes	<p>Will it help prevent the pollution of ground water and rivers?</p> <p>Will it help to prevent flooding?</p>							
5.	Safeguard soil quality and quantity	<p>Will it protect and improve the quality of the soil?</p> <p>Will it reuse brownfield land?</p> <p>Will it lead to the use of greenfield land?</p>							
6.	Maintain Air Quality	<p>Will it protect and/or enhance the current air quality?</p> <p>Will it lead to the designation of a AQMA?</p>							
7.	Reduce the Need to travel	<p>Will it improve public transport?</p> <p>Will it encourage walking and cycling?</p>							

8.	Reduce reliance on private car use	Will it improve public transport? Will it encourage walking and cycling? Will it reduce distances travelled?							
9.	Encourage use of public transport	Will it improve public transport? Will it reduce the need to travel by car?							
10.	Reduce reliance on private car use for short journeys	Will it encourage walking and cycling? Will it reduce distances travelled? Will it improve access to key services?							
11.	Preserve the Cultural Heritage of the area	Will it protect and enhance the areas sites and features of historical and archaeological importance?							
12.	Preserve the high quality landscape of the area	Will it protect the landscape quality of the area?							

NEXT STEPS

Proposed consultation timescales and methods

A number of consultation events have already taken place including public meetings and workshops. The most influential consultation which has taken place so far was a 10 week questionnaire based consultation on a paper discussing the future of the village.

There is to be further opportunity to for the public to comment on the PPS. It is envisaged once the responses from the last round of consultation have been incorporated into the vision for the future of Drumnadrochit, the Council will discuss these with the Community Council and then once in agreement they will be incorporated into the PPS and a consultation will take place. This will most likely be in the form of a number of public meetings and a questionnaire based response format lasting for at least 10 weeks. In addition a number of focus groups may be formed to look at specific issues arising from the consultation.

During this consultation it is also envisaged the Environmental Report will be put out for public comment. It is anticipated that this will be during early 2009.

Anticipated milestones in the SEA and planning processes related to this PPS

September 2008 - Scoping Report Submitted

November 19th 2008 - Results from the consultation on Drumnadrochit Futures to be taken to Planning, Environment and Development Committee

Early 2009 - Public Consultation on draft Drumnadrochit Futures Document and Environmental Report

Spring 2009 - Revision and final approval by committee