

**POST-ADOPTION SEA STATEMENT – COVER NOTE**

**Part 1**

To: [SEA.gateway@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:SEA.gateway@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

**Part 2**

**A post-adoption SEA statement is attached for the PPS entitled:**

The Highland Council Access Strategy 2008 - 2011

**The Responsible Authority is:**

The Highland Council

**Part 3**

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**Signature & Date**

Matthew Dent

4 August 2010

## **POST-ADOPTION SEA STATEMENT**

### **Post-adoption SEA statement for:**

The Highland Council Access Strategy 2008-2011

### **Adopted on:**

December 2008

### **Responsible Authority:**

The Highland Council

## **POST-ADOPTION SEA STATEMENT – INTRODUCTION**

This document (referred to here as the post-adoption SEA statement) has been prepared in accordance with Section 18 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005.

## **POST-ADOPTION SEA STATEMENT AVAILABILITY OF DOCUMENTS**

### **WEBSITE**

The full PPS as adopted, along with the Environmental Report and post-adoption SEA Statement are available on the Responsible Authority's website at:

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/leisureandtourism/what-to-see/countrysideaccess/accessstrategy.htm>

### **OFFICE ADDRESS**

The PPS, as adopted, along with the Environmental Report and post-adoption SEA Statement may also be inspected free of charge (or a copy obtained for a reasonable charge) at the principal office of the Responsible Authority:

#### **Contact name, address and telephone number**

Access Administrator,  
Planning and Development Service,  
The Highland Council HQ,  
Glenurquhart Road,  
Inverness,  
IV3 5NX

Telephone 01463 702288

[access@highland.gov.uk](mailto:access@highland.gov.uk)

#### **Times at which the documents may be inspected or a copy obtained:**

Monday to Friday 0900-1700.



## **POST-ADOPTION SEA STATEMENT - STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

The Highland Council Access Strategy 2008 - 2011 has been subject to a process of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), as required under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. This has included the following activities:

- Taking into account the views of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Scottish Ministers (Historic Scotland) regarding the scope and level of detail that was appropriate for the Environmental Report
- Preparing an Environmental Report on the likely significant effects on the environment of the draft PPS which included consideration of:
  - the baseline data relating to the current state of the environment;
  - links between the PPS and other relevant strategies, policies, plans, programmes and environmental protection objectives;
  - existing environmental problems affecting the plan area;
  - the plan's likely significant effects on the environment (positive and negative);
  - measures envisaged for the prevention, reduction and offsetting of any significant adverse effects;
  - an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives chosen;
  - monitoring measures to ensue that any unforeseen environmental effects will be identified allowing for appropriate remedial action to be taken.
- Consulting on the Environmental Report
- Taking into account the Environmental Report and the results of consultation in making final decisions regarding The Highland Council Access Strategy 2008 - 2011
- Committing to monitoring the significant environmental effects of the implementation of The Highland Council Access Strategy 2008 - 2011. This will also identify any unforeseen adverse significant environmental effects and to enable taking appropriate remedial action.

## How environmental considerations have been integrated into the guidance and how the environmental report has been taken into account

The table below sets out:

- environmental problems identified in the Environmental Report and explain how these have been taken into account in the preparation of the adopted version of the guidance;
- Significant negative effects identified in the Environmental Report and whether / how these have been dealt with in the adopted version of the guidance;
- measures for prevention, reduction and offsetting of significant adverse effects identified in the Environmental Report plus any revised measures considered later and explain how these have been integrated into the adopted version of the guidance; and
- significant positive effects identified in the Environment Report and whether/how these have been integrated into the adopted version of the guidance.

Environmental Problems identified within the Environmental Report	Integrated in to Plan	How Integrated or Reason for not taking account
Negative impact of access development and promotion on natural and cultural heritage features	Yes	<p>Broader consultation with in proforma for access promotion activities to highlight sites where over promotion may be an area of concern.</p> <p>These are localised problems and no empirical data is available. In future site monitoring data from agencies such as SNH and HS may be of use to assess this impact.</p>
Change in land use reducing key features of biodiversity, leading to loss of habitat for species.	No	No data to suggest significant change in land use due to access pressures. Access improvements almost always focused on land previously used for recreational access.
Use of access resource leading to secondary environmental issues, e.g. litter, dog fouling	Yes	Actions 3.4, 3.6 and 6.4
Use of access resource	Yes	The Access Strategy aims to

leading to pressure of existing services or creating environmental impact through lack of such services e.g. public toilets, car parking		ensure access provision is developed and promoted with other council services and public bodies to minimise environmental impacts through of lack of services.
Increase in travel use via use of private transport	Yes	Focus on use of access resource within and close to settlements, reducing need for private transport to access services and facilities.
Potential Safety Issues for the public exercising their access rights e.g. car parking/pedestrians of the road network without segregated footways	Yes	Actions 2.3, 4.2 and 4.6
Increasing obesity levels and lack of minimum exercise levels taken by public	Yes	Whole themes in the plans aim to improve health and wellbeing of the population and visitors to the area.
<b>Significant Negative Effect identified in the Environmental Report</b>		
No significant negative impacts were identified in assessing the plans objectives against the SEA regulatory categories.		
<b>Significant Positive Effects identified in the Environmental Report</b>		
Population and Human Health – Long Term	Yes	Whole themes in the plans aim to improve health and wellbeing of the population and visitors to the area.
Cultural, heritage, natural assets and landscape – short term	Yes	The plan aim to improves the public ability to come into contact with, and appreciate, the world around them.
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna – Long term	Yes	Bringing people into contact with flora and fauna over a longer period of time will increase the likely of repeat visits and/or improve the marketability of the area leading to a sustainable economic driver.

**How opinions expressed during the consultation have been taken into account.**

List of Consultation responses.

Consultee/Respondent	Summary of Comments	How comment was taken into account
<p>Scottish Environment Protection Agency</p>	<p><b>General Comments</b> SEPA is satisfied with the assessment of Strategy objectives presented, however, no assessments of alternatives is provided. Additionally the ER would have benefited from a clear explanation of the assessment process.</p>	<p>Assessment of alternatives was included in Final ER and more explanation into the assessment process was detailed.</p>
	<p><b>Outline and Objectives of the Access Strategy</b> As noted previously the Vision Statement provided in the ER is slightly different to that provided in the Strategy. SEPA welcomes the inclusion of the Vision Statement and Aims and Objectives in the ER itself; this reduces the amount of cross referencing required when reading the ER.</p>	<p>The vision statement in the two documents were updated to ensure there were the same.</p>
	<p><b>Relevant Aspects of the Current State of the Environment (and Appendix F)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In relation to key information it would have been useful if this section had directed the reader to Appendix F where the key information which forms the baseline is presented.</li> <li>• Various references to data not in the baseline in regard to the SEA objectives.</li> </ul>	<p>Done.</p> <p>Done</p>
	<p><b>Alternatives Considered</b></p>	<p>Increased information</p>

	Information on how and why alternatives were considered reasonable could also usefully be provided.	provided in the Final ER
The Scottish Ministers (Historic Scotland)	No comments on the ER were received from HS.	
Scottish Natural Heritage	<b>Introduction</b> ..we note that the third point in the vision statement differs from that in strategy.	The vision statement in the two documents were updated to ensure there were the same.
	<b>Relationship with other PPS..</b> There is an over-riding principle that any new access infrastructure and promotion that is likely to have a significant effect of a European site or species must be assess and must be shown to have no adverse effect.	Broader consultation within proforma for access promotion activities to highlight sites where over promotion or new infrastructure may be an area of concern.
	<b>Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment.</b> Suggest Scottish Recreation survey to be used for baseline data and not survey of SOAC	Removed SOAC and added SRS facts.
	<b>Environmental Problems</b> ....use of more Highland figures as opposed to Scotland wide stats.	Where available more localised data used.
	<b>Evolution of the environment with the PPS</b> first paragraph is confusing, core path plans is more than a mapping exercise and should be explained more	Simplified first paragraph. The council has no other statutory duty other than to provide a map of routes, at time of AS no plan to implement core paths other than statutory functions.
	<b>Assessment Methods</b> the requirement of the Habitat regulation needs to be clearly state in appendix D "key success Factors etc"	Done

There were no comments on the Environmental Report other than those from the Consultation Authorities

### **Reasons for choosing the strategy as adopted, in light of other alternatives.**

The alternatives to developing a new access strategy all have a negative effect or no change when measured against the SEA topics. Therefore the production of a new access strategy is the best policy to develop with regards environmental impacts and benefits.

### **Measures that are to be taken to monitor significant environmental effects of the implementation of the strategy.**

Monitoring of the Access Strategy will be based on the environmental baseline data as set against the SEA indicators within the Environmental report, ideally yearly but otherwise every other year.

### **Conclusion**

It is considered that the SEA process has added value to the development of the Access Strategy. The strategy and associated SEA documents will be available on-line and at The Highland Council headquarters.