

Appendix 3: Assessment Matrix

This section contains detailed assessments of the vision and spatial strategy contained within the Inner Moray Firth and any reasonable alternatives which have been identified.

The assessment considers:

- What level of impact the policy/reasonable alternative may have in the short/medium/long term on each of the SEA Objectives and;
- At what scale the policy/reasonable alternative may have an impact.

The matrix also includes a justification of the assessment for each SEA objective. This is intended to guide the reader through the decision making process. To aid in this the matrix also records assumptions which have been made in the decision making process.

For consistency the following scoring system has been used through out the assessment matrices:

Significant Positive Impact	No or minimal positive impact	Neutral Impact	No or minimal negative impact	Significant negative impact	Possible Positive and Negative Impacts	Unknown Impact
++	+	=	-	--	+/-	??

Each assessment will be followed by a concise commentary on the findings of the assessment of the policy/reasonable alternative.

Please note that all assessments have been carried out assuming that the mitigation is already included in the policy.

The approach/policy assessments are set out in alphabetical order and are split into those sites included in the Proposed Plan (3a) and alternative approaches (3b)

The key considerations which are set out below will be used in the assessment of each of the policies/reasonable alternatives.

<p>1 Maintain and enhance designated wildlife sites, biodiversity, valuable habitats and protected species, avoiding irreversible losses.</p> <p>Will it contribute to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity in Highland?</p> <p>Will it have a detrimental effect on protected species?</p> <p>Will it contribute to achieving local and regional biodiversity action plan targets?</p> <p>Will habitats of importance for biodiversity be protected?</p> <p>Will designated sites be protected?</p> <p>Will it avoid the introduction or spread of non-native species?</p>
<p>2 Maintain, enhance and create green networks for wildlife and people.</p> <p>Will it prevent the fragmentation of green habitat networks or maintain an area enjoyed by people?</p> <p>Will it ensure better connectivity of open spaces?</p> <p>Will it ensure recreational access to green networks?</p> <p>Will opportunities be created for the existing green network to be enhanced through better</p>

	<p>connections ?</p> <p>Will it create or enhance green networks for people or wildlife?</p> <p>Will it facilitate species adaptation to climate change through the protection of or contribution to green habitat networks?</p>
3	<p>Provide opportunities for people to come into contact with and appreciate nature/natural environments</p> <p>Will it provide or enhance responsible access to natural areas or areas of high biodiversity value?</p> <p>Will it contribute to education of local people and tourists in terms of their understanding of the local wildlife?</p>
4	<p>Protect and enhance human health</p> <p>Will it give additional benefit to human health?</p> <p>Will human health be significantly reduced?</p> <p>Will it ensure a more healthy lifestyle for the residents within the settlements?</p>
5	<p>Retain and improve quality, quantity and connectivity of publicly accessible open space.</p> <p>Will it increase the level of fit for purpose open spaces?</p> <p>Will it improve existing open spaces?</p> <p>Will it make open spaces more accessible to all?</p>
6	<p>Protect and enhance outdoor access opportunities and access rights including rights of way and core paths</p> <p>Will it promote the use of core paths by linking them to fit for purpose open spaces?</p> <p>Will it improve links to the wider countryside?</p> <p>Will it be protect and enhance the existing path network?</p> <p>Will access opportunities be upheld and enhanced?</p>
7	<p>Reduce contamination, safeguard soil quantity and quality</p> <p>Will it ensure the re-use of brownfield sites?</p> <p>Will it prevent the sealing of good quality soil on sites?</p> <p>Will it protect areas of importance for geodiversity in Highland?</p> <p>Will carbon storage of peat land be protected?</p>
8	<p>Minimise waste</p> <p>Will it support the minimisation of waste production?</p> <p>Will it support the achievement of government targets through the use of the waste management hierarchy?</p> <p>Will it ensure the waste management facilities comply with National Waste Strategy Objectives, thus ensuring only residual waste is land filled?</p> <p>Will it ensure recovery of energy and heat from waste is considered where appropriate?</p>
	<p>Avoid impact to and where possible enhance the water environment</p>
9	<p>Will it ensure development is supported by appropriate drainage infrastructure</p> <p>Will it ensure that development has no detrimental impact on the water environment?</p>

	Will it ensure developments enhance the water environment where possible?
10	<p>Maintain water abstraction, run-off and recharge within carrying capacity (inc future capacity)</p> <p>Will it enhance natural drainage?</p> <p>Will it ensure SUDS are included in new residential developments?</p>
11	<p>Maintain air quality</p> <p>Will it prevent a reduction in air quality?</p>
12	<p>Reduce vulnerability to the effects of climate change</p> <p>Will it ensure new developments are free from flooding?</p> <p>Will it reduce the vulnerability of existing areas to flooding?</p> <p>Will it reduce the risk of coastal inundation through sea level rising?</p> <p>Will it lead to the avoidance of areas of landslide/landslip?</p>
13	<p>Increase proportion of energy from renewable sources</p> <p>Will it ensure more renewable energy production where appropriate?</p> <p>Will it ensure energy efficiency is taken into consideration in new developments?</p> <p>Will it ensure suitable connection to electricity infrastructure?</p>
14	<p>Reduce the need to travel/increase opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport</p> <p>Will it reduce the need to travel?</p> <p>Will it ensure an increase in use of more sustainable transport methods?</p> <p>Will it ensure better opportunities for walking and cycling?</p>
15	<p>Protect and where appropriate enhance the historic environment</p> <p>Will it protect and enhance the historic environment?</p>
16	<p>Value and Protect the diversity and local distinctiveness of landscapes</p> <p>Will local diversity and distinctiveness be maintained or enhanced?</p> <p>Will the special qualities of designated areas be maintained or enhanced?</p>
17	<p>Conserve and enhance landscape character and scenic value</p> <p>Will existing landscape character be maintenance or enhanced?</p> <p>Will visual impact be minimised?</p> <p>Will scenic value be maintained or enhanced?</p> <p>Will adverse cumulative effect on existing landscape character be avoided?</p>
18	<p>Safeguard wild area qualities</p> <p>Will it safeguard the ability of people to experience qualities of wildness?</p>

Explanation of Assessment Matrix

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Justification and Assumptions	Mitigation		
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional		Measure	Lead Authority	Proposed Timescale
1									

Any mitigation measures that will be required to avoid, reduce, remedy or compensate any negative effects identified, when required and who will be required to implement them

SEA Objective from Environmental Report

When will the effect become apparent: short (0-5yrs), medium (5-10yrs), or long term (10+yrs)

Will the approach have an impact locally (i.e. just within a settlement) or regionally (i.e. right across the Inner Moray Firth)

Any assumptions which have been made when making the assessment and why the SEA has been given this assessment (including any difficulties and limitations)