

Appendix 4 – Strategic Environmental Assessment – Site Assessments

This section contains detailed assessments of all of the Sites included in the Inner Moray Firth Proposed Local Development Plan (as Modified Following Examination and as Intended to be Adopted) and any alternative sites to which SEA was applied.

The assessment considers:

- What level of impact the site may have on each of the SEA Objectives and;
- Potential mitigation which may be required to maximise the positive effects and minimise the negative effects on the environment.

Each matrix also includes a justification of the assessment. This is intended to guide the reader through the decision making process.

Please note that all site assessments have been carried out assuming no mitigation.

The site assessments are set out in alphabetical order and are split into those sites included in the Proposed Plan (as modified) (4a) and alternative sites (4b)

The following table provides the list of criteria against which each site was assessed and further guidance on what this may mean.

Key:

Significant Positive Impact	No or minimal positive impact	Neutral Impact	No or minimal negative impact	Significant negative impact	Positive and Negative Impacts	Unknown impact	Not Applicable
++	+	=	-	--	+/-	??	NA

Interpretation of Matrix

No	SEA Issue and checklist question	Y / N	Will the impact be...							Interpretation	Justification	Mitigation Measures (where appropriate)
			+	+	=	-	-	?	+/-			
1	<p>a) Will the site affect any natural heritage designation or area identified for its importance to nature conservation?</p> <p>b) Will the site affect any other important habitat for the natural heritage?</p>								<p>a) Is any part of the site inside or likely to affect the designation (SAC, SPA, SSSI, NNR, Ramsar) or Local Nature Conservation Site?</p> <p>b) Is any part of the site within or likely to affect non-statutory features identified as being of nature conservation importance e.g. Ancient, Semi-Natural or Long-Established Woodland Inventory sites, priority BAP habitats, habitats</p>		<p>What mitigation measures should be implemented to avoid, reduce, remedy or compensate for any negative impact as a result of development?</p>	

				included on the Scottish Biodiversity List, non-designated habitats listed in Annex 1 of EC Habitats Directive?		
2	<p>a) Will the site affect any priority habitat or species?</p> <p>b) Will the site affect any other important species for the natural heritage?</p>			<p>a) Will the site affect any European Protected Species, Badgers and species (birds, animals and plants) protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended? If such a species may be present on or near to the site, a survey should be carried out to inform this assessment (for which a licence from SNH may be required). Will the site avoid the introduction or spread of non-native species?</p> <p>b) Will the site affect species listed in the UK and Local BAPs, the Scottish Biodiversity List and relevant annexes of the EC Habitats Directive?</p>		
3	<p>a) Will the site affect the present green network of the area?</p>			<p>a) Will the site affect features that currently provide for the movement of species and/or people e.g. woodland, hedgerows, field margins, watercourses, coastlines, tree belts, greenspace?</p>		

	b) Will the site provide opportunities to enhance the present green network of the area?			b) Will connectivity of natural features or open space and paths used for public amenity be improved? Will existing fragmentation of habitats and open spaces be improved? Will species be enabled to move where at present there is an obstacle?		
4	Will it provide opportunities for people to come into contact with and appreciate nature/natural environments?			Is the site close to (within 1.5km) an opportunity to come into contact with nature/natural environments e.g. Local Nature Reserves, local greenspace, green networks? Are there proposals which will increase opportunities to come into contact with nature/natural environments?		
5	Will the site involve "off site" road improvements that will contribute to road safety?			Is the site likely to improve the local road network such junctions or crossings?		
6	Is there scope for road safety measures as part of the development of the site?			Will development incorporate on-site traffic calming measures (e.g. speed bumps) or street lighting? Will the site allow for open space to become more accessible to all?		
7	Is the site near any			Will the site be negatively affected		

	existing “bad neighbour” uses?			by any neighbouring use? (bad neighbour uses include those that affect residential property by way of fumes, vibration, noise, artificial lighting etc). Is the site affected by any of the Physical Constraints identified in the Council’s Physical Constraints: Supplementary Guidance?		
8	Are there any contaminated land issues affecting the site?			Are you aware if the site has been previously used for industrial or any other uses likely to cause contaminations?		
9	<p>a) Will the site safeguard any existing open space within the area?</p> <p>b) Will the site enable high quality open space to be provided within the area?</p> <p>c) Will the site allow for open space to become more accessible</p>			Will the site have any impact on useable public open space (such as parks, playing fields etc) or any opportunities to create additional public open space?		

	for all?				
10	<p>a) Will the site affect any core paths or right of way?</p> <p>b) Will the site affect any other existing paths or outdoor access opportunities?</p> <p>c) Will the allocation provide new access opportunities within the site and linking to the path network beyond the site?</p>			<p>a) Is a diversion of a core path or right of way required? Will there be any impact on the usability of a core path or right of way?</p> <p>b) Will it affect an existing path in the Highland Path Record? Will it provide additional access opportunities or adversely affect access opportunities afforded by the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003?</p> <p>c) Will new paths be created within and beyond the site? Will any existing paths be improved e.g. to increase accessibility to a wider range of users? Will the site help to realise priorities identified in the Council's outdoor access strategy or aspirational paths identified in the core path plans?</p>	
11	<p>a) Is the site on derelict, vacant or other land that has previously been used?</p>			<p>a) Has the site been identified in Scottish Government's Vacant and Derelict Land Survey (which can be found here: http://scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/01/26135819/0) or has the</p>	

	b) Is the site on greenfield land?		land got an existing use? b) Will the site be located on presently undeveloped land e.g. presently or capably used for agriculture, forestry or amenity purposes?		
12	Will the site have an impact on geodiversity of the area?		Are you aware if the site lies within or adjacent to an un-notified Geological Conservation Review site or Local Geodiversity Site? (or other site with geodiversity value e.g. distinctive landforms, areas with natural processes, rock exposures for study?)		
13	Will soil quality and capability of the site be adversely affected?		Will the site result in a loss of soil due to development or removal of good quality soil from the site? Is the site on land identified as Prime Quality Agricultural Land?		
14	Is the site on peatland?		Is the site within or functionally connected to an area of peatland? Would the allocation involve the disturbance of peat? If yes, how would impacts on peatland be avoided or minimised? Would any tree felling be required?		
15	Will the site have any affect on the		Does the site represent a significant loss of quality inbye crofting land or		

	viability of a crofting unit?			common grazing land?		
16	Will the site offer opportunities for sustainable waste management?			Will the waste produced by the site be minimised and processed close to source in a sustainable way? Is there adequate space for kerbside collection or recycling facilities?		
17	Will development of the site result in the need for changes in land form and level? If yes, how will soil and drainage issues be addressed?			Will there be any change in rate, quantity, quality of surface water run-off and groundwater on or off site? If so, will these affect priority habitats, especially blanket bog?		
18	Is there a watercourse, loch or sea within or adjacent to the site? If yes, how will the water environment be protected from development?			Will there be any culverting, diversion or channelling of existing watercourses? Is there any opportunity to leave the water environment in its natural state or to restore it to its natural state?		
19	Can the site be connected to the public water and sewerage system?			Can the site be connected at reasonable cost? If not, what alternative is proposed?		

20	Will the site have any impact upon local air quality?			Is the site near areas of employment or close to public transport? Such developments are less likely to result in additional traffic which may contribute to air pollution.		
21	Is any part of the site at risk from fluvial or coastal flooding as shown on SEPA's flood map or from local knowledge?			Are you aware of any part of the site being within the 1 in 200 year flood risk contour as identified by SEPA? (which can be found here: http://www.sepa.org.uk/flooding/flood_risk_maps/view_the_map.aspx) Will natural drainage or SUDS be utilised? Can the site be developed while safeguarding or other sites from flooding?		
22	Will the site affect or be affected by coastal erosion or natural coastal processes?			This will be noted on any relevant shoreline management plan.		
23	Is the site proposed to provide any form of renewable energy?			For example, will the site provide or be capable of providing a district heating system, solar panels or a wind turbine?		
24	Is the site sheltered from the			Will development make best use of the site in terms of energy		

	prevailing wind and does it have a principal aspect between SW and SE?			efficiency?		
25	Will the site encourage and enable provision for active travel (walking, cycling and public transport use)?			- Is any part of the site within 400m straight line distance of any community/commercial building? or will development provide a community/commercial building within walking distance of existing residential areas? - Are there opportunities to create new walking/cycling routes or improve existing routes?		
26	Does the site provide an opportunity for you to provide a financial contribution towards encouraging more sustainable travel patterns?			For example, can a subsidy to a local bus route be provided?		
27	Will the site affect a conservation area?			Is the site inside or likely to affect the character of a confirmed Conservation Area?		
28	Will the site impact			Is there a listed building or a part of		

	on any listed building and/or its setting?			the setting "area" of a listed building within the site?		
29	Will the site affect a site identified in the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes?			Is any part of the site inside the outer boundary of an Inventory "entry" or will the site affect the setting of an "entry"?		
30	Will the site affect and locally important archaeological sites identified in the Historic Environment Record?			Does the site contain any features identified in the HER? If yes, will the site affect the feature?		
31	Will the site impact on an Scheduled Ancient Monument and/or its setting?			Is there any SAM within the site boundary or will a SAM be affected?		
32	Will the site affect the distinctiveness and special qualities of the present landscape character or affect any landscape designations?			Does the site fit with the guidance within the relevant Landscape Capacity Assessment (if available)? Will the site result in the removal of valued landscape features or negatively affect any key views? Is it located within or would otherwise affect a National Scenic Area or		

				Special Landscape Area, having regard to their special qualities?		
33	Will the site have a significant impact on the local landform?			Can the site (including access) be developed without significant re-contouring etc.? Will access tracks and parking areas have significant cut and fill? Will the site avoid being visually intrusive or impacting on scenic views?		
34	Will the site affect any areas with qualities of wildness (that is land in its original natural state?)			Are you aware if the site is inside or likely to affect an area of Wild Land? (These areas are identified on Map 3 of SNH's Policy Statement, Wildness in Scotland's Countryside) and areas of Remote Coast identified by the Council, or an area of wildness identified in the draft Wild Land Supplementary Guidance?		
35	Is the site within the current settlement boundary?			Is the site within any identified settlement boundary in the Local Plan? Is it allocated for any uses?		
36	Will the site have an impact on light pollution levels?			Is it likely that the Council policy likely will require street lighting at this location? Are there proposals for floodlighting on the site?		