



Scottish Natural Heritage Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba

All of nature for all of Scotland
Nàdar air fad airson Alba air fad

Simon Hindson
The Highland Council
Planning and Development Service
Glenurquhart Road
Inverness
IV3 5NX

Sent via Scottish Government SEA Gateway – SEA.gateway@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Our Ref: CNS/SEA/00793
11 January 2013

Dear Mr Hindson

Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005: The Highland Council - A Strategic Masterplan for Nairn South - Screening Determination

I refer to your screening consultation submitted on 20 December 2012 via the Scottish Government SEA Gateway in respect of the above plan.

In accordance with Section 9(3) of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, SNH has considered your screening report using the criteria set out in Schedule 2 for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment. We agree that the above Plan is not likely to have significant environmental effects.

Further comments are detailed in Annex 1. Annex 2 provides a list of information that would be helpful to receive at the scoping stage.

Please note that this consultation response provides a view solely on the potential for the plan or programme to have significant environmental effects. We cannot comment on whether or not the plan or programme meets other criteria determining the need for SEA as set out in the Act.



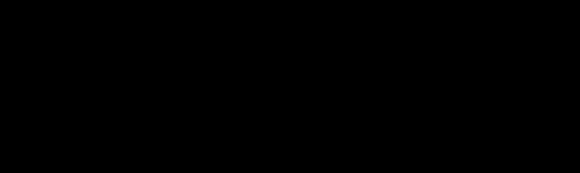
INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Scottish Natural Heritage, Fodderty Way, Dingwall Business Park, Dingwall, Ross-shire. IV15 9XB
Tel: 01349 865333 Fax: 01349 865609 Website: www.snh.gov.uk

Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba, Slighe Fodhraitidh, Pàirc Gnìomhachas Inbhir Pheofharain, Inbhir Pheofharain,
Siorrachd Rois. IV15 9XB
Fòn: 01349 865333 Facs: 01349 865609 Làrach-lìn: www.snh.gov.uk

Should you wish to discuss this screening determination, please do not hesitate to contact Nathan McLaughlan on Nathan.mclaughlan@snh.gov.uk or via SNH's SEA Gateway at sea.gateway@snh.gov.uk

Yours sincerely,



George Hogg
Area Manager, South Highland
George.hogg@snh.gov.uk

Ecopy: hssea.gateway@scotland.gsi.gov.uk ; sea_gateway@snh.gov.uk ;
sea.gateway@sepa.org.uk

ANNEX 1

CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING THE LIKELY SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment (1(a), 1(b) etc. refer to paragraphs in Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005)	Likely to have Significant environmental effects? YES/NO	Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)	SNH's Assessment under Section 9(3) Yes/No/ Unknown	SNH's Comments and additional Information
1(a) the degree to which the PPS sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources	No	The strategic masterplan will refine and guide developments in line with the principles set out in the Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP). The development outlined in this document will happen in due course but by having this document it offers flexibility on timescale for delivery.	No	We agree with THC's summary.
1(b) the degree to which the PPS influences other PPS including those in a hierarchy	No	The strategic masterplan is influenced by the HwLDP and it will be a key factor in delivering development outlined by this development framework. It is considered that this strategic masterplan may influence the Nairn South related content of the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan in due course, albeit this is likely to be limited.	No	We agree with THC's summary.

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment (1(a), 1(b) etc. refer to paragraphs in Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005)	Likely to have Significant environmental effects? YES/NO	Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)	SNH's Assessment under Section 9(3) Yes/No/Unknown	SNH's Comments and additional Information
1(c) the relevance of the PPS for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	No	The strategic masterplan will accord with the policies of the HwLDP which promote sustainable development.	No	We agree with THC's summary. We recommend the Green Network Supplementary Guidance is applied to this development and, as per the HwLDP, that access provision is fully integrated with the neighbouring proposals.
1(d) environmental problems relevant to the PPS	No	The key environmental constraints on the site have been identified through the SEA of the HwLDP and the appropriate mitigation from this will be brought through into the strategic masterplan.	No	We agree with THC's summary. Protected species should also be taken into account as per the general policies set out in the HwLDP. THC badger policy guidance note should be applied to this development.

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment (1 (a), 1 (b) etc. refer to paragraphs in Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005)	Likely to have Significant environmental effects? YES/NO	Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)	SNH's Assessment under Section 9(3) Yes/No/Unknown	SNH's Comments and additional Information
1(e) the relevance of the PPS for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, PPS linked to waste management or water protection)	No	It is not anticipated that the strategic masterplan will be relevant in this respect.	No	We agree with THC's summary.
2 (a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	Yes/No	The strategic masterplan will propose a mix of uses in this area, predominantly housing but some other uses including community, and business. With this in mind there will be long term non-reversible effects on the area, however these can be mitigated through application of policies contained within the development plan.		We agree with THC's summary.
2 (b) the cumulative nature of the effects	No	It is unlikely that the cumulative effect of development in this area will lead to a significant effect on the environment. However through application of policies in the HwLDP and mitigation which will be included in the strategic masterplan (taken from the HwLDP SEA) any environmental effect will be minimal.	No	We agree with THC's summary.

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment (1(a), 1(b) etc. refer to paragraphs in Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005)	Likely to have Significant environmental effects? YES/NO	Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)	SNH's Assessment under Section 9(3) Yes/No/Unknown	SNH's Comments and additional Information
2 (c) transboundary nature of the effects (i.e. environmental effects on other EU Member States)	No	N/A	No	We agree with THC's summary.
2 (d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)	No	The strategic masterplan will play a role in protecting and enhancing human health in the area, however it is not anticipated that there will be a significant effect.	No	We agree with THC's summary.
2 (e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	No	The strategic masterplan will apply to one specific area of Nairn. Development of this area is a key part of the spatial strategy for Nairn and the Inner Moray Firth and if not delivered may lead to impacts on development areas outwith the scope of this masterplan.	No	We agree with THC's summary.
2 (f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to- (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or (iii) intensive land-use.	No	This strategic masterplan will lead to promotion of development in an area which is mainly undeveloped at present. There are a number of natural, built and cultural heritage designations around the strategic masterplan area however it is anticipated that through application of mitigation measures identified in both the Highland-wide Local	No	We agree with THC's summary.

2 (g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status	No	Development Plan and the emerging Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan, and through the preparation of the strategic masterplan itself, any potential impacts on these features can be mitigated.	No	We agree with THC's summary.
---	----	---	----	------------------------------

ANNEX 2

COMMENTS ON INFORMATION HELPFUL AT THE SCOPING STAGE

In making scoping requests, Responsible Authorities are encouraged to provide the following information:

1 **Context**

a **The Plan**

- Plan name, area covered, period covered, timescales for preparation
- Legal requirement for plan
- Plan purpose, subject and proposed objectives
- Relationship with other relevant Plans and Programmes

b **The Area**

- Summary of existing environmental problems in the area/sector covered by the plan or programme and relevant aspects of the current state of the environment
- Summary of likely future changes to environment without the plan
- Environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected by the plan or programme
- Relationship with existing environmental objectives relevant to the plan or programme. These may be European objectives set by Directives, national objectives set by legislation or policy, or they may be local/regional objectives

2. **Scope**

a **Scope and Level of Detail**

- Summary of the environmental issues to be considered in the Environmental Report with justifications
- Summary of any environmental issues not to be considered in the Environmental Report with justifications
- Summary of the proposed level of detail of assessment – e.g. will the assessment focus on very detailed policies in the plan, or just strategic objectives?

b **Alternatives & Mitigation**

- Where possible, a summary of intended approach to assessing alternatives (e.g. type and scale of alternatives that may be assessed)
- Where possible, the proposed approach for identification of mitigation

3. **Methods**

a **Assessment Method**

- A brief summary of the proposed approach to the assessment which might include:
 - Summary of existing work to date
 - Proposed (draft) SEA objectives
 - Proposed approach to assessment including use of SEA objectives
 - Proposed (draft) indicators

4. **Next Steps**

a **Consultation**

- Proposed consultation period for the Environmental Report