Inverness West Link Design Project
Strategic Environmental Assessment
Cover Note

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or

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PART 2

An Environmental Report is attached for [name of PPS]:

Inverness West Link Design Project

The Responsible Authority is:

The Highland Council

PART 3

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PART 4

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Date	17/11/2011

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Non-technical summary

This Environmental Report will be available for public comment and comment from the Consultation Authorities between 23/11/2011 and 16/01/2012. All comments must be received by 5pm on 16/01/2012.

You can make comment on this Strategic Environmental Assessment – Environmental Report by:

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What is the Purpose and/or objectives of the Inverness West Link Design Project
The purpose of this design project is to consider the options for the delivery of a river and canal crossing to the south east of Inverness to be used as a distributor road.

It has a relationship with a number of other plans but those which are most relevant include:

- The Highland Local Transport Strategy;
- The Highland wide Local Development Plan; and
- The Highland Council's Programme.

What is the state of the current environment?
General
The design project will cover an area of approximately 4 square kilometres and is an area which is, at present, largely undeveloped. The wider area which may be impacted by the development is the City of Inverness which has a population of 60,890 (2009 mid-year estimates).

Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna
The River Moriston Special Area of Conservation (SAC) although located approximately 35km to the south is also a relevant consideration due to the Atlantic salmon which carry the Freshwater pearl mussel which are the qualifying feature of the River Moriston SAC passing through the area where the crossing is proposed.

There is some Long established Woodland of Plantation Origin within the site area which indicates that there maybe an area of habitat value in the vicinity.

There are potentially a number of priority habitats in the UK BAP ('UK') or Inverness & Nairn LBAP ('Local') located within the site area. Equally there are a number of important species and protected species which may be present in the area.

The most diverse and highest quality semi-natural broad-leaved woodland is found at Whin Island by the River Ness, especially near and at the river's edge.

A Phase 1 habitat survey and a badger survey of the study area has been undertaken.

Human Health
Information from the census is one of the best simple measures we have of the health of our population. In the area which is to be affected by this project the percentage of total with a long term limiting illness is 16.3% this is below the 18.4% of average in Highland as a whole.

It is considered likely that the dominant noise source in the area is road traffic, in particular on the A82 to the north and the B862 to the south, onto which the proposed scheme connects. Other potentially significant noise sources include activities on the River Ness and Caledonian Canal, the

various sporting activities at Queens Park and industrial activities located between the B862 and the River Ness.

Soil
The Torvean Landforms is a geological Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and is noted for its Quaternary of Scotland feature. No Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS) have been identified close to the West Link.

Water
The quality of the freshwater environment is also recognised internationally for its importance as a spawning ground for wild salmon and use by whisky distilleries. The many lochs and rivers that characterise the area are important for local economies and provide the scenic backdrop that encourages so many tourists to the area. The River Ness which runs through the area is classed as "Good" by SEPA and the Caledonian Canal is classed as "Good Ecological Potential (Artificial)" in terms of water quality. There are two other man made water bodies within the vicinity of the project area, Loch Na Sanais, Whin Park Pond and Golf Course pond.

With regard to flooding it is noted that the SEPA Indicative River and Coastal Flood Map (Scotland) shows some flooding along the channel of the River in the vicinity of the Mill / Timber Yard on the southern bank, at Canal Park on the northern bank and also at Ness-side House on the eastern bank. A specific flood risk assessment is being carried out for the proposed scheme

Air
Highland region is not affected by air pollution from extensive road networks and heavy industries as in other parts of Scotland. In the City of Inverness there are no Air Management Areas however there are some areas where air quality is becoming a problem, these are very localised to the City Centre (due to fumes from buses) and in Telford Street (solid fuel burning).

Climatic Factors
Transportation is one of the main contributors to climate change due to emissions of carbon dioxide (CO_2). High levels of CO_2 and other 'greenhouse gases' in the atmosphere are thought to accelerate the earth's natural warming. This warming is predicted to have a variety of environmental consequences including increased frequency and severity of storm events, as well as rises in sea level. Changes in rainfall patterns could lead to increased erosion and pollution associated with surface run-off.

Material Assets
The area covered by the study contains no significant material assets as the natural resources present have largely been utilised in the development of the City. There are a number of core paths which run through the site which may be affected by the provision of a river and canal crossing (some negatively, some positively).

Cultural Heritage
There are a number of Scheduled Monuments within the immediate and wider study area, these include;

- Caledonian Canal , Dochgarroch Lock – Muirtown Lock (including Tomnahurich Swing Bridge)
- Torvean Motte, and
- Holm House.
- There are also a number of listed buildings nearby.

Tomnahurich Cemetery Garden and Designed Landscape lies on the edge of the project area to the northeast. This major 19th and 20th century public cemetery adds significant landscape value to the city of Inverness and the study area. It consists of an extensive series of sculptured monuments and plantations, with views of Tomnahurich Hill.

The Inverness (Riverside) Conservation Area is in the south east of the project area, to the south of the rugby club grounds and extends across the river.

The Highland Historic Environment Record identifies a number of features within the study area.

Landscape
The area within which the corridor is located is covered by the SNH Inverness District Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) 1999 (No. 114). The corridor is within the 'Inverness Urban Area' Character Type but straddles two sub- types: the 'Suburban Fringe' (3.11b) and the 'River Ness and Canal' (3.11c).

The adjacent Tomnahurich Cemetery is included in the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland.

What might happen if the Inverness West Link Design Project was not implemented?
Without the Inverness West Link Design Project it is considered that the likely future changes to the area will be:

- Limited opportunity for development leading to faster expansion of the city rather than first consolidating the city which may lead to an adverse impact on the environment;
- Given the growth around the city there will be an increase in traffic wishing to cross the city. Without a solution brought forward through the Inverness West Link Design Project this may lead to a decrease in air quality in the City Centre;
- Limited opportunity to improve active travel connections across the city, making Inverness a more walkable/bikeable city.

There would also be significant repercussions in terms of social and economic however this is outwith the scope of the SEA process.

What are the current environmental problems?
A number of problems have been identified and are contained in the body of the report however they can be summarised as:

- The potential exists for European protected species and other protected species on the site to be affected.
- Risk of habitat loss and fragmentation due to culverting of water courses.
- Increasing population, increases traffic in and around the City leading to congestion at peak times.
- Loss of recreational access.
- Impacts on important geological features
- Potential for adverse impacts on the water environment during construction works.
- Increased emissions.
- Climate change impacts.
- Poor cross city travel links
- Risk of impact on cultural heritage features.
- Any new development will have an affect on landscape character.

Assessing the options
There have been 9 different options assessed. These are shown on drawings in Appendix 2. Following discussion with the Consultation Authorities we have assessed each of these options against the following SEA topics and objectives:

SEA Topic	SEA Objective
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	1. Maintain and enhance designated wildlife sites, biodiversity, valuable habitats and protected species, avoiding irreversible losses.
Soil	2. Protect and enhance important geological features.
Cultural Heritage	3. Protect and, where appropriate,

	enhance the cultural heritage.
Landscape	4. Value and protect the diversity and local distinctiveness of landscapes.
Population and Human Health	5. Maintain and enhance active travel and recreational access opportunities within the wider area.

You can find the full assessment results in Appendix 4 and below we have identified the significant affects before any mitigation is carried out:

It is anticipated that **Option 1** may have a significant negative affects on landscape and positive significant affects on Population and Human Health.

It is anticipated that **Option 2** may significant negative affects on Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna and landscape but significant positive affects on Population and Human Health.

It is anticipated that **Option 3** may have no significant affects.

It is anticipated that **Option 4** may have significant negative affects on biodiversity, flora and fauna but no significantly positive affects.

It is anticipated that **Option 5** may have significant negative affects on biodiversity, flora and fauna but no significantly positive affects.

It is anticipated that **Option 6** may have significant negative affects on biodiversity, flora and fauna and landscape buy significantly positive affects on Population and Human Health.

It is anticipated that **Option 7** may have significant negative affects on biodiversity, flora and fauna, Soils (geology), cultural heritage and landscape but no significantly positive affects.

It is anticipated that **Option 8** may have significant negative affects on biodiversity, flora and fauna, Soils (geology) and cultural heritage but no significantly positive affects.

It is anticipated that **Option 9** may have no significant affects.

How can these significant affects be minimised or maximised?
To minimise the significantly negative affects and maximise the significantly positive affects we have proposed mitigation measures. These are high level which can be built into the final design and construction of the chosen option. These are contained in the main body of the report but include:

- Fish Habitats survey to be carried out;
- Appropriate lighting of bridge;
- Compensatory planting where required;
- Archaeological survey work to be undertaken;
- Maximise active travel linkages;
- Avoid closure of canal/paths/trails for prolonged periods during construction.
- Consideration of bridge design to limit landscape impact.
- Appropriate design of bridge;
- Sensitive construction methods employed;
- Include mitigation such as badger/otter crossings
- Appropriate landscaping;
- Improve existing active travel links through the area;
- Sensitive micro-siting of an bridge piers to avoid impact on SSSI

Why have these options been assessed?
These options have been through a Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance exercise to consider their wider impacts on things such as land use plans, journey time and accessibility to local facilities. The Inverness West Link Design Process has previously been through public consultation (late 2010/early 2011) which identified an additional three options (6, 7, and 8) to be assessed from the original study.

How will we monitor its effectiveness?
The affect on the environment will be assessed alongside the overall monitoring of the effectiveness of the chosen option. We have suggested that in terms of the environment affects on the Soil, Biodiversity and Human Health should be closely monitored. This will be done using existing expertise in The Highland Council.

Introduction

Purpose of this Environmental Report and key facts

As part of the preparation of the Inverness West Link Design Project, The Highland Council is carrying out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). SEA is a systematic method for considering the likely environmental effects of certain PPS. SEA aims to:

- integrate environmental factors into PPS preparation and decision-making;
- improve PPS and enhance environmental protection;
- increase public participation in decision making; and
- facilitate openness and transparency of decision-making.

SEA is required by the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. The key SEA stages are:

Screening	determining whether the PPS is likely to have significant environmental effects and whether an SEA is required
Scoping	deciding on the scope and level of detail of the Environmental Report, and the consultation period for the report – this is done in consultation with Scottish Natural Heritage, The Scottish Ministers (Historic Scotland) and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency
Environmental Report	publishing an Environmental Report on the PPS and its environmental effects, and consulting on that report
Adoption	providing information on: the adopted PPS; how consultation comments have been taken into account; and methods for monitoring the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the PPS
Monitoring	monitoring significant environmental effects in such a manner so as to also enable the Responsible Authority to identify any unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage and undertake appropriate remedial action.

The purpose of this Environmental Report is to:

- provide information on the Inverness West Link Design Project;
- identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects of the PPS and its reasonable alternatives;
- provide an early and effective opportunity for the Consultation Authorities and the public to offer views on any aspect of this Environmental Report.

The key facts relating to Inverness West Link Design Project are set out in below.

Name of Responsible Authority

The Highland Council

Title

Inverness West Link Design Project

What prompted the Guidance
A detailed design of a river and canal crossing is required to ensure the road is delivered to facilitate a reduction in congestion within Inverness City Centre and the wider city area, including public transport and active travel improvements.

Subject

Transport

Period covered by Guidance

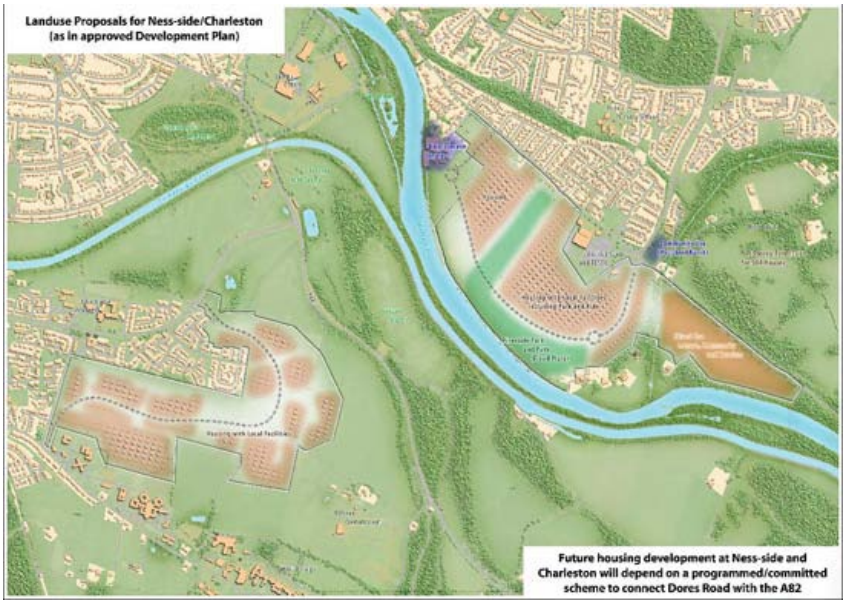
2011 onwards

Frequency of updates

As required

Area covered by Guidance

The area covered by the design project is shown in the map below:



Purpose and/or objectives of Guidance
The purpose of this design project is to consider the options for the delivery of a river and canal crossing to the south east of Inverness to be used as a distributor road.

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SEA activities to date

Table 1 below summarises the SEA activities to date in relation to the Inverness West Link Design Project

Table 1. SEA activities to date

SEA Action/Activity	When carried out	Notes (e.g. comment on data availability, particular issues or any advice from the Consultation Authorities that has now been taken into account)
screening to determine whether the PPS is likely to have significant environmental effects	*June 2011*	*Following comment from the Consultation Authorities it was determined that an SEA would be required on the 25th July 2011.*
scoping the consultation periods and the level of detail to be included in the Environmental Report	*July 2011*	*Following the responses to Screening from the Consulation Authorities a Scoping report was prepared throughout July 2011 and submitted to the SEA Gateway on 25th July 2011.*
Outline and objectives of the PPS	July 2011	
relationship with other PPS and environmental objectives	July 2011	
environmental baseline established	July 2011	
environmental problems identified	July 2011	
assessment of future of area without the PPS	September 2011	
alternatives considered	September 2011	
environmental assessment methods established	September 2011	
selection of PPS alternatives to be included in the environmental assessment	September 2011	
identification of environmental problems that may persist after implementation and measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and offset any significant adverse effects	September 2011	
monitoring methods proposed	September 2011	
consultation timescales • Timescale for Consultation Authorities • Timescale for public	September 2011	The timescales for delivery have been shortened therefore the consultation timescale has been reduced from 6 weeks to 4 weeks, following discussion with the consultation authorities.
notification/publicity action	November 2011	

Context

Outline and objectives of the Inverness West Link Design Project

Schedule 3 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires that the Environmental Report includes "*an outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan or programme*". The purpose of this section is to explain the nature, contents, objectives and timescale of the document.

The Highland Council have been examining several options for completing the section of road between the Dores Roundabout and the A82 at Torvean. A series of public meetings and exhibitions were held in the city at the various locations during December 2010.

This is a major project for Inverness, and the Council has been working with key partners including Transport Scotland (responsible for the trunk road network), British Waterways (responsible for the Caledonian Canal), Historic Scotland and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), to examine options for completing this section of road.

There is a need for a river and canal crossing in this location for the following reasons:

- To increase active travel;
- To reduce congestion in and around Inverness City Centre
- To unlock the development potential of land at both sides of the river and canal to help work towards the spataial strategy for Inverness.

A Strategic Transport Appraisal Guidance is being carried out for the options. This has 5 objectives:

- **Objective 1 (Land Use) :** integrate any interventions with the existing Highland Council land use development plans for the South West of Inverness (Ness Castle, Milton of Ness-side, Torvean and Charleston)
- **Objective 2 (Journey Time Reliability) :** maintain flows within capacity of existing transport network City Centre
- **Objective 3 (Modal Shift) :** improve the modal shares of more sustainable means of transport and encourage active travel
- **Objective 4 (Connectivity) :** reduce reliability on existing river and canal crossing points and reduce severance
- **Objective 5 (Deliverability) :** any interventions must be affordable and deliverable within the Council's Capital Programme for 2010 – 2017

The Inverness West Link Design Project will contain the following:

- Introduction
  - This will outline the purpose, aims, status and structure of the design project
- The options
  - This section will discuss each option in turn and how these solutions have been reached. This will include:
    - Summary of STAG appraisal;
    - Summary of environmental appraisal;
    - A potential land use framework (please note that this element of the document may lead to a future development brief).
- Delivery of the design
  - This section will focus on how the preferred solution could be delivered.
- Timescales

- This section will outline how long it may take to deliver the final solution or if appropriate further work that needs to be completed.

Once the document is approved for public consultation a 4 week consultation is envisaged. Following that all responses will be assessed and a preferred option will be brought forward into a design and build stage which will be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment as it falls into Schedule 2 of the Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Regulation 2011.

Relationship with other PPS and environmental protection objectives

Schedule 3 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires that the Environmental Report includes an outline of the PPS relationships with other relevant PPS, and how environmental protection objectives have been taken into account in the PPS preparation. This section covers these issues and describes the policy context within which the PPS operates, and the constraints and targets that this context imposes on the PPS.

Table 2 summarises how the Inverness West Link Design Project affects, and is affected by, other relevant PPS and environmental objectives.

Table 2. Relevant plans, programmes and strategies (PPS) and environmental protective objectives, and their relationship with the Inverness West Link Design Project

No.	Name of PPS/Environmental Protection objective	Objective/Requirements of PPS	How it affects or is affected by the Inverness West Link Design Project in terms of issues at Schedule 3 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005
International			
1	EC Directive on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (2001/42/EC)	The objective of this Directive is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development. Aims to identify and mitigate significant environment effects arising from certain plans and programmes.	The Directive requires that an SEA be carried out on documents such as this and an Environmental Report produced.
2	European Climate Change Programme (2005)	The European Commission's main instrument to discuss and prepare the further development of the European Union's climate policy. To identify and develop all the necessary elements on an EU strategy to deliver the EU Kyoto Protocol commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 8% below 1990 levels by 2008-2012.	The project should promote choice and raise awareness of the need for change; and aim to reduce the need to travel. The Council will promote active travel.
3	EC Directive establishing a framework for Community action in the Field of Water Policy Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)	The Water Framework Directive is designed to integrate the way we manage water bodies across Europe. It aims to protect and enhance our water environment, promote sustainable water consumption, reduce water pollution and lessen the effects of floods and droughts.	The Strategic Environment Assessment will consider the implications of the project on the water environment and how its can benefit the existing environment and reduce risk of flooding.
4	The Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development (2002)	Principles of international commitment to sustainable development reaffirmed. Aims to strengthen and improve Government at all levels to fulfil commitment to sustainable development.	The project will take into consideration the principles of sustainable development and seek to reflect these within the overarching objectives of the strategy and individual projects.
5	Agenda 21(1992)	Agenda 21 underlines the growing awareness of the need	The project will reflect the

		to adopt a balanced and integrated approach to environment and development issues. Agenda 21 contains a broad range of qualitative objectives that relate to sustainable development. These include a requirement for countries to adopt integrated strategies to ensure compliance with legislation relating to sustainable development, to promote the use of renewable energy systems and to build public environmental awareness.	principles of sustainable development, and will make reference to the Council's development policy planning guidance – Planning for Sustainability in the Highlands.
6	EC Directive On Public Access to Environmental Information (2003/4/EC)	Enforces the right of the public to view environmental information held by public authorities.	The Highland Council is required to ensure that all environmental information relating to the project is made available to the general public.
7	UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters. 'The Aarhus Convention' Adopted June 1998	Acknowledges the need for public participation in environmental issues and grants the public rights to access to justice and information on the environment.	Public involvement in the formulation of the project should be actively facilitated. Consultations should incorporate the views and suggestions of local residents, business groups, council representatives and government.
8	The Convention on Biological Diversity (1992)	International commitment to maintaining the world's biodiversity. Three main goals established – the conservation of biological diversity; the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits from the use of genetic resources. Requirement for each country who has signed the declaration to develop national strategies, plans or programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.	Adequate consideration of impacts affecting biodiversity with support for more detailed assessment at the local level where appropriate will be recommended.
9	The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat 'The Ramsar Convention' Adopted February 1971	An international treaty that provides the framework for national and international co-operation for the conservation of wetlands primarily to provide a habitat for birds.	The project must recognise the legal status of any 'Ramsar' protected site and reflect its ecological importance in its biodiversity objectives.
10	EU Soil Thematic Strategy (Consultation stage)	The emerging Soil Strategy aims to reduce soil pollution, erosion, compaction and sealing of soil. It also aims to protect the role of soil in storing CO2, avoiding water pollution and preserving biodiversity. Protection of the sustainable production of food and renewable resources is a further aim.	The project could highlight soil protection as an issue and implicates soil degradation as a forthcoming issue in relation to land use.
11	European Landscape Convention (2000)	Promotes the protection, management and planning of European landscapes and organises European co-operation on landscape issues.	The Convention directs the way in which European designated landscapes issues should be taken into consideration.
12	EC Air Quality Framework Directive	Sets new air quality standards for previously unregulated air pollutants. Includes sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, particulate matter, lead and ozone pollutants.	The project should consider the strategic approach to air quality in Highland.
13	European	Promotes the conservation and sustainable use of	The project should be

	Biodiversity Framework	biodiversity, emphasising education, training and awareness raining, species identification, monitoring and exchange of information.	implemented with regard to the Biodiversity Duty that is stated in the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004
14	European Framework on Sustainable Development	Promotes coherent and cost-effective policy making; technological innovation; stronger involvement in civil society; and business in policy formation. Strategies for Sustainable Economic support progress in respect of the local environment.	The project will promote efficient resource use, and sustainable travel through a number of the topics. Sustainable development would be considered a cross cutting theme.
14	European Spatial Development Perspective	Emphasises the importance of achieving, equally throughout the EU, economic and social cohesion, as well as the conservation and management of natural resources and cultural heritage. It stresses more balanced competitiveness of the European Community.	This will influences the delivery of all of the Objectives of the project.
15	Kyoto Protocol (1992)	United Nations international treaty on climate change. The Protocol entered into force in February 2005. Developed countries that have ratified the Protocol are committed to reducing their emissions of greenhouse gases. Commitment signed by 38 countries (plus the EU) to introduce legally binding targets to limit or reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 5% of 1990 levels in the period 2008-2012. The UK has committed to an 8% reduction.	The project will take account of targets of reducing CO2 emissions and consider measures to reduce the need to travel and promote more sustainable and active forms of transport.
16	Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC	The Water Framework Directive is designed to integrate the way we manage water bodies across Europe. It aims to protect and enhance our water environment, promote sustainable water consumption, reduce water pollution and lessen the effects of floods and droughts.	In terms of degradation of water quality the project will make reference to the guidance in The Council's Designing for Sustainability in the Highlands.
17	The Convention on Biological Diversity (1992)	The objectives of this Convention, to be pursued in accordance with its relevant provisions, are the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and by appropriate transfer of relevant technologies, taking into account all rights over those resources and to technologies, and by appropriate funding. Its short-term aim is to significantly reduce global biodiversity loss by 2010.	The project should be implemented with regard to the Biodiversity Duty that is stated in the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004
18	EC Directive on the Assessment and Management of Flood Risks - 2007/60/EC	requires Member States to assess if all water courses and coast lines are at risk from flooding, to map the flood extent and assets and humans at risk in these areas and to take adequate and coordinated measures to reduce this flood risk.	The project will ensure due regard is given to flood risk.
19	EU Thematic Strategy on Air Pollution (2005)	sets objectives for reducing certain pollutants and reinforces the legislative framework for combating air pollution via two main routes: improving Community environmental legislation and integrating air quality concerns into related policies.	The project will take this strategy into consideration when assessing any impact on air quality.
20	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992)	achieve stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. Such a level should be achieved within a time frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a	The project will consider the role it has to play with regard to climate change esp. Reduction of greenhouse gases.

		sustainable manner.	
21	EU Wild Birds Directive (79/409/EEC)	Protection scheme for all of Europe's wild birds, identifying 194 species and sub-species. Provides a framework for the conservation of wild birds in Europe. The Directive requires the identification of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) to conserve rare or vulnerable species. Aims to sustain populations of naturally occurring wild birds by sustaining areas of habitats in order to maintain populations at ecologically and scientifically sound levels.	Adequate consideration will be given to the impacts affecting biodiversity, with support for more detailed assessment at the local level where appropriate. The project must ensure that the ecological value of important SPAs is not undermined.
22	EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EC)	Aims to ensure biodiversity by conserving natural habitats of wild flora and fauna. It requires Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) to be identified which form a network of protected areas called Natura 2000 along with SPAs. Projects are only permitted on such sites under exceptional circumstances. Also aims to maintain, or restore, in a favourable condition designated natural types and habitats of designated species.	Ensure that the project is mindful of the list of sites of the natural habitats and species and take appropriate steps to avoid the deterioration of these habitats and avoid disturbance of scheduled, scarce or rare species. Ensure that schemes pursuant to the project do not result in damage to special areas of conservation.
23	SE Circular EU Habitats and Birds Directive (2000)	EU Nature conservation policy is based on two main pieces of legislation – the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive. Its priorities are to create the European ecological network (of special areas of conservation) called NATURA 2000, and to integrate nature protection requirements into other EU policies such as agriculture, regional development and transport.	The Local authority should be aware of the NATURA 2000 sites and protect the setting of these areas from unsympathetic development through the creation of the project.
24	European Commission Transport White Paper – European Transport Policy for 2010: Time to Decide (2001)	The Commission proposes some 60 measures aimed at developing a European transport system capable of shifting the balance between modes of transport, revitalising the railways, promoting transport by sea and inland waterways and controlling the growth in air transport.	The document will have due regard to the measures contained within this paper.
25	EU Urban Transport Green Paper: Clean Urban Transport (2007)	The objective of this paper is to enhance mobility while at the same time reducing congestion, accidents and pollution in European cities.	The document will have due regard to the provisions of this green paper.
26	Biofuels Directive 2003/30/EC	Lays the foundation for the promotion of alternative fuels in the EU. In particular, it specifies that Member States should ensure that a minimum share of biofuels and other renewable fuels is placed on the market, and, to that effect, shall set national indicative targets.	The document will have due regard to the provisions of the directive.
27	Schedules 2 (animals) and 4 (plants) of the Habitats Regulations 1994	These schedules list the protected species of animals and plants which are protected by European legislation.	The document will have consideration to the protection of these species of animals and plants if found to be present in the area.
National			
28	SEA Good Practice Guidelines (ODPM) 2005	The guidelines are designed to assist practitioners responsible for plans and programmes requiring SEA, explain the role of the Environment Agency in the process and promote good practice approaches.	The Council will use these guidelines to inform how best to carry out an environmental assessment on qualifying plans and programmes.
29	Forestry Commission (2004) The UK Forestry	The two central aims of the Standard are: - The sustainable management of our existing woods and forests; and	The project will consider the implications for any areas of semi-natural and amenity

	Standard: The Government's Approach to Sustainable Forestry	- A steady expansion of tree cover to increase the many diverse benefits that forests provide.	woodland in the project area.
30	Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended)1981	This Act is the principle mechanism for the legislative protection of wildlife in Great Britain. Schedule 1 (birds which are protected by special penalties), 5 (Birds which may be killed or taken) and 8 (Plants which are protected) lists species protected at a UK level.	There are a number of designated sites in the area. The project should recognise their statutory importance and strive to ensure their qualifying interests are adequately protected.
31	UK Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996	Offers protection for rare wild mammals throughout the UK, including species such as red squirrels, bats and otters.	The project will consider the location of habitats when assessing the options for the project.
32	UK The Protection of Badgers Act 1992	UK legislation offering specific protection to badgers and their setts. It is an offence to wilfully kill, injure or mistreat a badger. Their setts are also protected from obstruction, destruction, damage and, when active, disturbance. Any work within 30 metres of a badger sett may require a licence from SNH, and if destruction of the sett is unavoidable, a licence will definitely be required from SNH beforehand.	Badger habitats will be considered when assessing options for the project.
33	UK Climate Change Act	The UK Climate Change Act sets a target of 60% $C0_2$ reduction by 2050.	The project will take a strategic view on how the project can contribute.
34	UK Biodiversity Action Plan 1995 and 1999	It is the UK Government's response to the Convention on Biological Diversity signed in 1992. It describes the UK's biological resources and commits the government to a detailed plan for the protection of these resources. It currently has 391 Species Action Plans, 45 Habitat Action Plans and 162 Local Biodiversity Action Plans with targeted actions, a major review of the Priority Species and Habitats are underway, and will be completed in late 2008.	The project should be implemented with regard to the Biodiversity Duty that is stated in the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004
35	Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (2000 – amended 2003)	Describes the plans drawn up by the Government and devolved administrations to improve and protect ambient air quality in the UK in the medium-term. Standards set for 8 main air pollutants of particular concern to human health: - Benzene; - 1,3-butadiene; - Carbon Monoxide; - Lead; - Nitrogen Dioxide; - Ozone; - Particles (PM10); and - Sulphur Dioxide Local authorities are charged with drawing up their own strategies to tackle the air quality objectives in their areas. Standards are to be achieved between 2003 and 2008. The standards are purely health based and objectives are to be derived from these, taking account practically, technical feasibility, and economic factors.	The project will have regard to the implications of different policies on air quality and promote measures which reduce the need to travel and encourage the development and uptake of more sustainable options. The project should seek to ensure that air pollution within the area is managed and where possible, steps are taken to alleviate air quality problems.
Scotland National			
40	The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005	The Act ensures that during the preparation of a qualifying plan or programme, there will be the carrying out of an environmental assessment. The SEA process that should be followed by a responsible authority is also	The Council will follow the procedure outlined in the Act when carrying out an environment assessment on

		outlined.	a plan or programme.
41	Scottish Executive et al (2005) Securing the Future. The UK's shared framework for sustainable development	Sets out the guiding principles that have to be adhered to in order to achieve the goal of sustainable development. The following principles set out the framework for all sustainable development policy within the UK: - Living within environmental limits - Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society - Achieving a sustainable economy - Promoting good governance - Using sound science responsibly	The project should adhere to the five principles in order that all policies are sustainable. The emphasis within the strategy is on balancing all aspects of sustainability, and this should be considered within the project.
42	Scottish Executive: Choosing Our Future Scotland's Sustainable Development Strategy (2005)	This document sets out the action that will be taken in Scotland to turn the shared priorities set out in the UK Framework for sustainable development into action. It has six key priorities; sustainable consumption and production, climate change and energy, natural resource protection and environmental enhancement, sustainable communities, learning to live differently and delivery.	The project will take account of objectives relating to sustainable development. Measures for reducing the need to travel and a shift to active and public transport will positively contribute to these indicators.
43	Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003	Part 1 of the Act introduces: - statutory right of responsible access; - reciprocal obligation on owners to manage their land responsibly; - places a duty on local authorities to uphold access rights and to maintain core paths; Part 2 introduces: - community's right to buy Part 3 introduces: - crofting community right to buy	The project needs to be aware of community land ownership and liaise with communities in order to assess if there are any allocations that may be required for the community's benefit. The project will also take into account local paths that need to be maintained, improved and safeguarded from development.
44	Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006	Act of the Scottish Parliament to make further provision relating to town and country planning; to make provision for business improvement districts; and for connected purposes.	The project will be produced using the guidance set out in this Act and also the secondary legislation of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Development Planning) Regulations 2009.
45	Scottish Outdoor Access Code (2003)	The Scottish Outdoor Access Code, which aims to support the access provisions of the Land Reform Act, is based on three key principles: - respect the interests of other people - care for the environment - take responsibility for your own actions	The project should contribute to the development of core path networks alongside the core path plan. The project will identify paths that play a key part in a green framework.
46	Scotland's Biodiversity (2004) It's In Your Hands. A Strategy for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in Scotland	Vision: 'It's 2030: Scotland is recognised as a world leader in biodiversity conservation. Everyone is involved; everyone benefits. The nation is enriched' Objectives: - conserve what we have - sustain healthy ecosystems - create networks and connections - engage more people - promote sustainable development The strategy also underlines the need to promote understanding and appreciation of natural heritage.	Sets out the overall approach to biodiversity conservation and enhancement which the project should contribute towards. The project should identify key species and habitats, and give adequate consideration to the impacts affecting biodiversity with support for more detailed assessment at the local level where appropriate.
47	Scottish Historical Environment Policy (2008) (HS)	The Scottish Historic Environment Policy sets out Scottish Ministers' policies, providing direction for Historic Scotland and a policy framework that informs the work of a wide range of public sector organisations.	The project will take into consideration the SHEP when built and cultural heritage of the study area.

48	The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended)	Under the Regulations, competent authorities i.e. any Minister, government department, public body, or person holding public office, have a general duty, in the exercise of any of their functions, to have regard to the EC Habitats Directive.	The project will have regard to the EC Habitats Directive.
49	Scottish Executive (2001) Potential Adaptation Strategies for Climate Change in Scotland	Identifies a full range of potential adaptation strategies for Scotland, including those specifically relating to agriculture, forestry, fishing and biodiversity. Emphasises the importance of flexible resource management and the need to move on from defining conservation objectives on the basis of single species or fixed locations as these may no longer be achievable. The strategy notes that: 'the fragmented and often overlapping nature of policies for forestry, agriculture and biodiversity impedes appropriate adaptation strategies. In the medium-term, drivers of change from agriculture, from mitigating greenhouse gas emissions, from sustainability issues and from the protection of biodiversity may lead to a blurring and perhaps complete removal of the distinctions between policies for forestry, agriculture and biodiversity.'	The project will take account of the Scottish share and consider measures from the transport sector which would positively contribute to the targets, for example reducing the need to travel and encouraging modal shifts to more sustainable methods.
50	Scottish Executive (2003) Improving Health in Scotland The Challenge	Addresses wider health issues and aims to improve life expectancy. Also aims to reduce health inequalities between deprived and affluent people. Aims to 'mainstream' health policy so that it becomes an integral part of wider public sector policies. To achieve the required 1% annual increase, the strategy focuses on ensuring that physical activity is encouraged across the population as a whole, and targeting specific communities for basic changes in activity levels.	The project will take into account health related impacts of different strategies and seek to promote more active travel.
51	Water Environment and Water Services (Scotland) Act 2003 (WEWS)	The Act translates the EC Water Framework Directive into the Scottish context. It includes a number of key commitments relating to Scotland's water environment: • establishing River Basin Management districts; - preparing River Basin Management Plans - regulation of controlled activities (including those likely to cause pollution to the water environment, those involved in abstraction, and those from construction on or near water). The Act aims to prevent further deterioration of water quality and has given Scottish Ministers powers to introduce regulatory controls over activities in order to protect and improve Scotland's water environment. That is, wetlands, rivers, lochs, transitional waters (estuaries and saline lagoons), coastal waters and water under the ground (groundwater).	The project will reflect the Act in the development of adequate drainage systems. Future expansion of local water provision or abstraction and wastewater handling to cope with expected population increases will require close consultation with SEPA and Scottish Water.
52	The Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2005 (CAR)	Brings into effect the regulation of the following activities: • abstractions from surface and groundwater; • impoundment of rivers, lochs, wetlands and transitional waters; • groundwater recharge; - engineering in rivers, lochs and wetlands; - engineering activities in the vicinity of rivers, lochs and wetland which are likely to have a significant adverse impact upon the water environment; - activities liable to cause pollution; - direct or indirect discharge of certain substances to groundwater; and • any other activities which directly or indirectly are	The Regulations apply across the water environment to provide a holistic approach to pollution control and protection of the water environment. Any activities that may fall within the remit of these regulations will require close consultation with SEPA and the receipt of appropriate licences.

		liable to cause a significant impact upon the water environment.	
53	Flood Prevention and Land Drainage (Scotland) Act 1997	The introduction of the Flood Prevention and Land Drainage (Scotland) Act 1997 instigated changes to the responsibilities and duties of Local Authorities in Scotland. In respect of this Act the flooding referred to is the flooding of land, not being agricultural land. Flooding of agricultural land falls out with the requirements of the Act. The implications on The Highland Council of this Act impose the following additional requirements:- a) Assessment of watercourses, from time to time for the purpose of ascertaining whether any such watercourse is in a condition likely to flood. b) A duty to maintain watercourses, which are in a condition likely to cause flooding, or where works would substantially reduce the likelihood of such flooding. • Notification of Local Authorities out with the area. Where it appears to The Highland Council that any watercourse in the area is in a condition which is likely to cause flooding, out with the area, the Council shall notify the local authority for the area in which the land is situated. • Reports shall be published, at two year intervals.	The project should take account of flood plains and areas at risk of flooding from SEPA's flood risk maps.
54	Passed to the Future (2002) Historic Scotland Policy for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment	Sets out the Scottish Executive's policy for the sustainable management of the historic environment. It notes the irreplaceable nature of historic environment features, but also sets out the following key principles to guide the parameters in which change can take place: - recognising value – in terms of quality of life and as a means of meeting social, environmental and economic needs - good stewardship – taking into account capacity for change and the sustainable use of resources • assessing impact – following the precautionary principle where impact is not clear • working together – to reduce damage, resolve conflict and maximise benefit	The project should recognise the important role of the historic environment and acknowledge the need to work together with others to consider a balance between social, economic and environmental needs.
55	Scottish Executive Trunk Road Biodiversity Action Plan (TRBAP) (2000)	Sets the Scottish Executive's commitment to protecting Scottish biodiversity on the trunk road network. The purpose of the document is twofold: - to assist in the delivery of biodiversity targets and objectives as set down in the Scottish Local Biodiversity Action Plans. - to raise awareness of biodiversity in all engineers, managers, planners, designers and ecologists working on the Scottish Trunk Road network.	The project should take account of any recommendations and actions outlined within the Trunk Road Biodiversity Action Plan.
56	Scottish Climate Change Act	The aim of the Act is to establish a framework to enable more actions to reduce Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change.	The project will take into consideration the provisions of the act.
57	Meeting the Needs, Priorities, Actions and Targets for Sustainable Development in Scotland (2002)	Prioritises responsible resource use; Encourages energy conservation and promotes use of power from renewable sources; Ensures the provision of better land use planning, alternative service delivery and sustainable transport systems.	The project will promote sustainable travel
58	Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act	Sets out a series of measures which are designed to conserve biodiversity and to protect and enhance the biological and geological natural heritage of Scotland.	The project will take into consideration the measures proposed in the Act

		Places a general duty on all public bodies to further the conservation of biodiversity.	
59	Scottish Historic Environment Policy	Sets out the policy for the identification and designation of nationally important ancient monuments. Sets the context to conserve the evidence of Scotland's past based on their cultural significance.	The project should ensure the conservation of historic areas of cultural importance.
60	Draft River Basin Management Plan for the Scotland River Basin District (2008)	The draft river basin management plans (below) will ensure that statutory agencies, private organisations, public sector bodies and individuals work together to create a final plan that addresses all aspects of water management.	The project will make sure that the recommendations and findings of the RBMP will be taken into consideration when working to formulate policies on the water environment.
61	Changing out Ways - Scotland's Climate Change Programme (2006)	The Scottish Executive is committed to playing its full part to tackle climate change. Key elements of this programme are: - presenting a vision for Scotland and how we are to move forward - quantifying Scotland's 'equitable contribution' in carbon terms - setting a Scottish target for carbon emission reductions - demonstrating Scotland's achievements so far - setting out new actions and future directions across the main sectors - responding to the inevitable consequences of climate change	The project will support active and public transport, and will highlight the need for the provision of locally important pedestrian and cycle paths.
62	The Air Quality Limit Values (Scotland) Regulations 2003		
63	Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Regulations 1999 (As Amended)	Sets out the types of developments which will be subject to EIA and the process.	The final road build project will be subject to Environmental Impact Assessment.
64	Transport (Scotland) Act 2005	An act of the Scottish Parliament which places a range of duties related to transport on Local Authorities including the production of a regional transport strategy and local transport strategy and	The design project will give due regard to the provisions of the Act.
65	The Scotland River Basin Management Plan (2009)	River basin management plans (RBMPs) ensure that public sector bodies, businesses and individuals work together to protect the water environment and address significant impacts by co-ordinating all aspects of water management for the next 6 years.	The design project will need to give due consideration to the objectives of the RBPM.
66	North Highland River Basin Management Plan (2010)	This plan aims to maintain and improve the quality of the rivers, lochs, estuaries, coastal waters and groundwater areas which make up the water bodies of the West Highland area. It is a local action plan which supplements the river basin management plan for the Scotland river basin district and which will help to deliver the Water Framework Directive objectives.	The design project will need to give due consideration to the objectives of the RBMP especially given the proximity to two water courses which feed the Moray Firth.
67	The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2011	The 2011 Regulations consolidate, update, and replace Part II of the Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Regulations 19993, with effect from 1st June 2011. Parts III and IV of the 1999 Regulations, concerning Roads and Bridges, and Land Drainage, remain extant.	The preferred option when it reaches the detailed design stage will be subject to an EIA.
68	Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009	The Act introduced a more sustainable and modern approach to flood risk management, suited to the needs of the 21st century and to the impact of climate change.	The guidance will need to give due consideration to the provisions of the act.
69	Scottish Biodiversity	The purpose of the list is to help public bodies carry out	The project will give due

	List	their Biodiversity Duty by identifying the species and habitats which are the highest priority for biodiversity conservation in Scotland.	consideration to the presence of species on this list within the vicinity of the project.
Scottish Planning Policy Tier			
70	National Planning Framework for Scotland 2	This is the governments land use element of its economic strategy and sets out how each part of Scotland can play its part in making Scotland the best small country in the world.	The project must take into account the information within NPF2
71	Scottish Planning Policy (2009)	This sets out national policy, the purpose of the planning system and the objectives for core parts of the planning system	The project will have regard to the SPP.
72	PAN 43 Golf Courses and Associated Developments (1994)	Golf course proposals will be assessed on the demand for such development in the area and their ability to fit into the landscape.	The project area includes a golf course and as such due regard will be had of the provisions contained within the PAN.
73	PAN 60 Planning for Natural Heritage (2000)	Complements SPP on Natural Heritage, with examples of good planning practice in relation to natural heritage from across Scotland highlighted in a number of cases. Provides advice on how development and the planning system can contribute to the conservation, enhancement, enjoyment and understanding of Scotland's natural environment, and encourages developers and planning authorities to be positive and creative in addressing natural heritage issues.	The project will consider the implications of this PAN
74	PAN 61 Planning and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (2001)	Planners have a key role in highlighting the need for Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) and co-ordinating SUDS projects.	The project should set out how SUDS will be incorporated.
75	PAN 65 Planning and Open Space (2008)	Gives advice on the role of the planning system in protecting and enhancing existing open spaces and providing high quality new spaces. Supports NPPG 11: Sport, Physical Recreation and Open Space. Also sets out how local authorities can prepare open space strategies and gives examples of good practice in providing, managing and maintaining spaces. The advice relates to open space in settlements: villages, towns and major urban areas. A key aim of the PAN is to raise the profile of open space as a planning issue.	The project will consider the provisions of the PAN.
76	PAN 69 Planning and Building Standards Advice on Flooding (2004)	Provides background information and best practice advice in support of Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) 7: Planning and Flooding. The SPP aims to prevent future development which would have a significant probability of being affected by flooding or which would increase the probability of flooding elsewhere. The PAN takes as a starting point the responsibilities of local authorities and developers in ensuring that future development is not located in areas with a significant risk of flooding, including functional flood plains. However, there are circumstances where development would benefit from selecting designs, forms of construction and materials which may help to minimise the effects of a flood event on the property.	The project will consider role flooding will play in developing a design solution.
77	PAN 79 Water and Drainage (2006)	Development Plans guide the future development and use of land in the long term public interest. Local Plans play a key role in identifying suitable locations for development in the context of an overall settlement strategy. Provision of water and waste water is an important consideration in the delivery of public policy objectives, including those set out in development plans.	Issues relating to water and drainage should not be viewed in isolation but considered in relation to the objectives of the guidance.
78	Designing Streets	Designing Streets is the first policy statement in Scotland	The document will have due

		for street design and marks a change in the emphasis of guidance on street design towards place-making and away from a system focused upon the dominance of motor vehicles.	regard to the agenda set out in Designing Streets.
79	Designing Places	Sets out the Scottish Government's aims to raise standards of urban and rural development.	The document will have due regard to the place-making agenda set out in designing places.
Regional			
80	A Smart, Successful Highlands and Islands (Highlands and Islands Enterprise, 2005)	This is an enterprise strategy for the Highlands and Islands. Its central aim is to realise the populations' full potential on a sustainable basis, and outlines the strategic objectives of strengthening communities, developing skills, growing businesses and making global connections. In particular it addresses the issues of remoteness, affordability of housing, unique cultural and natural assets, lower than average incomes, increasing rural populations and balancing growth, and increasing business development.	The project will reflect the need to build communities' prospects for a sustainable future, through land allocations for business and housing (emphasising affordable housing), protecting and enhancing natural and built heritage, and encouraging (where appropriate) the use of renewable energy.
81	Highland Council Local Transport Strategy (2000)(currently being reviewed)	The Highland Council prepare a Local Transport Strategy and implement the policies, plans and projects to improve and manage the Highland transport system.	This document will be utilised to enable and encourage active transport improvements.
82	City of Inverness Greenspace Strategy	Sets out a long term vision for protecting and enhancing greenspace within the city. Sets out the importance of greenspace in Inverness and the positive impacts it can have on health, economy, environment, education and tourism.	Should be implemented with regard to the Biodiversity Duty that is stated in the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 and will deliver towards the objectives within the guidance to help create a healthier Highland.
83	A96 Corridor Master plan	An implementation scheme covering the overall phasing, infrastructure, funding, developer contributions protocol and deliver mechanisms for expansion and development eastwards of Inverness to the border with Moray.	The project is to update the green framework section of this masterplan
84	Highland Climate Change Strategy	A requirement of being a signatory to Scotland's Climate Change Declaration, the Climate Change Strategy will set out Highland Councils actions to mitigate the causes of Climate Change and adapt to its likely impacts. The Strategy will be developed during the term of this administration.	This will be taken into consideration when bringing forward the project.
85	Inverness Local Plan	Sets the strategy and land use framework for the development of land and protection of the environment in the Inverness area	The project will supplement guidance already in the Local Plan.
86	Supplementary Planning Guideline on Developer Contributions	This guidance is in preparation and will set out guidance on Developer Contributions	The project will consider the implications of this emerging guidance.
87	Highland Access Strategy	Aims to address the needs and aspirations of people of all ages and abilities to deliver a wide range of recreational and enjoyment of the environment benefits for walkers, cyclists, equestrians and paddlers. Thereby contributing to social inclusion, health improvements, sustainable transport and improvement to the overall quality of life by unlocking this potential and guiding the way in which the Council and its partners can take forward plans for access throughout the Highland Council	The project will seek to meet the aims of the access strategy.

		area.	
88	Highland Area Tourism Strategy (partnership strategy)	Produced in 2006 by the Highland Area Tourism Partnership sets out a Strategy (until 2015) and Action Plan (3 year) which sets out how Highland tourism could be developed to achieve the Government's 50% growth target by 2015.	Tourism will be a strong influence and driver a new crossing.
89	Inverness and Nairn Core Path Plan	This document identifies the key strategic links which will provide for a system of paths and waterways ("core paths") sufficient for the purpose of giving the public reasonable access throughout their area and to the wider access resource	The project will have due regard to core paths in the area.
90	Highland Open Space Audit	A comprehensive audit of open space in Highland was carried out in Summer/Autumn 2009. The findings of this will be published in Summer 2011. The audit considers the quality, quantity and accessibility of greenspace in Highland.	The project will take into consideration the audits findings.
91	Highland wide Local Development Plan	Sets the strategic vision, strategy and general policies for the whole of the Highlands.	The project will have due regard to the land allocations and general policies on the local development plan.
92	Green Networks: Interim Supplementary Guidance	Sets out detailed guidance and general principles for a Highland Green Network.	The project will have due regard to the guidance and cross refer if appropriate.
93	Inverness City Vision	Sets out a vision and provides detail on the strategy for the City of Inverness as set out in the Highland wide Local Development Plan.	The project will have due regard to the contents of the City Vision and help work towards the strategy for the city.
94	Inverness City Centre Development Brief	A document associated with the city vision it aims to identify the development opportunities in the City Centre.	The project will have due regard to the development opportunities in the City Centre and the impact these may have on the need for a river and canal crossing.
95	The Highland Council Guidance Note: Construction Environmental Management Process for Large Scale Projects	This guidance is designed to assist with environmental management in large scale construction projects, meeting in full the policy requirements as set out in the Highland Council's Development Plan.	Due consideration should be given to the contents of this document during the design and planning of the preferred option.
96	Inverness and Nairn Local Biodiversity Diversity Action Plan	Its purpose is to provide information and reference material for those seeking funding for future environmental projects, to help agencies and other funding bodies target resources towards local priorities, and to list the main habitats, species and issues that need to be taken into account when planning new developments.	Due consideration will be given to the contents of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan.
97	Badger Policy Guidance Note (2007)	This policy guidance note is intended to establish good practice in relation to pre-application, design statements, design/planning briefs and outline and detailed planning applications for development proposals in areas where there is a potential to impact on badgers.	There may be badgers present in the area of the project therefore due consideration should be given to the contents of this guidance note.

This analysis, and that carried out as part of the STAG appraisal for the Inverness West Link, has helped us to identify which options should be considered.

Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment

Schedule 3 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires that the Environmental Report includes a description of "the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme", and "the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected". This section aims to describe the environmental context within which the PPS operates and the constraints and targets that this context imposes on the PPS.

The purpose of this section is to provide enough environmental baseline data to:

- support the identification of environmental problems;
- support the process of assessing the environmental effects;
- provide a baseline against which future monitoring data can be compared.

General
The design project will cover an area of approximately 4 square kilometres and is an area which is, at present, largely undeveloped. The wider area which may be impacted by the development is the City of Inverness which has a population of 60,890 (2009 mid-year estimates). This relevant aspects for the current state of the environment are broken down by SEA Topic. A table and maps showing all of the baseline data can be found in Appendix 1.

Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna
Torvean Landforms SSSI is a very large statutory site the northern part of which encompasses almost all of the land between the Caledonian Canal and the A82 from the edge of the golf course down to the ponds opposite Ness-side. This includes all of the former quarry and surrounding woodland/scrub. It is protected for its Quaternary geomorphology, containing an excellent assemblage of fluvioglacial landforms comprising kame terraces, eskers, kames and kettleholes. It includes one of the best British examples of a suite of kame terraces and contains part of the Torvean esker, one of the largest such features in Britain. Torvean is significant, therefore, not only for some classic landforms, but also for a wider assemblage of interrelated geomorphological features. Although the designation is in respect of geological features, the site is also of note for unimproved neutral grassland, semi-natural woodland and scrub habitats.

The River Moriston Special Area of Conservation (SAC) although located in approximately 35km to the south is also a relevant baseline consideration. Atlantic salmon and Freshwater pearl mussel are both qualifying features of the River Moriston SAC which is located upstream from the River Ness and joins Loch Ness near Invermoriston. Atlantic Salmon pass through the River Ness when travelling upstream to the River Moriston. Any works affecting the River Ness therefore also have the potential to impact on the SAC. The conservation objectives for the SAC state, *'To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species or significant disturbance of the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features.*

Ancient Woodland Inventory in the vicinity of Torvean Landforms SSSI, and other locations to the south of the scheme. SNH have confirmed that the ancient woodland classification is "Long established Woodland of Plantation Origin". This is not a statutory designation, but does highlight the area as potentially high value ecological habitat.

The following habitats occur in the study area and are priority habitats in the UK BAP ('UK') or Inverness & Nairn LBAP ('Local'):

- Wetlands & Ponds (UK & Local)
- Drystone dykes & long-established field boundaries (Local)
- Gorse & scrub woodland (Local)
- Upland oakwood (UK)

- Upland birchwood (UK)
- Aspen stands (Local)
- Riparian woodland (Local)

The following selected species are known to occur (*) or could occur in the study area and are priority species in the UK BAP ('UK') or Inverness & Nairn LBAP ('Local'):

- Brown hare (UK) *
- Otter (UK) *
- Pine marten (Local)
- Badger (Local) *
- Polecat (Local)
- Bats (UK/Local) *
- Red squirrel (UK) *
- Slow worm (Local) *
- Common lizard (Local)
- Great crested newt (UK) *
- Toad, frog and palmate newt (Local) *
- Kingfisher (Local) *
- Skylark (UK) *
- Linnet (UK) *
- Yellow hammer (Local) *
- Osprey (Local) *
- Grey partridge (UK)
- Bullfinch (Local) *
- Song thrush (UK) *
- Common eel (Local)
- Atlantic salmon (Local) *
- Lampreys (Local) *
- Brown trout (Local)
- Speckled wood butterfly (Local) *
- Freshwater pearl mussel (UK)
- Bluebell (Local) *
- Aspen (Local) *

The most diverse and highest quality semi-natural broad-leaved woodland is found at Whin Island by the River Ness, especially near and at the river's edge. This is a mix mainly of sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and alder *Alnus glutinosa*, with some holly *Ilex aquifolium*, willow *Salix sp.* and locally oak *Quercus sp.*, incorporating a diverse ground flora including many species typical of lowland riparian woodland such as ramsons *Allium ursinum*, dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis*, bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, lesser celandine *Ranunculus ficaria* and pignut *Conopodium majus*. The quality of this woodland tends to decrease closer to the amenity areas, where there are patches of plantation and scrub.

Adjacent to the Caledonian Canal next to the playing fields and golf course there are strips of semi-natural broad-leaved woodland which are lower quality in terms of ground flora, but are notable for the abundance of mature wych elm *Ulmus glabra*. Where the canal and river are in closest proximity, the thin strip of land between them has for part of its length another strip of semi-natural broad-leaved woodland. This contains a large amount of mature beech, but the ground flora contains natural elements such as bluebell and great woodrush *Luzula sylvatica*.

Around the northern periphery of the former Torvean quarry, adjacent to beech plantation on slopes abutting the golf course, there is an extensive amount of semi-natural woodland dominated by birch with a generally acidic ground flora. To the south-east the dominant species changes to mature oak. Within the former quarry and on part of the south edge there are other

stands of silver birch *Betula pendula* woodland, some of them within the quarry in a state of succession from dense gorse *Ulex europaeus* scrub.

A Phase 1 habitat survey and a badger survey of the study area has been undertaken.

Population
As discussed in the general section above the City of Inverness has a population of 60,890, with a population density of approximately 22 people per hectare. The census output areas which make up the area covered by the project have a combined population of 468 (2001 data).

Human Health
Information from the census is one of the best simple measures we have of the health of our population. In the area which is to be affected by this project the percentage of total with a long term limiting illness is 16.3% this is below the 18.4% of average in Highland as a whole.

It is considered likely that the dominant noise source in the area is road traffic, in particular on the A82 to the north and the B862 to the south, onto which the proposed scheme connects. Other potentially significant noise sources include activities on the River Ness and Caledonian Canal, the various sporting activities at Queens Park and industrial activities located between the B862 and the River Ness.

Soil
The Torvean Landforms is a geological Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and is noted for its Quaternary of Scotland feature. No Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS) have been identified close to the West Link.

A sheet of “river overbank deposits” immediately underlies the flat lying area east of the River Ness. This deposit is thought to comprise up to 2 metres of brown loam or silty sand with scattered pebbles and cobbles. Locally, former river channels may be encountered on the floodplain. These former river channels may now be filled with several metres of potentially compressible water saturated organic sand, gravel and peat.

The Macaulay Institute Soil Survey of Scotland classifies the soils in this area as Fluvioglacial silts and raised beach sands of mainly Humus-iron podzols with some gleys.

The Macaulay Institute for Soil Research classifies land into 7 categories ranging from 1 (Land Capable of Producing a Very Wide Range of Crops) through to 7 (Land of very Limited Agricultural Value). The soil classification varies from 2 in the south through to 32 just south of the River Ness.

Water
The quality of the freshwater environment is also recognised internationally for its importance as a spawning ground for wild salmon and use by whisky distilleries. The many lochs and rivers that characterise the area are important for local economies and provide the scenic backdrop that encourages so many tourists to the area. The River Ness which runs through the area is classed as “Good” by SEPA and the Caledonian Canal is classed as “Good Ecological Potential (Artificial)” in terms of water quality. There are two other man made water bodies within the vicinity of the project area, Loch Na Sanais, Whin Park Pond and Golf Course pond.

With regard to flooding it is noted that the SEPA Indicative River and Coastal Flood Map (Scotland) shows some flooding along the channel of the River in the vicinity of the Mill / Timber Yard on the southern bank, at Canal Park on the northern bank and also at Ness-side House on the eastern bank. A specific flood risk assessment is being carried out for the proposed scheme and this gives further details in regard to site specific flood risk. The purpose of the FRA is to advise the bridge design and scheme development to ensure that mitigation of flood related effects is incorporated into the scheme design.

Air
Highland region is not affected by air pollution from extensive road networks and heavy industries as in other parts of Scotland. In the City of Inverness there are no Air Management Areas however there are some areas where air quality is becoming a problem, these are very localised to the City Centre (due to fumes from buses) and in Telford Street (solid fuel burning).

Highland Council operate a continuous monitoring site adjacent to the A862 Telford Street. The site has been in operation since July 2001 and currently monitors NO2 and PM10 (gravimetric). Up until 2007 carbon monoxide (CO) was also monitored at the site, however, the results were very low, well below the relevant air quality objectives and monitoring was therefore discontinued. Pollution concentrations at the automatic monitoring site are well below the current air quality objectives.

Climatic Factors
Transportation is one of the main contributors to climate change due to emissions of carbon dioxide (CO2). High levels of CO2 and other 'greenhouse gases' in the atmosphere are thought to accelerate the earth's natural warming. This warming is predicted to have a variety of environmental consequences including increased frequency and severity of storm events, as well as rises in sea level. Changes in rainfall patterns could lead to increased erosion and pollution associated with surface run-off.

Material Assets
The area covered by the study contains no significant material assets as the natural resources present have largely been utilised in the development of the City. There are a number of core paths which run through the site which may be affected by the provision of a river and canal crossing (some negatively, some positively).

Cultural Heritage
There are a number of Scheduled Monuments within the immediate and wider study area, these include;

- Caledonian Canal , Dochgarroch Lock – Muirtown Lock (including Tomnahurich Swing Bridge)
- Torvean Motte, and
- Holm House.

Nearby listed buildings to the area of works for all options include:

- The Firs and its garden wall at 2 Dores Road – Category B;
- Drummond Tower at Stratherrick Road – Category B;
- Lodge, Drummond Hill, Stratherrick Road – Category B;
- Number 38 at Island Bank Road – Category B; and
- A number of other listed buildings at Stratherrick Road (Bellevue Nursing home – Category B), 42 & 44 Island Bank Road (Category C).

Tomnahurich Cemetery Garden and Designed Landscape lies on the edge of the site to the northeast. This major 19th and 20th century public cemetery adds significant landscape value to the city of Inverness and the study area. It consists of an extensive series of sculptured monuments and plantations, with views of Tomnahurich Hill.

The Inverness (Riverside) Conservation Area is in the south east of the study area, to the south of the rugby club grounds and extends across the river.

The Highland Historic Environment Record identifies a number of features within the study area.

Landscape
The area within which the corridor is located is covered by the SNH Inverness District Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) 1999 (No. 114). The corridor is within the 'Inverness Urban Area' Character Type but straddles two sub- types: the 'Suburban Fringe' (3.11b) and the 'River Ness and Canal' (3.11c).

The adjacent Tomnahurich Cemetery is included in the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland.

The site is located on the western edge of the City in an urban fringe area which gives way to neighbouring countryside. The landscape character within the vicinity of the proposed route

options corridor is very distinctive. Although the wider setting of this landscape is part of the coastal plain with the land rising to the south of Inverness, the area has a more enclosed, leafy character formed by distinctive local topography, the presence of mature trees and woodland areas and built up areas of the City.

The key facts and the baseline information collated for the scoping has enabled us to identify some environmental problems in the Highland area. Environmental problems that affect the area are identified in table 2 below. Some of the negative trends negative trends highlighted in this table are likely to continue if there is not a suitable design for a river and canal crossing in Inverness. Feedback from the Consultation Authorities is sought on the scope of environmental problems identified.

Gaps/Unreliability of Baseline Data

This Strategic Environmental Assessment has been informed by an Environmental Assessment of Options specially commissioned for the Inverness West Link Design Project. While this document used the most up to date information available, it focused mainly on the area which will be directly affected by the river and canal crossing.

Environmental problems

Schedule 3 paragraph 4 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires that the Environmental Report includes a description of existing environmental problems, in particular those relating to any areas of particular environmental importance. The purpose of this section is to explain how existing environmental problems will affect or be affected by the Inverness West Link Design Project and whether the PPS is likely to aggravate, reduce or otherwise affect existing environmental problems.

SEA Issue	Potential Environmental Impact resulting from the Inverness West Link Design Project	Implications for the Inverness West Link Design Project
Biodiversity, flora, fauna	The land falls of a new crossing could impact on a designated site. Construction activities and crossing design may affect open water and have an impact down stream. The potential exists for European protected species and other protected species on the site. Loss, fragmentation and isolation of habitats and disturbance to species from the construction of a crossing. Habitat loss and fragmentation due to culverting of water courses.	The crossing should avoid adverse impacts on the Torvean SSSI. A Construction Environmental Management Plan should be produced and implemented to avoid significant adverse impacts. A protected species survey could be undertaken to look at the likelihood of the presence of protected species and identify potential mitigation.
Population	Increasing population, increases traffic in and around the City leading to congestion at peak times.	Any crossing should build in provision for active travel.
Human health	Noise associated with high traffic flows can have a detrimental affect on human health.	The crossing should be designed and sited in a manner which avoids amenity impacts.
Soil	New infrastructure would result in both temporary impacts on and permanent loss of greenfield land. It should be noted that this land has been allocated for development in the Inverness Local Plan and the Highland wide Local Development Plan (Proposed Plan).	The guidance should seek to avoid impacts on soil and geology including the avoidance of impacts on important geomorphological features such as Torvean Landforms.
Water	Water quality in the River Ness is good and in the Caledonian Canal has good ecological potential. Disturbance of the river during construction may have an impact (albeit temporary) on the water quality. Potential disturbance to groundwater during the construction period.	Any crossing should avoid the use of culverting and put in place appropriate construction methods to avoid impact on the water environment.
Air	If the river and canal crossing results in increased traffic then there maybe an increase in emissions which may reduce air quality.	Any crossing should build in provision for active travel.
Climatic factors	Increased emissions for the potential increased traffic may have an impact on climate change.	Any crossing should build in provision for active travel.
Material assets	The crossing can enable the development of additional active travel links	Any crossing should seek to promote the sustainable use of natural resources.
Cultural	Risk of impact on the setting of cultural	Any crossing should seek to avoid significantly

heritage	heritage features.	adverse impacts on the cultural heritage present in the surrounding area including the Caledonian Canal.
Landscape	Any new crossing is likely to have an impact on visual amenity and landscape character	Any crossing should be sensitively designed to avoid an impact on sensitive design.

Likely evolution of the environment without Inverness West Link Design Project

Without the Inverness West Link Design Project it is considered that the likely future changes to the area will be:

- Limited opportunity for development leading to faster expansion of the city rather than first consolidating the city which may lead to an adverse impact on the environment;
- Given the growth around the city there will be an increase in traffic wishing to cross the city. Without a solution brought forward through the Inverness West Link Design Project this may lead to a decrease in air quality in the City Centre;
- Limited opportunity to improve active travel connections across the city, making Inverness a more walkable/bikeable city.

There would also be significant repercussions in terms of social and economic however this is outwith the scope of the SEA process.

SEA Objectives

Following consultation with the Consultation Authorities it is proposed that five SEA objectives will be used to assess the proposed alternatives to The alternatives will be subject to detailed assessment against all the SEA objectives and criteria. We would welcome comment on the proposed SEA objectives as outlined below. The SEA objectives are derived from those used for the Strategic Environmental Assessment on the Highland wide Local Development Plan and modified to suit the particular circumstances and requirements of this project.

Further to comments from the Consultation Authorities an additional SEA objective as been included to assess the impact on recreational users of the area. This has been circulated (along with "Key Considerations") to the Consultation Authorities and has been agreed.

In formulating these objectives it is again important to note that the purpose of this SEA is to identify and propose mitigation for the SEA topics where there is likely to be significant environmental effect.

SEA Topic	SEA Objective
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	1. Maintain and enhance designated wildlife sites, biodiversity, valuable habitats and protected species, avoiding irreversible losses.
Soil	2. Protect and enhance important geological features.
Cultural Heritage	3. Protect and, where appropriate, enhance the cultural heritage.
Landscape	4. Value and protect the diversity and local distinctiveness of landscapes.
Population and Human Health	5. Maintain and enhance active travel and recreational access opportunities within the wider area.

Assessment of environmental effects and measures envisaged for prevention, reduction and offset of any significant adverse effects

The purpose of this section is to predict and evaluate as far as possible the environmental effects of this PPS and its reasonable alternatives (Section 14 of the Act) and to set out measures envisaged to prevent, reduce, and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment (Schedule 3 paragraph 7 of the Act).

The baseline information from the previous sections (and Appendix 1) is applied to consider whether the PPS and its alternatives are likely to have significant environmental effects (positive and negative).

SEA requires that "reasonable alternatives" to the Plan are considered. These set the context for the following two sections of this report – scoping of SEA issues and consideration of a framework for the assessment of environmental effects.

As the Consultation Authorities will be aware, a large amount of work has been undertaken to identify the options for the River and Canal Crossing including a range of public consultation. Through this work a total of 8 options for the river and canal crossing have been identified and a "do nothing" option. Each of the alternatives are described on the following pages and where applicable shown on maps included as Appendix 2 of this Environmental Report.

Option 1
Crosses the River Ness at the open ground between Pringles Woollen Mill and the Precast Yard to a roundabout at the western end on the Canal fields then follows the embankment of the canal along the edge of the fields to reach Bught Road adjacent to the Queens Park Athletics Track and thereafter crosses the canal with a low level canal bridge which will operate in tandem with the existing A82 Tomnahurich canal bridge ensuring that one of these bridges will remain open to traffic at all times.

Option 2
Crosses the River Ness at the open ground between Pringles Woollen Mill and the Precast Yard to a roundabout at the western end on the Canal fields then follows the northern edge of the canal fields to a roundabout at at the edge of the currently fenced rugby pitch to a new low level canal swing bridge mid way between the Tomnahurich Canal bridge and the edge of Torvean Quarry then traverses the Golf course to a new roundabout on the A82 trunk road at General Booth Road.

Option 3
Crosses the River Ness at its narrowest point between Rossie and Heraghty lodges on Dores Road to land on Whin Park and continues along Bught Road. It then forms a new roundabout adjacent to the Queens Park Athletics Track with one leg forming a roundabout on the Amercian Football training pitch adacent to the A82. Another leg crosses the canal with a low level canal bridge which will operate in tandem with the existing A82 Tomnahurich canal bridge ensuring that one of these bridges will remain open to traffic at all times. This road then forms a rounabout with the A82 opposite the Loch Ness Hotel.

Option 4
Crosses the River Ness at its narrowest point between Rossie and Heraghty lodges on Dores Road to land on Whin Park and thereafter passes along Bught lane until adjacent to Floral Hall it forms a rounabout. One leg of the roundabout then takes a route to mid bend on the river where it provides a low level Canal Bridge which will operate in tandem with the existing A82 Tomnahurich canal bridge ensuring that one of these bridges will remain open to traffic at all times and then traverses the Golf course to a new roundabout on the A82 trunk road at General Booth Road. The other leg of the rounabout passes the Queens Park

Aatheltics track and forms a rounabout on the American Football training pitch adcent to the A82.

Option 5
Crosses the River Ness at its narrowest point between Rossie and Heraghty lodges on Dores Road to land on Whin Park and forms a new roundabout adjacent to the bend of Bught Road. One leg of this passes through the middle of the Rugby ground to cross the Canal with a low level Canal Bridge which will operate in tandem with the existing A82 Tomnahurich canal bridge ensuring that one of these bridges will remain open to traffic at all times close to the edge of the Torvean Quarry which is a Special Area of Scientific Interest then traverses the Golf course to a new roundabout on the A82 trunk road at General Booth Road. The other leg follows Bught road passes Queens Park Athletic ground and forms a rounabout on the American Football training pitch adcent to the A82.

Option 6
After leaving the Southern Distributor road at the Dores Road Roundabout the road would flow through through Ness Side close to the River Ness and then diagnally cross the River Ness behind the Precast Yard. The road would then continue along the northern edge of the Canal Park to a roundabout at the corner of Queens Park Athletics Stadium with a new low level canal swing bridge close to the existing Tomnahurich Swing Bridge. The road would then cross the golf course and connect to the A82 via a roundabout infront of the former Loch Ness Hotel.

Option 7
After leaving the Southern Distributor road at the Dores Road Roundabout the road would flow through through Ness Side and up a newly created embankment to cros the River and Canal with a high level bridge at the point where the 132kv cables currently cross the canal. There would be a need for a cutting through the Torvean landforms SSSI before disending down and connecting to a roundabout on the A82. This will also include a low level crossing of the Caledonian Canal close to the Tomnahurich Bridge.

Option 8
Crosses the River Ness at the open ground between Pringle Woollen Mill and the Precast Yard to a roundabout at the western end on the Canal fields then follows the southern edge of the canal fields to a roundabout at the entrance to the car park at Whin Park. From here an aquaduct/tunnel will go under the Caledonian Canal and connect with the A82 at a new roundabout to be formed at the junction of the A82 and General Booth Road.

Option 9
This is the do nothing approach.

Assessment methods

The reasonable alternatives described above have been assessed against the range of environmental issues set out in Schedule 3 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. Comments from the Consultation Authorities (SNH, SEPA and The Scottish Ministers (Historic Scotland) have been taken into account regarding the methods, scope and level of detail in this Environmental Report.

A matrix approach has been used to assess the level of significant impact and the cumulative effects. It has been developed setting out environmental objectives, with indicators and columns for carrying out the appraisal of potential impacts. The assessments have been carried out assuming no mitigation is put in place thus giving a worst case scenario. Mitigation for each option is set out from page 49. An example of the assessment matrix is included in Appendix 3.

To aid with the assessment a series of key considerations have been brought forward and agreed with the Consultation Authorities. The SEA objectives and the key considerations are set out below:

1	**Maintain and enhance designated wildlife sites, biodiversity, valuable habitats and protected species, avoiding irreversible losses** Will it contribute to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity in Highland? Will it contribute to achieving local and regional biodiversity action plan targets? Will habitats of importance will biodiversity be protected? Will it safeguard Sites of Special Scientific Interest? Will it safeguard the qualifying features of the River Moriston Special Area of Conservation? Will it ensure the importance of the protected species of the area is made a priority?
2.	**Protect and enhance important geological features** Will it protect areas of importance for geodiversity?
3.	**Protect and where appropriate enhance the cultural heritage** Will it protect or enhance listed buildings and their settings? Will it protect or enhance the scheduled monuments and their settings? Will it protect or enhance locally important archaeological sites? Will it protect or enhance conservation areas? Will it protect or enhance historic gardens and designed landscapes?
4.	**Value and protect the diversity and local distinctiveness of landscapes** Will existing landscape character be maintained or enhanced? Will local diversity and distinctiveness be maintained or enhanced? Will it protect areas with strong qualities of wildness? Will it consider the cumulative landscape impact of proposals? Will it protect and enhance designated landscapes?
5.	**Maintain and enhance active travel and recreational access opportunities within the wider area?** Will it safeguard and enhance recreational access opportunities around and on the Caledonian Canal? Will it safeguard and enhance recreational access opportunities to the wider area? Will it safeguard and enhance active travel opportunities?

Assessment of Inverness West Link Design Project Options - summary

The PPS and its alternatives were assessed using the framework shown earlier. A summary of the assessment findings are shown below, and the full findings are shown in Appendix 4.

Summary of Assessment Findings

Option 1

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude	
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional
1	=	-	-	-	=
2	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	=
3	-	-	-	-	=
4	--	--	--	--	=
5	+/-	+	+	++	=

While there are some negative affects there may also be some significantly positive ones in terms of enhancement of active travel opportunities.

Option 2

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude	
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional
1	-	--	--	-	=
2	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	=
3	-	-	-	-	=
4	--	--	--	--	=
5	+/-	+	+	++	=

This option is largely negatively scored. There are anticipated significant negative affects on biodiversity and landscape with significantly positive local affects on population and human health. There is a greater impact on cultural heritage and less benefits through this option for active travel.

Option 3

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude	
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional
1	=	-	-	-	=
2	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	=
3	-	-	-	-	=
4	-	-	-	-	=
5	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	=

This option is largely negatively scored. There are no anticipated significant affects either positive or negative. There is a greater impact on cultural heritage and less benefits through this option for active travel.

Option 4

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude	
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional
1	-	--	--	-	=
2	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	=
3	-	-	-	-	=
4	-	-	-	-	=
5	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	=

This option is largely negatively scored. There it is anticipated that there may be significantly negative affects in terms of biodiversity, flora and fauna. There is a greater impact on cultural heritage and less benefits through this option for active travel.

Option 5

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude	
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional
1	-	--	--	-	=
2	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	=
3	-	-	-	-	=
4	-	-	-	-	=
5	-	-	-	-	=

This option is largely negatively scored. There it is anticipated that there may be significantly negative affects in terms of biodiversity, flora and fauna. There is a greater impact on cultural heritage and less benefits through this option for active travel.

Option 6

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude	
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional
1	--	-	-	--	=
2	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	=
3	-	-	-	-	=
4	--	--	--	--	=
5	+/-	++	++	+	=

While there are some negative affects there may also be some significantly positive ones in terms of enhancement of active travel opportunities if this option is brought forward

Option 7

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude	
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional
1	--	-	-	--	=
2	--	--	--	--	--
3	--	--	--	--	-
4	--	--	--	--	=
5	-	-	-	+/-	=

This option is largely scored as significantly negative. There is a greater impact on cultural heritage and minimal benefits through this option for active travel. There is also likely to be significant negative affects on the Torvean Landforms SSSI which would be considered of national significance.

Option 8

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude	
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional
1	-	--	--	-	=
2	--	--	--	--	=
3	--	--	--	--	--
4	-	-	-	-	=
5	-	+/-	+/-	+/-	=

This option is largely scored as significantly negative. There is a greater impact on cultural heritage and minimal benefits through this option for active travel. There is also likely to be significant negative affects on the geology of the area albeit not sites such as Torvean Landforms SSSI which would be considered of national significance.

Option 9

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude	
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional
1	=	=	=	=	=
2	=	=	=	=	=
3	=	=	=	=	=
4	=	=	=	=	=
5	=	-	--	-	=

This option is largely scored as neutral as it will not lead to any change in the current scenario. In terms of active travel it is scored negatively as the pressure will increase on the current recreational and active travel links and there will be limited opportunity to facilitate their improvement without further development of this area or a river/canal crossing.

Assessment of alternatives - cumulative effects

The purpose of this design project and Environmental Report is help the Council to bring forward the most appropriate solution to crossing the River Ness and the Caledonian Canal. The options assessed will not be brought forward in conjunction with one another but as one single scheme therefore it is not anticipated that there will be a cumulative affect of each of the options.
With this said, it is likely that there would be secondary effects for each of the options which may come forward if that particular option is brought forward. The main secondary affect would be the potential for the release of development land. Below is a table demonstrating the potential level of housing release for each option:

Option	**High level of development** (full potential of all allocated sites realised)	**Medium level of development** (mid level of potential realised on some/all allocated sites)	**Low level of development** (low level of potential realised on some/all sites)	**Notes**
1		**X**		This option would release all land at Charleston but limited land at Ness-side.
2		**X**		This option would release all land at Charleston but limited land at Ness-side.
3			**X**	All land at Charleston could be released limited development at Ness-side.
4			**X**	All land at Charleston could be released limited development at Ness-side.
5			**X**	All land at Charleston could be released limited development at Ness-side.
6	**X**			All allocated land at Charleston and Ness-side could be released.
7		**X**		This option would release all land at Charleston but limited land at Ness-side as a large area of the site would be lost to earth works.
8		**X**		This option would release all land at Charleston but limited land at Ness-side.
9			**X**	This option would not release land at Charleston but there may be potential for some development at Ness-side.

It is each option will be assessed against the scoped in SEA topics to determine any cumulative/secondary effects.

The results of this assessment is summarised below and included in full in Appendix 5.

Summary of Results

Option 1

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude	
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional
1	=	-	--	-	=
2	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	=
3	-	-	-	-	=
4	--	--	--	--	=
5	+/-	+	+	++	=

It is considered that the level of development which would be facilitated by this option would not lead to significantly different affects than those experienced through delivery of the option alone.

Option 2

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude	
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional
1	-	--	--	-	=
2	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	=
3	-	-	-	-	=
4	--	--	--	--	=
5	+/-	+	+	++	=

It is considered that the level of development which would be facilitated by this option would not lead to significantly different affects than those experienced through delivery of the option alone.

Option 3

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude	
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional
1	=	-	-	-	=
2	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	=
3	-	-	-	-	=
4	-	--	--	--	=
5	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	=

It is considered that the level of development which would be facilitated by this option would not lead to significantly different affects than those experienced through delivery of the option alone.

Option 4

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude	
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional
1	=	-	-	-	=
2	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	=
3	-	-	-	-	=
4	-	--	--	--	=
5	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	=

It is considered that the level of development which would be facilitated by this option would not lead to significantly different affects than those experienced through delivery of the option alone except in terms of landscape affects which would be greater given the greater level of change in the landscape as apposed to delivery of the river and canal crossing in isolation.

Option 5

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude	
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional
1	=	-	-	-	=
2	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	=
3	-	-	-	-	=
4	-	-	-	-	=
5	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-

It is considered that the level of development which would be facilitated by this option would not lead to significantly different affects than those experienced through delivery of the option alone except in terms of landscape affects which would be greater given the greater level of change in the landscape as apposed to delivery of the river and canal crossing in isolation.

Option 6

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude	
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional
1	--	--	--	--	=
2	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	=
3	-	-	-	-	=
4	-	--	--	--	=
5	+/-	++	++	++	=

It is considered that the level of development which would be facilitated by this option would not lead to significantly different affects than those experienced through delivery of the option alone except in terms of landscape affects which would be greater given the greater level of change in the landscape as apposed to delivery of the river and canal crossing in isolation.

Option 7

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude	
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional
1	--	--	--	--	=
2	--	--	--	--	--
3	--	--	--	--	--
4	--	--	--	--	=
5	-	-	-	+/-	=

It is considered that the level of development which would be facilitated by this option would not lead to significantly different affects than those experienced through delivery of the option alone except in terms of increased opportunities for recreation/active travel as the routes through any new development will help create new opportunities.

Option 8

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude	
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional
1	--	--	--	--	=
2	--	--	--	--	--
3	--	--	--	--	--
4	--	--	--	--	=
5	-	-	-	+/-	=

It is considered that the level of development which would be facilitated by this option would not lead to significantly different affects than those experienced through delivery of the option alone except in terms of slightly increased opportunities for recreation/active travel as new routes may be created through the any new development but this would be limited given the limited development which could take place.

Option 9

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude	
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional
1	=	-	-	-	=
2	=	=	=	=	=
3	=	=	=	=	=
4	-	-	-	-	=
5	=	-	-	-	=

It is considered that the level of development which would be facilitated by this option would not lead to significantly different affects than those experienced through delivery of the option alone except in terms of slightly increased opportunities for recreation/active travel as new routes may be created through the any new development but this would be limited given the limited development which could take place.

Assessment of alternatives, compatibility with other PPS

Compatibility with Plans, Policies and Strategies

There are a number of interrelated documents which are directly relevant to transport infrastructure in Highland and Specifically the West Link. Table 2 above includes a more comprehensive list of which documents have influenced or will be influenced by the Inverness West Link Design Project. Here we look in detail at the compatibility with documents which are key to the delivery of sustainable economic development in Highland.

Single Outcome Agreement 2
The Single Outcome Agreement 2 delivers a partnership approach to tackling issues which affects Highland. As part of this there are a number of National and Local Outcomes, the ones relevant to this project are listed below. By delivering a the Inverness West Link it is considered that the project is compatible with the Single Outcome Agreement.

National Outcomes
- We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place to do business in Europe (NO1)
- We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need (NO10)

Local Outcomes
- To support the economy access is improved to housing, transport and high speed broadband (LO1.I)
- To support the economy access is improved to housing, transport and high speed broadband (LO 10.I)

Highland Wide Local Development Plan[1]
The Highland wide Local Development Plan identifies Ness-side and Charleston as areas key for consolidation of the city of Inverness prior to the expansion of the city. Without the west link only a limited amount of housing can be delivered in this area meaning development in the A96 corridor will need to be brought forward. This is contrary to our vision and strategy set out in the Highland wide Local Development Plan which identifies the need for a river and canal crossing to facilitate the delivery of development to consolidate the city. Therefore it is considered that this project is compatible with the Highland wide Local Development Plan.

Local Transport Strategy
The Local Transport Strategy promotes the concept of the Spider Network for the City of Inverness, a key feature of which is the Inverness West Link. Therefore it is considered that this project is compatible with the Local Transport Strategy.

Council Programme
The Council Programme states that “We will work with the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland, British Waterways and other key stakeholders to examine and agree solutions for completing the link road between the A9/A96 and the A82 trunk roads, including crossing the River Ness and the Caledonian Canal.” Through delivering this project we hope to meet the aspirations of the programme.

[1] At the time of writing the Highland wide Local Development Plan is going through examination by Scottish Ministers. The final contents of the plan will not be know until the Reporter’s Report is received from the Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals. This is expected end of November 2011.

Measures envisaged for the prevention, reduction and offsetting of significant adverse effects

Schedule 3 paragraph 7 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires an explanation of "the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme." Table 9 sets out any environmental problems that are likely to remain on implementation of the PPS and summarises proposed measures for the prevention, reduction and offset of significant adverse effects.

Following each assessment a series of mitigation measures have been identified. These have been summarised by each option below:

It should be noted that this mitigation would be for the routes only. Mitigation for any development site would be brought forward through the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan.

Option 1

- Fish Habitats survey to be carried out;
- Appropriate lighting of bridge;
- Compensatory planting where required;
- Archaeological survey work to be undertaken;
- Maximise active travel linkages;
- Avoid closure of canal/paths/trails for prolonged periods during construction.
- Appropriate design of bridge;
- Sensitive construction methods employed;
- Include mitigation such as badger/otter crossings where the route passes through their territory.
- Appropriate landscaping;
- Improved existing active travel links through the area;

Option 2

- Fish Habitats survey to be carried out;
- Appropriate lighting of bridge;
- Compensatory planting where required;
- Archaeological survey work to be undertaken;
- Maximise active travel linkages;
- Avoid closure of canal/paths/trails for prolonged periods during construction.
- Appropriate design of bridge;
- Sensitive construction methods employed;
- Include mitigation such as badger/otter crossings where the route passes through their territory.
- Appropriate landscaping;
- Improved existing active travel links through the area;
- Micro-siting to avoid impact on golf course ponds or re-homing of Great Crested Newts, if appropriate.

Option 3

- Fish Habitats survey to be carried out;
- Appropriate lighting of bridge;
- Appropriate design of bridge;
- Sensitive construction methods

employed;

- Compensatory planting where required;
- Include mitigation such as badger/otter crossings where the route passes through their territory.
- Archaeological survey work to be undertaken;
- Appropriate landscaping;
- Maximise active travel linkages;
- Improved existing active travel links through the area;
- Avoid closure of canal/paths/trails for prolonged periods during construction.
- Sensitive design and layout of approach roads to avoid detrimental affect on setting of listed buildings;
- Sympathetic design of route through Whin Park to avoid significant detrimental impact on character of the area.

Option 4

- Fish Habitats survey to be carried out;
- Appropriate design of bridge;
- Appropriate lighting of bridge;
- Sensitive construction methods employed;
- Compensatory planting where required;
- Include mitigation such as badger/otter crossings where the route passes through their territory.
- Archaeological survey work to be undertaken;
- Appropriate landscaping;
- Maximise active travel linkages;
- Improved existing active travel links through the area;
- Avoid closure of canal/paths/trails for prolonged periods during construction.
- Sensitive design and layout of approach roads to avoid detrimental affect on setting of listed buildings;
- Sympathetic design of route through Whin Park to avoid significant detrimental impact on character of the area.
- Micro-siting to avoid impact on golf course ponds or re-homing of Great Crested Newts, if appropriate.

Option 5

- Fish Habitats survey to be carried out;
- Appropriate design of bridge;
- Appropriate lighting of bridge;
- Sensitive construction methods employed;
- Compensatory planting where required;
- Include mitigation such as badger/otter crossings where the route passes through their territory.
- Archaeological survey work to be undertaken;
- Appropriate landscaping;
- Maximise active travel linkages;
- Improved existing active travel links through the area;
- Avoid closure of canal/paths/trails for prolonged periods during construction.
- Sensitive design and layout of approach roads to avoid detrimental affect on setting of listed buildings;

- Sympathetic design of route through Whin Park to avoid significant detrimental impact on character of the area.
- Careful micro-siting of the road around north western edge of Torvean Landforms SSSI.
- Micro-siting to avoid impact on golf course ponds or re-homing of Great Crested Newts, if appropriate.

Option 6

- Fish Habitats survey to be carried out;
- Appropriate lighting of bridge;
- Compensatory planting where required;
- Archaeological survey work to be undertaken;
- Maximise active travel linkages;
- Avoid closure of canal/paths/trails for prolonged periods during construction.
- Appropriate design of bridge;
- Sensitive construction methods employed;
- Include mitigation such as badger/otter crossings where the route passes through their territory.
- Appropriate landscaping;
- Improved active travel links through the area;
- Provision of new active travel linkage between crossing and Dores Road Roundabout.

Option 7

- Fish Habitats survey to be carried out;
- Appropriate lighting of bridge;
- Compensatory planting where required;
- Archaeological survey work to be undertaken;
- Maximise active travel linkages;
- Avoid closure of canal/paths/trails for prolonged periods during construction.
- Consideration of bridge design to limit landscape impact.
- Appropriate design of bridge;
- Sensitive construction methods employed;
- Include mitigation such as badger/otter crossings where the route passes through their territory ie on the stretch of road from Dores Road Roundabout up to the River Crossing.
- Appropriate landscaping;
- Improve existing active travel links through the area;
- Sensitive micro-siting of an bridge peirs to avoid impact on SSI

Option 8

- Fish Habitats survey to be carried out;
- Appropriate lighting of bridge;
- Compensatory planting where required;
- Archaeological survey work to be undertaken;
- Maximise active travel linkages;
- Appropriate design of bridge;
- Sensitive construction methods employed;
- Include mitigation such as badger/otter crossings where the route passes through their territory;
- Appropriate landscaping;
- Improve existing active travel

links through the area;

- Avoid closure of canal/paths/trails for prolonged periods during construction.
- Micro-siting to avoid impact on golf course ponds or re-homing of Great Crested Newts, if appropriate.

Option 9

- Maximise linkages between existing paths and trails.
- Maximise linkages to the wider area.

It should be noted that this mitigation would be for the routes only. Mitigation for any development site would be brought forward through the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan.

Monitoring

Section 19 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires the Responsible Authority to monitor significant environmental effects of the implementation of the Highland wide Local Development Plan. This must be done in such a way as to also identify unforeseen adverse effects and to take appropriate remedial action.

It is considered good practice for monitoring:

- fit a pre-defined purpose, help to solve problems, and address key issues;
- is practical and is customised to the PPS;
- is transparent and readily accessible to the public;
- is seen as a learning process and a cyclical process relating closely to the collation of the environmental baseline.

For this monitoring to be effective it will need to be linked to both the SEA Objectives and the STAG Objectives. The baseline data set out earlier in this report sets the scene for any monitoring which is to take place. Below is a monitoring framework. The table below only considers indicators relevant to the state of the environment.

Note: Items highlighted in grey are longer term items which we seek to monitor as and when resources become available.

SEA Topic	What the project seeks to achieve	Monitoring Indicator	Responsible for Data Collation	Publication of Monitoring	Remedial Action
Soil	Limited impact on an geologically important site.	Area of Torvean SSSI affected by chosen option	THC (TEC Services)	Biennially	Review mitigation measures put in place.
Biodiversity	Protection and enhancement of biodiversity in Highland		THC (Information and Research)	Annually	Review Mitigation measures put in place
	Protected Species are not significantly disturbed		THC/SNH	Annually	Review policy and site allocations in Local Development Plan(s).
Human Health	Improve active travel / recreational access linkages	% travelling to work/study by car	THC (Information and Research)	Biennially	Review wider active travel linkages
		% travelling to work/study by active travel	THC (Information and Research)	Biennially	Review wider active travel linkages
	Protection and enhancement of public access	Number of path identified in the core path plan affected by chosen option in the long term	THC (Information and Research facilitated by access officers)	5 yearly	Secure enhancements to additional routes/improvements to those which have been affected.

Next Steps

This Environmental Report will be subject to a 4 week consultation, where expressions of opinion on the report will be welcomed. The Environmental Report will be available to view online and at Planning and Development Service Reception, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness, IV3 5NX. Copies will be sent to the SEA Gateway and also to the Consultation Authorities.

Following this consultation the views will be collated and, where appropriate, alterations will be made.

If appropriate, following any changes to the options at public consultation, revisions may be made to the Environmental Report prior to adoption of preferred solution for the Inverness West Link which is anticipated early 2012.

This SEA will then inform the EIA of the preferred option which will be required by the Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Act 2011.

Appendix 1 – Relevant Baseline Information and Maps

The information and maps in this section represent baseline data at a local level to the project area and expands on the information contained in the Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment. Date of data noted where known, otherwise taken as July 2011.

Note: Where information is not available at a local level it is given at a highland wide level.

While some of the information below may not be directly relevant it helped to scope the environmental issues which may be relevant to this project.

Maps Contained in this Section are:

- Core Path Network
- Flood Risk
- Forestry features
- Cultural Heritage
- City Boundary
- Designated sites
- Development plan allocations
- Historic environment record
- Open Space
- Landscape Character
- Water Quality

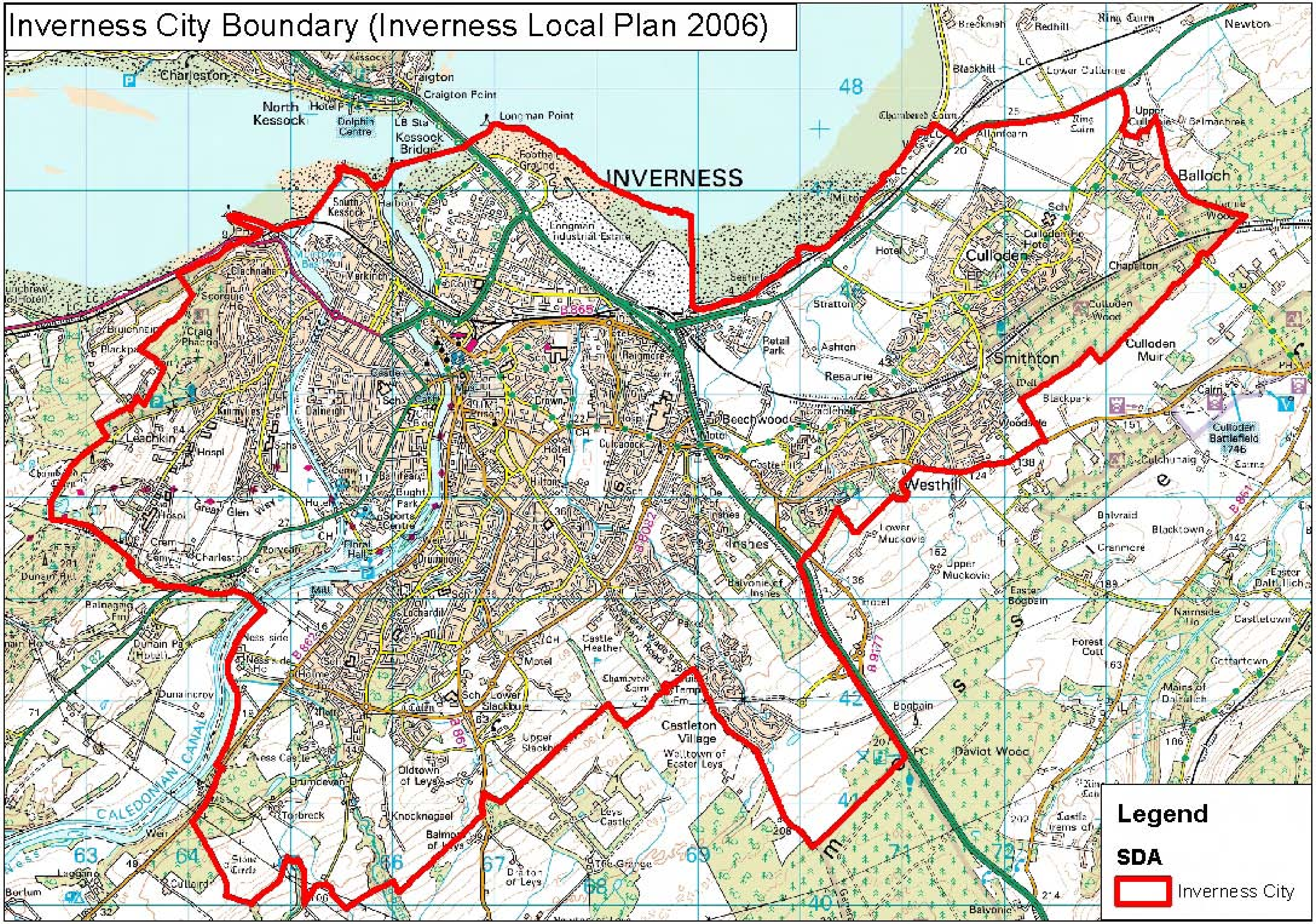
The baseline data has been derived from a number of sources and refined from that used in other recent SEA work. We seek comment from the consultation authorities on its scope.

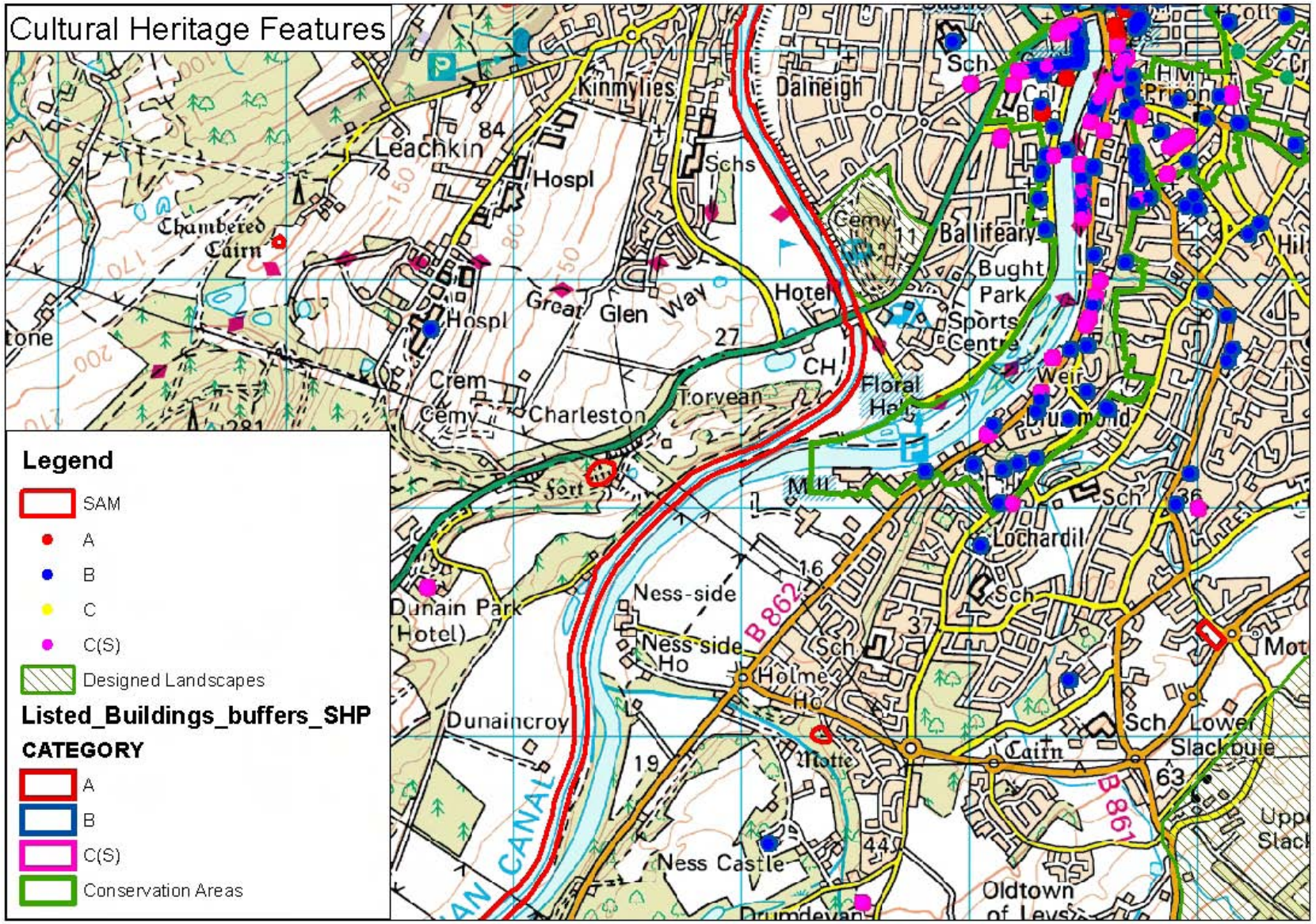
SEA Topic	Information	Information Source
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna		
Designated Sites	There are currently 1 RAMSAR sites, 1SAC's, 1 SPA's, 1 SSSI's, 0 NNR's, 1 LNR, within the vicinity of the project.	SNH datasets
Habitats and Species	The project area includes 7 types of habitat that are listed as priority habitats in either the uk or local biodiversity action plans. There are 20 species which are known to be present in the project area and 8 which may be present.	Highland Biodiversity Action Plan www.highlandbiodiversity.com Habitat and Birds Directive – Annex 1 http://www.rspb.org.uk/Images/sensitivitymapreport_tcm9-157990.pdf http://www.rspb.org.uk/Images/sensitivitymap_tcm9-157991.pdf
Condition of designated sites	Site condition monitoring database being produced by SNH will provide information on the condition of designated sites, 2000-2005, including recreational pressures..	SNH
Sea resources	Natural Resources of the Seas around Highland.	http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/agriculturefisheriesandforestry/fisheriesandaguaculture/
Forest and Woodland	There are woodland resources nearby and within the project area	The Highland Forest and Woodland strategy. http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/agriculturefisheriesandforestry/treesandforestry/highland-forest-and-woodland-strategy.htm Forestry Commission Scotland; http://www.forestry.gov.uk/scotland THC Datasets SNH Datasets
Population		
Population	Population of the City of Inverness is 60,890	2009 mid year estimates
Human Health		
	Highland wide in 2006 22 pedestrians and 5 cyclists were killed or serious injured in road accidents. 1994-98 yearly averages are 38 pedestrian and 16 cyclist	www.scotland.gov.uk

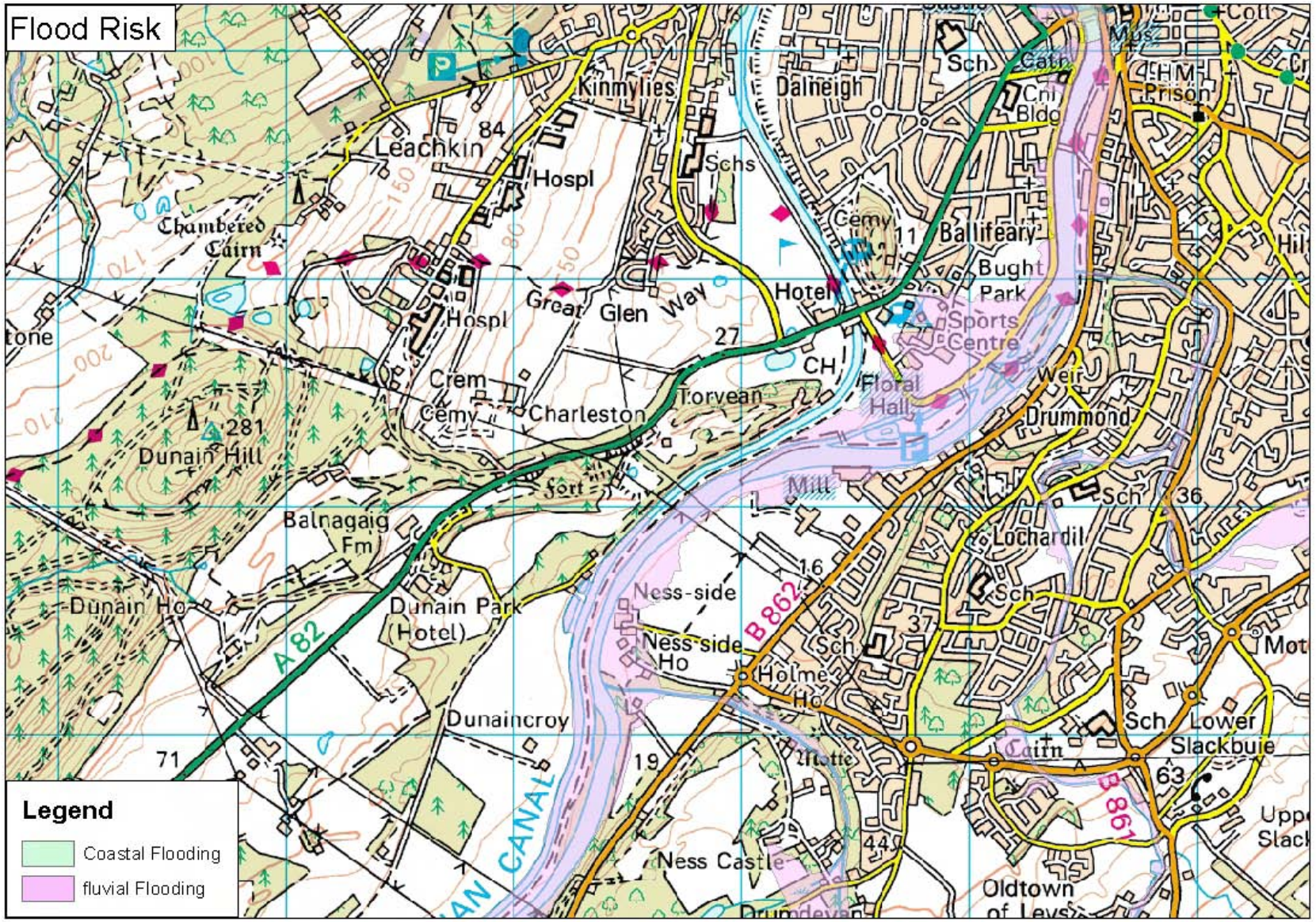
	fatalities.	
	82 non-domestic noise complaints received by Highland Council in 2006/7.	www.audit-scotland.gov.uk
	Scottish Crime and Victimisation Survey 2006 suggests 56% of respondents thought crime to be a 'big' problem (93% considered a problem overall). Feelings of safety while walking alone after dark is often used as a proxy measure for fear of crime. Overall, just over 3 in 10 respondents (32%) reported that they felt unsafe while walking alone after dark (which was the same as the proportion that reported feeling unsafe in the 2003 survey). Just over one in 10 (12%) reported that they felt 'very unsafe'. No regional data.	www.scotland.gov.uk
	11 health-related walking groups operating in PPS area.	www.stepituphighland.org.uk
	50% of Highland population walked a least on one day in the past week with the main aim been as a mode of transport (Scotland 53%). 64% walked at least one day in the past week just for pleasure or to keep fit (Scotland 46%).	SHS Transport Across Scotland 2005-2006
Soil		
Contaminated Land	Number of sites of Contaminated Land in direct vicinity of project area.	Highland Council Contaminated Land Database.
Agricultural Land	Land use, employment and production information. Crofting in Highland Type of soils	National Farmers Union Scotland; http://www.nfus.org.uk/facts_index.asp Crofters Commission Annual report 2006/07; http://www.crofterscommission.org.uk/documents/croft-englishfinalreport0607.pdf Macaulay Soil Survey of Scotland
Geodiversity	Torvean Landforms SSSI is designated for its Quaternary of Scotland feature.	SNH Dataset
Water		
Water Quality	Water Quality in the River Ness is classed as Good. Water Quality in the Caledonian Canal is classed as Good Ecological Potential.	SEPA data
Flooding	The project area sits within an area of fluvial flooding.	SEPA data
Air		
Air Quality	There are no Air Quality Management Areas in the vicinity of project.	THC Environmental Health and http://www.scottishairqua

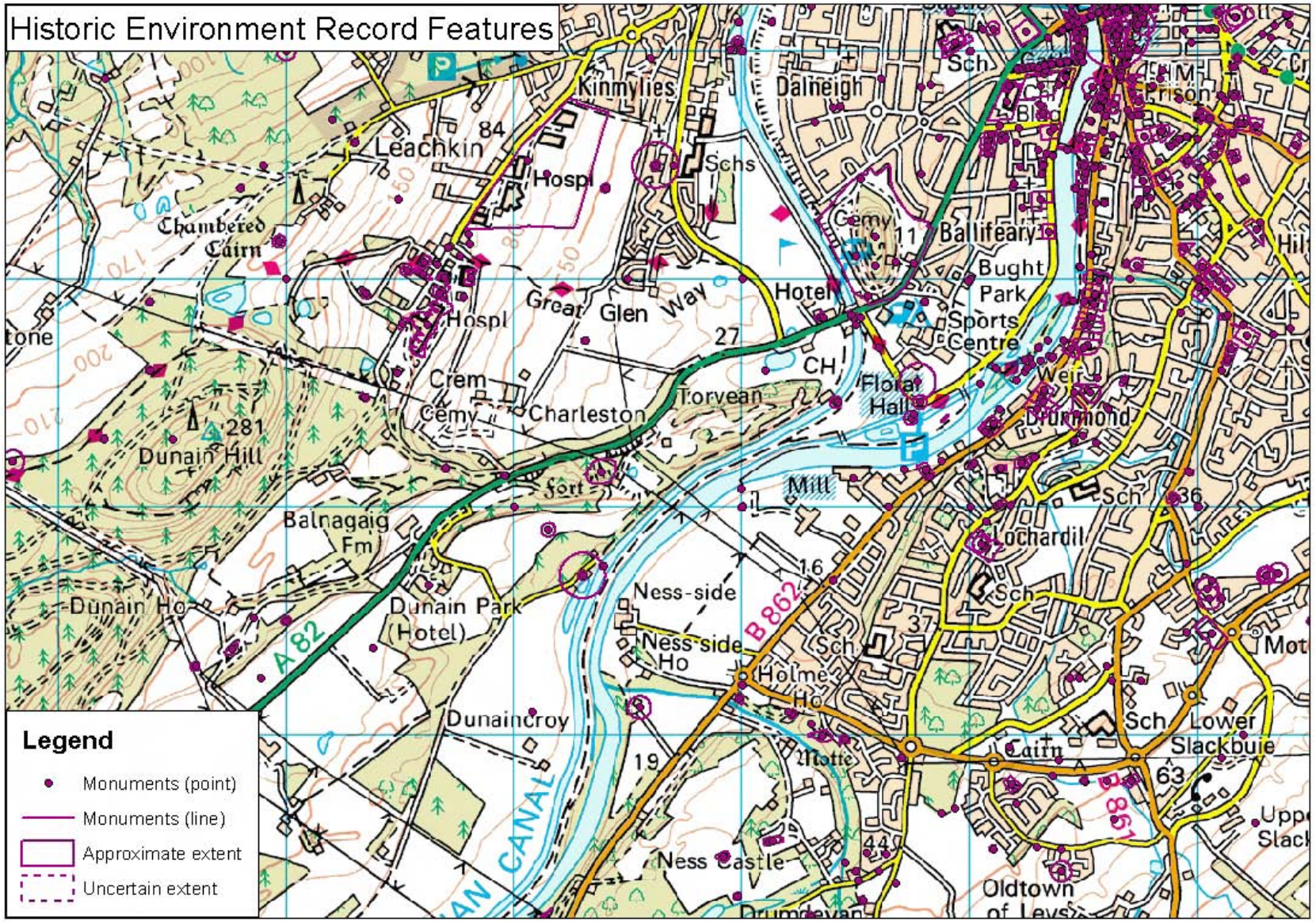
		lity.co.uk/
Climatic Factors		
Use of Sustainable Transport.	Number of people travelling by car. Number of people using public transport for social, commuting and business travel. Number of people using active travel for social, commuting and business travel.	Local Transport Strategy http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/roadsandtransport/transportplanning/localtransportstrategy.htm Census Results Scottish Household Survey.
Material Assets		
Water Treatment Works	Number of water treatments works in Highland. Investment in future.	Scottish Water Strategic Asset Capacity and Development Plan (2006); http://www.scottishwater.co.uk/portal/page/portal/SW_PAGE_GROUP_PS_ADMIN/SW_PUB_SCHEME_ADMIN_HOLDING/TAB65572/RELEASED%20STRATEGIC%20CAPACITY%20AND%20DEVELOPMENT%20PLAN%20MARCH%202006%20V2.pdf Scottish Waters Vision for Highlands 2010; http://www.scottishwater.co.uk/portal/page/portal/SWE_PGP_INVESTMENT/SWE_PGE_INVESTMENT/SWE_INV_HIGH_2010
Footpath networks	A number of paths including core paths, rights of way etc run through and connect the project area.	The Highland Councils Core Path Plan.
Cycle paths	Number of designated cycle routes in Highland	Sustrans National Cycle Network Map; http://www.sustrans.org.uk/webfiles/general/sustrans_2008_ncn_map.pdf
Cultural Heritage		
Listed Buildings	There are: 5 B listed buildings 2 C(s) Listed Buildings in the vicinity of the project area.	Historic Scotland Dataset

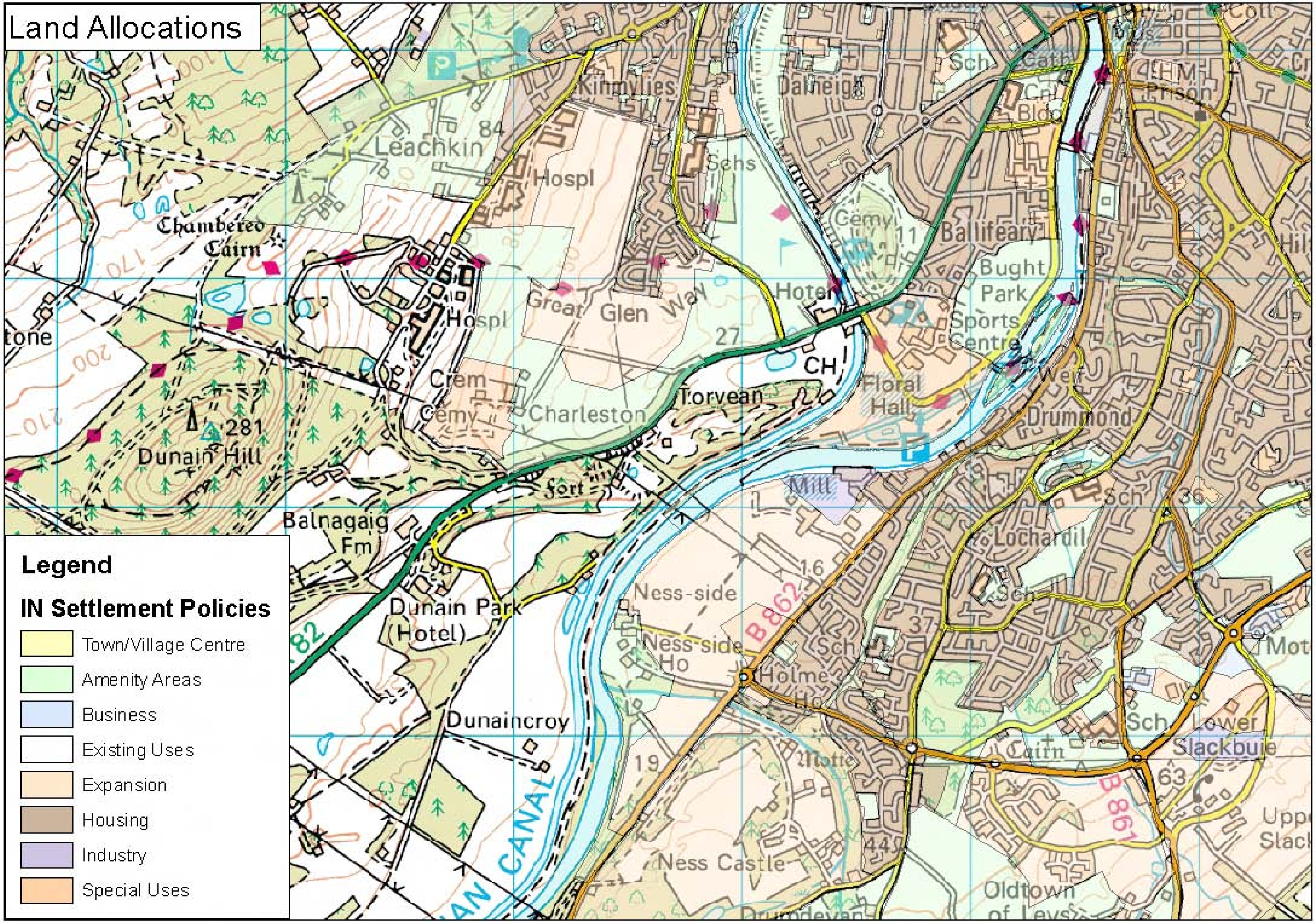
Schedule Monuments	There are 3 Schedule Monuments in the vicinity of the project area.	Historic Scotland Dataset
Design Landscapes	1 Designed Landscape in the vicinity of the project area.	Historic Scotland Dataset
Conservation Areas	The Inverness Riverside Conservation Area is to the south east of the study area.	Historic Scotland Dataset
Local Historic Environment Features	There are numerous records within the Highland Historic Environment Record in the vicinity of the project area.	Highland Historic Environment Record
Landscape		
Landscape Character	The project area covers three distinct landscape types	Scottish Natural Heritage: *Overview of Scotland's national programme of Landscape Character Assessment (2004)* Scottish Natural Heritage (1998) *Inner Moray Firth Landscape Character Assessment.* Scottish Natural Heritage (1998) *Inverness District Landscape Character Assessment*
Open Space	There is a significant mix of greenspace across the project area.	Highland Greenspace Audit 2010.

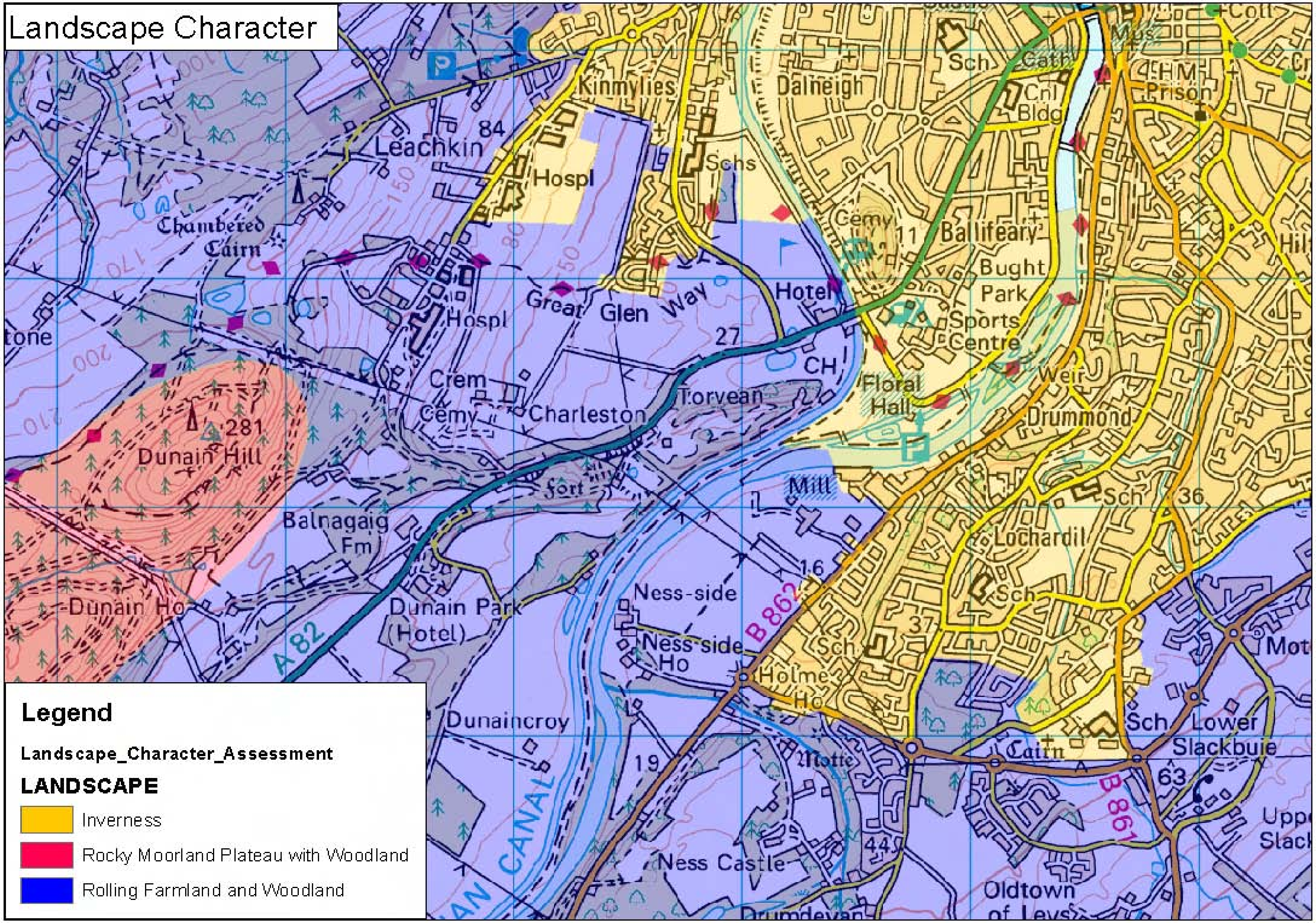

Inverness City Boundary (Inverness Local Plan 2006)
INVERNESS
Culloden
Smithton
Westhill
Balloch
Charleston
North Kessock
Craigton
Kessock Bridge
Longman Industrial Estate
Beechwood
Inshes
Dalneigh
Leachkin
Castleton Village
Culloden Battlefield 1746
Culloden Muir
Daviot Wood
CALEDONIAN CANAL
Legend
SDA
Inverness City

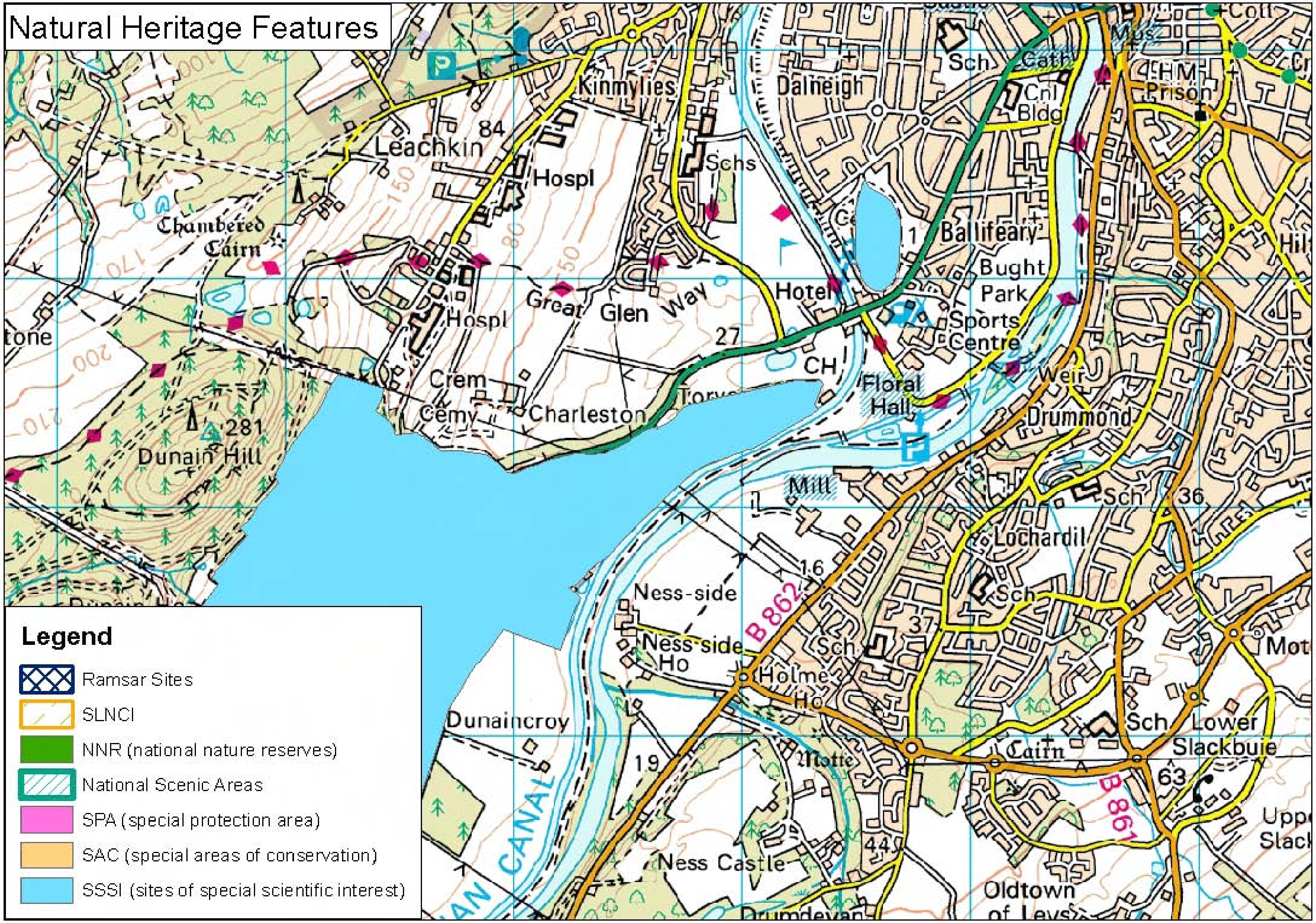

Cultural Heritage Features
Legend
SAM
A
B
C
C(S)
Designed Landscapes
Listed_Buildings_buffers_SHP
CATEGORY
A
B
C(S)
Conservation Areas
Kinmylies
Leachkin
Hospl
Schs
Dalneigh
Sch
Ballifeary
Bught Park
Sports Centre
Hotel
Great Glen Way
Chambered Cairn
Crem
Cemy
Charleston
Torvean
Floral Hall
Weir
Fort
Lochardil
Dunain Park (Hotel)
Ness-side
Ness-side Ho
B862
Holme
Dunaincroy
Motte
Cairn
Lower Slackbuie
B861
Ness Castle
Oldtown of Leys
Drumdevan
CANAL

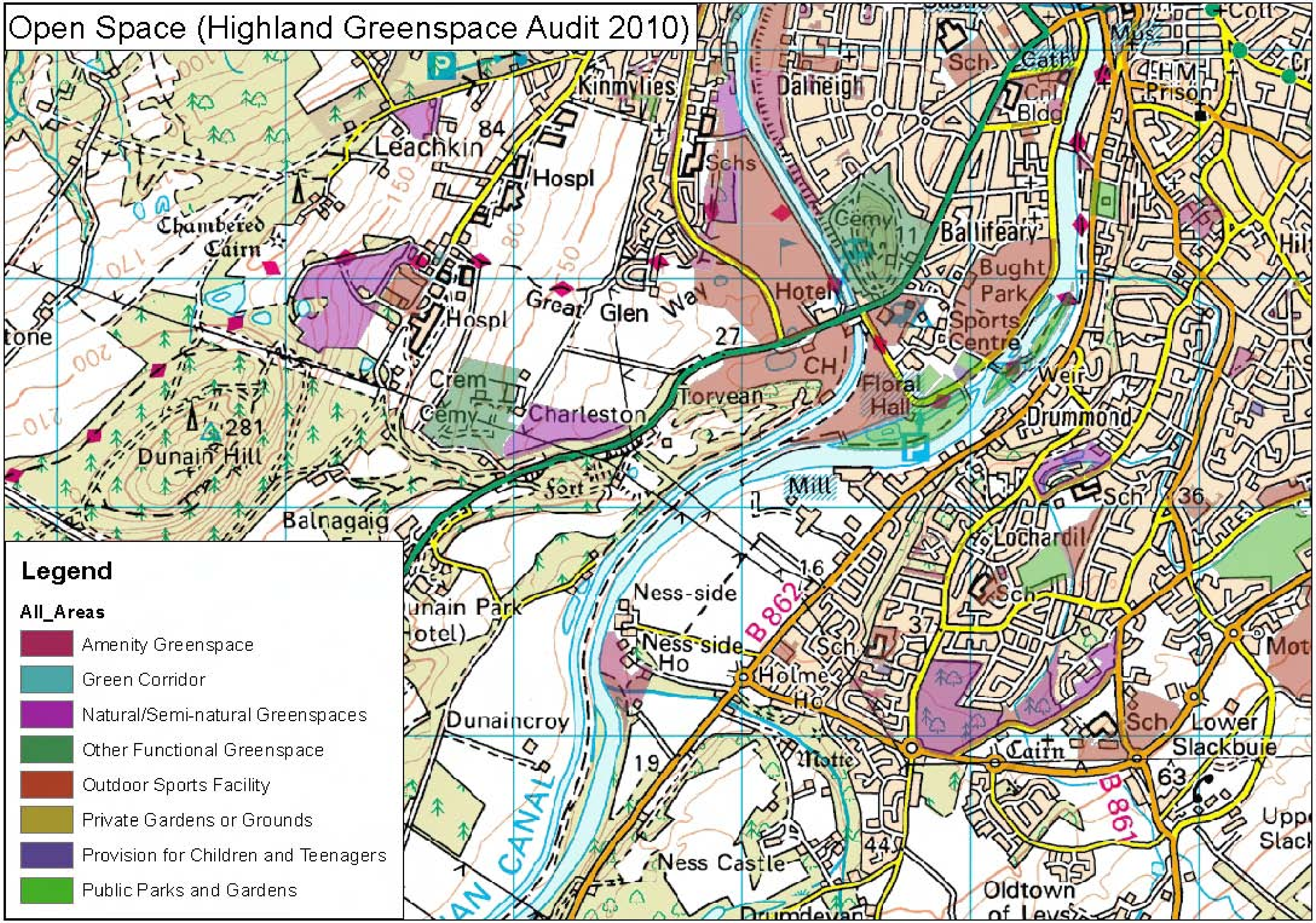

Flood Risk
Legend
Coastal Flooding
fluvial Flooding
Kinmylies
Leachkin
Hospl
Schs
Dalneigh
Sch
Cemy
Ballifeary
Bught Park
Sports Centre
Hotel
Great Glen Way
Chambered Cairn
Crem
Cemy
Charleston
Torvean
CH
Floral Hall
Weir
Drummond
Dunain Hill
Balnagaig Fm
Dunain Ho
Dunain Park (Hotel)
A 82
Mill
Lochardil
Ness-side
Ness-side Ho
B 862
Holme Ho
Dunaincroy
Ness Castle
Lower Slackbuie
B 861
Oldtown of Leys
HM Prison

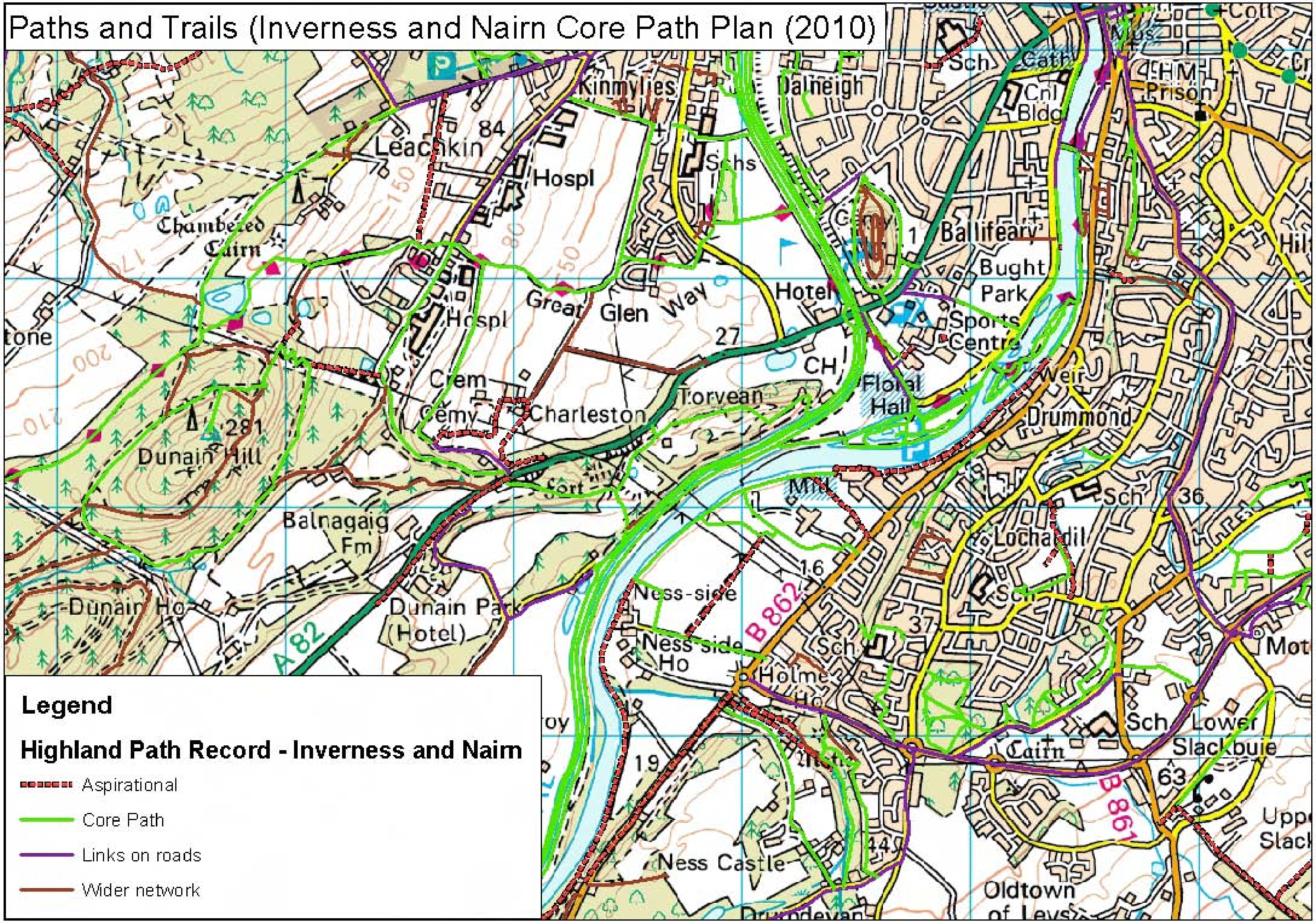

Historic Environment Record Features
Legend
Monuments (point)
Monuments (line)
Approximate extent
Uncertain extent
Kinmylies
Leachkin
Dalneigh
Sch
Prison
Schs
Hospl
Chambered Cairn
Cemy
Ballifeary
Bught Park
Sports Centre
Hotel
Great Glen Way
Crem
Cemy
Charleston
Torvean
Floral Hall
Drummond
Dunain Hill
Fort
Mill
Balnagaig Fm
Dunain Ho
Dunain Park (Hotel)
A 82
Ness-side
Ness-side Ho
B 862
Holme Ho
Lochardil
Dunaincroy
Motte
Lower Slackbuie
Cairn
Ness Castle
Oldtown of Leys
Drumdevan
CH
Weir

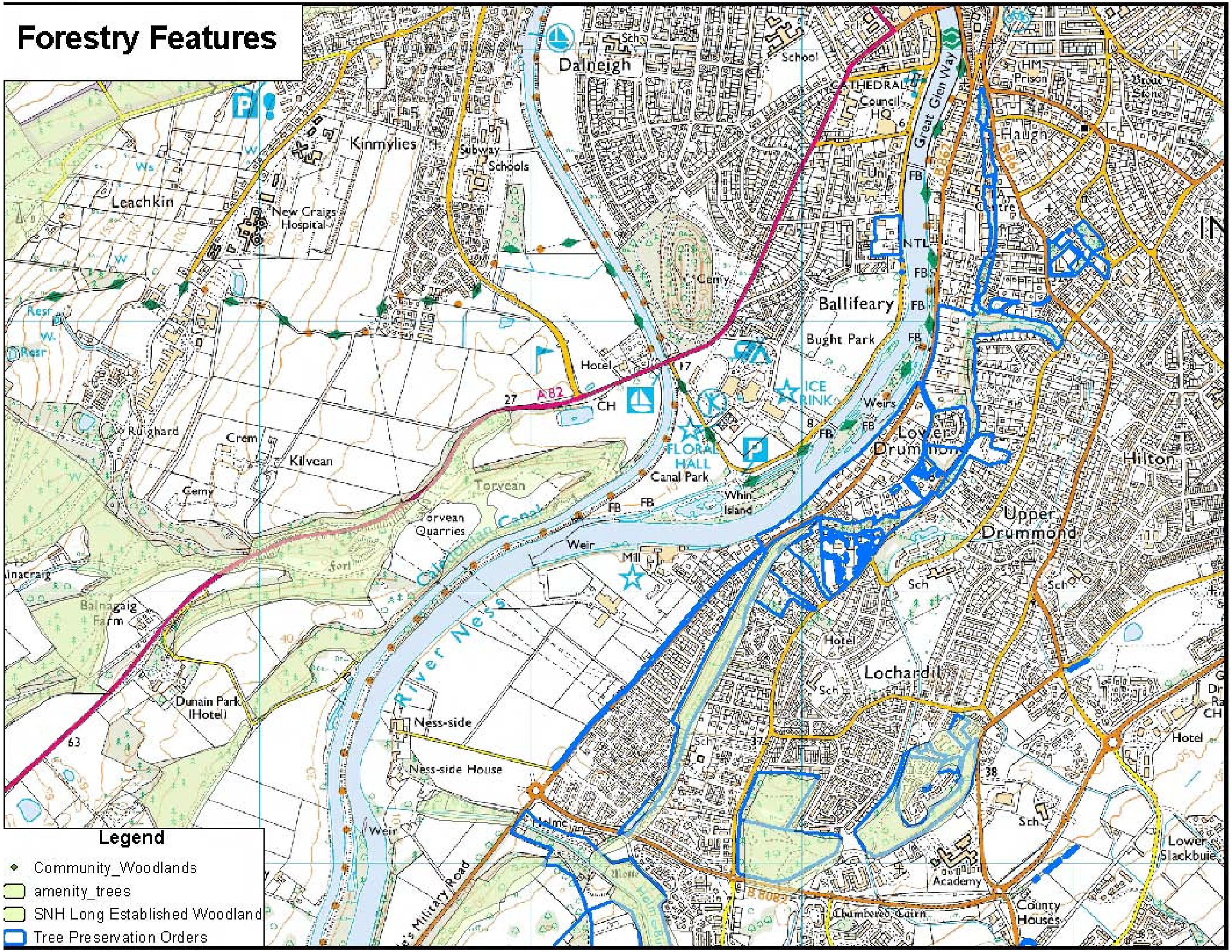

Land Allocations
Legend
IN Settlement Policies
Town/Village Centre
Amenity Areas
Business
Existing Uses
Expansion
Housing
Industry
Special Uses
Leachkin
Hospl
Kinmylies
Dalneigh
Sch
HM Prison
Ballifeary
Bught Park
Sports Centre
Floral Hall
Great Glen Way
Torvean
Charleston
Crem
Cemy
Dunain Hill
Chambered Cairn
Balnagaig Fm
Dunain Park (Hotel)
Dunaincroy
Ness-side
Ness Castle
Holme
Lochardil
Drummond
Mill
Lower Slackbuie
Oldtown of Leys
B862
B861
CANAL


Landscape Character
Legend
Landscape_Character_Assessment
LANDSCAPE
Inverness
Rocky Moorland Plateau with Woodland
Rolling Farmland and Woodland
Kinmylies
Dalneigh
Leachkin
Hospl
Schs
Chambered Cairn
Cemy
Ballifeary
Bught Park
Sports Centre
Great Glen Way
Hotel
Hospl
Crem
Cemy
Charleston
Torvean
CH
Floral Hall
Weir
Drummond
281
Dunain Hill
Fort
Mill
Sch
Balnagaig Fm
Lochardil
Ness-side
Ness-side Ho
B 862
Dunain Ho
Dunain Park (Hotel)
A 82
Holme Ho
Sch
Lower Slackbuie
Dunaincroy
Motte
Cairn
B 861
CANAL
Ness Castle
Oldtown of Leys
Drumdevan
H M Prison
Cathl
Cnl Bldg
Mus
Sch


Natural Heritage Features
Legend
Ramsar Sites
SLNCI
NNR (national nature reserves)
National Scenic Areas
SPA (special protection area)
SAC (special areas of conservation)
SSSI (sites of special scientific interest)
Kinmylies
Dalneigh
Sch
Cathl
HM Prison
Cnl Bldg
Leachkin
84
Hospl
Schs
Chambered Cairn
Ballifeary
Bught Park
Sports Centre
Hotel
Great Glen Way
27
CH
Hospl
Crem
Cemy
Charleston
Floral Hall
Weir
Drummond
Dunain Hill
281
Mill
Sch
36
Lochardil
16
Ness-side
B 862
Sch
37
Ness-side Ho
Holme Ho
Sch
Lower Slackbuie
Dunaincroy
19
Motte
Cairn
63
B 861
44
Ness Castle
Oldtown of Leys
CANAL

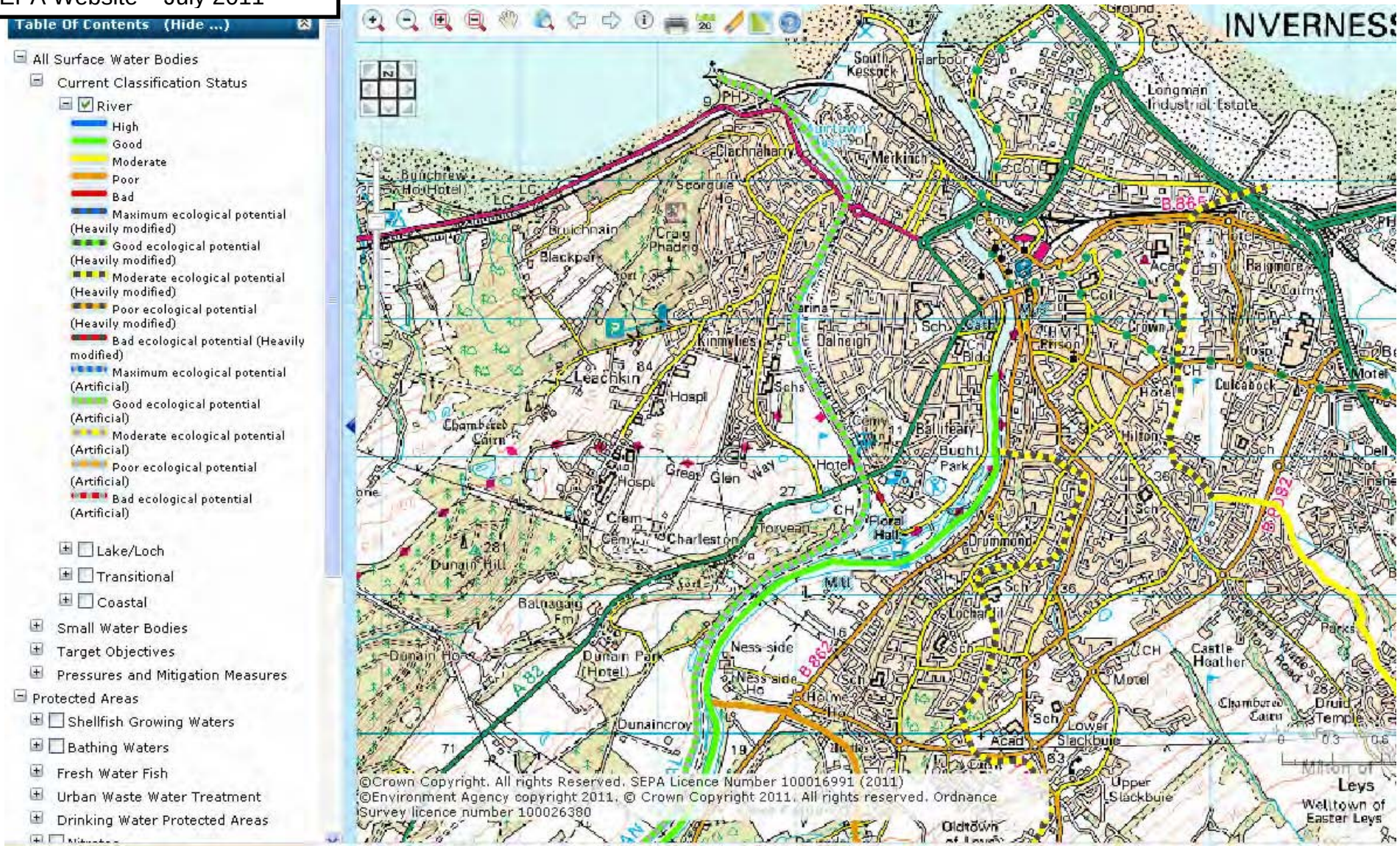

Open Space (Highland Greenspace Audit 2010)
Legend
All_Areas
Amenity Greenspace
Green Corridor
Natural/Semi-natural Greenspaces
Other Functional Greenspace
Outdoor Sports Facility
Private Gardens or Grounds
Provision for Children and Teenagers
Public Parks and Gardens
Kinmylies
Dalneigh
Leachkin
Hospl
Chambered Cairn
Great Glen Way
Ballifeary
Bught Park
Sports Centre
Hotel
Torvean
Floral Hall
Crem
Cemy
Charleston
Dunain Hill
Balnagaig
Drummond
Lochardil
Ness-side
Holme
Dunaincroy
Ness Castle
Oldtown of Leys
Lower Slackbuie
H M Prison
B 862
B 861


Paths and Trails (Inverness and Nairn Core Path Plan (2010)
Legend
Highland Path Record - Inverness and Nairn
Aspirational
Core Path
Links on roads
Wider network
Kinmylies
Dalneigh
Leachkin
Hospl
Chambered Cairn
Great Glen Way
Dunain Hill
Charleston
Torvean
Ballifeary
Bught Park
Sports Centre
Floral Hall
Drummond
Lochardil
Ness-side
Ness Castle
Dunain Park (Hotel)
Balnagaig Fm
Dunain Ho
Holme
Lower Slackbuie
Oldtown of Leys
H M Prison
A 82
B 862
B 861

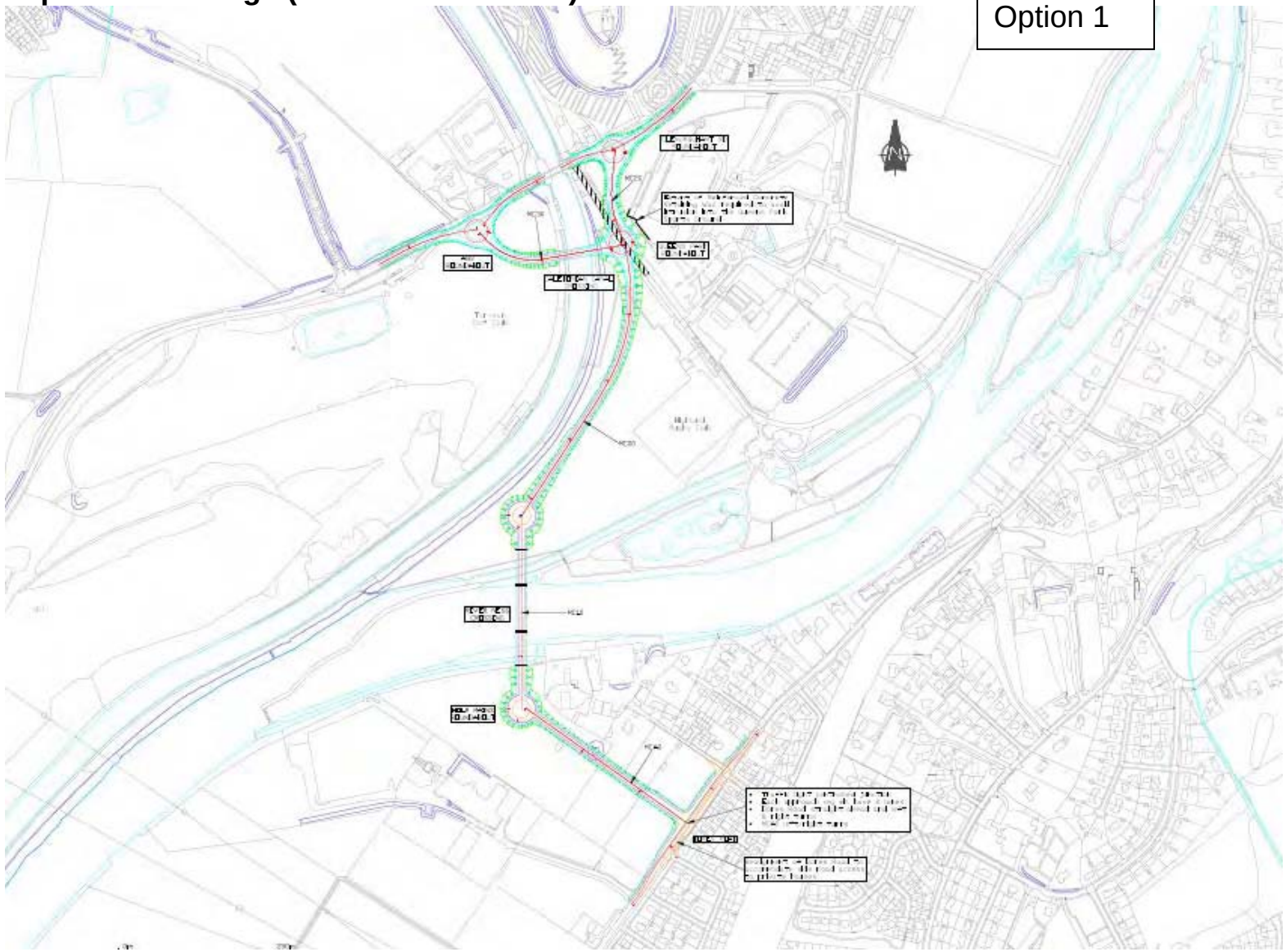


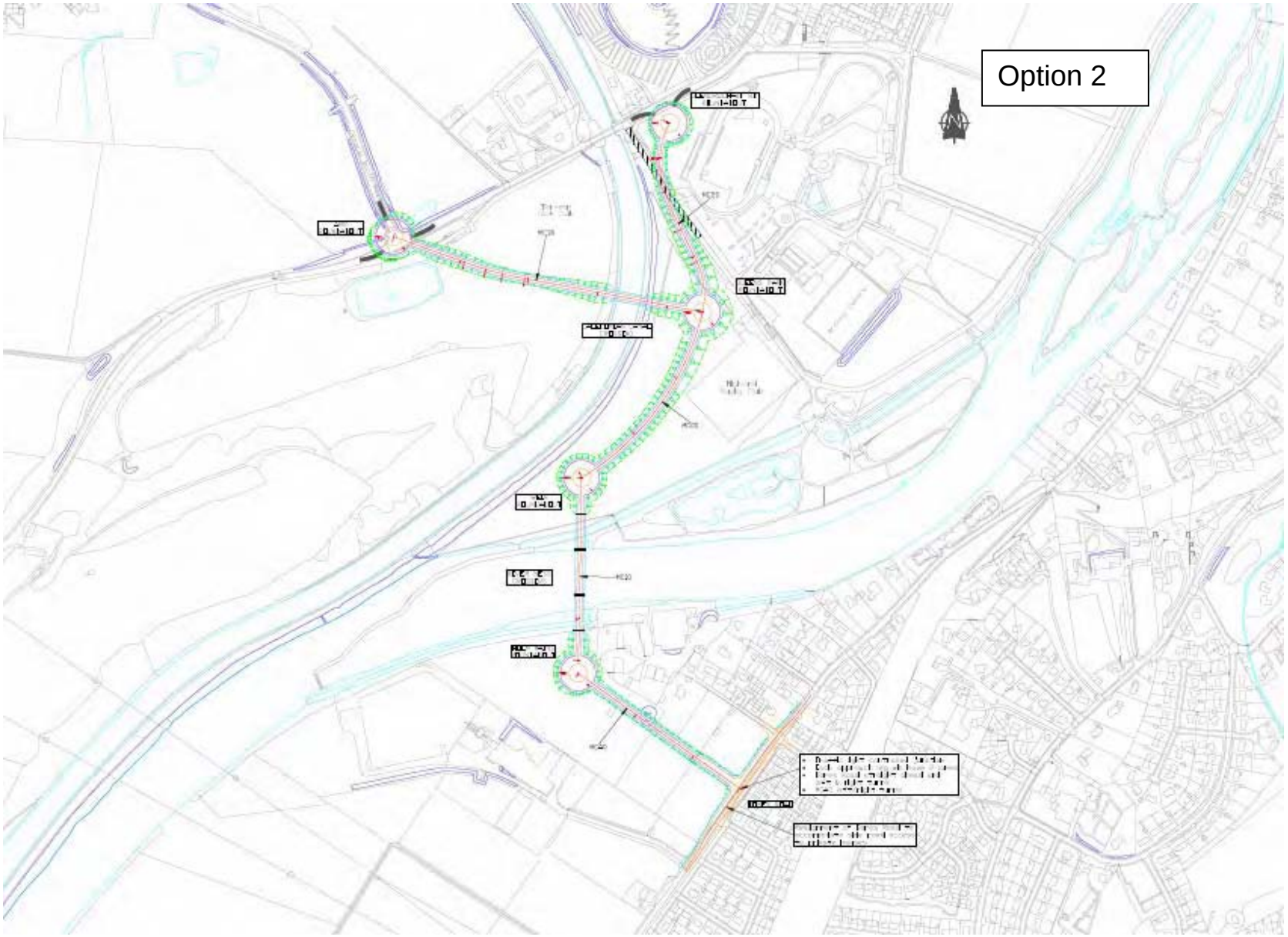
Forestry Features
Legend
Community_Woodlands
amenity_trees
SNH Long Established Woodland
Tree Preservation Orders

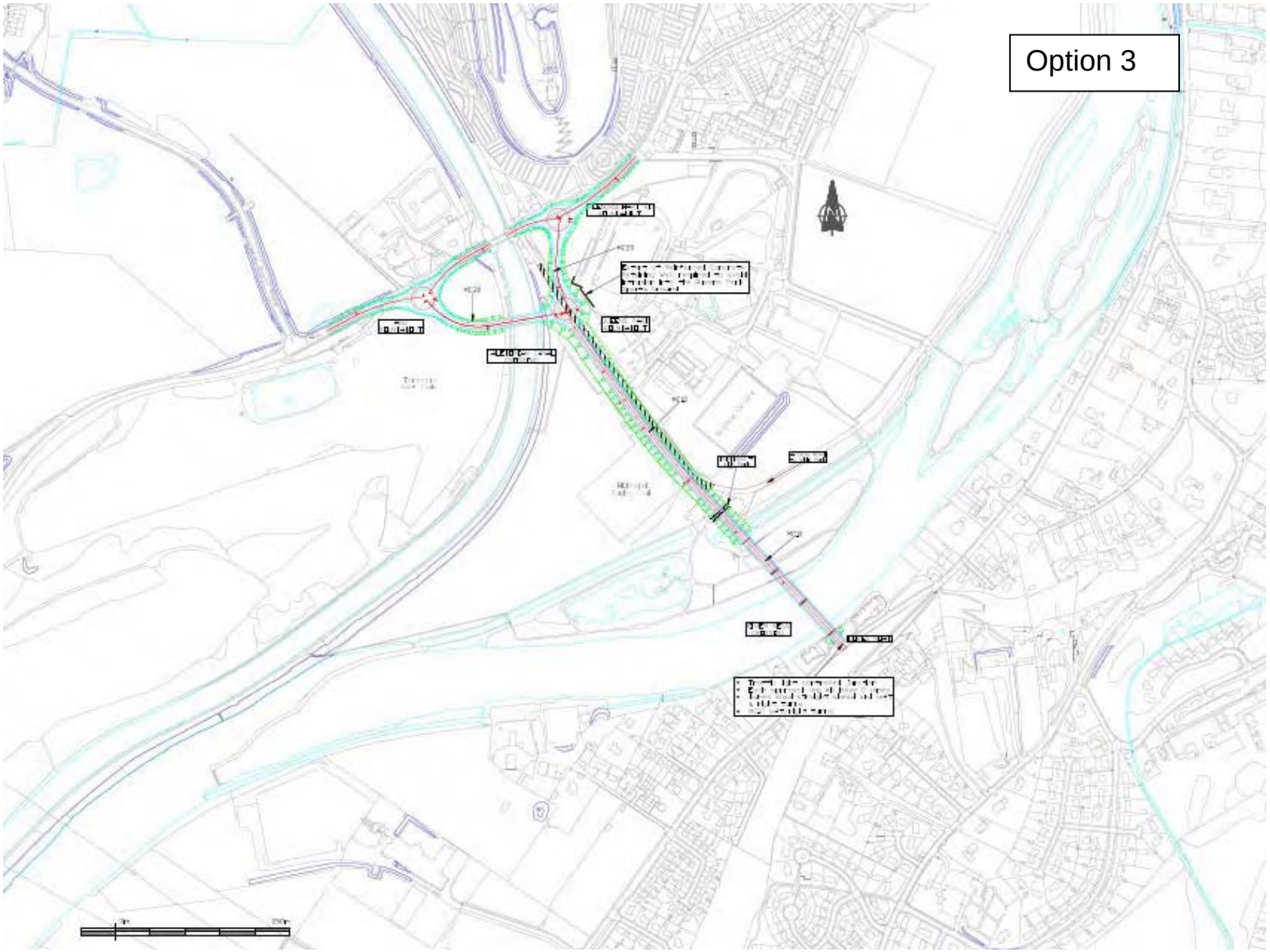
Water Quality as taken from SEPA Website – July 2011



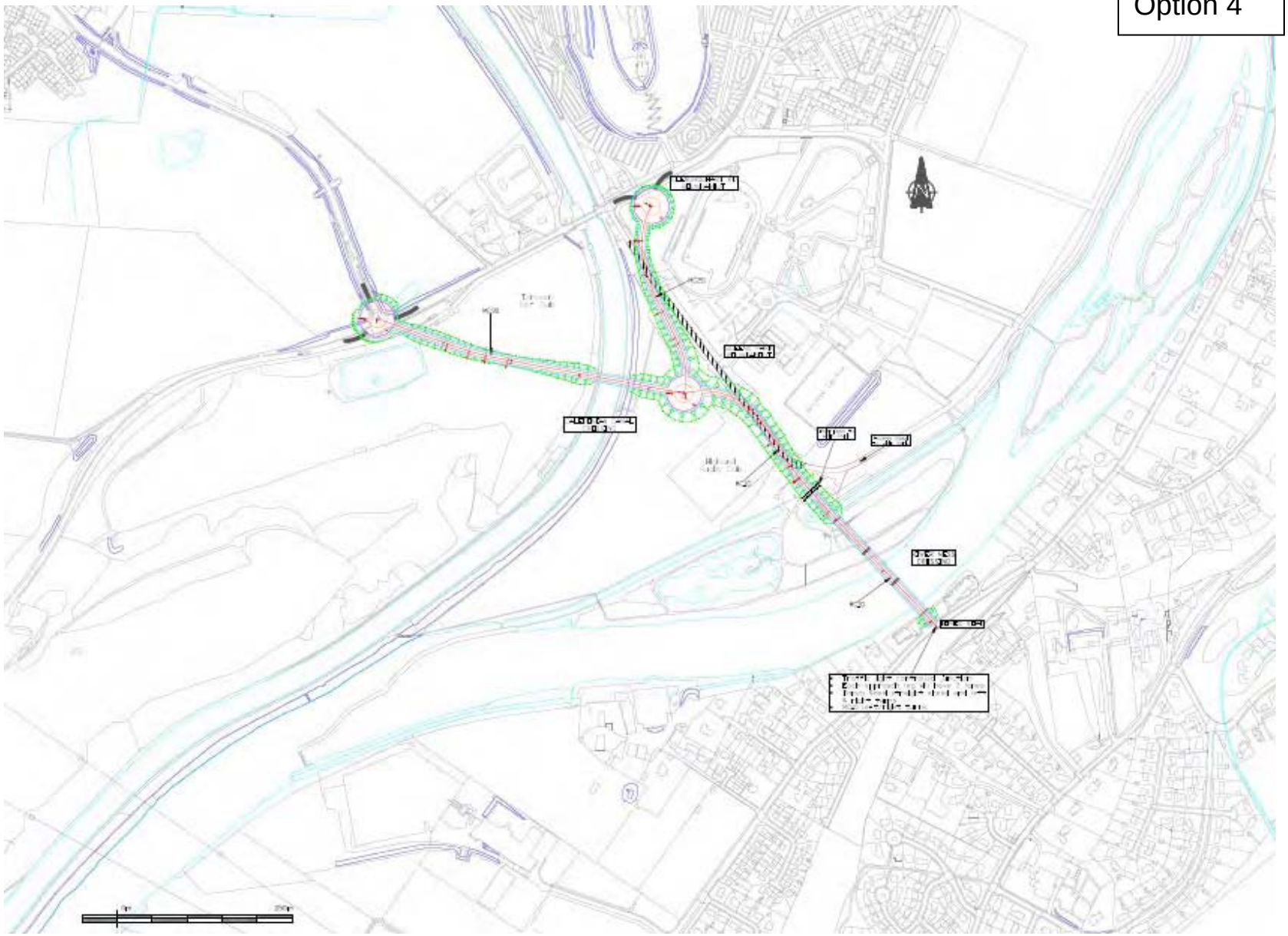
Appendix 2 – Options Drawings (as at October 2011)




Option 2


Option 3

Option 4



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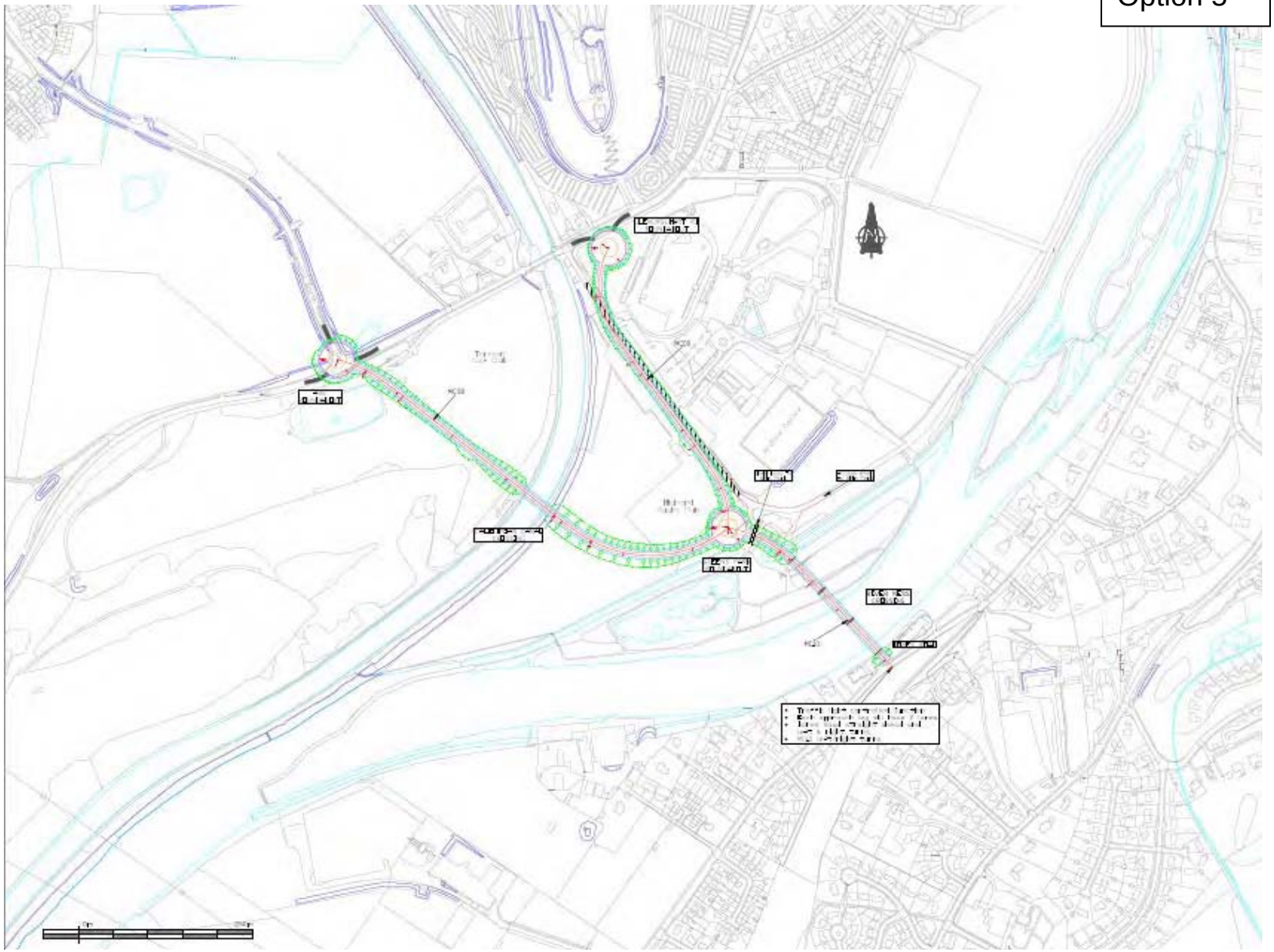
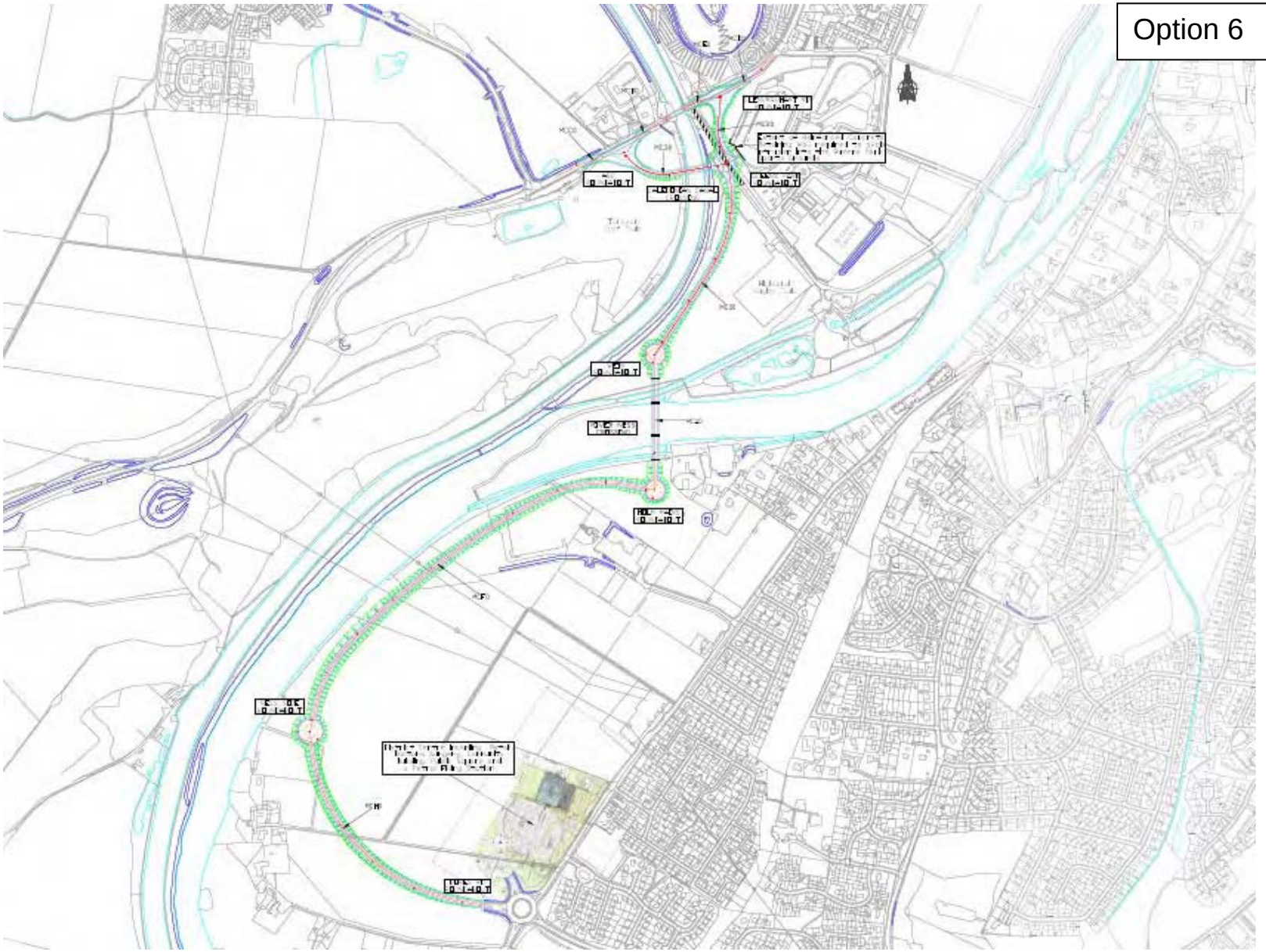
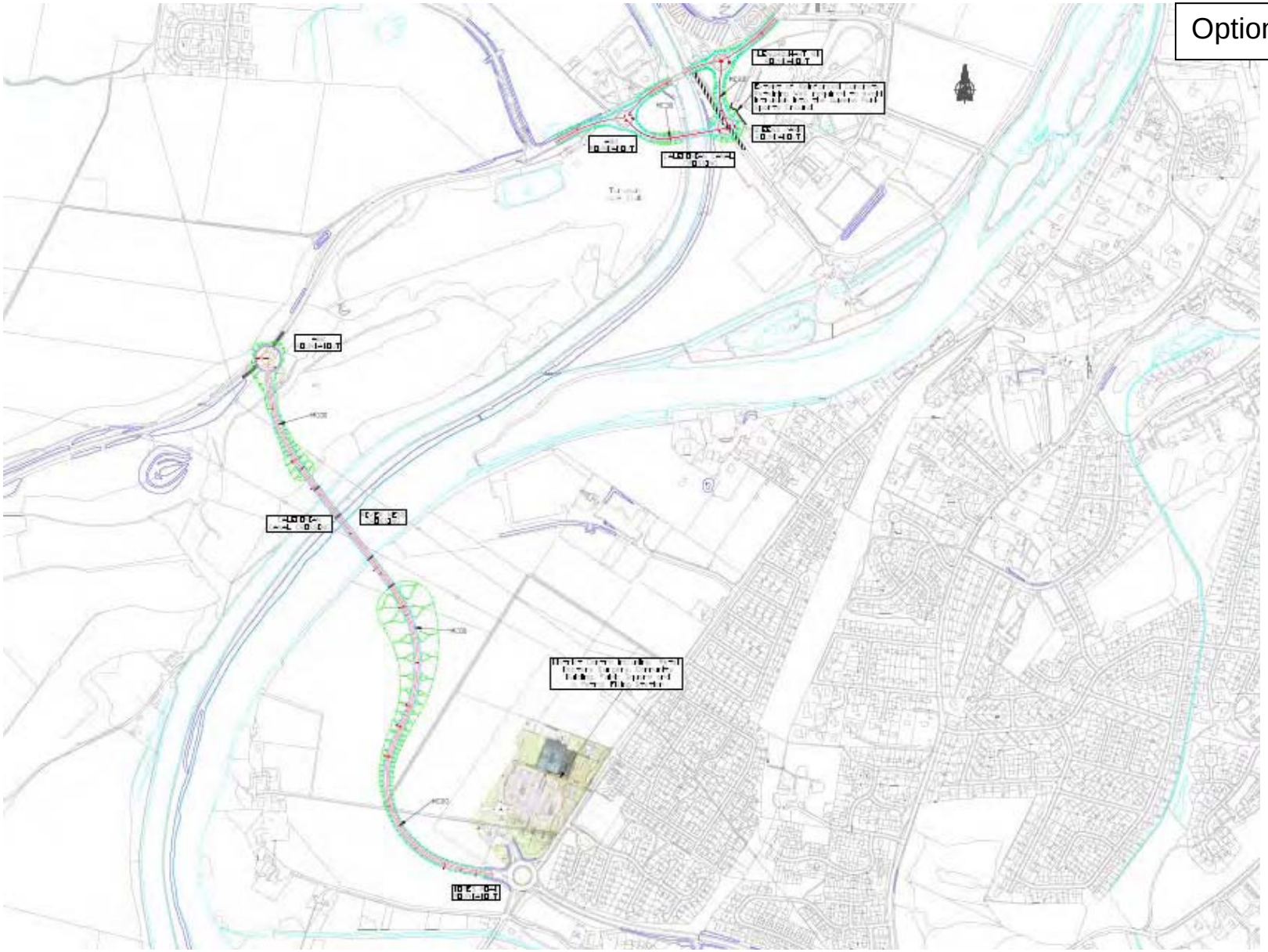
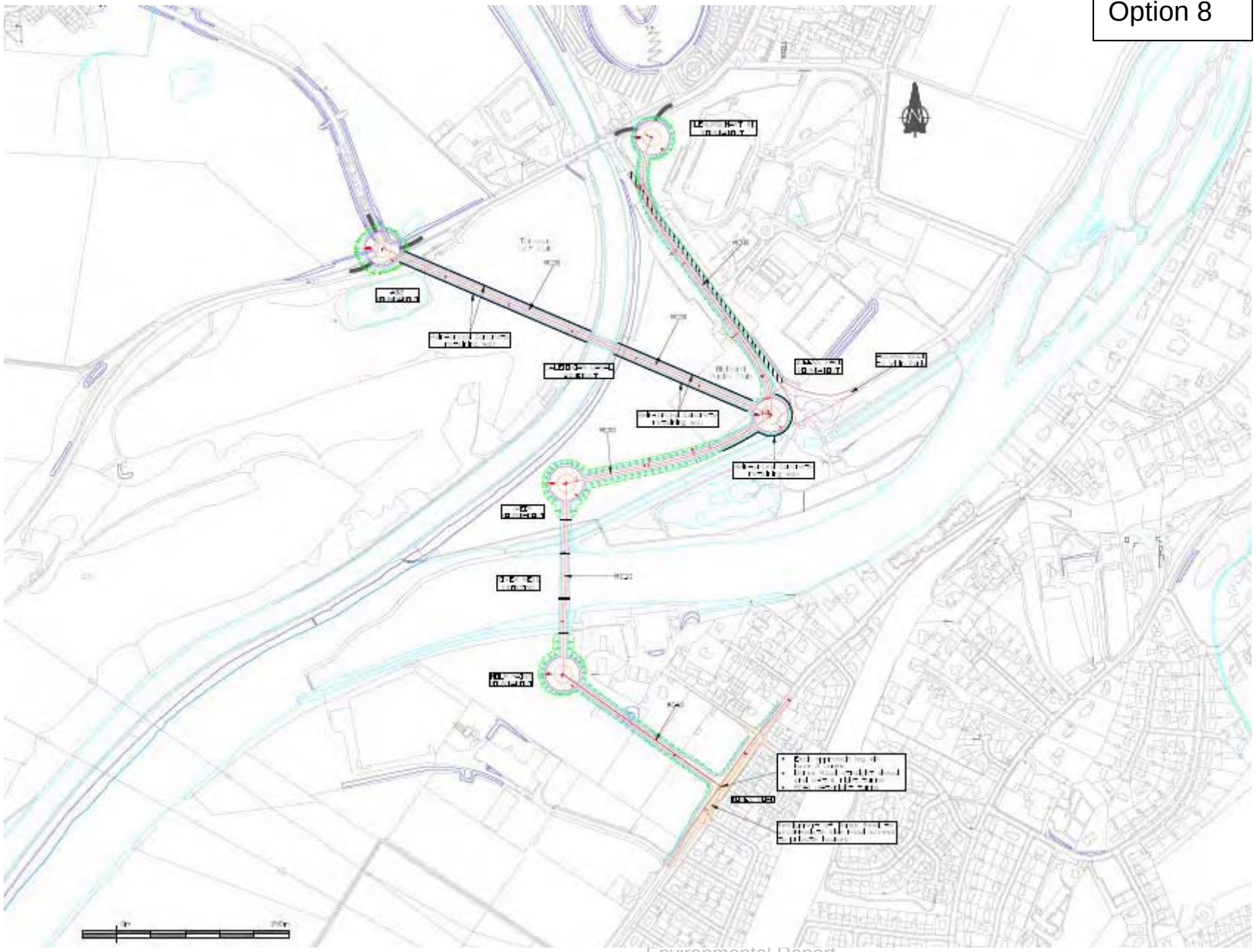



Option 6



Option 7

Option 8



Appendix 3 – How the Assessment will be carried out (Example of Matrix Approach)
The assessment will consider:

- What level of impact the guidance/reasonable alternative may have in the short/medium/long term on each of the SEA Objectives and;
- At what scale the preferred approach/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	Minimal positive impact	No or neutral Impact	Minimal negative impact	Significant negative impact	Possible Positive and Negative Impacts	Unknown Impact
++	+	=	-	--	+/-	??

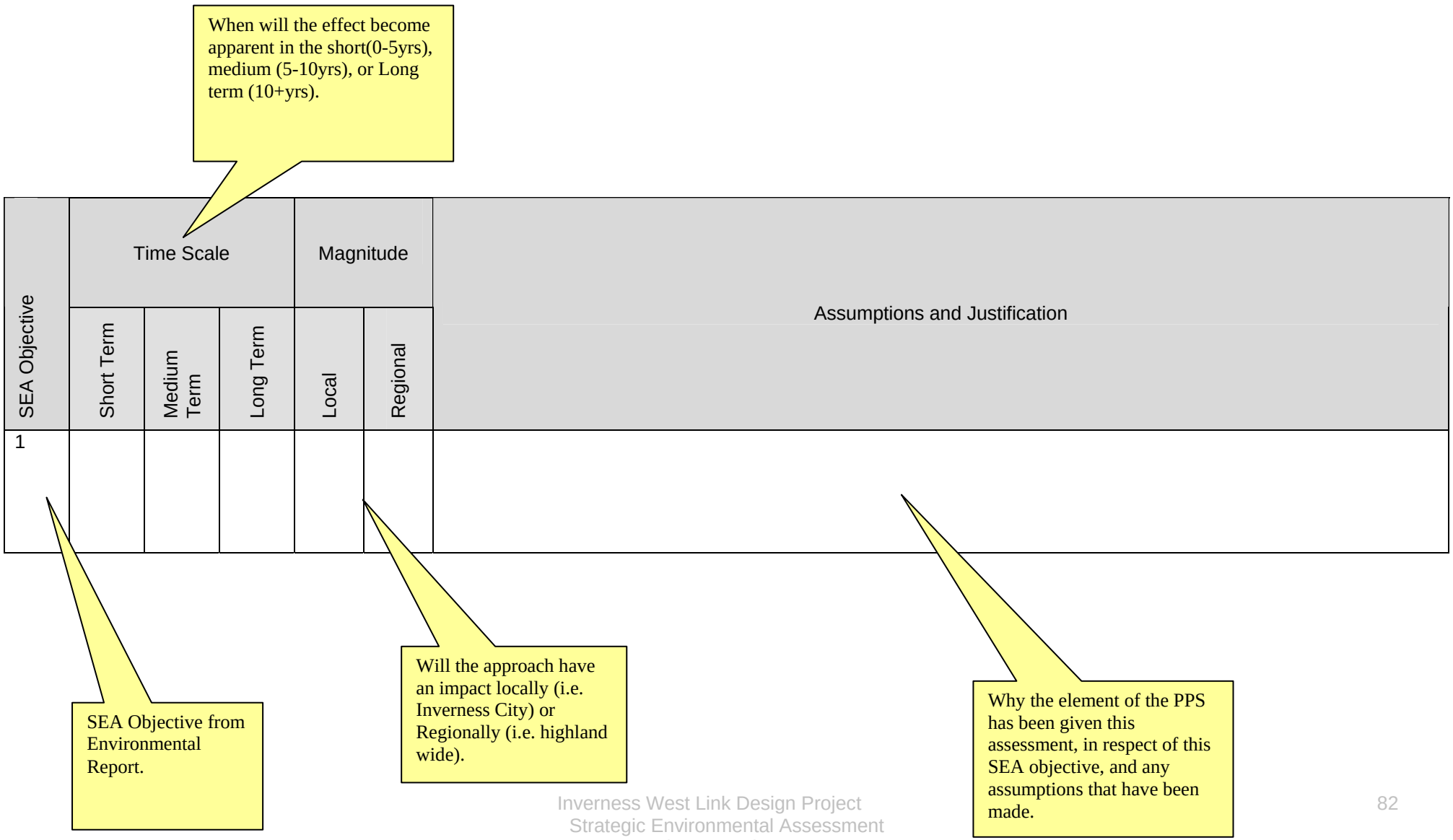
Each assessment will be followed by a concise commentary on the findings of the assessment of the option.

On the following page the SEA Objectives are set out and are accompanied by the key considerations for the assessment of the guidance/reasonable alternative.

Key Considerations

1	**Maintain and enhance designated wildlife sites, biodiversity, valuable habitats and protected species, avoiding irreversible losses** Will it contribute to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity in Highland? Will it contribute to achieving local and regional biodiversity action plan targets? Will habitats of importance will biodiversity be protected? Will it safeguard Sites of Special Scientific Interest? Will it safeguard the qualifying features of the River Moriston Special Area of Conservation? Will it ensure the importance of the protected species of the area is made a priority?
2.	**Protect and enhance important geological features** Will it protect areas of importance for geodiversity?
3.	**Protect and where appropriate enhance the cultural heritage** Will it protect or enhance listed buildings and their settings? Will it protect or enhance the scheduled monuments and their settings? Will it protect or enhance locally important archaeological sites? Will it protect or enhance conservation areas? Will it protect or enhance historic gardens and designed landscapes?
4.	**Value and protect the diversity and local distinctiveness of landscapes** Will existing landscape character be maintained or enhanced? Will local diversity and distinctiveness be maintained or enhanced? Will it protect areas with strong qualities of wildness? Will it consider the cumulative landscape impact of proposals? Will it protect and enhance designated landscapes?
5.	**Maintain and enhance active travel and recreational access opportunities within the wider area?** Will it safeguard and enhance recreational access opportunities around and on the Caledonian Canal? Will it safeguard and enhance recreational access opportunities to the wider area? Will it safeguard and enhance active travel opportunities?

Example Matrix



Appendix 4 . Full assessment results

Note: These assessments have been carried with the best available information available at the time of writing and taking into consideration all of the baseline data and other information which has been gathered in bringing forward this report. These assessments consider the strategic effects of the options, it will be the role of the Environmental Impact Assessment to look in detail at each of the individual options in detail.

Option 1

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
1	=	-	-	-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. The freshwater pearl mussels are intrinsically linked with the lifecycle of the Atlantic Salmon **Justification** It is considered that there may be a moderate loss of mature woodland, trees and riparian habitat in bringing forward this option. No element of this option will facilitate the achievement of LBAP or RBAP targets. This option will avoid the Torvean Landforms SSSI therefore it facilitates its protection. It is anticipated that there may be impacts on freshwater Atlantic Salmon through the construction and implementation of this option. As there will be a loss of habitats in the area it may be possible that there will be an impact on protected species. This may include an impact on badgers, great crested newts and otters.

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
2	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. **Justification** It is anticipated that due to the construction work that will be undertaken that there may be an impact on the geomorphologic landscape however it is considered that this will be very minor and this option avoids impact on the Torvean Landforms Site of Special Scientific Interest.
3	-	-	-	-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. **Justification** This option will not have an impact on any listed building or its setting. It is anticipated that this option would have a potential moderate adverse impact on the Caledonian Canal as it is crossing the canal at grade crossing. The route avoids nearby locally important archaeological sites which are identified in the Highland Historic Environment Record. There will be moderate impacts on the south eastern edge of the Inverness Riverside Conservation Area. While not directly affecting the Tomnahurich Cemetery Design Landscape it may affect the views out of the cemetery if these are opened up in future.

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
4	--	--	--	--	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. **Justification** Given this option will bring a change to the existing landscape character of the area that there will be a significantly negative impact at a very local level. The local diversity and distinctiveness of the landscape will be affected given the change of form on the urban fringe. There will be not affect on areas of wildness given the location. This option will provide an opportunity for further development and may therefore lead to a greater impact on the landscape when looked at cumulatively. This option will not affect any designated landscapes.
5	+/-	+	+	++	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. **Justification** This option may have a neutral affect on the recreational access around and on the Caledonian Canal in the medium to long term however during construction (short term) this may restrict access. Recreational access to the wider area will be improved in the medium to long term but it will potentially be adversely affected during the construction of this option. This option will provide a shorter river and canal crossing therefore increasing the attractiveness of active travel in the city as a whole but particularly on the south side of Inverness.

Commentary

While there are some negative affects there may also be some significantly positive ones in terms of enhancement of active travel opportunities. The following mitigation is proposed to ensure that the negative and positive effects can be minimised/maximised respectively:

- Fish Habitats survey to be carried out;
- Appropriate design of bridge;

- Appropriate lighting of bridge;
- Compensatory planting where required;

- Archaeological survey work to be undertaken;
- Maximise active travel linkages;
- Avoid closure of canal/paths/trails for prolonged periods during construction.

- Sensitive construction methods employed;
- Include mitigation such as badger/otter crossings where the route passes through their territory.
- Appropriate landscaping;
- Improved existing active travel links through the area;

Option 2

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
1	-	--	--	-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. The freshwater pearl mussels are intrinsically linked with the lifecycle of the Atlantic Salmon **Justification** It is considered that there may be a moderate loss of mature woodland, trees and riparian habitat in bringing forward this option. No element of this option will facilitate the achievement of LBAP or RBAP targets. This option will avoid the Torvean Landforms SSSI therefore it facilitates its protection. It is anticipated that there may be impacts on freshwater Atlantic Salmon through the construction and implementation of this option. As there will be a loss of habitats in the area it may be possible that there will be an impact on protected species. This may include an impact on badgers and otters. It is highly likely that Great Crested Newts will be affected given the potential impact on the golf course ponds.
2	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. **Justification** It is anticipated that due to the construction work that will be undertaken that there may be an impact on the geomorphologic landscape however it is considered that this will be very minor and this option avoids impact on the Torvean Landforms Site of Special Scientific Interest.

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
3	-	-	-	-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. **Justification** Given this option will bring a change to the existing landscape character of the area that there will be a significantly negative impact at a very local level. The local diversity and distinctiveness of the landscape will be affected given the change of form on the urban fringe. There will be not affect on areas of wildness given the location. This option will provide an opportunity for further development and may therefore lead to a greater impact on the landscape when looked at cumulatively. This option will not affect any designated landscapes.
4	--	--	--	--	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. **Justification** This option will not have an impact on any listed building or its setting. It is anticipated that this option would have a potential moderate adverse impact on the Caledonian Canal as it is crossing the canal at grade crossing. The route avoids nearby locally important archaeological sites which are identified in the Highland Historic Environment Record. There will be moderate impacts on the south eastern edge of the Inverness Riverside Conservation Area. While not directly affecting the Tomnahurich Cemetery Design Landscape it may affect the views out of the cemetery if these are opened up in future.

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
5	+/-	+	+	++	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. **Justification** This option may have a neutral affect on the recreational access around and on the Caledonian Canal in the medium to long term however during construction (short term) this may restrict access. Recreational access to the wider area will be improved in the medium to long term but it will potentially be adversely affected during the construction of this option. This option will provide a shorter river and canal crossing therefore increasing the attractiveness of active travel in the city as a whole but particularly on the south side of Inverness.

Commentary

This option is largely negatively scored. There are anticipated significant negative affects on biodiversity and landscape with significantly positive local affects on population and human health. There is a greater impact on cultural heritage and less benefits through this option for active travel. The following mitigation is proposed to ensure that the negative and positive effects can be minimised/maximised respectively:

- Fish Habitats survey to be carried out;
- Appropriate lighting of bridge;
- Compensatory planting where required;
- Archaeological survey work to be undertaken;
- Maximise active travel linkages;
- Avoid closure of canal/paths/trails for prolonged periods during construction.
- Appropriate design of bridge;
- Sensitive construction methods employed;
- Include mitigation such as badger/otter crossings where the route passes through their territory.
- Appropriate landscaping;
- Improved existing active travel links through the area;
- Micro-siting to avoid impact on golf course ponds or re-homing of Great Crested Newts, if appropriate.

Option 3

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
1	=	-	-	-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. The freshwater pearl mussels are intrinsically linked with the lifecycle of the Atlantic Salmon **Justification** It is considered that there may be a moderate loss of mature woodland, trees and riparian habitat in bringing forward this option. No element of this option will facilitate the achievement of LBAP or RBAP targets. This option will avoid the Torvean Landforms SSSI therefore it facilitates its protection. It is anticipated that there may be impacts on freshwater Atlantic Salmon through the construction and implementation of this option. As there will be a loss of habitats in the area it may be possible that there will be an impact on protected species. This may include an impact on badgers, great crested newts and otters.
2	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. **Justification** It is anticipated that due to the construction work that will be undertaken that there may be an impact on the geomorphologic landscape however it is considered that this will be very minor and this option avoids impact on the Torvean Landforms Site of Special Scientific Interest.

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
3	-	-	-	-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. **Justification** This option may have an impact on the setting of listed buildings. There are three within relatively close proximity of this option. It is anticipated that this option would have a potential moderate adverse impact on the Caledonian Canal as it is crossing the canal at grade crossing. The route avoids nearby locally important archaeological sites which are identified in the Highland Historic Environment Record. There will be moderate impacts on the south eastern edge of the Inverness Riverside Conservation Area. While not directly affecting the Tomnahurich Cemetery Design Landscape it may affect the views out of the cemetery if these are opened up in future.
4	-	-	-	-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. **Justification** Given this option will bring a change to the existing landscape character of the area that there will be a negative impact at a very local level. This is somewhat limited as there will be very limited amount of new road built and it is contained within a small area. The local diversity and distinctiveness of the landscape will be affected given the change of form on the urban fringe. There will be not affect on areas of wildness given the location. This option will provide a very limited opportunity for further development and therefore it is unlikely that there will be a greater impact on the landscape when looked at cumulatively. This option will not affect any designated landscapes.

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
5	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. **Justification** This option may have a neutral affect on the recreational access around and on the Caledonian Canal in the medium to long term however during construction (short term) this may restrict access. Recreational access to the wider area will be improved in the medium to long term but it will potentially be adversely affected during the construction of this option. In addition the access currently enjoyed in and around Whin Park will be detrimentally affected in the short medium and longer term. This option will provide a shorter river and canal crossing therefore increasing the attractiveness of active travel in the city but this will be limited in its affect as there is already a river crossing in close proximity to this option through Ness Islands.

Commentary

This option is largely negatively scored. There are no anticipated significant affects either positive or negative. There is a greater impact on cultural heritage and less benefits through this option for active travel. The following mitigation is proposed to ensure that the negative and positive effects can be minimised/maximised respectively:

- Fish Habitats survey to be carried out;
- Appropriate lighting of bridge;
- Compensatory planting where required;
- Archaeological survey work to be undertaken;
- Maximise active travel linkages;
- Avoid closure of canal/paths/trails for prolonged periods
- Appropriate design of bridge;
- Sensitive construction methods employed;
- Include mitigation such as badger/otter crossings where the route passes through their territory.
- Appropriate landscaping;
- Improved existing active travel links through the area;
- Sensitive design and layout of approach roads to avoid

during construction.

- Sympathetic design of route through Whin Park to avoid significant detrimental impact on character of the area.

detrimental affect on setting of listed buildings;

Option 4

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
1	-	--	--	-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. The freshwater pearl mussels are intrinsically linked with the lifecycle of the Atlantic Salmon **Justification** It is considered that there may be a moderate loss of mature woodland, trees and riparian habitat in bringing forward this option. No element of this option will facilitate the achievement of LBAP or RBAP targets. This option will avoid the Torvean Landforms SSSI therefore it facilitates its protection. It is anticipated that there may be impacts on freshwater Atlantic Salmon through the construction and implementation of this option. As there will be a loss of habitats in the area it may be possible that there will be an impact on protected species. This may include an impact on badgers and otters. It is highly likely that Great Crested Newts will be affected given the potential impact on the golf course ponds.
2	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. **Justification** It is anticipated that due to the construction work that will be undertaken that there may be an impact on the geomorphologic landscape however it is considered that this will be very minor and this option avoids impact on the Torvean Landforms Site of Special Scientific Interest.

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
3	-	-	-	-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. **Justification** This option may have an impact on the setting of listed buildings. There are three within relatively close proximity of this option. It is anticipated that this option would have a potential moderate adverse impact on the Caledonian Canal as it is crossing the canal at grade crossing. The route avoids nearby locally important archaeological sites which are identified in the Highland Historic Environment Record. There will be moderate impacts on the south eastern edge of the Inverness Riverside Conservation Area. While not directly affecting the Tomnahurich Cemetery Design Landscape it may affect the views out of the cemetery if these are opened up in future.
4	-	-	-	-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. **Justification** Given this option will bring a change to the existing landscape character of the area that there will be a negative impact at a very local level. This is somewhat limited as there will be very limited amount of new road built and it is contained within a small area. The local diversity and distinctiveness of the landscape will be affected given the change of form on the urban fringe. There will be not affect on areas of wildness given the location. This option will provide a very limited opportunity for further development and therefore it is unlikely that there will be a greater impact on the landscape when looked at cumulatively. This option will not affect any designated landscapes.

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
5	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. **Justification** This option may have a neutral affect on the recreational access around and on the Caledonian Canal in the medium to long term however during construction (short term) this may restrict access. Recreational access to the wider area will be improved in the medium to long term but it will potentially be adversely affected during the construction of this option. In addition the access currently enjoyed in and around Whin Park will be detrimentally affected in the short medium and longer term. This option will provide a shorter river and canal crossing therefore increasing the attractiveness of active travel in the city but this will be limited in its affect as there is already a river crossing in close proximity to this option through Ness Islands.

Commentary

This option is largely negatively scored. There it is anticipated that there may be significantly negative affects in terms of biodiversity, flora and fauna. There is a greater impact on cultural heritage and less benefits through this option for active travel. The following mitigation is proposed to ensure that the negative and positive effects can be minimised/maximised respectively:

- Fish Habitats survey to be carried out;
- Appropriate lighting of bridge;
- Compensatory planting where required;
- Archaeological survey work to be undertaken;
- Maximise active travel linkages;
- Avoid closure of canal/paths/trails for prolonged periods
- Appropriate design of bridge;
- Sensitive construction methods employed;
- Include mitigation such as badger/otter crossings where the route passes through their territory.
- Appropriate landscaping;
- Improved existing active travel links through the area;
- Sensitive design and layout of approach roads to avoid

during construction.

- Sympathetic design of route through Whin Park to avoid significant detrimental impact on character of the area.

detrimental affect on setting of listed buildings;

- Micro-siting to avoid impact on golf course ponds or re-homing of Great Crested Newts, if appropriate.

Option 5

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
1	-	--	--	-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. The freshwater pearl mussels are intrinsically linked with the lifecycle of the Atlantic Salmon **Justification** It is considered that there may be a moderate loss of mature woodland, trees and riparian habitat in bringing forward this option. No element of this option will facilitate the achievement of LBAP or RBAP targets. This option will avoid the Torvean Landforms SSSI therefore it facilitates its protection. It is anticipated that there may be impacts on freshwater Atlantic Salmon through the construction and implementation of this option. As there will be a loss of habitats in the area it may be possible that there will be an impact on protected species. This may include an impact on badgers and otters. It is highly likely that Great Crested Newts will be affected given the potential impact on the golf course ponds.
2	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. **Justification** It is anticipated that due to the construction work that will be undertaken that there may be an impact on the geomorphologic landscape however it is considered that this will be very minor and this option avoids significant impact on the Torvean Landforms Site of Special Scientific Interest however it may affect the most north eastern edge of the designated site.

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
3	-	-	-	-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. **Justification** This option may have an impact on the setting of listed buildings. There are three within relatively close proximity of this option. It is anticipated that this option would have a potential moderate adverse impact on the Caledonian Canal as it is crossing the canal at grade crossing. The route avoids nearby locally important archaeological sites which are identified in the Highland Historic Environment Record. There will be moderate impacts on the south eastern edge of the Inverness Riverside Conservation Area. While not directly affecting the Tomnahurich Cemetery Design Landscape it may affect the views out of the cemetery if these are opened up in future.
4	-	-	-	-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. **Justification** Given this option will bring a change to the existing landscape character of the area that there will be a negative impact at a very local level. This is somewhat limited as there will be very limited amount of new road built and it is contained within a small area. The local diversity and distinctiveness of the landscape will be affected given the change of form on the urban fringe. There will be not affect on areas of wildness given the location. This option will provide a very limited opportunity for further development and therefore it is unlikely that there will be a greater impact on the landscape when looked at cumulatively. This option will not affect any designated landscapes.

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
5	-	-	-	-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. **Justification** This option may have a neutral affect on the recreational access around and on the Caledonian Canal in the medium to long term however during construction (short term) this may restrict access. Recreational access to the wider area will be improved in the medium to long term but it will potentially be adversely affected during the construction of this option. In addition the access currently enjoyed in and around Whin Park will be detrimentally affected in the short medium and longer term and as the route takes in additional land around the rugby pitches there is likely to be a more significant affect although it is unlikely that this would be significant. This option will provide a shorter river and canal crossing therefore increasing the attractiveness of active travel in the city but this will be limited in its affect as there is already a river crossing in close proximity to this option through Ness Islands.

Commentary

This option is largely negatively scored. There it is anticipated that there may be significantly negative affects in terms of biodiversity, flora and fauna. There is a greater impact on cultural heritage and less benefits through this option for active travel. The following mitigation is proposed to ensure that the negative and positive effects can be minimised/maximised respectively:

- Fish Habitats survey to be carried out;
- Appropriate lighting of bridge;
- Compensatory planting where required;
- Archaeological survey work to be undertaken;
- Maximise active travel linkages;
- Appropriate design of bridge;
- Sensitive construction methods employed;
- Include mitigation such as badger/otter crossings where the route passes through their territory.
- Appropriate landscaping;
- Improved existing active travel links through the area;

- Avoid closure of canal/paths/trails for prolonged periods during construction.
- Sympathetic design of route through Whin Park to avoid significant detrimental impact on character of the area.
- Careful micro-siting of the road around north western edge of Torvean Landforms SSSI.
- Sensitive design and layout of approach roads to avoid detrimental affect on setting of listed buildings;
- Micro-siting to avoid impact on golf course ponds or re-homing of Great Crested Newts, if appropriate.

Option 6

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
1	--	-	-	--	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. The freshwater pearl mussels (qualifying feature of the River Moriston SAC) are intrinsically linked with the lifecycle of the Atlantic Salmon **Justification** It is considered that there may be a moderate loss of mature woodland, trees and riparian habitat in bringing forward this option. No element of this option will facilitate the achievement of LBAP or RBAP targets. This option will avoid the Torvean Landforms SSSI therefore it facilitates its protection. It is anticipated that there may be impacts on freshwater Atlantic Salmon through the construction and implementation of this option. As there will be a loss of habitats in the area it may be possible that there will be an impact on protected species. This may include an impact on badgers and otters. In addition as there is a longer length of road it is likely that there would be a greater chance of badger and/or otter casualties especially during the construction phase.
2	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. **Justification** It is anticipated that due to the construction work that will be undertaken that there may be an impact on the geomorphologic landscape however it is considered that this will be very minor and this option avoids impact on the Torvean Landforms Site of Special Scientific Interest.

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
3	-	-	-	-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. **Justification** This option will not have an impact on any listed building or its setting. It is anticipated that this option would have a potential moderate adverse impact on the Caledonian Canal as it is crossing the canal at grade crossing. The route avoids nearby locally important archaeological sites which are identified in the Highland Historic Environment Record. There will be moderate impacts on the south eastern edge of the Inverness Riverside Conservation Area. While not directly affecting the Tomnahurich Cemetery Design Landscape it may affect the views out of the cemetery if these are opened up in future.
4	--	--	--	--	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. **Justification** Given this option will bring a change to the existing landscape character of the area that there will be a significantly negative impact at a very local level especially given the longer length of road running alongside the River Ness. The local diversity and distinctiveness of the landscape will be affected given the change of form on the urban fringe. There will be not affect on areas of wildness given the location. This option will provide an opportunity for significant further development on both the east and west of the river and canal and may therefore lead to a greater impact on the landscape when looked at cumulatively. This option will not affect any designated landscapes.

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
5	+/-	++	++	++	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. **Justification** This option may have a neutral affect on the recreational access around and on the Caledonian Canal in the medium to long term however during construction (short term) this may restrict access. Recreational access to the wider area will be improved in the medium to long term but it will potentially be adversely affected during the construction of this option. This option will provide a shorter river and canal crossing therefore increasing the attractiveness of active travel in the city as a whole but particularly on the south side of Inverness. There will also be a direct link to Dores Road Roundabout which will add benefit to creating a linkage which is currently not in place making it easier to follow the cycle route which currently runs alongside the existing Southern Distributor Road and extend this to cross the river/canal.

Commentary

While there are some negative affects there may also be some significantly positive ones in terms of enhancement of active travel opportunities. The following mitigation is proposed to ensure that the negative and positive effects can be minimised/maximised respectively:

- Fish Habitats survey to be carried out;
- Appropriate lighting of bridge;
- Compensatory planting where required;
- Archaeological survey work to be undertaken;
- Maximise active travel linkages;
- Avoid closure of canal/paths/trails for prolonged periods
- Appropriate design of bridge;
- Sensitive construction methods employed;
- Include mitigation such as badger/otter crossings where the route passes through their territory.
- Appropriate landscaping;
- Improved active travel links through the area;
- Provision of new active travel linkage between crossing

during construction.

and Dores Road Roundabout.

Option 7

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
1	--	-	-	--	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. The freshwater pearl mussels (qualifying feature of the River Moriston SAC) are intrinsically linked with the lifecycle of the Atlantic Salmon **Justification** It is considered that there may be a moderate to major loss of mature woodland, trees and riparian habitat in bringing forward this option. No element of this option will facilitate the achievement of LBAP or RBAP targets. This option will go directly through the Torvean Landforms SSSI however this is designated for geological features rather than its biodiversity value. It is anticipated that there may be impacts on freshwater Atlantic Salmon through the construction and implementation of this option. As there will be a loss of habitats in the area it may be possible that there will be an impact on protected species. This may include an impact on badgers and otters in relation to the short crossing of the canal near the existing Tomnahurich Swing Bridge.
2	--	--	--	--	--	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. **Justification** It is anticipated that due to the construction work that will be undertaken that there will be an impact on the Torvean Landforms SSSI which is designated for it's geological features. It is considered this would be of National Significance. In addition given the type of construction required for such a structure it is likely that there would be significant negative affects on the geomorphologic landscape.

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
3	--	--	--	--	-	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. **Justification** This option will not have an impact on any listed building or its setting. It is anticipated that this option would have a potential significant negative affect on the Caledonian Canal given the anticipated affect on its setting. It is considered that there would also be a negative indirect affect on the setting of Torvean Motte.. The route avoids nearby locally important archaeological sites which are identified in the Highland Historic Environment Record. There will not be an impact on a conservation area. While not directly affecting the Tomnahurich Cemetery Design Landscape it may affect the views out of the cemetery if these are opened up in future.

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
4	--	--	--	--	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. **Justification** Given this option will bring a change to the existing landscape character of the area that there will be a significantly negative impact at a very local level especially given proposed height of the crossing and the earthworks required on the south west of the River Ness to bring the crossing up to a height which would allow it to cross Torvean Landforms. The local diversity and distinctiveness of the landscape will be affected given the change of form on the urban fringe. There will be not affect on areas of wildness given the location. This option will provide an opportunity for limited further development on both the east and west of the river and canal and therefore there would be limited additional affect on the landscape when looked at cumulatively. This option will not directly affect any designated landscapes but it may be visible from the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig Special Landscape Area.

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
5	-	-	-	+/-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. **Justification** This option is likely to have no or limed affect on the recreational access around and on the Caledonian Canal in the medium to long term however during construction (short term) this may restrict access. Recreational access to the wider area may be improved in the medium to long term but around Torvean Landforms it is likely that the current access enjoyed here may be adversely affected in terms of amenity given the noise of the bridge crossing. In the short term there may be adverse affects on recreational access during the construction of this option. This option will provide a shorter river and canal crossing therefore potentially increasing the attractiveness of active travel, however given the height and location of the bridge it is unlikely to make this more of an attractive active travel route than in the one closer to the city centre, thus reducing the potential for a significant increase in active travel. While there will be a short canal crossing closer to the city centre given that this will not be accompanied by a river crossing as well the existing routes will have to be utilised which do not give a direct crossing.

Commentary

This option is largely scored as significantly negative. There is a greater impact on cultural heritage and minimal benefits through this option for active travel. There is also likely to be significant negative affects on the Torvean Landforms SSSI which would be considered of national significance. The following mitigation is proposed to ensure that the negative and positive effects can be minimised/maximised respectively:

- Fish Habitats survey to be carried out;
- Appropriate lighting of bridge;
- Compensatory planting where required;
- Appropriate design of bridge;
- Sensitive construction methods employed;
- Include mitigation such as badger/otter crossings where the route passes through their territory ie on the stretch of road from Dores Road Roundabout up to the River

- Archaeological survey work to be undertaken;
- Maximise active travel linkages;
- Avoid closure of canal/paths/trails for prolonged periods during construction.
- Consideration of bridge design to limit landscape impact.

Crossing.

- Appropriate landscaping;
- Improve existing active travel links through the area;
- Sensitive micro-siting of an bridge peirs to avoid impact on SSI

Option 8

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
1	-	--	--	-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. The freshwater pearl mussels are intrinsically linked with the lifecycle of the Atlantic Salmon **Justification** It is considered that there may be a moderate loss of mature woodland, trees and riparian habitat in bringing forward this option. No element of this option will facilitate the achievement of LBAP or RBAP targets. This option will avoid the Torvean Landforms SSSI therefore it facilitates its protection. It is anticipated that there may be impacts on freshwater Atlantic Salmon through the construction and implementation of this option. As there will be a loss of habitats in the area it may be possible that there will be an impact on protected species. This may include an impact on badgers and otters. It is highly likely that Great Crested Newts will be affected given the potential impact on the golf course ponds.
2	--	--	--	--	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. **Justification** It is anticipated that due to the construction work that will be undertaken that there may be a significantly negative impact on the geomorphologic landscape. This option avoids impact on the Torvean Landforms Site of Special Scientific Interest.

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
3	--	--	--	--	--	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. **Justification** This option will not have an impact on any listed building or its setting. It is anticipated that this option would have a significantly negative impact on the Caledonian Canal as the canal will need to be drained, deconstructed and reconstructed to allow for construction of the aqueduct/tunnel. In addition it is likely that there would be a negative affect on the setting of the canal. The route avoids nearby locally important archaeological sites which are identified in the Highland Historic Environment Record, however there are those nearby which may be indirectly affected. There will be moderate affects on the south eastern edge of the Inverness Riverside Conservation Area. While not directly affecting the Tomnahurich Cemetery Design Landscape it may affect the views out of the cemetery if these are opened up in future.
4	-	-	-	-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. **Justification** Given this option will bring a change to the existing landscape character of the area that there will be a negative impact at a very local level. This is somewhat limited as there will be very limited amount of new road built, the crossing is below the canal and it is contained within a small area. The local diversity and distinctiveness of the landscape will be affected given the change of form on the urban fringe. There will be not affect on areas of wildness given the location. This option will provide a very limited opportunity for further development and therefore it is unlikely that there will be a greater impact on the landscape when looked at cumulatively. This option will not affect any designated landscapes.

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
5	-	+/-	+/-	+/-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. **Justification** This option may have a neutral affect on the recreational access around and on the Caledonian Canal in the medium to long term however during construction (short term) this may restrict access. Recreational access to the wider area will be improved in the medium to long term but it will potentially be adversely affected during the construction of this option. In addition the access currently enjoyed in and around Whin Park will be detrimentally affected in the short medium and longer term and as the route takes in additional land around the rugby pitches there is likely to be a more significant affect although it is unlikely that this would be significant. This option will provide a shorter river and canal crossing therefore potentially increasing the attractiveness of active travel in the city but this will be limited in its affect as there is already a river crossing in close proximity to this option through Ness Islands and there is also the potential for the crossing of the canal to be unattractive to walkers and cyclists due to the slope down and back up out of the tunnel.

Commentary

This option is largely scored as significantly negative. There is a greater impact on cultural heritage and minimal benefits through this option for active travel. There is also likely to be significant negative affects on the geology of the area albeit not sites such as Torvean Landforms SSSI which would be considered of national significance. The following mitigation is proposed to ensure that the negative and positive effects can be minimised/maximised respectively:

- Fish Habitats survey to be carried out;
- Appropriate lighting of bridge;
- Compensatory planting where required;
- Appropriate design of bridge;
- Sensitive construction methods employed;
- Include mitigation such as badger/otter crossings where the route passes through their territory;

- Archaeological survey work to be undertaken;
- Maximise active travel linkages;
- Avoid closure of canal/paths/trails for prolonged periods during construction.
- Appropriate landscaping;
- Improve existing active travel links through the area;
- Micro-siting to avoid impact on golf course ponds or re-homing of Great Crested Newts, if appropriate.

Option 9

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
1	=	=	=	=	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. The freshwater pearl mussels are intrinsically linked with the lifecycle of the Atlantic Salmon **Justification** It is considered that there will be no loss of habitat if this option is brought forward. No element of this option will facilitate the achievement of LBAP or RBAP targets. This option will not affect any designated site. It is anticipated that there will be no impacts on freshwater Atlantic Salmon through the implementation of this option. It is unlikely that there would be an affect on any protected species.
2	=	=	=	=	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. **Justification** It is anticipated that there will be no affect on areas of importance for geodiversity.

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
3	=	=	=	=	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. **Justification** This option will not have an impact on any listed building or its setting. It is anticipated that this option would not have an impact on any of the nearby Schedule monuments. This option will not lead to an impact on any locally important archaeological sites. This option will not have an affect on any conservation area. . This option will not have an affect on any historic gardens of designed landscapes.
4	=	=	=	=	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. **Justification** There will be no change to the existing landscape through this option it is therefore considered neutral. The local diversity and distinctiveness of the landscape will not be affected given there will be no change in form. There will be not affect on areas of wildness given the location. This option will provide a very limited opportunity for further development and therefore it is unlikely that there will be a greater impact on the landscape when looked at cumulatively. This option will not affect any designated landscapes.

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
5	=	-	--	-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. **Justification** This option may have a neutral affect on the recreational access around and on the Caledonian Canal in the short, medium and long term. Recreational access to the wider area will be maintained but not enhanced. However there will be limited scope to facilitate improvements to these access opportunities but they will be put under significant additional pressure through the expansion of Inverness in the medium to long term. This option will mean that people will need to rely on the existing infrastructure for active travel. There will be limited scope to facilitate improvements to the existing active travel opportunities but they will be put under significant additional pressure through the expansion of Inverness in the medium to long term..

Commentary

This option is largely scored as neutral as it will not lead to any change in the current scenario. In terms of active travel it is scored negatively as the pressure will increase on the current recreational and active travel links and there will be limited opportunity to facilitate their improvement without further development of this area or a river/canal crossing. The following mitigation is proposed to ensure that the negative and positive effects can be minimised/maximised respectively:

- Maximise linkages between existing paths and trails.
- Maximise linkages to the wider area.

Appendix 5 – Cumulative, Secondary and Synergistic Effects Assessment

The following are assessments of the likely cumulative affects of each option with a level of development which may be expected in the area if that particular option is brought forward.

Each option will be assessed against the scoped in SEA Topics.

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

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

Option 1

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
1	=	-	--	-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion site at Charleston and at Ness-side – the Ness-side site may have a slower build out rate as there will be the need to deliver a distributor road within the site. The freshwater pearl mussels are intrinsically linked with the lifecycle of the Atlantic Salmon. **Justification** It is considered that through considering this option with the potential for development that it may bring it will be likely that there will be a loss of habitat including possible fragmentation of habitat in the longer term.
2	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion site at Charleston and at Ness-side – the Ness-side site may have a slower build out rate as there will be the need to deliver a distributor road within the site. **Justification** Considering this option together with housing land will have no affect greater than that of just the road option.

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
3	-	-	-	-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion site at Charleston and at Ness-side – the Ness-side site may have a slower build out rate as there will be the need to deliver a distributor road within the site. **Justification** Considering this option together with housing land will have no affect greater than that of just the road option.
4	--	--	--	--	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion site at Charleston and at Ness-side – the Ness-side site may have a slower build out rate as there will be the need to deliver a distributor road within the site. **Justification** Considering this option together with housing land will have no affect greater than that of just the road option however it is recognised that the development of the allocated sites will lead to further change within the landscape which may affect local distinctiveness.

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
5	+/-	+	+	++	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion site at Charleston and at Ness-side – the Ness-side site may have a slower build out rate as there will be the need to deliver a distributor road within the site. **Justification** The development of the allocated sites is likely to lead to the development of additional active travel routes however it is unlikely that this would lead to any greater of an affect than that of just the road option.

Commentary

It is considered that the level of development which would be facilitated by this option would not lead to significantly different affects than those experienced through delivery of the option alone.

Option 2

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
1	-	--	--	-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion site at Charleston and at Ness-side – the Ness-side site may have a slower build out rate as there will be the need to deliver a distributor road within the site. The freshwater pearl mussels are intrinsically linked with the lifecycle of the Atlantic Salmon. **Justification** It is considered that through considering this option with the potential for development that it may bring it will be likely that there will be a loss of habitat including possible fragmentation of habitat in the longer term.
2	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion site at Charleston and at Ness-side – the Ness-side site may have a slower build out rate as there will be the need to deliver a distributor road within the site. **Justification** Considering this option together with housing land will have no affect greater than that of just the road option.

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
3	-	-	-	-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion site at Charleston and at Ness-side – the Ness-side site may have a slower build out rate as there will be the need to deliver a distributor road within the site. **Justification** Considering this option together with housing land will have no affect greater than that of just the road option.
4	--	--	--	--	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion site at Charleston and at Ness-side – the Ness-side site may have a slower build out rate as there will be the need to deliver a distributor road within the site. **Justification** Considering this option together with housing land will have no affect greater than that of just the road option however it is recognised that the development of the allocated sites will lead to further change within the landscape which may affect local distinctiveness.

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
5	+/-	+	+	++	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion site at Charleston and at Ness-side – the Ness-side site may have a slower build out rate as there will be the need to deliver a distributor road within the site. **Justification** The development of the allocated sites is likely to lead to the development of additional active travel routes however it is unlikely that this would lead to any greater of an affect than that of just the road option.

Commentary

It is considered that the level of development which would be facilitated by this option would not lead to significantly different affects than those experienced through delivery of the option alone.

Option 3

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
1	=	-	-	-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion site at Charleston and only limited growth at Ness-side. The freshwater pearl mussels are intrinsically linked with the lifecycle of the Atlantic Salmon. **Justification** It is considered that through considering this option with the potential for development that it may bring it will be likely that there will be a loss of habitat including possible fragmentation of habitat in the longer term in and around the Charleston expansion site.
2	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion site at Charleston and only limited growth at Ness-side. **Justification** Considering this option together with housing land will have no affect greater than that of just the road option.

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
3	-	-	-	-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion site at Charleston and only limited growth at Ness-side. **Justification** Considering this option together with housing land will have no affect greater than that of just the road option.
4	-	--	--	--	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion site at Charleston and only limited growth at Ness-side. **Justification** This option considered in line with the potential for development out of this option at Charleston expansion site would lead to a greater change in the landscape which is may lead to a significantly adverse affect in the medium to longer term at a local level.
5	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion site at Charleston and only limited growth at Ness-side. **Justification** The development of the allocated sites is likely to lead to the development of additional active travel routes however it is unlikely that this would lead to any greater of an affect than that of just the road option.

Commentary

It is considered that the level of development which would be facilitated by this option would not lead to significantly different affects than those experienced through delivery of the option alone except in terms of landscape affects which would be greater given the greater level of change in the landscape as apposed to delivery of the river and canal crossing in isolation.

Option 4

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
1	=	-	-	-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion site at Charleston and only limited growth at Ness-side. The freshwater pearl mussels are intrinsically linked with the lifecycle of the Atlantic Salmon. **Justification** It is considered that through considering this option with the potential for development that it may bring it will be likely that there will be a loss of habitat including possible fragmentation of habitat in the longer term in and around the Charleston expansion site.
2	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion site at Charleston and only limited growth at Ness-side. **Justification** Considering this option together with housing land will have no affect greater than that of just the road option.

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
3	-	-	-	-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion site at Charleston and only limited growth at Ness-side. **Justification** Considering this option together with housing land will have no affect greater than that of just the road option.
4	-	--	--	--	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion site at Charleston and only limited growth at Ness-side. **Justification** This option considered in line with the potential for development out of this option at Charleston expansion site would lead to a greater change in the landscape which is may lead to a significantly adverse affect in the medium to longer term at a local level.
5	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion site at Charleston and only limited growth at Ness-side. **Justification** The development of the allocated sites is likely to lead to the development of additional active travel routes however it is unlikely that this would lead to any greater of an affect than that of just the road option.

Commentary

It is considered that the level of development which would be facilitated by this option would not lead to significantly different affects than those experienced through delivery of the option alone except in terms of landscape affects which would be greater given the greater level of change in the landscape as apposed to delivery of the river and canal crossing in isolation.

Option 5

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
1	=	-	-	-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion site at Charleston and only limited growth at Ness-side. The freshwater pearl mussels are intrinsically linked with the lifecycle of the Atlantic Salmon. **Justification** It is considered that through considering this option with the potential for development that it may bring it will be likely that there will be a loss of habitat including possible fragmentation of habitat in the longer term in and around the Charleston expansion site.
2	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion site at Charleston and only limited growth at Ness-side. **Justification** Considering this option together with housing land will have no affect greater than that of just the road option.

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
3	-	-	-	-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion site at Charleston and only limited growth at Ness-side. **Justification** Considering this option together with housing land will have no affect greater than that of just the road option.
4	-	--	--	--	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion site at Charleston and only limited growth at Ness-side. **Justification** This option considered in line with the potential for development out of this option at Charleston expansion site would lead to a greater change in the landscape which is may lead to a significantly adverse affect in the medium to longer term at a local level.
5	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion site at Charleston and only limited growth at Ness-side. **Justification** The development of the allocated sites is likely to lead to the development of additional active travel routes however it is unlikely that this would lead to any greater of an affect than that of just the road option.

Commentary

It is considered that the level of development which would be facilitated by this option would not lead to significantly different affects than those experienced through delivery of the option alone except in terms of landscape affects which would be greater given the greater level of change in the landscape as apposed to delivery of the river and canal crossing in isolation.

Option 6

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
1	--	--	--	--	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion sites at Charleston and Ness-side. The freshwater pearl mussels are intrinsically linked with the lifecycle of the Atlantic Salmon. **Justification** It is considered that through considering this option with the potential for development that it may bring it will be likely that there will be a further loss of habitat including possible fragmentation of habitat in the medium to long term in and around the allocated sites.
2	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion sites at Charleston and Ness-side. **Justification** Considering this option together with housing land will have no affect greater than that of just the road option.

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
3	-	-	-	-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion sites at Charleston and Ness-side. **Justification** Considering this option together with housing land will have no affect greater than that of just the road option.
4	-	--	--	--	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion sites at Charleston and Ness-side. **Justification** While there will be further change in the landscape when development of allocated sites is considered along with development of the road it is not anticipated that the affect will be any greater than that of road delivery in isolation.
5	+/-	++	++	++	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion sites at Charleston and Ness-side. **Justification** It is likely that development of the allocated sites may lead to further paths which would create linkage to the wider area which would in turn lead to a significantly positive affect on the local area in terms of recreational and active travel linkages.

Commentary

It is considered that the level of development which would be facilitated by this option would not lead to significantly different affects than those experienced through delivery of the option alone except in terms of increased opportunities for recreation/active travel as the routes through any new development will help create new opportunities.

Option 7

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
1	--	--	--	--	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion site at Charleston and limited development at Ness-side. The freshwater pearl mussels are intrinsically linked with the lifecycle of the Atlantic Salmon. **Justification** It is considered that through considering this option with the potential for development that it may bring it will be likely that there will be a further loss of habitat including possible fragmentation of habitat in the medium to long term in and around the allocated sites.
2	--	--	--	--	--	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion site at Charleston and limited development at Ness-side. **Justification** Considering this option together with housing land will have no affect greater than that of just the road option.

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
3	--	--	--	--	--	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion site at Charleston and limited development at Ness-side. **Justification** Considering this option together with housing land will have no affect greater than that of just the road option.
4	--	--	--	--	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion site at Charleston and limited development at Ness-side. **Justification** While there will be further change in the landscape when development of allocated sites is considered along with development of the road it is not anticipated that the affect will be any greater than that of road delivery in isolation.
5	-	-	-	+/-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion site at Charleston and limited development at Ness-side. **Justification** It is likely that development of the allocated sites may lead to further paths which would create linkage to the wider area. However, these would be limited in their scope and in there benefit as they will be mostly on the north of the river and canal with few on the south.

Commentary

It is considered that the level of development which would be facilitated by this option would not lead to significantly different affects than those experienced through delivery of the option alone except in terms of slightly increased opportunities for recreation/active travel as new routes may be created through the any new development but this would be limited given the limited development which could take place.

Option 8

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
1	--	--	--	--	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion site at Charleston and limited development at Ness-side. The freshwater pearl mussels are intrinsically linked with the lifecycle of the Atlantic Salmon. **Justification** It is considered that through considering this option with the potential for development that it may bring it will be likely that there will be a further loss of habitat including possible fragmentation of habitat in the medium to long term in and around the allocated sites.
2	--	--	--	--	--	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion site at Charleston and limited development at Ness-side. **Justification** Considering this option together with housing land will have no affect greater than that of just the road option.

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
3	--	--	--	--	--	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion site at Charleston and limited development at Ness-side. **Justification** Considering this option together with housing land will have no affect greater than that of just the road option.
4	--	--	--	--	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion site at Charleston and limited development at Ness-side. **Justification** While there will be further change in the landscape when development of allocated sites is considered along with development of the road it is not anticipated that the affect will be any greater than that of road delivery in isolation.
5	-	-	-	+/-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion site at Charleston and limited development at Ness-side. **Justification** It is likely that development of the allocated sites may lead to further paths which would create linkage to the wider area. However, these would be limited in their scope and in there benefit as they will be mostly on the north of the river and canal with few on the south.

Commentary

It is considered that the level of development which would be facilitated by this option would not lead to significantly different affects than those experienced through delivery of the option alone except in terms of slightly increased opportunities for recreation/active travel as new routes may be created through the any new development but this would be limited given the limited development which could take place.

Option 9

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
1	=	-	-	-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would not facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion site at Charleston and limited development could occur at Ness-side. The freshwater pearl mussels are intrinsically linked with the lifecycle of the Atlantic Salmon. **Justification** It is considered that through considering this option with the potential for development that it may bring it will be likely that there will be a loss of habitat including possible fragmentation of habitat in the medium to long term in and around the Ness-side site.
2	=	=	=	=	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would not facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion site at Charleston and limited development could occur at Ness-side. **Justification** Considering this option together with housing land will have no affect greater than that of just the road option.

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
3	=	=	=	=	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would not facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion site at Charleston and limited development could occur at Ness-side. **Justification** Considering this option together with housing land will have no affect greater than that of just the road option as the development sites are unlikely to affect any cultural heritage feature.
4	-	-	-	-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would not facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion site at Charleston and limited development could occur at Ness-side. **Justification** There will be change in the landscape through development which is likely to have a negative affect on the landscape character and local distinctiveness. It is not considered that this would be significant given the low level of development this option would facilitate.

SEA Objective	Time Scale			Magnitude		Assumptions and Justification
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Local	Regional	
5	=	-	-	-	=	**Assumptions** For the purpose of this assessment it is assumed that no mitigation is built in. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that this option would not facilitate the build out of the allocated expansion site at Charleston and limited development could occur at Ness-side. **Justification** It is likely that even limited development in this area would lead to an increase in permeability and opportunities for a limited increase in recreational access and active travel however given that in the medium to long term development of the wider city and expansion of it will increase this option would not deliver the necessary active travel/recreational access infrastructure to cope with the increased pressure on the existing infrastructure.

Commentary

It is considered that the level of development which would be facilitated by this option would not lead to significantly different affects than those experienced through delivery of the option alone. However it may be possible that some of the affects of the option in isolation may be lessened by delivery of some limited development in terms of improved active travel/recreational access route.

Appendix 6 – Consultation Authority Responses to Scoping Report

Inverness West Link Design Project
Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Responses from Consultation Authorities

Consultation Authority Comment	Council Response
Historic Scotland	
Scope of assessment and level of detail The scoping report provides a clear outline of the proposed approach to the environmental assessment of the IWLDP and subject to the specific comments set out below and in an annex (1) I am content with the scope and level of detail proposed for the SEA.	Noted.
As you will be aware, in our response to your screening opinion we noted that SEA is at its most effective when strategic decisions are being made, such as considering a number of scenarios with differing environmental implications and where these decisions constrain lower level decisions. In light of this I welcome the decision to carry out an assessment of the options for the above river/canal crossing.	Noted.
Consultation period for the Environmental Report I can confirm that I am content with the 6 week consultation period stated in the scoping report. Please note that, for administrative purposes, Historic Scotland consider that the consultation period commences on receipt of the relevant documents by the SEA Secretariat.	Noted.
Relevant Plans, Programmes, Strategies and Environmental Objectives To note that the Memorandum of Guidance has been withdrawn and replaced with a series of guidance notes under the name Managing Change in the Historic Environment. These can be found at http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/index/heritage/policy/managingchange.htm	This change will be brought forward in the Environmental Report.
Scoping in/out of SEA issues I note and welcome that the historic environment has been scoped into the assessment.	Noted.
Methodology for Assessing Environmental Effects	Noted.

My understanding from the Scoping Report is that the 8 options for the river and canal crossing and the "do nothing" scenario will be assessed against the identified SEA Objectives. I can confirm that I cam content with this approach as well as the SEA Objective for the historic environment and its related key considerations. As this will be reported in a matrix I particularly welcome the inclusion of a commentary section allowing the assumptions and detail behind the assessment to be clearly explained.	
Next Steps As noted above I am content with the proposed 6 week consultation period.	Noted.
Mitigation and Monitoring As noted in the scoping report, mitigation aims to prevent, reduce or offset significant adverse effects. The SEA process should help to influence the project in this area and help set the environmental parameters of the proposed EIA of the option taken forward. In terms of monitoring it is important to note that to a large extent any mitigation measures that are identified and required within the assessment should drive the monitoring indicators and this should be borne in mind as the assessment progresses.	Noted. The monitoring framework with recommendations for the EIA, will be brought forward in Environmental Report.
Scottish Environment Protection Agency	
General comments Generally, the scoping report provides clear and detailed information on the proposed scope and level of detail of the assessment and covers most of the aspects that we would wish to see addressed at this stage. Subject to the comments below, we are generally content with the scope and level of detail proposed for the ER.	Noted.
Relationship with other Plans, Policies and Strategies (PPS) *We consider that the PPS listed in Table 1 provides a good start at providing a background framework to the development of the Project. In addition we bring the following PPS relating to the water environment to your attention for consideration.* *The Scotland River Basin Management Plan 22 December 2009* North Highland River Basin Management Plan September 2010 Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009 The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment)	These additional documents will be considered and added to the list in the Environmental Report.

(Scotland) Regulations 2011 The Highland Council Guidance Note Construction Environmental Management Process for Large Scale Projects	
Baseline information Appendix 1 provides good specific baseline data for those aspects of the environment where we have an interest.	Noted.
Environmental problems We consider that the environmental problems described generally highlight the main issues of relevance for the SEA topics within our remit.	Noted.
Alternatives We are satisfied with the alternatives outlined. These should be assessed as part of the SEA process and the findings of the assessment should inform the choice of the preferred option. This should be documented in the ER.	Noted.
Scoping in/out of SEA Objectives We were of the opinion at screening stage that the Project was unlikely to have significant environmental effects in relation to the SEA topics within our remit (air, water, soil, and climatic factors). We note that issues within our remit have been scoped out except for soil. We understand this has been scoped in due to presence of the Torvean Site of Special Scientific Interest and therefore we would anticipate Scottish Natural Heritage providing advice on this.	Noted.
Scottish Natural Heritage	
Scope of assessment and level of detail Subject to the specific comments set out below and in the annex to this letter, we are content with the scope and level of detail proposed for the environmental report.	Noted.
Consultation period for the environmental report We note that a period of 6 weeks is proposed for consultation on the Environmental Report and are content with this proposed period.	Noted.
Concluding remarks I hope that these points are helpful. Please note that this response is in the context of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 and our role as a Consultation Authority. We understand that we will be separately consulted on our views regarding the Environmental Report and on the	Noted.

Strategy / Plan / Programme. As you are aware we are also active contributors of the STAG process.	
Setting the Context Table 1 lists plans, programmes, strategies and environmental objectives which will be analysed by the Environmental Report. We have the following comments: International Tier • The Birds and Habitats Directives are included twice in Table 1 – once together and once separately. We recommend that they are listed separately. • European Protected Species, being those listed on Schedules 2 (animals) and 4 (plants) of the Habitats Regulations 1994, are mentioned in a biodiversity context in Table 2. They should more properly be covered in table 1 under the relevant European legislation. National Tier • Under the Wildlife and Countryside (as amended) Act 1981, Schedule 1, 5 and 8 species should be referred to. Scotland National Tier • The Scottish Biodiversity List should be included http://biodiversityscotland.gov.uk/pageType2.php?id=35&type=2&navID=92 Regional Tier • Consideration should be included of users of the Great Glen Way, the Great Glen Canoe Trail and the River Ness, all of whom stand to be affected by the proposals. • The Inverness and Nairn Local Biodiversity Act Plan should be included. • The Highland Council's Badger Policy Guidance Note should be referred to.	Noted. These changes/additions will be added to include the suggested changes.
Baseline information We are pleased to note that the scoping document includes consideration of the likely evolution of the environment without the plan to provide a frame of reference for the assessment of the plan. We also note and welcome the variety of options for the proposed link route. We note that the option 7 would	Noted.

involve crossing of the Torvean Landforms SSSI.	
Significant issues We note that in Table 2 it is suggested that "a protected species survey could be undertaken." We recommend that in a development of this scale, at least one protected species survey will be essential and therefore that the word "could" be replaced with "should".	This change will be made. It is understood that this is now being taken forward.
We note that one of the options being presented – option 7 - crosses Torvean Landforms Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). As you will be aware, we have provided your Council with detailed advice on this option on a number of occasions. This advice is that an option cutting through the SSSI is likely to have a significant impact on the integrity of this national site. If this option was developed it is likely that the impact would be nationally significant.	Noted. This comment will help the responsible authority to assess the options which may affect the SSSI.
Option 5 also comes close to the eastern boundary of the main part of the site. We have previously commented on the implications of option 5, to the effect that although the route avoids the SSSI, it is possible that physical damage to the esker ridge might occur as a result of the working corridor for the route. The proximity of the road to the steep face of the esker may also require slope stabilisation measures (e g slope regrading) from a safety viewpoint. However, it is our understanding, that should this route be selected, careful micrositing will ensure that the site is not impacted.	Noted. This comment will help the responsible authority to assess the options which may affect the SSSI.
In addition, as we have advised previously, the River Moriston Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is upstream of this proposal and the River Ness. This site is designated for Atlantic salmon and freshwater pearl mussel. Works that may have impact on passage and habitat of salmon in the River Ness could therefore have an adverse effect on the integrity of the River Moriston SAC. As the lifecycles of Atlantic salmon and freshwater pearl mussel are intrinsically linked any impact on salmon may also impact freshwater pearl mussel. Careful consideration will be needed to ensure that works do not affect this site.	Noted. This comment will help the responsible authority to assess the options which may affect the SSSI.
The following issues, not included in the scoping document, require consideration: • Wildlife corridors. There will be a requirement for provision for protected species to cross the link route safely, for example through the installation of	Noted. This information will be brought forward into the Environmental Report.

badger tunnels or the modification of culverts to allow safe passage for otters. It will also be necessary to ensure that habitats are not fragmented by the development. • Invasive non-native species. It will be necessary to incorporate strategies for the avoidance of introduction / spread of non-native species such as Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam. Further advice can be sought from your own Biodiversity Officers.	
<u>Scoping in/out of SEA issues</u> We note that 'population' has been scoped out. However the options being considered will have varying recreational disturbance issues on the canal towpath, the canal itself, River Ness, Bught Park, Whin Park, the rugby pitches and the riverside area. These are key elements of the recreational green network on this side of Inverness. There are also human health implications. We therefore recommend that either population or human health or both are screened in.	Noted. Population will be scoped in, an SEA objective on these issues will be brought forward in the Environmental Report. Prior to this being undertaken it will be circulated to the consultation authorities for comment.
<u>SEA objectives</u> SEA objectives provide a tool for assessing the potential environmental effects arising from the implementation of the plan. This is distinct from the environmental objectives of the plan, which are used to consider the environmental performance of the plan through its lifetime. They should be SMART. The four objectives proposed are not SMART and would benefit from being made so.	Noted. It is considered that the SEA objectives themselves should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant/realistic. It is not however considered that the SEA objectives should be timebound. Following discussion with Scottish Natural Heritage it was agreed that the SEA objectives could remain as they were in the Scoping Report however the monitoring proposed in the SEA Environmental Report should be SMART.
<u>Assessment Methodology</u> We recommend that additional Key Considerations are added including one for to the SAC, we suggest 'Will it safeguard Special Area of Conservation (SAC)' and an additional set covering population and or human health.	Noted. The key consideration related to the SAC will be added to SEA objective 1. Key considerations for Population will be brought forward in consultation with the Consultation Authorities.