



We safeguard the nation's historic environment and promote its understanding and enjoyment

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Your ref:

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Dear Ms Lambert

**Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005
Renfrewshire Council Core Paths Plan: Screening Report**

Thank you for consulting Historic Scotland on the screening report for Renfrewshire Council's Core Paths Plan, received by the Scottish Government's SEA Gateway on 28 September 2007. I have reviewed the screening report on behalf of Historic Scotland in its role as a Consultation Authority under the above Act, in accordance with the requirements of Section 9(3). In doing so I have used the criteria set out in Schedule 2 for determining the likely significance of the effects on the environment.

My understanding from the screening report is that the Core Paths Plan will provide the public with a reasonable degree of access across the Council area, through the creation of a basic framework of paths made available for recreation and everyday journeys by local people and visitors.

I note that it is the Council's view that the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects. In light of the information included in the report, I agree that the plan may have significant effects on the historic environment. Simply for information, I have provided a list in the annex to this letter of some of the potential impacts on the historic environment that may arise from activities associated with recreation and access.

As you will be aware, it is the responsibility of Renfrewshire Council as the Responsible Authority to determine whether the plan requires an environmental assessment and to inform the Consultation Authorities accordingly. Should you determine that an environmental assessment of the plan is required, I draw your attention to the information requirements set out in Schedule 3 of the Act and to the Scottish Government SEA Tool Kit (available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/09/13104943/0>).

Please do not hesitate to contact Rosalind Campbell on 0131 668 8575 or by email at HSSEA.gateway@scotland.gsi.gov.uk should you wish to discuss this response.

Yours sincerely

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Amanda Chisholm
Strategic Environmental Assessment Team Leader

Annex: Historic environment issues

Simply for information, the Core Paths Plan has the potential to affect the historic environment both as a result of improvements and through increased use of existing paths. Improvement may result in effects on the setting and characteristics of historic environment features, scheduled monuments for example. Increased access to historic environment features, while beneficial for the public, may need some form of control to prevent damage e.g. from erosion. For information, I have set out below some of potential impacts on the historic environment that may arise from activities associated with recreation and access:

- creation of new paths may result in loss or damage to archaeological sites and/or their setting
- widening of existing paths may result in loss or damage to archaeological sites and/or their setting
- upgrading and/or maintaining existing paths e.g. bridges, culverts, fences, handrails, benches may have implications for listed buildings and their setting as well as the setting of archaeological sites. Works on listed structures such as bridges are likely to require listed building consent.
- erection of new buildings/facilities may result in loss or damage to archaeological sites and/or their setting
- refurbishment of existing buildings may have positive effects if done appropriately
- erection of signs or interpretation boards may have implications for the setting of archaeological sites and/or listed features
- management of vegetation on or nearby paths may affect archaeological sites
- in general, increased human access may result in erosion of monuments and/or of vulnerable elements of historic landscapes