



Ms Catherine Lambert
Planner (Regeneration and Environment)
Department of Planning & Transport
Renfrewshire Council HQ
South Building
Cotton Street
Paisley
PA1 1LL

Our ref: PF 132/07-08

19 October 2007

Dear Ms Lambert

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

I refer to your screening consultation submitted on 28 September 2007 via the Scottish Executive SEA Gateway in respect of the above plan.

In accordance with Part 1 Section 9(3) of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, SNH has considered your screening report using the criteria set out in Schedule 2 for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment.

SNH's view in respect of each of these criteria is set out in the Annex attached. Accordingly, SNH agrees that the above Plan is likely to have significant environmental effects. The Annex also provides a list of information that it would be helpful for SNH to receive at the scoping stage.

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

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

Yours sincerely



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SCHEDULE 2

CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING THE LIKELY SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Schedule 2 Criteria	Part 1 Section 8(1) determination - Are significant environmental effects likely ? <i>(Responsible Authority's assessment)</i>	SNH's Assessment under Part 1 Section 9(3) Yes/No/Unknown	SNH's Comments And Additional Information
1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard , in particular to:			
(a) the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources;	Yes	Yes	SE Guidance on core paths plans limits the inclusion of routes requiring development to those that can be achieved within 1-2 years.
(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;	Yes	Yes	As well as the PPS listed, the Plan will also influence actions taken through the <i>Regional Transport Strategy for the west of Scotland</i> to improve walking and cycling opportunities.
(c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;	Yes	Yes	The Plan will link countryside and greenspace to residential areas and encourage sustainable travel.
(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme;	Yes	Yes	The Plan has the potential to increase disturbance to sensitive wildlife habitats. However a large proportion of the network will use existing paths. The main problems may arise with paths requiring development.
(e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on	Yes	Yes	The Plan is not relevant to the implementation of European Community legislation. However,

the environment (for example plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection);			there could be local effects that need addressing under existing Directives.
2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to -			
(a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;	Yes	Yes	The Plan is intended to encourage people to access the outdoors and the countryside on a more regular basis.
(b) the cumulative nature of the effects;	Yes	Yes	A well promoted network arising from the Plan could give rise to greater effects than expected in a particular locality.
(c) the transboundary nature of the effects (<i>in UK international cases</i>);	Uncertain	No	Not applicable
(d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example due to accidents);	Yes	Uncertain	The risks presented by the Plan are low.
(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);	Yes	Yes	The Plan will service an area of 270 sq. km with a population of 173,000. In addition there is regular movement to and from Glasgow and other neighbouring authorities for work and recreation. Core path networks are expected to integrate across administrative boundaries.
(f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; ii. exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or iii. intensive land-use; and 	Uncertain	Yes	Some routes requiring development (shown in the interim draft Plan) have the potential to introduce adverse effects into sensitive areas.

(g) the effects on areas or landscapes that have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	Yes/No	Yes	There are 10 SSSIs in Renfrewshire, 2 Special Protection Areas and 1 proposed SPA. As well as potential effects due to increased use on existing paths, routes requiring development must take account of the protection in these areas (e.g. Inner Clyde)
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Comments on information needed at the Scoping Stage

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

1 Context

a The Plan

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

b The Area

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

2. Scope

a Scope and Level of Detail

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

b Alternatives & Mitigation

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

- Where possible, the proposed approach for identification of mitigation

3. Methods

a Assessment Method

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

a Consultation

- Proposed consultation period for the Environmental Report