

**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF THE RENFREWSHIRE
DRAFT CORE PATHS PLAN: SCREENING DETERMINATION**

Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005

Renfrewshire Draft Core Paths Plan

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Determination

This statement sets out the Council's determination under Regulation 10(1) of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 on whether or not a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required for the Renfrewshire Draft Core Paths Plan.

Having consulted the three Consultation Authorities, and having considered the criteria set out in the Act, the Council considers that the Draft Core Paths Plan is likely to have significant environmental effects. The Council has therefore determined that an SEA is required for the Renfrewshire Draft Core Paths Plan.

In making this determination the Council has applied the criteria set out in Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, as required by section 8 of the Act, and the conclusions reached have been set out in the attached statement of reasons.

Crawford Russell
Head of Planning and Transport
Renfrewshire Council
Renfrewshire House
Paisley PA1 1LL
29th February 2008

RENFREWSHIRE DRAFT CORE PATHS PLAN:

STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR SCREENING DETERMINATION

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment Paragraphs Numbers refer to Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005	Likely to have significant Environmental effects? Yes/No	Summary of significant environmental effects Negative and Positive
1(a) the degree to which the PPS sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.	Yes The Core Paths Plan (CPP) will set a framework for key routes, including existing or new routes and will highlight priority projects. The locations, nature and size of projects will be identified through the plan and it will highlight priorities for resource allocation.	Development or improvement to any paths as a result of the CPP may have negative impacts associated with the building process, the location of the path etc. Other plans and projects will have to incorporate the requirements of the CPP. Impacts should be mitigated to an extent by focusing access on clearly defined, well suited routes.
1(b) the degree to which the PPS influences other PPS including those in a hierarchy	Yes The CPP will have some influence on Renfrewshire Council's Open Space Strategy, Local Transport Strategy, Access Strategy, Local Biodiversity Action Plan, Trees and Woodland Strategy, Neighbourhood Action Plans, Area Development Frameworks, Local Plan and Local Housing Strategy.	All other Plans, Programmes and Strategies will be required to have regard to the objectives of the CPP.
1(c) the relevance of the PPS for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	Yes The CPP can promote social sustainability. The CPP will cater for all user types and abilities. It will aid social inclusion by connecting people and places in a sustainable manner and encourage community engagement through involvement in the core path planning process. The CPP will encourage people to walk, cycle, and ride and enjoy other non-motorised activities as part of their leisure and for active travel. In terms of sustainability, the CPP will promote more sustainable modes of transport, thereby, reducing CO ₂ emissions; and help to address climate change related problems to an extent. It will also support social and economic	The CPP could make a positive contribution to all aspects of sustainable development. Non-motorised types of travel and access are generally considered to be more sustainable. Again, improvements in access and the development of new routes may have environmental impacts which will have to be balanced with any increase in sustainability.

<p>Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment</p> <p>Paragraphs Numbers refer to Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005)</p>	<p>Likely to have significant Environmental effects?</p> <p>Yes/No</p>	<p>Summary of significant environmental effects</p> <p>Negative and Positive</p>
	<p>regeneration and healthy living.</p> <p>The CPP will also have positive economic impacts as evidence exists to show that paths attract people, both in terms of tourism and in attracting and sustaining inward investment. This is done through promoting access to attractive quality green spaces for recreation.</p>	
<p>1(d) environmental problems relevant to the PPS</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>The CPP could have both positive and negative environmental impacts. Paths encourage people into an area and there could therefore potentially be some wildlife disturbance and habitat degradation in more fragile areas. Positively managed access to attractive green space can encourage people to care for, respect and look after their environment, particularly where there is a high degree of community involvement. Potential air quality enhancements may be experienced with increases in sustainable travel modes.</p>	<p>The path and access proposals contained in the CPP have the potential to create significant environmental problems if they are not carefully managed. The CPP does, however, provide a mechanism for considering environmental problems and seeking ways of reducing them.</p>
<p>1(e) the relevance of the PPS for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, PPS linked to waste management or water protection)</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>The Council has obligations to fulfil under the Habitats and Birds Directives with regard to sites and species. There is potential for routes within the CPP to coincide with sites or species, however, the CPP should also provide a mechanism whereby any negative impacts can be mitigated or avoided. It may also be possible to build positive management measures into the CPP</p>	<p>The CPP could influence how the Council complies with the requirements of EC legislation, particularly the Birds and Habitats Directives.</p>

<p>Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment</p> <p>Paragraphs Numbers refer to Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005)</p>	<p>Likely to have significant Environmental effects?</p> <p>Yes/No</p>	<p>Summary of significant environmental effects</p> <p>Negative and Positive</p>
<p>2 (a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Details about the level of effect will require further investigation; however, effective access planning and management should reduce or avoid the impacts on wildlife and habitats. It will also be possible to build in and facilitate the mitigation of any impacts where they do occur. Probability, duration and frequency will be considerations in planning and managing access, particularly in sensitive areas.</p>	<p>It is probable that there will be positive and negative impacts and they will have the potential be of long or short duration. The CPP should facilitate the mitigation or reversal of negative impacts and a means for managing the positive impacts.</p>
<p>2 (b) the cumulative nature of the effects</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Again, the extent of any cumulative effect is uncertain at present. The level of any impact will depend on the number of routes created and the resulting impact on the landscape, topography, geology and other physical characteristics of areas which may be altered. Any increase in the number of people using the paths could have an additional cumulative impact. The CPP should, however, facilitate more positive management of such usage and any problems associated with it, including erosion and vandalism.</p> <p>Cumulative impacts may also stem from the CPP being implemented along side other PPS that influence access such as the Local Transport Strategy, or any future open space strategy.</p>	<p>It is considered likely that there will be cumulative effects which may be positive or negative. The CPP will promote the improvement and extension of the core path network. Such action in conjunction with other access initiatives could also contribute to cumulative impacts.</p>
<p>2 (c) transboundary nature of the effects (i.e. environmental effects on other EU Member States.</p>	<p>Uncertain</p> <p>The CPP could have some implications if migratory species are affected.</p>	<p>It is unclear whether there will be any transboundary effects resulting from the CPP and if there are, whether they will be positive or negative.</p>
<p>2 (d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>The CPP should have a beneficial impact on human health. Good</p>	<p>The CPP could create some risks to human health and safety or the environment. It is anticipated that</p>

<p>Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment</p> <p>Paragraphs Numbers refer to Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005)</p>	<p>Likely to have significant Environmental effects?</p> <p>Yes/No</p>	<p>Summary of significant environmental effects</p> <p>Negative and Positive</p>
	<p>quality access to countryside and green spaces will contribute to a range of acknowledged mental and physical health benefits, improve the general sense of well-being and contribute to a better quality of life. This can be direct through increased numbers of paths and their length, or indirect through the improvements in access to green spaces and recreational areas. For this to be effective, however, paths need to be of an acceptable standard, well maintained and safe from crime. Paths need to be well designed and fit for purpose. The wrong user on a path can damage it and pose a health and safety risk to other users.</p>	<p>the CPP could provide a means for managing and reducing any risks and contribute to improvements in human health.</p>
<p>2 (e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>The adoption of the CPP will have significant positive effects and will cater for all aspects of the population. The CPP will cover the whole local authority area and connect to the surrounding authority areas. The management of access through the CPP will help to limit the significance of any negative impacts.</p>	<p>The CPP affects the whole of the Renfrewshire Council area, both urban and rural. Any impacts are likely to be more concentrated along the path corridors. The Council area include several large urban areas, therefore, there is the potential for any effects to reach large numbers of the population.</p>
<p>2 (f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to-</p> <p>(i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;</p> <p>(ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or</p> <p>(iii) intensive land-use.</p>	<p>Uncertain</p> <p>Renfrewshire has two SPAs and a pSPA, several SSSIs, 2 LNRs, many SINCs and wildlife corridors. There are also SAMs, 2 sites on the Inventory of Designed Landscapes and Historic Gardens and numerous listed buildings. The CPP process will ensure that demand is balanced with the need to protect the environment. It is likely to have significant, positive effects by providing a means with which to manage responsible access to sites. The CPP should help to secure the regular use of formalised routes and facilitate the management of any access. On balance the CPP</p>	<p>There are several very extensive sites within Renfrewshire that have national and international designations in recognition of their importance for nature conservation. The authority also benefits from a rich built and cultural heritage. The CPP should help to focus activity away from these sensitive areas, however, both positive or negative effects could occur.</p>

<p>Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment</p> <p>Paragraphs Numbers refer to Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005)</p>	<p>Likely to have significant Environmental effects?</p> <p>Yes/No</p>	<p>Summary of significant environmental effects</p> <p>Negative and Positive</p>
	<p>should help to focus access related activities away from areas of sensitivity.</p>	
<p>2 (g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.</p>	<p>Yes/No</p> <p>Core paths and other access routes can be used as a tool for managing responsible access to sites of national, community or international protection status. It may be the case, however, that usage of particular areas may significantly increase as a result of core path designation. This in turn could have an impact on the environment.</p>	<p>Much of rural Renfrewshire is protected by a Green Belt designation which recognises the quality of the landscape. Paths can be a well integrated, positive element of the rural landscape; or equally of the townscape. There is scope for both positive and negative effects, although the CPP should seek to address any such effect.</p>