

TAYSIDE & CLACKMANNANSHIRE

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Ref. CNS/SEA/SEA Screening Reports 2006-7

7 December 2006

Dear Madam

**The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Scotland)
Regulations 2004: Auchterarder Expansion Development Framework
Screening Determination**

I refer to your screening consultation submitted on 10 November 2006 via the Scottish Executive SEA Gateway in respect of the above plan.

In accordance with Regulation 14(3) of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Regulations, SNH has considered your screening report using the criteria set out in Schedule 1 for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment.

SNH's view in respect of each of these criteria is set out in Annex 1 attached. Accordingly, SNH agrees that the above Plan is likely to have significant environmental effects and therefore does require an assessment in accordance with the aforementioned Act. Annex 2 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 Carolyn Warwick on 01738 458583 or via SNH's SEA Gateway at sea.gateway@snh.gov.uk

Yours sincerely



**Philip Gaskell
Area Manager**

Annex 1

SCHEDULE 1 CRITERIA

CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING THE LIKELY SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

| Schedule 2 Criteria | Section 8(1) determination - Are significant environmental effects likely ? (Responsible Authority's assessment) | SNH's Assessment under 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; | no | yes | SNH considers that the development framework will set the framework for housing, employment and recreation projects |
| (b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy; | no | no | SNH agrees with Responsible Authority's assessment. |
| (c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development; | no | no | SNH agrees with Responsible Authority's assessment. |
| (d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; | yes | yes | The Responsible Authority's assessment omits landscape, soils and biodiversity problem. With regard to landscape, SNH considers that there are likely to be significant effects on the local landscape character and while these may be capable of being mitigated, they should nonetheless be assessed. There are likely to be locally significant effects on soils. There may be locally significant effects on biodiversity, particularly birds though loss of habitat |
| (e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection); | no | no | SNH agrees with Responsible Authority's assessment. |

| 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; | no | yes | Impacts on landscape, habitats, species and soils are likely to be localised, but will be permanent where new structures are built on top of them. Assessment of the loss of these would enable more accurate mitigation to be identified. |
| (b) the cumulative nature of the effects; | yes | yes | In addition to People and Health and socio-economic impacts, SNH considers that landscape and visual impacts are likely to be cumulative with existing built development. The amount of work already carried out to assess the landscape and visual impacts, and how to minimise these, would suggest that the impacts are likely to be significant. However, much of the existing work could be adapted to meet the SEA requirements. SNH agrees with the Responsible Authority's assessment in relation to soils and agricultural land |
| (c) the transboundary nature of the effects <i>(in UK international cases)</i> | NA | NA | |
| (d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example due to accidents); | no | no | SNH agrees with Responsible Authority's assessment. |
| (e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical areas and size of the population likely to be affected); | no | no | SNH agrees with Responsible Authority's assessment. |
| (f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: | | | |
| i. special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; | no | no | SNH agrees with Responsible Authority's assessment. |
| ii. exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or | no | no | SNH agrees with Responsible Authority's assessment. |
| iii. intensive land-use; and | NA | NA | |
| (g) the effects on areas or landscapes that have a recognised national, Community or international protection status. | no | no | SNH agrees with Responsible Authority's assessment. |

Annex 2

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

4. Next Steps

a Consultation

- Proposed consultation period for the Environmental Report