

Appendix 1:SEA Template

SEA SCREENING REPORT – COVER NOTE	
COVER NOTE – SECTION 1	
To:	SEA.gateway@scotland.gsi.gov.uk or William Carlin SEA gateway Scottish Executive Area 1 H (Bridge) Victoria Quay Edinburgh EH6 6QQ
COVER NOTE – SECTION 2	
An SEA screening report is attached for the plan/programme entitled:-	
Aberdeenshire Core Paths Plan	
The Responsible Authority is: -	
ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL	
COMPLETE SECTION 3 OR 4 OR 5	
COVER NOTE – SECTION 3	
Screening is required because the plan/programme falls under Section 5(3)(c) or Section 8(1) of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. Our view is that: -	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	An SEA is required because the plan/programme is likely to have significant environmental effects
	<i>or</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	An SEA is not required because the plan/programme is unlikely to have any significant environmental effects
COVER NOTE – SECTION 4	
<input type="checkbox"/>	The plan/programme does not require an SEA under the regulations. However, we wish to carry out an SEA on a voluntary basis. We accept that, because this SEA is voluntary, the statutory 28-day timescale for views from the Consultative Authorities cannot be guaranteed.
COVER NOTE – SECTION 5	
<input type="checkbox"/>	None of the above applies. We have prepared this screening report because:
SEA SCREENING REPORT – COVER NOTE (Continued)	

COVER NOTE – SECTION 6

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COVER NOTE – SECTION 7

Signature (electronic Signature is acceptable)	Alastair D. R. Fullwood
Date	02.11.06

SEA SCREENING REPORT – SECTION 1, KEY FACTS

Responsible Authority	Aberdeenshire Council
Title of Plan/Programme	Aberdeenshire Core Paths Plan
Plan purpose	The purpose of the plan is to identify and provide a basic framework of routes sufficient to give the public reasonable non-motorised access throughout Aberdeenshire (excluding

	Aberdeen City and the area covered by the Cairngorms National Park). This basic framework of routes will be both in and around local communities and will also link into and support wider networks of other routes.
What prompted the plan (e.g. legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions)?	Sections 17 to 20 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 places a statutory responsibility on Aberdeenshire Council, as the responsible access authority for the above area, to develop a Core Paths Plan.
Plan subject (e.g. transport)	Outdoors non-motorised access
Period covered by plan	2008 to 2011
Frequency of plan updates	At five yearly intervals following adoption unless otherwise directed by the Scottish Executive
Plan area (e.g. sq kms)	4680 sq km
Summary of nature/ content of plan	To provide a plan for a basic framework of paths to meet the needs of local communities and visitors for both recreational access and everyday journeys
Are there any proposed plan objectives?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Copy of objectives attached	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES (Appendix 2) <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Date	02.11.06

**SEA SCREENING REPORT – SECTION 2
CONSIDERING THE LIKELY SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTS ON THE
ENVIRONMENT**

Our determination regarding the likely significance of effects on the environment of [insert plan title] are set out in table 1

TABLE 1 - LIKELY SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

TITLE OF PLAN/PROGRAMME		
Aberdeenshire Core Paths Plan		
RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY		
Aberdeenshire Council		
Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment (para numbers refer to Schedule 1 of the Regulations)	Likely to have significant environmental effects? YES/NO	Summary of significant environmental effects
1(a) Will the plan set a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources?	Yes	The Plan will specifically set the framework for the location of routes and paths, the functionality of these routes and paths and the allocation of resources to identify and develop these routes and paths by Aberdeenshire Council and others
1(b) Will the plan influence other plans including those in a hierarchy?	Yes	The Plan is likely to influence priorities for path and route development carried out by Aberdeenshire Council and others and will be instrumental in delivering actions identified in the Outdoor Access Strategy. The Plan is unlikely to influence the current Local Plan, Community Plan, Local Transport Strategy or Structure Plan but is likely to influence future revisions to these plans
1(c) Does the plan have any relevance for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development?	Yes	The Plan will promote sustainable development and sustainable use of the environment by encouraging development of non-motorised sustainable transport. This will assist in addressing climate change issues. The Plan will assist in delivering targets aimed at improving health and wellbeing through encouraging physical activity and will promote social inclusion and community development by providing links between communities.

		The Plan will also provide opportunities to mitigate existing problems related to access and environmentally sensitive areas.
1(d) Are there some environmental problems relevant to the plan?	Yes	The Plan has the potential to identify routes that cross environmentally sensitive areas at a local level where increase in frequency of use may lead to an increase of frequency of disturbance to wildlife. Other potential associated problems linked to increased frequency of use include increased soil erosion, impact on watercourses and disturbance to vegetation. The Plan will also provide opportunities to mitigate existing problems associated with access in environmentally sensitive areas and to identify and manage potential problems through careful selection of routes to minimise negative impacts and monitoring over time to identify potential problems at an early stage
1(e) Will the plan have any relevance for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans linked to waste management or water protection)?	Yes/No	The positive impacts of Core Paths may be considered in the development and implementation of Community legislation on the environment
Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment (para numbers refer to Schedule 1 of the Regulations)	Likely to have significant environmental effects ? YES/NO	Summary of significant environmental effects
2(a) Will the environmental effects be significant when consideration is given to probability, duration, frequency and reversibility?	Yes	The environmental effects of the Plan are likely to be low in magnitude and will principally be in two stages. The first stage is likely to be during development of routes in previously undeveloped areas. These effects will be limited to small linear areas and may be reversible over time.

		<p>The second stage will be during use of the routes when potential increase in frequency in access activities may have a cumulative negative environmental impact through increased disturbance.</p> <p>The Plan will provide the opportunity to focus development and use in more environmentally robust areas and relieve pressure on more sensitive areas.</p>
2(b) Will the effects be cumulative in nature?	Yes	<p>The Plan covers the area of Aberdeenshire for which Aberdeenshire Council is the responsible access authority however negative environmental impacts are likely to be very localised with minimal disturbance, therefore the magnitude of the cumulative negative effects is likely to be low.</p> <p>The increased promotion and use of paths and routes may have a positive impact on other environmental factors including both individual and community health and wellbeing and a reduction in dependency on motorised transport with an associated reduction in carbon emissions and consequent improvement in air quality</p>
2(c) Will the effects be transboundary in nature?	Yes	<p>The Plan covers the area of Aberdeenshire for which Aberdeenshire Council is the responsible access authority but has the potential to link into similar plans being prepared by neighbouring access authorities. This may widen some of the positive benefits of the Plan e.g. reduction in car dependency but negative impacts are likely to remain localised and minimal</p>
2(d) Will the environmental effects be significant when consideration is given to the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)?	No	<p>The environmental effects are unlikely to be significant. However there will be limited positive effects achieved by providing opportunities for increased physical activity and consequently improving healthy lifestyles.</p> <p>The risks for accidents will be reduced by providing well maintained routes and improved access points to paths</p>

2(e) Will the environmental effects be significant when consideration is given to the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)?	No	The environmental effects are likely to be insignificant when the geographical area and density of population are taken into account
2(f) Will the environmental effects be significant when consideration is given to the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to- special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or intensive land-use?	No	The CPP process will ensure that demand for access is balanced with the need to protect the environment and will provide opportunities to manage responsible access to minimise any negative effects in specially designated or vulnerable sites
2(g) Will the environmental effects be significant when consideration is given to the effects on areas or landscapes, which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status?	No	Core Paths Planning will provide opportunities to plan routes avoiding specially designated sites or manage access to have minimal negative impacts

TABLE 2 – SUMMARY

<p>SUMMARY</p> <p>The Aberdeenshire Core Paths Plan will be a component part of the revised Aberdeenshire Outdoors Access Strategy and will be instrumental in delivering the objectives of the Strategy at both local and strategic levels.</p> <p>The Plan will provide opportunities to develop access facilities to meet the basic needs of local residents and visitors in a sustainable way. This will be achieved by minimising negative impacts on the environment and land management and enhancing positive benefits by contributing to key public policies including health improvement and sustainable transport.</p>
<p>SEA SCREENING REPORT – SECTION 3</p> <p>SUMMARY RECORD OF COMMENTS FROM</p> <p>THE CONSULTATION AUTHORITIES</p>

**TABLE 3: SUMMARY RECORD OF COMMENTS FROM THE
CONSULTATION AUTHORITIES**

GUIDANCE NOTE	
It is not required to include this section in the screening report. However, the Responsible Authority may find it useful for record purposes.	
TITLE OF PLAN/PROGRAMME	
RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY	
DATE COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM CONSULTATION AUTHORITIES	
Consultation Authority	Views (if known at this stage)
Scottish Environmental Protection Agency	Significant environmental effects – YES/NO
	If YES, note SEA topic/issues here (e.g. soil and water)
Scottish Natural Heritage	Significant environmental effects – YES/NO
	If YES, note SEA topic/issues here (e.g. flora, fauna and biodiversity)
Scottish Ministers (Historic Scotland)	Significant environmental effects – YES/NO
	If YES, note SEA topic/issues here (e.g. landscape and cultural heritage)

Appendix 2: Aberdeenshire Core Paths Plan Objectives.

The Core Paths Plan will provide a basic framework of paths in and around local communities and links into wider path networks across Aberdeenshire. These paths will be for recreational use and everyday journeys for local residents and visitors alike. Core paths will provide opportunities for walking, cycling, riding and other non-motorised activities including watersports. Routes will be selected for Core Paths status using information gained from extensive consultations with communities and after discussions with landowners and managers.

The selection process for Core paths will provide opportunities to avoid negative environmental impacts and conflicts with land management operations and also provide opportunities to enhance the positive benefits of a well integrated and promoted network of paths.