

SEA SCREENING REPORT (COVER NOTE)

PART 1

To: SEA.gateway@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
or
SEA Gateway
Scottish Executive
Area 1 H (Bridge)
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh EH6 6QQ

PART 2

An SEA Screening Report is attached for the plan, programme or strategy (PPS) entitled:

Aberdeenshire Forestry and Woodland Strategy 2016

The Responsible Authority is:

Aberdeenshire Council

COMPLETE PART 3 or 4 or 5

PART 3

Screening is required by the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. Our view is that:

- an SEA is required** because the PPS falls under the scope of Section 5(3) of the Act and is likely to have significant environmental effects **or**
- an SEA is required** because the PPS falls under the scope of Section 5(4) of the Act and is likely to have significant environmental effects **or**
- an SEA is not required** because the PPS is unlikely to have significant environmental effects

PART 4

The PPS does not require an SEA under the Act. 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 Consultation Authorities cannot be guaranteed.

PART 5

None of the above apply. We have prepared this screening report because:
.....
.....
.....

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PART 6

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PART 7

Signature
(electronic
signature
is acceptable) *James Davidson*

Date 26/06/15

SEA SCREENING REPORT - KEY FACTS

Responsible Authority

Aberdeenshire Council

Title of PPS

2016 Aberdeenshire Forestry and Woodland Strategy

Purpose of PPS

To produce a strategy for the management and creation of forestry and woodlands in Aberdeenshire including indicative mapping of preferred areas for new woodland planting. This will be supplementary guidance to the Proposed 2016 Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan.

What prompted the PPS

(e.g. a legislative, regulatory or administrative provision)

Scottish Forestry Strategy 2006 and Planning Scotland Act 2006

Subject

(e.g. transport)

Land Use/Forestry

Period covered by PPS

2016 - 2036

Frequency of updates

Review in 2021

Area covered by PPS

(e.g. geographical area – it is good practice to attach a map)

Aberdeenshire Local Authority area out with Cairngorms National Park

**Summary of nature/
content of PPS**

In integrating with other land use types across Aberdeenshire, the strategy will identify objectives for forest and woodlands and in doing so will help to inform the location, design and management of woodlands including influencing where grant support for forestry projects should be targeted. In line with the Scottish Forestry Strategy, it is expected that the PPS will focus on seven key, inter-related, themes: Climate change, timber, business development, community development, access and health, environmental quality and biodiversity.

**Are there any proposed
PPS objectives?**

YES

NO

Copy of objectives attached

YES (Appendix 1 below)

NO

Date

Xx/06/2015

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Our determinations regarding the likely significance of effects on the environment of Aberdeenshire Passenger Transport Strategy is set out in Table 1.

TABLE 1 – LIKELY SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

TITLE OF PPS		
Aberdeenshire Forestry and Woodland Strategy 2016		
RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY		
Aberdeenshire Council		
Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment (1(a), 1(b) etc. refer to paragraphs in 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 strategy will influence grants for woodland management and creation through the Scottish Rural Development Programme and potentially other grant funding process of relevance. It will also have influence on development management. It could influence a wide range of project related to forests and woodland from community ownership, business development to environmental protection and climate change mitigation.
1(b) the degree to which the PPS influences other PPS including those in a hierarchy	Yes	The strategy could influence strategic and local development plans, river basing management planning, forest management plans, the Scottish Rural Development Programme, flood risk management plan, climate change action plans, the North East Scotland Biodiversity Action Plan and community planning.

1(c) the relevance of the PPS for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	Yes	The strategy will be strongly focussed on effective integration of new woodland into exiting land use (including new built development) so as to deliver multiple benefits. It will promote the management of existing woodland to derive social, environmental and economic benefits.
1(d) environmental problems relevant to the PPS	Yes	There are a number of conflicts between potential woodland expansion and other land uses such as sport shooting or agriculture. Climate change is likely to have significant effects on woodlands as well as other land uses. A number of the habitats and species associated with woodlands are declining. Aberdeenshire hosts a number of nationally important populations of key woodland species and habitats. Deer browsing in relation to woodland regeneration is a significant issue. There are Scottish Government targets for woodland expansion but planting rates need to increase to meet these. Woodland has the potential to benefit flood prevention and water quality. There is the need to take account of the historic environment in planning woodland creation and management.
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)	Yes	This PPS is likely to be relevant to the implementation of a number of EU Directives, including the Water Framework Directive, Climate Change Directive, Habitats and Birds Directive, Biodiversity Action Plan and the Common Agricultural Policy. It is also likely to have relevance to Community Empowerment.
2 (a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	Yes	While it is not envisaged that this PPS is likely to have any significant negative effects on the environment, long term effects environment are likely due to the long term nature of forestry and woodland creation. It should be noted that the strategy will not directly instigate

		woodland planting and forestry activity but would be one element out of a number that will influence decision making and practice.
2 (b) the cumulative nature of the effects	Yes	There is a high level of interaction between different types of land uses, so any positive or negative effects arising from this PPS are likely to have significant secondary, indirect or induced environmental effects.
2 (c) transboundary nature of the effects (i.e. environmental effects on other EU Member States)	Yes	Land use change, disturbance of carbon rich soils, use of forestry resources and how man engages with land are likely to affect climate change, which pervades national boundaries. There is the potential to influence national and internationally important species and habitats.
2 (d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)	No	No significant risks to the environment or human health are anticipated. The strategy will aim to ensure that environmental risks from woodland creation and management are minimised. It will also promote activities that will benefit human health by providing recreational access and improvements to environmental quality.
2 (e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	Yes	The strategy will have an influence across Aberdeenshire Local Authority area out-with Cairngorms National Park.
2 (f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to- (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit	Yes	There are a range of important local, national and international designations in within the area covered by the strategy – SPA's, SAC's, RAMSAR sites, SSSI, National Scenic Areas, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Designed Landscapes etc. all of which could be influenced by the PPS. The strategy will aim to take account of

values; or (iii) intensive land-use.		<p>area of valuable and intensive land uses and will protect these, where relevant.</p> <p>The strategy will strongly consider historic and cultural heritage implications of woodland management and planting.</p>
2 (g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status	Yes	<p>There is the potential for woodland management and creation to influence landscapes. How to integrate woodland creation and management with designated and non-designated landscapes is likely to be an element of the strategy.</p>

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A summary of our considerations of the significant environmental effects of Aberdeenshire Passenger Transport Strategy is given below.

TABLE 2 – SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

The PPS has a range of potential environment effects based on its identification of priorities for woodland management and creation in the region, its identification of preferred areas for new woodland planting and its potential to influence other PPS as well as grant processes.

It is envisaged that the strategy will have significant positive environmental effects. In carrying out Strategic Environmental assessment we will aim to maximise these positive effects. It must be borne in mind that the strategy will not directly instigate on-the-ground effects but will set a high level direction and would only be one element in a land use decision.

It will be a core aim to the strategy to have no significant negative environmental effects. However, there can be trade-offs in relation to woodland management, or the creation of productive woodland, and environmental objectives, this needs exploration in developing the strategy.

Trans-boundary and cumulative effects from the PPS cannot be overruled.

For the reasons outlined it is considered that the PPS is likely to have significant effects. Further steps will be taken to undertake strategic environmental assessment

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

SCREENING TEMPLATE - GUIDANCE NOTE 2

It is not a statutory requirement to include this section in the screening report. However, the Responsible Authority may find it useful for record purposes.

TITLE OF PLAN, PROGRAMME OR STRATEGY

2016 Aberdeenshire Forestry and Woodland Strategy

RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY

Aberdeenshire Council

DATE COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM CONSULTATION AUTHORITIES

18/06/2015

Consultation Authority	Views (if known at this stage)
Scottish Environment Protection Agency	Significant environmental effects - YES
Scottish Natural Heritage	Significant environmental effects - YES
The Scottish Ministers (Historic Scotland)	Significant environmental effects - YES

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TABLE 4 – RECORD OF POST SCREENING ACTION

SCREENING TEMPLATE - GUIDANCE NOTE 3

It is not a requirement to include this section in the screening report. However, the Responsible Authority may find it useful for record purposes.

TITLE OF PLAN, PROGRAMME OR STRATEGY (PPS)

2016 Aberdeenshire Forestry and Woodland Strategy

RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY

Aberdeenshire Council

1

Responsible Authority and Consultation Authorities in agreement – PPS is likely to have significant environmental effects

Yes

Date of determination

18/06/15

2

Responsible Authority and Consultation Authorities in agreement – PPS is not likely to have significant environmental effects

Date of determination

3

Responsible Authority and Consultation Authorities cannot reach agreement – referred to the Scottish Ministers for their determination

Date referred to the Scottish Ministers

4

Scottish Ministers' determination

Date of determination

5

Publicity requirements met

YES

6

Signature

James Davidson

Date

26/06/15

Appendix 1

The objectives of PPS will are likely to be drawn from four key themes:

- Climate change
- Timber and Business development
- Community development, Access and health
- Natural, Cultural and Historic Assets