

Post-Adoption SEA Statement

Strategic Environmental Assessment Process

The Post-Adoption Statement is required under Section 18(3) of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. The statement should cover (a) how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan; (b) how the environmental report has been taken into account; (c) how the opinion expressed during consultations have been taken into account in adopting the plan; (d) reasons for choosing the plan in the light of other reasonable alternatives and (e) monitoring measures. Your statement could look like the following statement, which should be amended to suit the individual situation and facts.

Aberdeenshire Council has prepared Supplementary Planning Guidance: Carbon Neutrality in New Developments which has been subject to a process of strategic environmental assessment (SEA), as required under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. This has included the following activities: -

- Taking into account the views of the Consultation Authorities regarding the scope and level of detail that was appropriate for the environmental report
- Preparing an environmental report on the likely significant effects on the environment of the draft plan which included consideration of:-
 - the baseline data relating to the current state of the environment;
 - links between the plan and other relevant policies, plans, programmes and environmental objectives;
 - existing environmental problems affecting the plan;
 - the plan's likely significant effects on the environment (positive and negative);
 - the mitigation measures envisaged;
 - an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives chosen;
 - monitoring measures to ensue that any unforeseen environmental effects will be identified allowing for appropriate remedial action to be taken.
- Consulting on the environmental report
- Taking into account the environmental report and the results of consultation in making final decisions regarding the plan/ programme
- Committing to monitoring the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan to identify any unforeseen adverse significant environmental effects and to taking appropriate remedial action. The key findings are as follows:

1) Effects of Environmental considerations & the environmental report on the plan

The following table summarises how environmental considerations have been integrated into Carbon Neutrality in New Developments and how the environmental report has been taken into account in accordance with Section 18 (3)(a-b).

Table 1: Environmental Considerations & the Environmental Report

Environmental Considerations and Findings from Environmental Report	Integrated into Plan (Yes/No)	How Integrated/Taken into Account or Reason for not Being Taken Into Account
Make further improvements to achieve higher carbon dioxide reduction standards and further positive benefits in terms of climate change and also affordable warmth	Yes	A table has been included in the plan that sets out how the target for carbon dioxide reduction will be increased in the future
There are potential negative impacts on the landscape from the inclusion of on-site renewable technologies	Yes	Reference to the Council's guidance on micro-renewables and the policies in the Aberdeenshire Local Plan have been included in the guidance and this supports the SEA objectives
There are potential negative impacts on biodiversity from wind energy developments	Yes	Reference to the Council's guidance on micro-renewables and the policies in the Aberdeenshire Local Plan have been included in the guidance and this supports the SEA objectives
There are potential negative impacts on the cultural heritage from on-site renewable energy developments	Yes	Reference to the Council's guidance on micro-renewables and the policies in the Aberdeenshire Local Plan have been included in the guidance and this supports the SEA objectives
There are potential negative impacts of biomass production on land take	No	Biomass energy supports the SEA objectives but it is just one of many potential measures available to meet the target

2) Consultation responses

The following table summarises how opinions expressed during consultation have been taken into account (including any consultation required with other EU member states) in accordance with Section 18(3)(c-d).

Table 2 – How consultation responses have been taken into account

Consultee / Respondent	Summary of Comments	How The Comment Was Taken Into Account In Making the Decision to Adopt The Final Plan/Programme
Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)	Some comments on the clarity of the environmental report and guidance were made.	Changes to the guidance and environmental report were made.
Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)	assessing the effect of the Guidance at a local level, when it is a contribution to a global strategy in which Aberdeenshire is one of many other players, is of limited real value. The real value of the Guidance is that it provides a steer for development in Aberdeenshire which makes a positive contribution to the global strategy/solution.	The impacts of the guidance on global climate were considered in the environmental assessment. The impacts on other criteria, for example natural heritage, were assessed on a local level.
Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)	The mitigation measures should ensure EIA should demonstrate that biomass will not have a significant effect on land of high natural heritage value.	This has now been included in the mitigation measures.
Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)	In the Appropriate Assessment screening statement I am not certain that your view that all the Objectives and Actions have been screened out because they do not generate development etc is correct. Objective 2 Action 3 could generate development in the form of wind turbines, which in turn could impact on Special Protections Areas (SPAs) in Aberdeenshire.	It would be the case that any development which included a wind turbine element, would itself be subject to Appropriate Assessment.
Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)	It would be appropriate for this Guidance to give developers some steer as to what the Council, as Planning Authority, would consider acceptable as part of any development proposal that came forward for planning permission.	Aberdeenshire Council are not being prescriptive about how the developer must achieve the carbon dioxide reduction targets.
Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA)	SEPA considers the ER acceptable	Noted.
Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA)	make mention to the new PAN84	PAN84 has been considered in the final guidance and reference made to it in both the environmental report and guidance.
Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA)	SEPA is disappointed to note that none of the comments it made at the scoping stage on possible amendments to the SEA Objectives have been acted upon	It was not felt that there were any other alternatives. There have been 4 alternatives to achieving option 2 and the impacts of these have been assessed.

<p>Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA)</p>	<p>SEPA agrees that the SPG will have positive effects against the human health SEA Objectives.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
<p>Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA)</p>	<p>SEPA would consider that Objective 2 may have an unknown (?) effect on SEA Objective 8. SEPA accepts that the policies in the development plan will act as mitigation.</p>	<p>The policies in the current local plan will protect water quality and it is our view that the overall effect will be neutral.</p>
<p>Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA)</p>	<p>SEPA agrees that the SPG will have positive effects against the climatic factors SEA Objectives. However as climatic factors and climate change are global issues SEPA considers that the effects are unlikely to be significantly positive.</p>	<p>The difference is to demonstrate that the higher requirements for carbon dioxide reduction targets will have a greater effect on climate change even if it is a small impact on a global scale.</p>
<p>Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA)</p>	<p>SEPA notes that the negative effects on water and soil will be mitigated by EIA, yet if the SPG applies to all planning applications many of these will not be subject to EIA. SEPA would therefore welcome further thought on the mitigation for these effects in the SEA Post Adoption Statement. SEPA would encourage the authority to consider amending the SPG (for example by including a paragraph that such impacts should be demonstrated to be minimised) as a form of mitigation.</p>	<p>The guidance requires an energy statement to be provided by the applicant that outlines the measures proposed to meet the target reduction in emissions. Within this the developer is required to “demonstrate how they promote the sensitive development of renewable energy facilities and provide protection for the built, natural and historic environment”.</p>

3) Reasons for adopting this plan in the light of other reasonable alternatives

Consistent with Section 18(3)(e), this plan is adopted in the light of other reasonable alternatives discussed in the Environmental report on the basis of the following reasons.

- By setting a target for carbon dioxide reductions beyond the current building regulations the positive environmental impacts will be greater in terms of climatic factors
- There is a requirement from national planning policy that a target to reduce carbon dioxide emissions beyond the building regulations
- The option chosen will have a more significant positive effect on providing affordable warmth and good health
- The impact from this option on the landscape could potentially be negative. However there are policies in place in the local plan that provide guidance on the siting of renewable technologies

4) Monitoring Measures

Section 18(3)(f) proposes the provision of information on the measures that are to be taken to monitor for any unforeseen environmental effects so that appropriate remedial action may be taken. The following are proposed action listed in the monitoring framework at **Appendix 1**.

5) Conclusion

It is our view that the SEA has made a positive effect on the plan. It will assist the council in realising its goal of sustainable development, promote evidenced-based culture and transparency as well as supporting the community well being.

Appendix 1: Monitoring Plan

Significant Issues Identified	SEA Objectives	SEA Indicators	Monitoring carried out by	Frequency of Actions/Reviews	Source of Data	Comments
Effects of feedstock/ biomass production on land take	To conserve and enhance the integrity of ecosystems	Reported levels of damage to designated sites/species	SNH	Annually		Exploration with SNH on the modalities for monitoring this indicator will be carried out
Effects of Wind Energy on birds	Prevent damage to designated wildlife sites and protected species	Achievement of Biodiversity Action Plan targets Number of renewable projects screened against flight path of birds	RSPB	Annually		Exploration with RSPB on the modalities for monitoring this indicator will be carried out
Improved efficiency in new builds improving affordable warmth.	Protect and improve health	% Increase in homes with improved energy efficiency	Aberdeenshire Council Housing and Social Work	Annually	Aberdeenshire Fuel Poverty Strategy	

Negative effects of renewable energy projects on the historic environment through excavation and construction	Protect, where appropriate, enhance and restore the historic environment.	Number of developments proposing micro renewable technologies that do not comply with Env\19	Aberdeenshire Council Information & Research officer	Annually	Annual Local Plan Monitoring	
Possible water pollution from mini-hydro projects	Limit water pollution to levels that do not damage natural systems.	Quality (biology and chemistry) of rivers, canals and fresh water bodies.	SEPA	Annually		Exploration with SEPA on the modalities for monitoring this indicator will be carried out
Possible Soil contamination from the use of bio fuels	Safeguard soil quality, quantity and function	Area of contaminated land resulting from renewable projects	Aberdeenshire Council Environmental Health Service	Annually	Environmental Health Aberdeenshire Council Public Register of Contaminated Land	

<p>Significant positive effects of on site renewable energy projects</p>	<p>To reduce the cause and effects of climate change Reduce greenhouse gas emissions</p>	<p>Number of developments incorporating micro renewable technologies</p>	<p>Building Standards DM (Northgate back office system)</p>	<p>Annually</p>	<p>Annual Local Plan monitoring</p>	<p>Development Management can record information as the applications are assessed. This information may be published in future Climate Change Action Plan reviews.</p>
<p>Significant positive effects of higher standard development in terms of energy efficiency</p>	<p>To reduce the cause and effects of climate change Reduce greenhouse gas emissions</p>	<p>Number of applications granted for new developments with increased efficiency</p>	<p>Building Standards DM (Northgate back office system)</p>	<p>Annually</p>	<p>Annual Local Plan monitoring</p>	<p>Development Management can record information as the applications are assessed. This information may be published in future Climate Change Action Plan reviews.</p>

Reduction in carbon dioxide from the combination of renewables and more energy efficient buildings	To reduce the cause and effects of climate change Reduce greenhouse gas emissions	Number of new homes which demonstrate a 15% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions	Building Standards DM (Northgate back office system)	Annually	Annual Local Plan monitoring	Development Management can record information as the applications are assessed. This information may be published in future Climate Change Action Plan reviews.
Significant negative effects of some renewable energy projects on the landscape quality	To conserve and enhance landscape character and scenic value of the area	Number of renewable energy planning applications refused for not being compatible with the landscape	Sustainability, Information & Research officer	Annually	Annual Local Plan Monitoring	
Positive effects of encouraging the use of waste as fuel in some renewable energy projects	To promote sustainable use of natural resources and material assets	Number of developments proposing to use waste as a fuel source	Aberdeenshire Council Waste Team	Annually		

