



**Pre-Screening Notification in respect of Aberdeenshire Council Consultation
Action Plan**

The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 ("the Act")

Aberdeenshire Council is preparing an Action Plan entitled Aberdeenshire Council Consultation Action Plan. Briefly, the action plans seeks to provide a corporate overview of all the consultations that Aberdeenshire Council is undertaking; to make the consultation process open, transparent and of a high quality; to produce statistically reliable data, which will inform decision making within the council in order to evaluate and /or improve services provided by Aberdeenshire Council. The PPS relates to the whole of Aberdeenshire.

By virtue of Section 7(2) of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, Aberdeenshire Council has applied the criteria specified in Schedule 2 of the Act to the PPS on the 6th day of November 2007. Aberdeenshire Council is of the opinion that the Strategy will have no effect in relation to the environment.

Pursuant to Section 7(3) of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, Aberdeenshire Council hereby notifies the consultation authorities of that fact. Appendix 1 below shows how the criteria specified in Schedule 2 of the Act have been applied to the PPS to reach this opinion.

Signed LStrachan

6 November 2007

Consultation Co-ordinator

Appendix 1

SEA PRE-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 Council Consultation Action Plan

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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SEA PRE-SCREENING REPORT (COVER NOTE)

PART 6

Contact name

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Job Title

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PART 7

Signature

(electronic
signature
is acceptable)

LStrachan

Date

6 November 2007

SEA PRE-SCREENING REPORT - KEY FACTS

Responsible Authority	Aberdeenshire Council
Title of PPS	Aberdeenshire Council Consultation Action Plan
Purpose of PPS	The purpose of the action is to develop a culture of open, transparent and effective Consultation; co-ordinate consultations through the use of the consultation database which records key information; use appropriate methods of consultation for different target groups; ensuring that the purpose of the consultation is communicated in order to manage expectations; utilise opportunities that are offered by use of latest technology; minimise duplication and consultation fatigue with stakeholders; promoting the consultation prior to commencement and publicising the results/feedback in an appropriate method; and demonstrate viable outcomes from Aberdeenshire Council's consultations.
What prompted the PPS (e.g. a legislative, regulatory or administrative provision)	Administrative requirements
Subject (e.g. transport)	Communication
Period covered by PPS	2007-2010
Frequency of updates	As and when required
Area covered by PPS (e.g. geographical area – it is good practice to attach a map)	The whole of Aberdeenshire
Summary of nature/content of PPS	It covers the introduction, consultations, key actions, methodology, monitoring and evaluation, increasing and public engagement

**Are there any proposed
PPS objectives?**

YES

NO

Copy of objectives attached

YES

NO

Date

6 November 2007

SEA PRE-SCREENING REPORT

Our determinations regarding the likely significance of effects on the environment of Aberdeenshire Council Consultation Action Plan is set out in Table 1.

TABLE 1 – LIKELY SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Aberdeenshire Council		
RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY		
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	No	It sets no framework for projects and other activities.
1(b) the degree to which the PPS influences other PPS including those in a hierarchy	No	It does not set a framework for other PPS
1(c) the relevance of the PPS for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	No	It does not address environmental or sustainability issues

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment (1(d) etc. refer to paras 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(d) environmental problems relevant to the PPS	No	There are no known environmental problems relevant to this policy
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)	No	The plan does not affect or is affected by any Community legislation on the environment.
2 (a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	No	No effects
2 (b) the cumulative nature of the effects	No	No perceived cumulative effects
2 (c) transboundary nature of the effects (i.e. environmental effects on other EU Member States)	No	No transboundary effect
2 (d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)	No	There are no discernible risks associated with the implementation of this policy
Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment (2(e), 2(f) etc refer to paras 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)

<p>Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment (2(e), 2(f) etc refer to paras in Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005)</p>	<p>Likely to have significant environmental effects? YES/NO</p>	<p>Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)</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>No</p>	<p>No effect</p>
<p>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 values; or (iii) intensive land-use.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No effects on designated and non-designated sites</p>
<p>2 (g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No effects on landscapes</p>

SEA PRE-SCREENING REPORT

A summary of our considerations of the significant environmental effects of Aberdeenshire Council Consultation Action Plan is given below.

TABLE 2 – SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

Aberdeenshire Council Consultation Action Plan aims to develop a culture of open, transparent and effective Consultation; co-ordinate consultations through the use of the consultation database which records key information; use appropriate methods of consultation for different target groups; ensuring that the purpose of the consultation is communicated in order to manage expectations; utilise opportunities that are offered by use of latest technology; minimise duplication and consultation fatigue with stakeholders; promoting the consultation prior to commencement and publicising the results/feedback in an appropriate method; and demonstrate viable outcomes from Aberdeenshire Council's consultations. It does not set a framework for projects and other PPS. There are no environmental problems relevant to this policy. The policy, which does not affect or is affected by any Community legislation on the environment, has no discernible risks associated with its implementation.

It is the considered opinion of Aberdeenshire Council that this PPS has no effect in relation the environment.

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL CORPORATE CONSULTATION ACTION PLAN

Vision

Aberdeenshire Council is currently developing an effective and co-ordinated approach to consultation that is user focused. This approach will provide a corporate overview of all the consultations that Aberdeenshire Council is undertaking. The consultation process used by Aberdeenshire Council will be open, transparent and of a high quality. Through the co-ordinated approach we will be able to produce statistically reliable data, which will inform decision making within the council in order to evaluate and /or improve services provided by Aberdeenshire Council. This will be achieved by:

- Developing a culture of open, transparent and effective Consultation.
- Co-ordinating consultations through the use of the consultation database which records key information.
- Using appropriate methods of consultation for different target groups.
- Ensuring that the purpose of the consultation is communicated in order to manage expectations.
- Utilising opportunities that are offered by use of latest technology.
- Minimising duplication and consultation fatigue with stakeholders.
- Promoting the consultation prior to commencement and publicising the results/feedback in an appropriate method.
- Demonstrating viable outcomes from Aberdeenshire Council's consultations.

The following are objectives and key tasks

Objective and Tasks

Objective

Update and relaunch database

Promoting the Consultation Strategy

Ensure

Co-ordination

of

Tasks

Work with ICT to provide a system which is easy to use and able to record key information
Promotion of database and its requirement to be used for all consultations.

Develop workshops to ensure key staff involved in consultation are aware of the document and how it affects their work.

Attend Team Meetings

Cascade through Core Brief

Publicising on Arcadia and in Accent.

To promote use of the database at workshops.

Aberdeenshire Council consultation activities.	If consultations identified as running and not being on the database positively challenge to ensure future use.
Promotion of Consultation	Highlight through Internal Comms Tools such as Core Brief and Arcadia. Attending Team meetings.
Ensure high standards of consultation	Workshops for staff involved in Consultation. Promote the revised Consultation Toolkit Develop Toolkit as feedback received from services
Promotion of feedback of Consultation outcomes.	Use Employee Focus Groups to gain feedback on improvement ideas. Consultation Workshops on an ongoing basis to offer updates and training to new staff. To encourage consultation staff to work with Communications Officers to ensure feedback provided to the appropriate group.
Effective Evaluation and Monitoring of Consultation	To ensure that staff link the feedback information with what was promoted. E.g. if it was promoted as an information gaining exercise to highlight possible improvements then share the results and any actions to be taken as a result of the consultation. To ensure that the information regarding consultations is inputted onto the database To identify which of our consultation methods are effective with which target groups. To develop realistic PIs for consultation work to demonstrate how we are performing as a council.
Utilise new methods of engaging with target audiences.	Develop a system where individuals can register their interest for consultations. This can be done by individual questionnaire or by keyword. This could be enhanced to allow interested parties to request additional information about the consultation or a consultation pack so they can be involved. Investigate the possibility of using text messaging as a method of engaging target audiences. Investigate the possibility of using more on line interactive surveys as part of the consultation process. Investigate the possibility of using systems such as opinion meter and standpoint to increase engagement.
Review progress through the changes.	Focus groups Feedback from Service Co-ordinators.