

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN: SITE ASSESSMENT and SEA CHECKLIST

Site Name:	Source of site suggestion: All landowners/interested parties identified/aware?		Site History/Previous planning applications, existing local plan policies and proposals:
Settlement:	GIS Site Ref: MIR Site Ref: Pre-MIR Site Ref:	Outside settlement boundary?	
OS Grid Ref:	Site Size (ha):	MIR status:	Summary Description (topography, features, boundaries, neighbouring issues, access, exposure, aspect etc.
Current Use e.g. is the site developed, sparsely developed or undeveloped (e.g. agriculture, brownfield etc):	Proposed Use:	Existing LDP policies/proposals	

Insert Location Plan

Insert Photographs if available

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Site assessment question (click on links embedded in the text for further guidance)	Related SEA topic if applicable	Comment	Information available – GIS/site visit?	Scoring – pre mitigation	Mitigation if appropriate?	Scoring – post mitigation
Water						
Could the option result in a change of status of a water body or significantly affect a designated water body as identified in the Scotland and Solway Tweed River Basin Management Plan ?	Water					
Could the option have a direct impact on the water environment (for example result in the need for watercourse crossings or a large scale abstraction or allow the de-culverting of a watercourse?)	Water					
Can the option connect to the public foul sewer?	Water					
Does the option avoid impact on Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems (GWDTEs) i.e. are there any wetlands and boggy areas on the site?	Water and Biodiversity, Fauna and Flora					
For large scale developments are there any private or public water supplies within 250m of the site which may be affected?	Water and Human Health					

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<p>Flood Risk</p> <p>Is the site thought to be at risk of flooding or could its development result in additional flood risk elsewhere?</p>	Water, Climatic Factors and Human Health					
<p>Could the development of the site help alleviate any existing flooding problems in the area?</p>	Water and Climatic Factors					
<p>Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna</p>						
<p>To what extent will the proposal affect biodiversity, flora and fauna interests? In particular -</p>	Bio flora and fauna					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International designation – e.g. SAC/SPA 	Bio flora and fauna	<p>Yes – Habitats Regulations Appraisal required</p>	No			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other designation – e.g. SSSI, NNR, and locally important designations such as LNRs. 	Bio flora and fauna					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non designated – e.g. trees, TPOs, hedges, woodland, (including woodlands in the Ancient , Semi 	Bio flora and fauna					

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Natural and Long Established Plantation Woodlands), species rich grasslands,						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protected Species affected? –e.g. bats, otters, etc 	Bio flora and fauna					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any local geodiversity sites or wider geodiversity interests that could be affected by the proposal? 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will habitat connectivity or wildlife corridors be affected by the proposal – will it result in habitat fragmentation or greater connectivity? 	Bio flora and fauna					
<p>Climate Change mitigation</p> <p>What is the site overall impact in terms of carbon emissions (using SPACE)?</p>	Climatic Factors					
<p>Air Quality</p> <p>Could the option lead to Local Air Quality Management</p>	Air					

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thresholds being breached in an existing Air Quality Management Area?						
Could the option lead to the designation of a new Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)?	Air					
Does the option introduce a new potentially significant air emission to the area (e.g. Combined Heat and Power, an industrial process, large scale quarry or Energy from Waste plant)?	Air					
Will the option lead to a sensitive use being located close to a site regulated for emissions to air by SEPA?	Air and Human Health					
Service Infrastructure Education capacity - Secondary School Catchment Area/ Primary school catchment area Health provision/GP capacity						
To what extent will the proposal affect the quality and quantity of open space	Popl and human health or					

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and connectivity and accessibility to open space or result in a loss of open space?	material assets					
To what extent will the proposal affect core path links or other key access networks such as cycle paths, coastal paths and rights of way?	Popl and Human health or material assets or climatic factors					
Will the proposal have the opportunity to enhance the green network through for example the green infrastructure on site?	Popl and Human health or material assets					
Soils Is the option on greenfield or brownfield land?	Material Assets and Soils					
Are there any contaminated soils issues on the site and if so, will the option reduce contamination?	Material Assets and Soils					
Is the proposal on peatland and could the development of the site lead to a loss of peat?	Climatic Factors and Soils					

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Does the proposal result in the loss of the best quality agricultural land?	Soils					
Deliverability/sustainability constraints Will the site be delivered within the LDP timeframe? Other site servicing constraints, e.g. electricity pylons, underground gas pipelines etc.	Material assets					
Site aspect – does the site make best use of solar gain? Is the site protected from prevailing winds?	Climatic factors					
Vehicular Access constraints or opportunities - Road network capable of accommodating traffic generated?	Material assets and climatic factors?					
Is the site close to a range of facilities? Can these be accessed by public transport?	Climatic factors and human health					
Landscape Designated	Landscape					

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<p>sites</p> <p>To what extent will any designated sites be affected – including NSAs, Regional Scenic Areas, and local landscape designations?</p>						
<p>Non designated landscape features and key landscape interests</p> <p>Does the proposal ensure that development does not exceed the capacity of the landscape to accommodate it? Such as current settlement boundaries, existing townscape and character of surrounding area?</p>	Landscape					
<p>To what extent will the proposal affect features of landscape interest, including the distinctive character of the landscape and the qualities of wild land?</p>	landscape					
<p>Material assets</p> <p>Will the option minimise demand on primary resources e.g. does the development re-use an existing structure or recycle or recover existing</p>	Material Assets					

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on-site materials / resources?						
Is the option in the vicinity of a waste management site and could therefore compromise the waste handling operation?	Material Assets and Human Health					
For potential waste management activity sites (includes allocation for employment, industrial or storage and distribution uses) - does the proposal comply with the locational criteria set out in annex B of the Zero Waste Plan?	Material Assets					
Cultural Heritage Will the option affect any scheduled monuments or their setting?	Cultural heritage, incl architectural and archaeological heritage (and links with landscape)					

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Will the option affect any locally important archaeological site? (www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore.html)	Cultural Heritage, incl archaeological heritage (and links with landscape)					
Will the option affect any listed buildings and/or their setting ?	Cultural heritage, incl architectural and archaeological heritage and links with landscape					
Will the option affect any Conservation Areas? (e.g. will it result in the demolition of any buildings)	Cultural heritage, incl architectural and archaeological heritage and links with landscape					
Will the option affect any Inventory Garden and Designed Landscape ?	Cultural heritage, incl links with landscape					
Will the option affect any Inventory Historic Battlefield ?	Cultural heritage, incl architectural					

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	and archaeological heritage and links with landscape					
Will the option affect any World Heritage Sites ?	Cultural heritage, incl architectural and archaeological heritage and links with landscape					
To what extent will the proposal result in the opportunity to enhance or improve access to the historic environment?	Cultural heritage, incl architectural and archaeological heritage and links with landscape					

Other Considerations

Please note any other issues which may be relevant to the assessment of the candidate site. For example:

- *Any restrictive covenants relating to the use of the land/ buildings contained within the proposed candidate site?*
- *Is the candidate site on Common Good Land?*

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Scoring – two columns have been added in the event that it is useful for planning authorities to quickly identify environmental effects from a proposal on a site. Where adverse effects have been identified, it may then also be useful to consider any obvious mitigation measures that might reduce these adverse effects. The second scoring column then allows at a quick glance to see what residual effects might remain following mitigation. There are many scoring techniques currently in use and an example of one option could be:

++	+	0	-	--
Significantly positive	positive	neutral	adverse	Significantly adverse

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Explanation of the key SEA topics (please note the SEA objectives are suggested examples only).

Water

SEA objective – To protect and enhance the ecological status of the water environment

- **Water Drainage Constraints**

The Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) has the overall objective of ensuring that all inland and coastal waters within defined river basin districts reach at least good status by 2027. Achieving this requires measures to be put in place and action to be taken to i) prevent deterioration and ii) promote improvements in the water environment.

Information on the current status of a water body, pressures affecting it, measures required to address those pressures, and deadlines for achieving those measures can be extracted from SEPA's [RBMP data download tool](#). This tool should be used to identify existing pressures on water bodies and the site assessment should identify whether or not policies and proposals are likely to exacerbate existing pressures or create new problems. For example, if there are already morphological pressures on a water body then further engineering could trigger a further downgrade. Control of non-native invasive bank-side / in-stream plant species is an example of enhancement where an invasive non-native species pressure has been identified for a water body. Further guidance on the Water Framework Directive including river basin planning can be found in SEPA's [Land Use Planning System Guidance Note 7, Guidance on the Water Framework Directive including river basin planning](#).

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- **Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems (GWDTEs)**

GWDTEs are types of wetland which are specifically protected under the Water Framework Directive. SEPA holds a list of GWDTEs within all designated sites (SSSIs, SPAs, and SACs). To identify non-designated GWDTEs a habitat survey (Phase 1) would be required. At the site assessment stage we do not require a Phase 1 Habitat Survey, but we do require information on location of wetlands and boggy areas. This information can be collected by looking for the boggy ground symbol on GIS and / or a site visit.

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- **Flood Risk**

In relation to flood risk then we would expect the plan preparation process to be informed and supported by a strategic overview of flood risk management issues, usually in the form of a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). SEPA [Technical Flood Risk Guidance for Stakeholders](#) and the [Strategic Flood Risk Assessment - SEPA technical guidance to support Development Planning](#) provide guidance on how to do this. SEPA has produced Flood Maps which can be found at www.sepa.org.uk/environment/water/flooding/flood-maps/. The Flood Map information can be supported and complemented by other easily derived or readily available information in relation to flood risk from SEPA, Flood Prevention Authorities, and Local Authorities, for example information on historical flood events or the impact of flood alleviation schemes.

If flood risk is found to be an issue, potential mitigation could be the removal of part of site found to be at risk from allocation.

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[SEA guidance on air, soil and water](#) provides advice on how to take water into account in SEA. This guidance is augmented by SEPA's [Standing advice for Responsible Authorities on Strategic Environmental Assessment scoping](#).

Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna

SEA objective – Protect and enhance designated wildlife sites, wider biodiversity interests, valuable habitats and protected species, avoiding irreversible losses

- **International Designations**

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If there is a likely significant effect then it is important to state why and what site may be affected (including Ramsar sites). The information gathered for this Site Assessment will help inform the 'screening' stage of the HRA – i.e. identify likely significant effects on a Natura site. **Policies or proposals likely to affect a Natura site should be flagged up for assessment in terms of the [Habitats Regulations Appraisal](#).** Guidance on where designated sites are and what their qualifying interests relate to can be found on SNH's website Sitelink - <http://gateway.snh.gov.uk/sitelink/index.jsp> In addition, the majority of Natura sites are underpinned by Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). SSSIs all have a site management statement which provides useful information on site condition and management pressures and will help to establish what is important and why and therefore help identify likely significant effects.

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- **Other designated sites**

Again see the above comments regarding site management statements for Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). National Nature Reserves (NNRs) are examples of the best wildlife sites in Scotland. These are managed for wildlife but also allowing for enjoyment by public. Guidance on NNRs can be found at: <http://www.snh.gov.uk/protecting-scotlands-nature/protected-areas/national-designations/nnr/>

Local Nature Reserves (LNR) are locally important for natural heritage, designated and managed by local authorities to give people better opportunities to learn about and enjoy nature close to where they live. Similarly Local Nature Conservation Areas flag-up to planners and developers where there are natural feature of some merit. In this way it gives planners and developers early indication of sensitive sites and opportunities for enhancing the local environment. The local Biodiversity Officer should be able to provide advice here.

- **Non designated features and key wildlife habitats**

- trees and woodland, including ancient and semi- natural inventory sites
- species rich grassland, moorland, heathland, wetlands and watercourses including burns

Links to Ancient Woodland Inventory (within SNHi) and the Forestry Commission's Native Woodland Survey of Scotland are detailed below.

<https://gateway.snh.gov.uk/natural-spaces/index.jsp>

<http://scotland.forestry.gov.uk/supporting/strategy-policy-guidance/native-woodland-survey-of-scotland-nwss>

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- **Protected Species**

Although protected areas can safeguard species within their boundaries, some animals and plants are so threatened or vulnerable that they need legal protection wherever they occur. For further information on Protected species click [here](#).

- **Local Geodiversity sites**

These sites provide examples of geology and geomorphology of regional and local importance, where the geodiversity resource can be conserved, so that people can enjoy and find out more about it. These sites can contribute to the quality of local environments and provide opportunities for recreation and informal education.

Geological Conservation Review sites come from an assessment of nationally and internationally important sites for geology and geomorphology. The site boundaries for these and un-notified GCR sites are available through SNHi. <http://www.snh.gov.uk/protecting-scotlands-nature/safeguarding-geodiversity/protecting/geological-conservation/>

Local geodiversity sites are selected by voluntary geoconservation bodies such as local Geodiversity groups and Regionally Important Geological / Geomorphological Sites (RIGS) groups. Geology and other natural history enthusiasts, wildlife trusts, museums, geological societies, teachers, planners and site owner, participate in the running of RIGS groups. [More information on RIGS](#) .

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Air Quality

SEA objective – To improve or maintain air quality and reduce emissions of key pollutants

The impact of allocations on local Air Quality Management thresholds should be considered. For example, where an area is already close to exceeding air quality objectives, where an area is at risk of becoming an AQMA, or where sensitive development such as a hospital or residential use is proposed close to a busy road or a site regulated for emissions to air by SEPA. Such allocations may lead to an increase in the exposure of people to poor air quality.

[SEA guidance on air, soil and water](#) provides advice on how to take air into account in SEA. This guidance is augmented by SEPA's [Standing advice for Responsible Authorities on Strategic Environmental Assessment scoping](#).

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Population and Human Health

SEA Objective – To protect and enhance quality of life including maintaining and improving opportunities to access public open space and the natural and historic environment

Our surroundings are a key factor in determining our health and sense of well-being. Development plans set the context for clear development management decisions which will help deliver high quality green networks and protect and enhance natural heritage assets. Green Networks in Development Planning explains the background to green networks, their multi-functionality and provides development planning advice in respect of green networks. Planning authorities should also seek to prevent further fragmentation or isolation of habitats and identify opportunities to restore links which have been broken; Integrated Habitat Networks can be used here alongside green networks to ensure local biodiversity is maintained and enhanced

Human health can be affected by environmental factors which include pollution (e.g. emissions to air, soil or water from industrial processes including energy and waste management), flooding and climate change. Consideration of these issues, particularly in relation to location of sensitive development types, in site assessment will help to ensure that human health and wellbeing are integral to the plan.

[SEPA's Standing Advice for Responsible Authorities on Strategic Environmental Assessment scoping](#) provides additional guidance on this topic.

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Soil

SEA objective – To maintain or improve soil quality, quantity and function and prevent any further degradation of soils

Soils provide the following seven key functions:

- providing the basis for food and biomass production;
- controlling and regulating environmental interactions (regulating water flow & quality);
- storing carbon and maintaining the balance of gases in the air;
- providing valued habitats and sustaining biodiversity;
- providing a platform for buildings and roads;
- providing raw material;
- preserving cultural and archaeological heritage.

The assessment should consider the impacts of development on the relevant soil functions for the site.

SEPA provides information on regulations that apply to soil and good practice guidance which is available at www.sepa.org.uk/environment/land/soil/.

The [Scottish Soil Framework](#) provides a general framework to promote the sustainable, management and protection of soil consistent with the economic, social and environmental needs of Scotland.

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The [James Hutton Institute](#) (formerly Macaulay) provides information on soil maps which are available from Scotland's Soils website www.soils-scotland.gov.uk/data.

British Standards has recently updated its standard on the use and requirements for topsoil ([BS3882:2007 - Specification for topsoil and requirements for use](#))

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Landscape

SEA objective – conserve and enhance landscape character and scenic value of the area and protect and enhance designated landscape areas

- **Landscape Designated sites**

[Scotland's landscapes](#) underpin our economy and attractiveness as a place to live and do business. It is important to consider how landscapes in their area should be safeguarded and enhanced through plans and strategies. Our finest landscapes have been given the designation [National Scenic Area](#) or [National Park](#) and these include some of the most famous areas in Scotland - the Cuillin Hills, Glencoe, Ben Nevis, The Cairngorms, Loch Lomond.

- **Non designated landscape features and key landscape interests**

Scotland has a great variety of landscapes for its size. A [new map of Scotland's landscapes and places](#) shows this. It unites the physical fabric of our towns, countryside, hills, glens and coasts with the human and cultural aspects of place and history. The distinctiveness and character of our landscapes helps define a sense of place at both the local and regional level.

Wild and remote areas have a distinct and special character, which is increasingly rare to find. A key component of Scotland's identity, they bring significant economic benefits, attracting visitors and tourists. Many people derive psychological and spiritual benefit from their existence, and they provide increasingly important havens for Scotland's wildlife. For further information on 'wild land' click [here](#).

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Climatic Factors - Climate Change Mitigation

SEA objective - To reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase resilience to the consequences of climate change

The Scottish Government's guidance [Consideration of Climatic Factors within Strategic Environmental Assessment \(SEA\)](#) provides useful guidance on how to determine whether a PPS is likely to have significant environmental effects. The Scottish Government and SEPA have developed a [Spatial Planning Assessment of Climate Emissions \(SPACE\) tool](#) which helps planners assess the possible relative impacts of different scenarios in terms of greenhouse gas emissions.

SEPA's [Standing Advice for Responsible Authorities on Strategic Environmental Assessment scoping](#) provides additional guidance on this topic.

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Material Assets - Waste

SEA objective - To reduce waste and promote the sustainable use of resources

The Scottish Government's [Zero Waste Plan](#) sets out a vision of a zero waste Scotland where waste is treated as a valuable resource and not as a burden.

For allocations for the location of waste management facilities consideration should be given to the potential for adverse impacts which may arise from locating other new development in the vicinity of proposed /

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existing waste sites and on the potential risk the proposal would pose to people or property. Guidance on buffer zones and distances from sensitive receptors is contained within the ODPM [Planning for Waste Management Facilities](#) research study. The local authority Environmental Health department is best placed to advise on site specific considerations.

SEPA's [Standing Advice for Responsible Authorities on Strategic Environmental Assessment scoping](#) provides additional guidance on this topic.

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Cultural Heritage (including archaeological and architectural heritage)

SEA Objective - Protect and where appropriate enhance the historic environment

Settlement level: Consideration should be given to the likely implications and opportunities for the historic environment arising from the spatial strategy. This will involve considering the likely significant effects for individual assets and where relevant, their settings.

Strategic considerations: Scotland's current landscape is the product of natural processes and human activity operating over many centuries, and both natural and cultural aspects require to be taken into account when developing policies and proposals at the landscape scale. The cultural aspect is not only in identifiable ancient or historic sites and buildings, but also in patterns of rural land use and the layout of settlements. Proposals should protect and promote the overarching importance of the historic environment to a sense of place. They should take account of the capacity of settlements and surrounding areas to accommodate development without damage to their cultural and historic significance.

Historic Scotland Data Services website: <http://data.historic-scotland.gov.uk/pls/htmlldb/f?p=2000:10:0>

Canmore database

www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore.html

[The Canmore database combines location information, site details and images on more than 300,000 archaeological, architectural, maritime and industrial sites throughout Scotland]

Managing change in the historic environment guidance notes:

www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/managingchange

Historic environment policy

www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/index/heritage/policy/shep.htm

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