



William Carlin
SEA Gateway
Scottish Executive
Area 1H (Bridge)
Victoria Quay
EDINBURGH
EH6 6QQ

Our ref: PF 41/06-07

29 June 2006

Dear Mr Carlin

**Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Scotland) Regulations, 2004.
Perth and Kinross Structure Plan Alteration No. 1 Indicative Forestry Strategy –
Screening Determination**

I refer to your screening consultation submitted on 8 June 2006 via the Scottish Executive SEA Gateway in respect of the above plan.

In accordance with Section 14(3) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Scotland) Regulations 2004, SNH has considered your screening report using the criteria set out in Schedule 1 for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment.

SNH's view in respect of each of these criteria is set out in Annex 1 attached. Accordingly, SNH agrees that the above Plan is likely to have significant environmental effects and therefore does require an assessment in accordance with the aforementioned Regulations.

Please note that this consultation response provides a view solely on the potential for the strategy to have significant environmental effects. SNH cannot comment on whether or not the plan meets other criteria determining the need for SEA as set out in the Regulations (e.g. under Regulation 2 (a) and (b) required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provision', Regulation 9 (a) 'sets the framework for development consents'). These are for the Responsible Authority to determine.

Should you wish to discuss this screening determination, please do not hesitate to contact Carolyn Warwick on 01738 458583 or via SNH's SEA Gateway at sea.gateway@snh.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

Phillip Gaskell
Area Manager – Tayside and Clackmannanshire

cc Roland Bean, Perth and Kinross Council
Historic Scotland Gateway
SEPA Gateway
SNH Gateway

REGULATION 13 – SCHEDULE 1

CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING THE LIKELY SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Schedule 1 Criteria	Regulation 13 determination - Are significant environmental effects likely ? (Responsible Authority's assessment)	SNH's Assessment Yes/No/ Unknown	SNH's Comments And Additional Information
1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard , in particular to:			
(a) the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources;		Yes	It is clear that the IFS intends to set a long term framework for forestry and existing woodland management projects in Perth and Kinross area. This has the potential to have significant environmental effects.
(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;		Yes	The IFS is a Structure Plan Alteration with a long term timescale of around 20 years. It influences Perth and Kinross Council Local Plans, Forestry Commission plans and projects and other local plans and strategies.
(c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;		Yes	The stated aim of the IFS is to integrate economic, social and environmental considerations and provide a balance between these.
(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme;		Yes	The IFS could have potential significant effects on biodiversity including sensitive wildlife and habitats, and visual and landscape impacts.

			Recreation and access.
(e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection);		Yes	Habitats Directive (including Appropriate Assessment of Development Plans), Birds Directive, Water Framework Directive.
2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to -			
(a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;		Yes	Inappropriate planting, felling or management could result in loss/displacement/ disturbance to species and habitats including European Protected Species, and landscape and visual impacts. Potentially irreversible and permanent.
(b) the cumulative nature of the effects;		Yes	Yes, in particular given the strategic and long term nature of the proposed Plan.
(c) the transboundary nature of the effects; <i>(in UK international cases)</i>		No	
(d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example due to accidents);		Yes	For environment see a) and b) above in relation to planting, management and felling and maintenance.
(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical areas and size of the population likely to be affected);		Yes	The IFS will cover all of Perth and Kinross and is likely to influence immediately adjacent local authority areas
(f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected		Yes	

due to:			
i. special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;		Yes	Perth and Kinross has an unusually rich variety and extent of internationally and nationally important habitats and species, and nationally important landscapes. The area is historically and culturally renowned for its forestry and woodland resource.
ii. exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or		Yes	Potential to significantly affect favourable conservation status of Natura sites and favourable condition of SSSIs.
iii. intensive land-use; and		Yes	Potential intensification of land use from forestry and biomass production
(g) the effects on areas or landscapes that have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.		Yes	See (f)i) above.

Other Issues / Comments

SNH would like to make the following additional comments:

We welcome the submission of Perth and Kinross Council's screening report for the Indicative Forestry Strategy. This is clearly structured, and we consider this is a useful and comprehensive model for future SEA screening reports. It would be helpful if the Council provided a definitive view of whether they consider there is likely or not to be a significant environmental impact (i.e. yes or no) for each of the Schedule 1 criteria.

An indicative timetable for undertaking the SEA would also be helpful at this stage.

We recommend specific reference to European Protected Species, potential effects on other protected species such as birds, badgers, red squirrels and water voles, and to maintaining links between features of nature conservation value.

We also recommend that specific reference is made to the Scottish Biodiversity List (as described in Section 2(4) of the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004) and to the statutory duty on all public bodies to further the conservation of biodiversity.