

**Delayed Office Opening for Employee Training**

*This Office will be closed from 8.45am – 11.00am on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of each month*

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Our ref S2/7

Your ref

Date 26 July 2006

Dear Elaine,

**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA) SCREENING DETERMINATION FOR THE PERTH & KINROSS STRUCTURE PLAN ALTERATION N°1 – INDICATIVE FORESTRY STRATEGY**

This statement sets out the Council's determination under Regulation 15 (1) of the Strategic Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Scotland) Regulations 2004 on whether or not a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required for the above plan.

**The SEA Screening Process**

The process for determining whether or not a SEA is required is called screening. The screening process, in this instance, has involved consulting the following consultation authorities on whether the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects:

- Scottish Natural Heritage
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency
- Historic Scotland

As well as consulting the above bodies, responsible authorities are required to take into account the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Regulations when determining whether or not the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects.

In this instance, the Council wrote to the consultation authorities on 8 June 2006. Their responses are summarised as follows:

<b>Consultation Authority</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Likely to have significant environmental effects</b>
<b>Historic Scotland</b>	The management of existing woodlands and the development of new woodland has the potential to irreversibly affect the historic environment, and it is therefore agreed that the plan could result in significant environmental effects.	Potential
<b>Scottish Natural</b>	As the IFS intends to set a long term framework for forestry and existing woodland management projects	Yes

<b>Heritage</b>	<p>in Perth and Kinross it has the potential to have significant environmental effects.</p> <p>The IFS could have potential significant effects on biodiversity including sensitive wildlife and habitats, and visual and landscape impacts. Recreation and access.</p> <p>Potential to significantly affect favourable conservation status of Natura sites and favourable condition of SSSIs.</p> <p>Potential intensification of land use from forestry and biomass production</p>	
<b>Scottish Environment Protection Agency</b>	<p>Having reviewed the Screening Report, SEPA considers that the plan has the potential to have significant environmental effects.</p>	Potential

The Council has also considered the plan against the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Regulations, and a summary of this analysis is attached to this document (see Appendix).

**Reasons for Determination**

Having consulted the three consultation authorities, and having considered the criteria set out in the Regulations, the Council considers that the Indicative Forestry Strategy has the potential to have significant environmental effects.

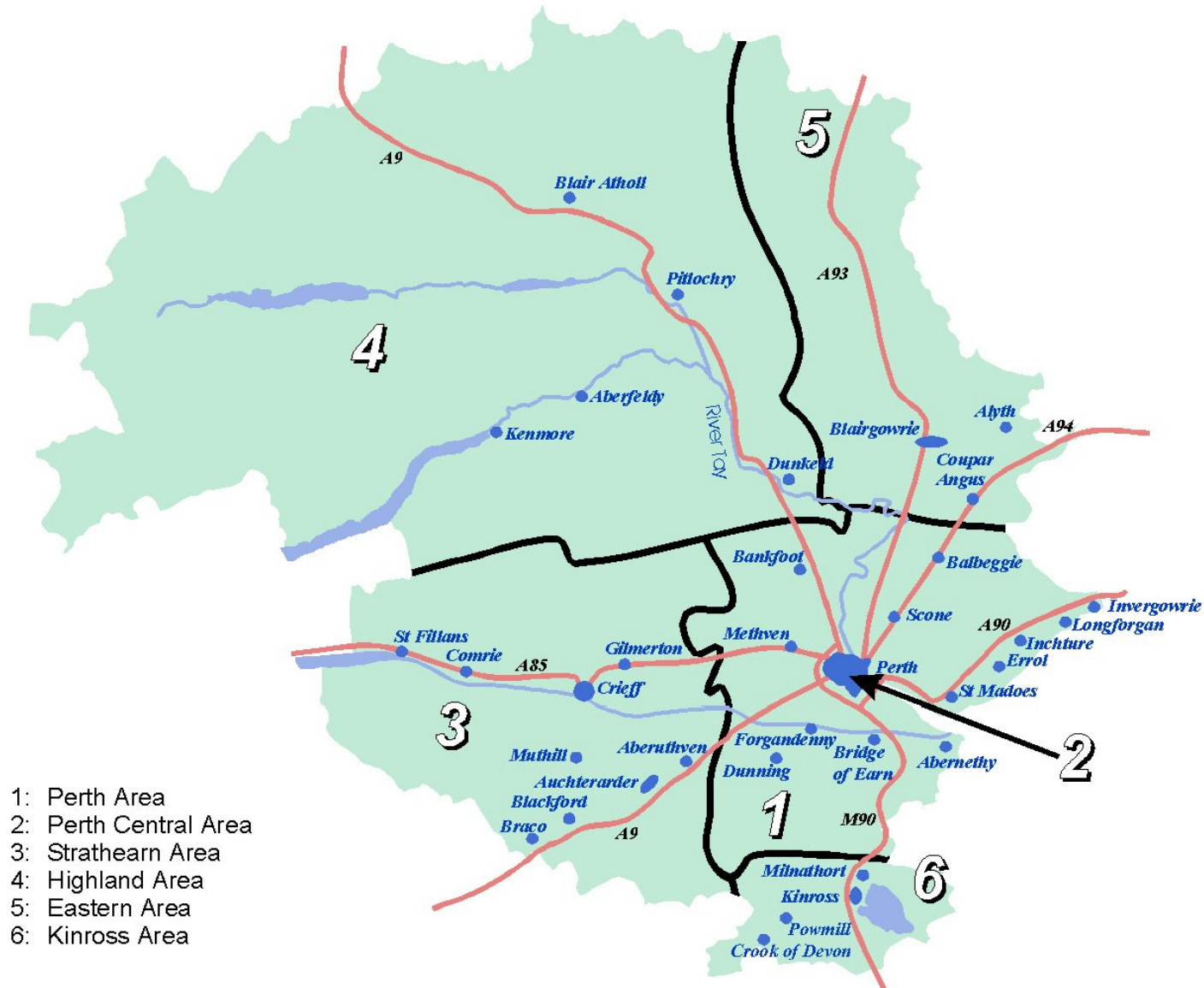
The Council has therefore determined that SEA is required for the Structure Plan Alteration.

Yours sincerely

Graham Esson  
 Planning Officer

Enc.

Area Covered by the Perth & Kinross Structure Plan – Alteration No 1 – Indicative Forestry Strategy and showing Local Plan Boundaries.



- 1: Perth Area
- 2: Perth Central Area
- 3: Strathearn Area
- 4: Highland Area
- 5: Eastern Area
- 6: Kinross Area

Our determinations regarding the likely significance of effects on the environment of Perth & Kinross Structure Plan – Alteration No 1 – Indicative Forestry Strategy are set out below.

	<b>Council determination</b>	<b>Council's assessment of whether likely to have significant environmental effects?</b>
1(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	<p>The existing IFS was prepared in the early 1990s having regard to the provisions of the Tayside Structure Plan and all relevant Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) and National Planning Policy Guidelines (NPPG).</p> <p>The IFS is an Alteration to the approved Perth &amp; Kinross Structure Plan and influences, and is supported by, other strategies, plans and programmes produced by Planning and Transportation, other Council Services and external agencies. These include the Council's Corporate Plan, Community Plan, the Tayside Local Biodiversity Action Plan, Area Waste Plan, Economic Strategy, and the Local Transport Strategy.</p> <p>The IFS will set the framework for forestry and woodland planting and management in Perth &amp; Kinross and provide the framework for the allocation of Forestry Commission resources in the area through their forestry grant schemes.</p>	<b>Yes</b>
1(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy	<p>The IFS will influence Local Plan proposals and the management of the Perth Green Belt and Forest Frameworks that the Council may develop in the future. It will also influence Forest Plans developed by forest managers in both the public and private sectors.</p> <p>In addition it is recognised that the Council has a statutory duty to further the conservation of biodiversity and in this regard the Scottish Biodiversity List will be used to guide us in implementing our duty to further the conservation of biodiversity in Scotland.</p>	<b>Yes</b>
1(c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	<p>The IFS will assist in promoting sustainable development as forests and woodlands provide wide-ranging and diverse benefits to people in Perth &amp; Kinross. These benefits include important economic outputs, such as the income and employment that is generated by forest industries, and the wider contribution that forests indirectly make to other sectors such as tourism. Well-managed forests and woodlands also deliver a range of 'social and environmental' goods and services.</p> <p>With the national strategy emphasising the need for multi-benefit woodland the Forestry Strategy focuses on policies and priorities for all types of woodland management and tree planting. The aim of the</p>	<b>Yes</b>

	<p>Forestry Strategy is to provide a balance between the economic needs of the forestry sector and wider social, economic and environmental needs. As part of this it is important to ensure that new woodlands integrate, enhance and reflect the diversity and local distinctiveness of the landscape within which they are set. Accordingly, the Forestry Strategy seeks to:</p> <p>(i) Enhance the quality of life of communities by: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Encouraging community involvement in forestry</li> <li>◆ Promoting forestry within the 'green belt' and around settlements to enhance the environment</li> <li>◆ Promoting appropriate opportunities for recreation</li> </ul> <p>(ii) Support the local economy by: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Identifying the potential for further forestry planting</li> <li>◆ Promoting better quality timber production</li> <li>◆ Supporting employment in forestry activities</li> <li>◆ Encouraging the development of renewable energy schemes using forest residues</li> <li>◆ Promoting the tourism benefits of forests</li> </ul> <p>(iii) Sustain the environment by: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Identifying the natural and cultural environmentally sensitive sites</li> <li>◆ Identifying the most appropriate types of forestry in the right locations and balancing forestry with other land uses</li> <li>◆ Encouraging the management and expansion of native woodland in appropriate locations</li> <li>◆ Maintaining and enhancing the landscape character of the area</li> <li>◆ Protecting water quality</li> <li>◆ Promoting biodiversity</li> <li>◆ Promoting carbon sequestration</li> </ul>	
<p>1 (d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme</p>	<p>At this stage of the process, the main SEA Directive topics of concern appear to be Biodiversity, Climate, Landscape, Cultural Heritage, Public Health, Water and Soil.</p> <p>There are also economic and social impacts, which may affect local populations and it must be noted some of these “problems” can also be benefits (i.e. landscape and habitat change) when managed properly, which the IFS will seek to achieve.</p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p>
<p>1 (e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the</p>	<p>Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) encompassing Special Areas of Conservation  Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) encompassing Special Protection Areas.  Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)</p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p>

environment	encompassing River Basin Management Regulation (EC) No 2152/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 November 2003 concerning monitoring of forests and environmental interactions in the Community (Forest Focus)	
2 (a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	<p>Habitat or species loss as a result of future forest planting and management could potentially be irreversible and permanent; however this is unlikely given the strategic aims and objectives of the IFS. What are more probable are localised impacts on landscape and/or habitats which hopefully will be beneficial but if adverse should be reversible over time. This will be dependent on species choice and purpose and rotations where harvesting is the objective.</p> <p>Nonetheless consideration has to be given to ensuring that there are not significant effects on European Protected Species and potential effects on other protected species such as birds, badgers, red squirrels and water voles. There is also a need consider the need to maintain links between features of nature conservation value.</p>	<b>Yes</b>
2 (b) the cumulative nature of the effects	<p>Cumulative effects may arise because of the incremental change on the environment as a result of the combined influences of various plans, programmes, strategies or projects and other human activities. Furthermore, each plan, programme or project could induce new projects to occur, for example the creation of roads/tracks in previously inaccessible areas.</p> <p>The most likely cumulative effects can be broken down in one of the following five ways:</p> <p><b>Physical-chemical transport:</b> The introduction of a chemical or physical contaminant into the environment (e.g., into the, soil, air or waterways) where the contaminant is transported elsewhere and interacts with contaminants from other projects, or interacts with environmental components (e.g., vegetation) that are also affected by other plans, programmes and strategies.</p> <p><b>Landscape nibbling:</b> Landscape nibbling affects plants and animals, and results from the combination of four distinct effects: landscape fragmentation, loss of habitat connectivity, and mortality. The availability of habitat for plants can be lost through direct removal as well as indirect changes in microclimate. The availability of habitat for wildlife can be lost through direct removal (e.g., clearing of land), indirect effects (e.g., changes in drainage) and/or sensory disturbances (e.g., noise). Together, these changes can break a landscape up into increasingly smaller pieces that may no longer</p>	<b>Yes</b>

	<p>meet the needs of resident species (fragmentation) and can reduce the ability of plants and animals to move between the remaining habitat patches (connectivity).</p> <p><b>Socio-economic:</b> The combined effects of various plans, programmes or strategies in a region may result in effects on human communities (e.g., social services and employment), use of the land (e.g., recreation), and tourism. Cumulative socioeconomic effects may result in economic redistribution and changes to services and quality of life.</p> <p><b>Spatial bounding:</b> The cumulative impact of forest management has the potential to be significant at larger geographical levels, both adversely, e.g. habitat loss, landscape change, land use conflict; hydrological and hydrogeological effects and beneficially, e.g. habitat improvement, habitat network linking beyond Perth &amp; Kinross, significant employment and tourism potential.</p> <p><b>Temporal bounding:</b> Given the nature of forestry it also has the potential to have impacts over a long period of time. These can be beneficial or adverse.</p> <p><b>Summary:</b> In summary the SEA will include the identification of: <b>1)</b> valued environmental and cultural components (VECCs) within the assessment area; <b>2)</b> potential interactions between plans, programmes and strategies and VECCs; <b>3)</b> regional issues of concern; <b>4)</b> existing plans, programmes, strategies, projects and land uses that may cumulatively interact with the plan under review; and <b>5)</b> possible local and regional cumulative effects and an evaluation of their significance.</p>	
2 (c) trans-boundary nature of the effects (i.e. environmental effects on other EU Member States)	There are no trans-boundary effects within the terms of the Directive.	<b>No</b>
2 (d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)	The main direct impact is the potential for accidents in managing and harvesting the forest estate; serious vehicular accidents on public roads from the transportation of the timber.	<b>Yes</b>
2 (e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	Direct impacts will mostly occur at the local level i.e. within the geographical confines of individual forest or woodland areas but the IFS covers all of Perth & Kinross and will therefore result in impacts at the wider Perth & Kinross level and in adjoining local authority areas.	<b>Yes</b>

<p>2 (f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to</p>	<p><b>Soil:</b> Forestry practices can raise issues in relation to contamination, compaction and erosion of soils. Impacts on soil quality, and on the function of soils in storing carbon, can occur in areas of low pH / high carbon soils. In addition, forestry may have the potential to be used for the “disposal” of sewage sludge. Forestry and woodland can contribute positively to soil and slope stabilisation, particularly in relation to increased rainfall associated with climate change.</p> <p><b>Water:</b> The environmental problems which relate to this policy area include the effects of run-off into watercourses both in terms of water quality and quantity, and the way in which planting and harvesting can influence this process. Woodland and forestry have the potential to contribute to catchment-wide approaches to flood management by slowing run-off response times. As a result, the SEA should explore the role of the IFS in mitigating/adapting to adverse environmental impacts and maximising benefits through enhancement of this role.</p> <p><b>Air:</b> Forestry tends to have positive effects on air quality (mainly in urban/city areas), and so the SEA is likely to focus on the potential benefits which could be realised by the IFS.</p> <p><b>Climatic factors:</b> Climate change raises potentially significant issues for the IFS and its SEA to take into account. The IFS has aimed to promote the use of forestry as a means of adapting to and mitigating climate change by contributing to biomass-based renewable energy and achieving carbon sequestration. There is also the need to consider what sort of land-use ‘forestry-for-biomass’ is replacing (e.g. carbon-intensive agricultural practice).</p> <p>The revised IFS will also need to consider the extent to which forestry and woodland management can be adapted to respond to climate change. Potential impacts include changes in the extent of the natural range of some species (particularly native species), increased risk of storm damage resulting from anticipated increases in the severity and frequency of storms and an elevated risk of fire due to drier summers.</p> <p><b>Cultural heritage:</b> New planting can directly affect archaeological sites and their setting, and effects are often irreversible; the inappropriate siting of new woodlands may affect sensitive historic landscapes; and existing woodland often requires active management to ensure that archaeological sites are not damaged.</p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p>
<p>(i) special natural characteristics or</p>	<p><b>Cultural heritage:</b> The expansion of productive forestry or native woodland raises concerns about the potential impact on the wider historic environment. In</p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p>

cultural heritage;	many cases information about the historic environment is very limited and may only be identified as a planting proposal is being developed. Information on the wider historic environment is improving but there can remain problems in evaluating historic significance and balancing this with other objectives and benefits of forestry.	
(ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or	Unregulated forestry practices have the potential to lead to water quality standards being breached.	<b>Yes</b>
(iii) intensive land-use.	Large-scale timber production and the large-scale development of biomass could result in intensive land uses. However, some of this land may already be used for intensive agricultural practices.	<b>Yes</b>
2 (g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status	<p><b>Landscape:</b> As with biodiversity, there is already a high level of awareness of the significant impacts which past forestry practices have had on Perth and Kinross' landscapes. Many of the landscapes recognised as being of national importance depend, in part, on the contribution forest and woodland cover make to them.</p> <p>Although it is anticipated that measures such as the expansion of native woodlands, farm woodlands, urban planting and forest restructuring will produce landscape benefits, there may remain issues in areas where large-scale timber production remains a core objective. In addition, large scale development of biomass could result in significant landscape change. Present day landscapes are the result of both natural environmental conditions and the interaction between people and their environment over a long period of time. Elements of the historic environment have a recognised national protection status such as Scheduled Ancient Monuments and listed buildings, and gardens and designed landscapes which depend to a large extent on the landscape within which they are located. There may also be nationally important landscapes that have a historic dimension which contribute to the 'sense of place'. Consequently, while it is anticipated the IFS will produce benefits it has the potential to raise issues which could result in significant change to these features.</p> <p>The IFS could assist in improving landscapes, particularly within urban and urban fringe settings (e.g. Perth Green Belt) in Perth &amp; Kinross. In addition, it will be useful to test the SFS in relation to stakeholder concerns that a national level policy could lead to loss of landscape diversity and regional and local 'sense of place'.</p>	<b>Yes</b>

# Indicative timetable for IFS and SEA

