

# Report

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| Report to:       | <b>Executive Committee</b>                                     |
| Date of Meeting: | <b>13 May 2020</b>   |
| Report by:       | <b>Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)</b> |

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| Subject: | <b>Strategic Environmental Assessment Progress Report</b> |
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## 1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ Inform the Committee of the progress in carrying out Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs) on the Council's policies, plans, programmes and strategies.

## 2. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendations:-

- (1) that the statutory requirement for SEA to inform the development of Council led policies, plans, programmes and strategies be noted.
- (2) that progress in conducting SEAs within the Council be noted.

## 3. Background

- 3.1. The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires the Council as a 'Responsible Authority' to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment of all its policies, plans, programmes and strategies (plans).
- 3.2. The SEA process helps to integrate environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans. The SEA is carried out in a staged process alongside the preparation of the proposed plan. Throughout the process, the plan can be adjusted to mitigate negative, or enhance beneficial, environmental effects.
- 3.3. SEAs help to promote the Council's commitment to sustainability and are a key priority within the Sustainable Development and Climate Change Strategy. The Corporate SEA Working Group continues to meet regularly to oversee the progression of SEAs across the Council. Its remit also includes development and mainstreaming of employee knowledge and understanding of the SEA process and development of the skills needed to undertake assessments. The Group is chaired by the Planning Officer (SEA).
- 3.4. The SEA process is further supported by the publication of the biennial South Lanarkshire State of the Environment Report which provides the baseline environmental data. The 2019 edition of this report was approved by the Executive Committee on 26 February 2020.

- 3.5. As part of the SEA process, the Council is also required to formally consult with the statutory Consultation Authorities (Historic Environment Scotland, Scottish Environment Protection Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage). This is facilitated by the Scottish Government's SEA Gateway.
- 3.6. In March 2009, the Executive Committee delegated authority to the Chief Executive to make determinations on whether a Council led plan is exempt from SEA or if a full SEA would be carried out. In January 2020, the Chief Executive delegated this authority to the Executive Director of Community and Enterprise Resources. These determinations are collated by the SEA Gateway and issued to the statutory Consultation Authorities for consultation and agreement. This process is facilitated within the Council by the Planning Officer (SEA).

#### **4. Progress in carrying out SEAs**

- 4.1. The Council has a statutory duty to consider and carry out an SEA for all its policies, plans, programmes and strategies as they are being developed or refreshed. During 2019/2020, a wide range of Council led plans were subject to SEA.
- 4.2. The SEA Act requires the Council to assess firstly whether the plans etc. are within the scope of the legislation and whether SEA is required. This can be considered through either Pre-screening or Screening.
- 4.3. Ten assessments of plans were completed at the Pre-screening stage. At this stage, the Council informed the Scottish Government's SEA Gateway of their opinion that these plans were exempt from SEA as their implementation would have no or minimal effect on the environment. These are detailed in Table 1.

**Table 1: Pre-screening completions 2019/2020**

| <b>Lead Resource</b>     | <b>Plans</b>                                      |
|--------------------------|---|
| Community and Enterprise | Food Growing Strategy                             |
|                          | Fleet Strategy                                    |
| Finance and Corporate    | Communication Strategy                            |
|                          | Neighbourhood Plans                               |
|                          | Local Child Poverty Action Report and Plan        |
|                          | Digital Inclusion Strategy                        |
| Housing and Technical    | Anti-social Behaviour Strategy                    |
|                          | Homelessness Policy                               |
|                          | Gypsy and Traveller Sites Pitch Allocation Policy |
|                          | Rent Management Policy                            |

- 4.4. No plans were finalised at screening stage during 2019/2020.
- 4.5. Three plans are currently subject to full SEA and are at Environment Report stage. Details of these plans are set out in Table 2.

**Table 2: Plans at Environment Report stage, March 2020**

| <b>Lead Resource</b>     | <b>Plans</b>               |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Community and Enterprise | Air Quality Strategy       |
|                          | Contaminated Land Strategy |
|                          | Local Development Plan 2   |

- 4.6. The final stage of the SEA process is the preparation and submission of a Post Adoption Statement to the SEA Gateway. In 2019/2020, no Council led plans were subject to this stage.
- 4.7. During 2019/2020, work on translating the State of the Environment Report to Glow, the digital learning platform, was further progressed. This initiative, the first of its kind in Scotland, was launched in May 2019 and is now available as a teaching resource in our schools. The State of the Environment Glow site will assist teachers in planning relevant classroom lessons, and also contains a useful 'who's who' element which will facilitate improved collaboration between schools and officers with regards to environmental matters.
- 4.8. The Strategic Environmental Assessment work continues to promote the protection and enhancement of the South Lanarkshire environment for our people and communities. It will be a key process in the Council's response to meeting its climate change targets.
- 5. Employee Implications**  
None
- 6. Financial Implications**  
None
- 7. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications**  
Strategic Environmental Assessment is a valuable tool for the Council and partners in strategic planning. It safeguards South Lanarkshire's natural and built environment and helps to raise the profile of climatic factors, including climate change.
- 8. Other Implications**  
Failure to make a formal determination in relation to a plan could result in the SEA process having to be restarted leading to a delay in the development of the plan. Council actions in relation to SEA are also open to legal challenge and it is, therefore, important to ensure compliance with the legislation.
- 9. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements**  
This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a significant change to an existing policy, function or strategy and, therefore, no impact assessment is required. The report is for information only and consultation on its contents is not required.

**Michael McGlynn**  
**Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)**

15 April 2020

**Link(s) to Council Values and Objectives**

- ◆ Fair, open and sustainable
- ◆ Make communities safer, stronger and sustainable

**Previous References**

- ◆ Executive Committee, 25 March 2009
- ◆ Executive Committee, 29 May 2019

**List of Background Papers**

- ◆ South Lanarkshire Council Sustainable Development Strategy 2017 – 2022 (approved by Executive Committee, December 2017)
- ◆ South Lanarkshire State of the Environment Report 2019 (approved by Executive Committee, February 2020)

**Contact for Further Information**

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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