

Report

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Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	16 May 2018
Report by:	Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)

Subject:	Strategic Environmental Assessment Progress Report
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

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

2. Recommendations

2.1. 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; and
- (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 2017 edition of this report is being presented for approval under separate items at this Committee.

- 3.5. The South Lanarkshire State of the Environment Report has been cited as an example of good practice in national SEA research carried out on behalf of the Scottish Government and the statutory Consultation Authorities, Historic Environment Scotland, Scottish Environment Protection Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (Land Use Consultants Ltd, October 2017).
- 3.6. As part of the SEA process, the Council is also required to formally consult with the statutory Consultation Authorities. This is facilitated by the Scottish Government's SEA Gateway.
- 3.7. 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. 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 2017/2018, a wide range of Council led plans were subject to SEA.
- 4.2. The SEA Act requires the Council to assess whether plans 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 2017/2018

Lead Resource	Plans
Community and Enterprise	Balloon and Sky Lantern Releases Policy
	Collections Development Policy
	Fleet Asset Management Plan
	Roads Asset Management Plan
Finance and Corporate	Information and Communication Technology Asset Management Plan
	Sustainable Procurement Policy
Housing and Technical	Corporate Asset Management Plan
	Housing Stock Asset Management Plan
	Property Asset Management Plan
	Security Strategy

- 4.4. Following Screening and with the agreement of the Consultation Authorities, the Council made formal determinations that two plans did not require to undergo full assessment. It was determined that these plans were unlikely to have significant environmental effects as they had previously been subject to SEA and no additional significant environmental effects were anticipated, or, plans higher in the hierarchy of plans had undergone SEA. These are detailed in Table 2.

Table 2: Screening Determinations 2017/2018

Lead Resource	Plans
Community and Enterprise	Air Quality Action Plan
Finance and Corporate	Local Outcomes improvement Plan

- 4.5. Four plans are currently subject to full SEA and Environmental Reports are being progressed for them. Details of these plans are set out in Table 3.

Table 3: Plans at Environmental Report Stage, March 2018

Lead Resource	Plans
Community and Enterprise	Air Quality Strategy
	Contaminated Land Strategy
	Invasive Species Strategy
	Local Development Plan 2

- 4.6. The national SEA research published in October 2017 highlighted that the SEA of Local Development Plan 2 is an example of good practice, noting that it followed a strongly iterative process and drew on comments from the Consultation Authorities on previous SEAs to deliver a proportionate result.
- 4.7. The final stage of the SEA process is the preparation and submission of a Post Adoption Statement to the SEA Gateway. In 2017/2018, both the South Lanarkshire Biodiversity Strategy and the Council's Biodiversity Duty Implementation Plan underwent SEA and a Post Adoption Statement will be prepared for these plans following their approval at Committee.
- 4.8. During 2017/2018, work on translating the State of the Environment Report to Glow, the education platform used by our schools was progressed. The project, the first of its kind in Scotland, will be formally launched and rolled out in 2018/2019.
- 4.9. The Strategic Environmental Assessment work continues to promote the protection and enhancement of the South Lanarkshire environment for our people and communities.

5. Employee Implications

- 5.1. None

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. None

7. Other Implications

- 7.1. 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.

8. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 8.1. 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)

18 April 2018

Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives

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

Previous References

- ◆ Executive Committee, 25 March 2009

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 2017 (presented for approved by Executive Committee, May 2018)

Contact for Further Information

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

Jennifer Murphy, Planning Officer (Strategic Environmental Assessment)

Ext: 5742 Phone: 01698 455742

Email: jennifer.murphy@southlanarkshire.gov.uk