South Lanarkshire Council
Strategic Environmental Assessment
Environmental Report - Non Technical Summary

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1 Introduction

Purpose of this environmental report and key facts about the plan

1.1.1 This is a Non Technical Summary of the Environmental Report which documents the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the South Lanarkshire Local Plan (S LLP). South Lanarkshire Council (SLC) has produced a Finalised Local Plan to replace five existing local plans. The S LLP sets out the development objectives, strategies and proposals for land use planning in South Lanarkshire over the next five to ten years. The Finalised Local Plan will be published on 3rd August 2006 for public comment.

1.1.2 The S LLP SEA has been prepared in accordance with requirements for environmental reports that are established under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Scotland) Regulations 2004, which has been superseded by the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. However, as the SEA for the S LLP was started in September 2004 it must comply with the requirements of the Regulations 2004. All of the requirements of the Regulations have been included in this environmental report.

1.1.3 The purpose of this report is to provide information on the S LLP and the associated SEA process which identifies and evaluates the environmental effects of the plan.

1.1.4 SLC is responsible for producing the Local Plan which sets out the development objectives and land use planning for South Lanarkshire. Below is the point of contact for queries relating to the SEA Environmental Report. Copies of the full report are available for inspection from SLC offices, or can be purchased for £50 each:

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SEA activities to date

1.1.5 As identified above, the preparation of the SLLP includes an SEA. The SEA process commenced in September 2004 and has led to the preparation of an Environmental Report.

1.1.6 Between September 2004 and June 2006 the SEA process has developed objectives and assessed all elements of the SLLP. This has been undertaken through vigorous assessment of the proposed objectives, policies and proposals in the SLLP as well as consultation with statutory and non-statutory consultees. An Environmental Report was produced in August 2005 to accompany the Consultative Draft Local Plan and following consultee comments this revised report presents an assessment of the Finalised Local Plan. The table below summarises the SEA activities to date.

1.1.7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEA Activity</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State of Environment Report</td>
<td>Sept 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Interest Consultation</td>
<td>Dec 2004</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finalised SoE Report</td>
<td>April 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Plan / SEA Team meetings (25 meetings held)</td>
<td>Jan 2005 – June 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scoping</td>
<td>March 2005 - April 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scoping Report Consultation</td>
<td>15th April 2005 – 16 May 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Assessment of Local Plan</td>
<td>March 2005 – Aug 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publication of Environmental Report with Consultative Draft Local Plan</td>
<td>14th Oct 2005</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public and Statutory consultation</td>
<td>14th Oct 2005- 25th Nov 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of Consultation Response</td>
<td>13th Dec 2005 – 19th Jan 06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publication of Environmental Report with Finalised Local Plan</td>
<td>3rd Aug 2006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2 South Lanarkshire Local Plan and its Context

Relationship with other Plans, Programmes, and environmental Objectives

2.1.1 A key requirement of the Directive is the Local Plan’s relationship with other relevant Plans and Programmes. These Plans and Programmes cover European, National, Local and Community Plans and Programmes such as the EU Habitats Directive, a National Waste Plan and a Local Woodland Strategy. The Local Plan must take account of any environmental objectives set out in other plans and programmes.

3 South Lanarkshire’s Environment

Environmental Baseline

3.1.1 A State of the Environment Report for South Lanarkshire was prepared to provide an environmental baseline for the Local Plan area. The Environmental Report uses this to describe the environmental characteristics of the Local Plan area, these are summarised below.

Settlement

3.1.2 South Lanarkshire is dominated by urban areas in the north and rural areas in the south. There are six main towns and burghs, and many historical towns, such as New Lanark. A history of industry has left a legacy of contaminated land, and significant amounts of vacant and derelict land exist.

Biodiversity

3.1.3 The biodiversity of South Lanarkshire is both varied and valuable with a distinct landscape character. The area has many nature conservation areas, which are designated at local to international level.

Water Resources

3.1.4 South Lanarkshire has five major reservoirs and 23 principle watercourses, which are mostly tributaries to the River Clyde. The water quality is good and supports a wide biodiversity. The area’s key resources are its wood and moor land.

Landscape

3.1.5 South Lanarkshire has an attractive landscape and much is designated as a ‘Regional Scenic Area’.
Renewables
3.1.6 The area has renewable energy potential and a hydropower scheme on the River Clyde.

Cultural Heritage
3.1.7 The area has numerous heritage assets including the New Lanark World Heritage Site.

Geology and Soils
3.1.8 The geology of South Lanarkshire is diverse with 12 designated Special Sites of Scientific Interest. The area is characterised by its coal, shale and carboniferous limestone.

Environmental Issues
3.1.9 Legislation requires an assessment of the existing environmental problems and whether the Local Plan is likely to influence these. The environmental problems are:

- Greenfield development,
- Quality of life (Human Health),
- Preserving cultural and built heritage
- Water quality
- Flooding
- Waste Management
- Maintaining and enhancing biodiversity
- Habitat abundance and decline
- Providing open space
- Contaminated land
- Landscape deterioration

SEA Limitations / Issues
3.1.10 At the beginning of the SEA process, the principle issue for developing methodologies and implementing SEA was the lack of best practice available under the Scottish SEA Regulations. During the course of this SEA there has been significant development in SEA practice in Scotland which has influenced this SEA. However, these changes have not altered the SEA methodology significantly as this had been established and agreed from an early stage.

3.1.11 A secondary issue was the timeframe for the Local Plan to which the SEA had to conform. The Local Plan had undergone some development prior to the inception of the SEA. This timing issue may
have restricted the level of influence that the SEA had on the Local Plan in the early stages of its development. However, since then the SEA and Local Plan have been developed concurrently and the SEA has contributed to alterations in the plan that are of significant environmental benefit.

3.1.12 Two other issues arose in data collection, these were, lack of data and data confidentiality.

3.1.13 The primary approach to assessment and decision-making throughout the SEA is based on professional judgement whilst informed by the State of the Environment Report.

**Evolution of South Lanarkshire’s environment without the Local Plan**

3.1.14 The Local Plan will provide a framework for development in South Lanarkshire over the next five to ten years. The plan directs development to the right places, at the right time and of the right quality whilst taking into account relevant impacts.

3.1.15 Without the Local Plan it is considered that the likely future changes to the environment in South Lanarkshire will be negative, possibly resulting in irreversible and severe environmental damage.

3.1.16 It is recognised that there are statutory controls and international obligations through National and European legislation that safeguard the built and natural heritage even without the existence of the Local Plan. However, without the Local Plan development would proceed unchecked and uncoordinated with the likely result of inappropriate development to the detriment of the environment. Furthermore, without the Local Plan the means of delivering effectively on other statutory controls and obligations would prove more problematic.

3.1.17 The environmental issues in South Lanarkshire may not be addressed and would be exacerbated without the implementation of appropriate Local Plan policies.

### 4 SEA and Local Plan Objectives

**SEA Objectives**

4.1.1 SEA objectives are measures by which the environmental performance of the plan may be measured. These objectives are distinct from the objectives of the Local Plan and build upon the environmental baseline which encompasses international, national and local objectives to identify priorities for South Lanarkshire’s environment. The SEA objectives are shown below in Table 4.1.
Table 4.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Protect and enhance quality of life</td>
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<td>2. Reduce the amount of waste going to landfill and increase recycling</td>
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<td>3. Improve water quality and reduce the risk to development from flooding</td>
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<tr>
<td>without adversely affecting the environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. To reduce energy consumption and facilitate renewable energy without</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adversely affecting the environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Improve air quality</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Reduce noise and light pollution</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Increase the use of derelict, vacant and contaminated land sites without</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>compromising the biodiversity value of the site</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Maintain and improve open recreational and green spaces and access to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. To maintain the quality and extent of areas of Landscape Character Types.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. To prevent the risk of loss, and improve the quality of South Lanarkshire’s designated nature conservation sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Maintain biodiversity and support the LBAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Preserve and protect heritage assets, archaeological sites and culturally important features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Maintain South Lanarkshire’s unique soils and geology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Improve and maintain the transport network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Improve public transport, access and integration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1.2 The SEA objectives have been used throughout the development of the Local Plan to ensure the plan’s aims and objectives, which provide the context for the development of plan policies and proposals, are consistent with the environmental objectives of the SEA.

Local Plan Objectives - Compatibility with SEA Objectives

4.1.3 As part of the SEA process the Local Plan objectives are continually assessed against the SEA objectives developed specifically for the Local Plan. The Local Plan objectives are tested for their consistency against SEA objectives.

4.1.4 The results of the assessment show inconsistencies related to energy usage, night blight (light pollution) and car usage. There are also a number of recurring unknown compatibilities including waste, energy
consumption and air quality. It is anticipated that most of these issues can be mitigated at a later stage in the Plan’s implementation.

5 Assessment of Environmental Effects

Regulations

5.1.1 The purpose of this section is to predict and evaluate the environmental effects of the Local Plan and suggest reasonable alternatives to reduce known environmental impacts.

5.1.2 The Local Plan consists of a number of elements that form a hierarchy of influence on development. The SEA assesses these elements to determine the environmental impacts at each level which influences the Local Plan’s development. The following sections present the assessments of these elements:

- Local Plan Aim
- Strategic alternatives;
- Local Plan policies; and
- Local Plan proposals.

Local Plan Aim

5.1.3 The Local Plan aim is to: ‘To promote the continued growth and regeneration of South Lanarkshire by seeking sustainable economic and social development within an improved urban and rural environment.’

5.1.4 The assessment of the aim shows an overall positive environmental impact on the Local Plan area.

Strategic Alternatives

5.1.5 The SEA process requires that strategic alternatives for the plan are considered and assessed to determine their environmental implications.

5.1.6 The alternatives assessed by the SEA only include those that the Local Plan can influence. As a development framework, the Local Plan is required to provide land for development, particularly in sectors where there is development pressure or where a strategic requirement is identified through the Structure Plan process.

5.1.7 Alternatives for consideration were identified to correspond to the key topics in the Local Plan. The option assessment provides a comparison of the environmental concerns for each option. The outcome is that the policy option with the fewest issues highlighted as concerns is selected as the environmentally preferable option.
5.1.8 Generally, the preferred approach has been adopted as the Local Plan approach. However, in a number of cases the Local Plan approach is a combination of the preferred approach and one or more additional options. Only three of the topics have a Local Plan approach that is not the preferred environmental option, these are: Housing, Greenbelt and Tourism. For each topic a reference is provided to relevant Local Plan policy, particularly where policy measures will mitigate any potential environmental impact.

5.1.9 The outcome of the option and policy assessment has been alterations to 25 of the Local Plan policies (refer to Section 5 of the full Environmental Report).

Local Plan Policies

5.1.10 The Local Plan policies are largely based on the existing policies in the five adopted local plans for the South Lanarkshire Council area. There are however a number of new policies that specifically address current needs, taking into consideration new national guidance, the new Structure Plan and other factors, including Scottish Executive model planning policies. In total there are 109 Local Plan policies.

5.1.11 The policy assessment identifies the likely impact that each Local Plan policy is likely to have on the environmental parameters established in the Directive, under a number of broad assumptions. The full assessment is presented in Appendix 7 of the full Environmental Report.

5.1.12 The assessment revealed negative impacts associated with 2 policies both of which have subsequently been improved as a result of the SEA recommendation. The environmental impact of the revised policies is either positive or neutral. Changes were made to 25 policies as a result of the assessment.

5.1.13 For the majority of the policies a positive environmental impact is considered the most likely, with a significant number also considered likely to have a neutral impact. The environmental parameter ‘water’ has the most unknown impacts and this is because the impact is dependent on policy implementation, including site selection and possible mitigation. Population and Human Health are the parameters that benefit most from Local Plan policy.

Local Plan Proposals

5.1.14 The following section presents the assessment results of the Local Plan proposals. They are specific proposals affecting land use in South Lanarkshire. The proposals refer to specific sites, which are assessed as part of the SEA.
5.1.15 The Local Plan initially considered 587 pressure sites; a filtering process was developed to determine which sites required more detailed assessment through the SEA process.

5.1.16 The potential environmental impact of developing the sites was determined through an assessment carried out by the SEA. This assessment of ‘pressure sites’ was recorded in the SEA Environmental Report published at Local Plan Consultative Draft Stage in October 2005. Subsequent to the Consultative Draft further proposals were also received. These were assessed along with amended proposals as part of the Finalised Local Plan assessment.

Assessment Methodology

5.1.17 Proposal sites were assessed individually by environmental constraint mapping using GIS software coupled with professional judgement. The constraint mapping overlaid the site boundaries against recorded environmental constraints. The environmental constraints included environmentally sensitive areas, such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), ancient woodlands and salmonid watercourses. In total the assessment utilised 21 datasets to determine the likely environmental impacts. Where conflicts were identified they were assessed in more detail for the significance of the conflict and sensitivity of the environmental constraint. Certain highly sensitive constraints such as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) were given buffer zones.

Results

5.1.18 All sites which have been identified in the Local Plan as being proposals suitable for development were assessed. The vast majority of these sites had few environmental constraints as the more constrained sites had been discarded earlier on in the Plan development process due to environmental or other identified impacts. Of the sites that remained, most of the constraints were associated with less significant issues such as crossing watercourses or Rights of Way which can easily be mitigated. Other common constraints were small areas of woodland which again could be mitigated for by maintaining the woodland and incorporating them into the development. Sites also fell within conservation areas and contained listed buildings.

5.1.19 No sites fell within SSSIs or SACs but some were within the assigned buffers (100m and 500m respectively). The most constrained sites fell within the Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes, Country Parks and areas that were totally wooded. However, some of these proposals actually have positive impacts such as improving the Country Park infrastructure and increasing its boundaries. Section 5.6
of the full Environmental Report provides a detailed site by site assessment.

6 Local Transport Strategy

6.1.1 South Lanarkshire Council published the Consultative Draft Local Transport Strategy in March 2006. Many transport policies have a land use implications and are likely to inform and set the context for future development consent. As such these policies have been incorporated into the Local Plan and have been assessed in the full Environmental Report.

6.1.2 The SEA policy assessment indicates that none of the Local Plan transport policies are likely to have an adverse impact on the environment. All of the policies have a positive effect on Population and Human Health. Two of the policies TRA 9 and TRA 10 were altered as a direct result of the SEA.

6.1.3 The key land use aspects of the Transport Strategy are represented as proposals in the Local Plan, and have been assessed as such in the full Environmental Report.

7 Cumulative Impacts

7.1.1 The purpose of this section is to illustrate the potential cumulative impact of implementing the Local Plan. The assessment of cumulative effects has been taken into consideration throughout the SEA process and assessed against the environmental parameters defined in the SEA Directive.

7.1.2 In analysing the cumulative impact of the Local Plan, all proposals have to be measured as being implemented. On this basis alone there would be a negative impact on South Lanarkshire’s environment principally as a consequence of the scale of development proposed. However, this impact requires to be balanced against the positive effects on factors such as human health, cultural heritage and material assets. Furthermore, any potential environmental impact can be managed through phasing and implementation mechanisms, and development can be mitigated for on a site by site basis.

7.1.3 The Local Plan policies were also assessed as they have the potential to contribute to the cumulative impact of development in South Lanarkshire. The polices have been carefully developed and are designed to promote sustainable growth in line with the Local Plan aim. The policy assessment highlights where there would be potential impacts on the environment, and as a result a number of policies were amended to take into account environmental considerations.
8 Proposed Mitigation and Enhancement Measures

8.1.1 The SEA process has identified environmental assets and the environmental issues associated with each proposal site. Mitigation measures have also been incorporated into the Local Plan through the amended policies and discarding of proposal sites.

8.1.2 However, it will be through the Council’s development management process guided by the Local Plan that site level environmental impacts of development will be identified. Site level analysis and monitoring will also lead to the production of more specific mitigation measures to ensure that the receiving environment is protected and, where possible, enhanced.

8.1.3 As a result of the SEA process an environmental mitigation and enhancement policy (STRAT 9 – Environmental Mitigation and Enhancement Policy) has been incorporated directly into Local Plan policy to ensure that the environment is protected and improved. The policy reads as follows:

STRAT 9 – Environmental Mitigation and Enhancement Policy

All applications for development proposed by the Local Plan must take into account the results of the SEA site assessment and –

- Where development of a site is anticipated to have a negative environmental impact appropriate site surveys must be carried out to ensure that the impact is prevented, reduced or offset
- Where site surveys anticipate that the development of the site is likely to have a neutral or positive environmental impact, enhancement measures should be clearly outlined

8.1.4 Mitigation is closely linked to the monitoring process, which itself is fundamentally important to the effective implementation of the Local Plan. Monitoring the effects of the plan allows mitigation to be developed for unforeseen effects as they arise.

9 Monitoring

9.1.1 The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Scotland) Regulations 2004 requires the Responsibility Authority (SLC) to monitor significant environmental effects, which may arise from the implementation of the Plan. These must be closely monitored in order to maintain a clear understanding of unforeseen and potentially adverse environmental impacts.

9.1.2 In order to monitor the Local Plan’s implementation, it is proposed that the State of the Environment Report is used for monitoring change to the environment. This resource provides the most up to date
information on South Lanarkshire’s environment and is the logical choice as a baseline to monitor change that the Local Plan can influence. The SoE Report will be updated to ensure that the information contained within is relevant and useful for all of SLC’s environmental monitoring.

9.1.3 The responsibility for monitoring the implementation and effects of the SLLP rests with SLC, as the Responsible Authority. SLC intend to produce a monitoring report and take steps to formally review the plan as necessary. The monitoring of the SEA will contribute to and be in conjunction with this process.

10 Conclusion

10.1.1 The Environmental Report presents the results of 20 months of environmental assessment of the Local Plan for South Lanarkshire. Over this period the SEA process has significantly altered the Local Plan’s content. Objectives have been refined, policies amended and proposals have been excluded from the Plan as a direct influence of their potential environmental impact.

10.1.2 As a result of the SEA process the SLLP is a document which presents development proposals and policies that will deliver a better natural and built environment for South Lanarkshire and its residents. The SLLP is still likely to have an impact on the environment as the Plan contains a considerable number of proposals for development. These proposals have a cumulative impact which will affect the environmental parameters identified in the SEA Regulations. This impact is unavoidable as Local Plans are development plans which have inevitable consequences for the environment. However, this SEA process has sought to ensure that the report presents sustainable development options such as improved public transport, improving protection to sensitive natural heritage sites and locations for business which provide positive environmental benefits.

10.1.3 The SEA process has also positively influenced the Local Plan by amending policies to ensure that the environment continues to be considered throughout the Local Plan’s life through environmental assessment of new proposals and the implementation of its policies. The Plan itself is also subject to ongoing assessment through the monitoring plan for the SEA.

11 Next Steps

11.1.1 The Environmental Report will be published on the 3rd August 2006 in conjunction with the Finalised Local Plan. The Environmental Report will be issued to the Scottish Consultation Authorities for comment.
11.1.2 The consultation period for the Local Plan and the Environment Report is 6 weeks ending on 14th September 2006.

11.1.3 An advertisement for the Local Plan and the associated Environmental Report will be placed in the local press and copies of the documents are available from SLC offices.

11.1.4 Following consultation, comments on the Local Plan will be fully considered and, where appropriate incorporated into Local Plan proposed modifications. It is anticipated that these will be submitted for approval in December 2006.

11.1.5 The Local Plan may then go to Public Inquiry with any outstanding objections in Spring 2007. The Adopted Local Plan is expected to be published in Summer 2008.

11.1.6 The SEA process will continue alongside the Local Plan. If any significant changes are made to the Local Plan, these will be assessed through the SEA process and incorporated into the Environment Report. An amended version of the Environment Report will be circulated to take into account of any significant changes in the Local Plan.