

Strategic Environmental Assessment

Screening Report



Scottish Low Emissions Strategy

The Scottish Government

June 2014

Contents of screening report

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Cover note

Part 1

To: SEA.gateway@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
or
SEA Gateway
Scottish Government
Area 1H (Bridge)
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh EH6 6QQ

Part 2

An SEA Screening Report is attached for the Plan, entitled:

Scottish Low Emissions Strategy

The responsible Authority is:

The Scottish Government

Complete part 3 or 4

Part 3

Please tick the appropriate box

- an SEA is required** because the PPS falls under the scope of Section 5(3) of the Act and is likely to have significant environmental effects **or**
- an SEA is required** because the PPS falls under the scope of Section 5(4) of the Act and is likely to have significant environmental effects **or**
- an SEA is not required** because the PPS is unlikely to have significant environmental effects

Part 4

- The PPS does not require an SEA under the Act. However, we wish to carry out an SEA on a voluntary basis. We accept that, because this SEA is voluntary, the statutory 28 days timescale for views from the Consultation Authorities cannot be guaranteed

Part 5

Contact name Andrew Taylor

Job title Air Quality Policy Manager

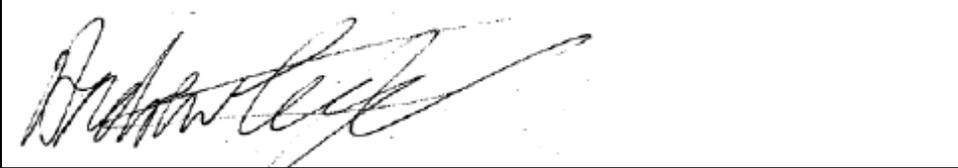
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Environment and Forestry
Environmental Quality Division
Victoria Quay
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Part 6

Signature
(electronic signature is acceptable)



Date 16 June 2014

SEA screening report

The Scottish Government has undertaken screening for the proposed Low Emissions Strategy with regard to the requirements of section 9 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. The Screening Report has been submitted to the Scottish Government's SEA Gateway, setting out the views of Scottish Government on the likelihood of significant environmental effects for the proposed Low Emissions Strategy and the potential for requiring an SEA.

1. Key facts

Responsible authority

The Scottish Government

Title of Strategy

Low Emissions Strategy

Purpose of Strategy

The Low Emissions Strategy (LES) will set out the Scottish Governments objectives for progressively improving air quality. The aim of the LES will be to draw together existing legislation and policy covering air quality and related policy areas. The LES may also consider the requirements for additional legislation. It is intended that this strategy will provide the appropriate mechanisms for local authorities and others with a role in improving air quality to use in developing and implementing strategic measures that will assist in delivering the air quality objectives set by the Scottish Government, along with further benefits for human and environmental health. The provision of the LES will bring together a number of policy areas in order to provide an overarching strategy, to drive reductions in atmospheric emissions.

What prompted the Strategy

Although air quality has improved markedly over recent years, hotspots of poorer air quality remain in many of Scotland's cities and towns. Poor air quality can have a significant effect on the health of vulnerable individuals and also on overall quality of life in urban areas through associated issues like traffic congestion. It has therefore become clear that more needs to be done to maximise the impact of current air quality policies and to develop stronger and more effective links with related policy areas such as transport, health, climate change, planning and renewable energy. Although local authorities with air quality issues have air quality action plans in place containing a wide range of measures, some for a number of years now, these have not been as effective as envisaged. The reasons for this are complex, but an important one is that the measures that will deliver real change e.g. Low Emission Zones, large scale modal shift to public transport are expensive and/or politically sensitive. A national LES with a standardised approach maybe therefore encourage greater consideration of such measures at the local level and prompt local authorities to work together regionally.

Strategy subject

The LES will aim to reduce the emissions of atmospheric pollutants in Scotland. The strategy will set out the framework for a coordinated approach to dealing with poor air quality. This process should

make better use of limited resources, by better alignment with existing policies and guidance that are currently operating in parallel, thus improving delivery and highlighting areas where conflicting policies may hinder progress.

The formulation of an LES will encourage those with a role in improving air quality to plan for a more sustainable Scotland; we cannot afford to passively wait for external factors to bring about change in an ad hoc and uncoordinated manner. We need to be proactive and we need to plan.

The LES will therefore:

- promote the development and uptake of new technologies;
- identify new opportunities for economic development ;
- encourage a shift to more sustainable forms of transport across the public and private sector;
- encourage alignment of legislation and guidance with common aims;
- identify conflicting legislation and guidance;
- support Government policy and targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and decarbonise transport; and
- improve air quality, protect the human health, reduce damage to the built environment and meet domestic air quality objectives and EU limit values.

Whilst the LES will initially focus on transport emissions, it will evolve over a period of time so that it includes other key sources of emissions such as building design, domestic heating, waste, sustainable transport infrastructure and strategic/local development planning.

Period covered by the Strategy

There is no defined period for the LES to cover, although it is envisaged that there will be both short term (5-10 years) and longer term (20-30 years) targets.

Frequency of updates

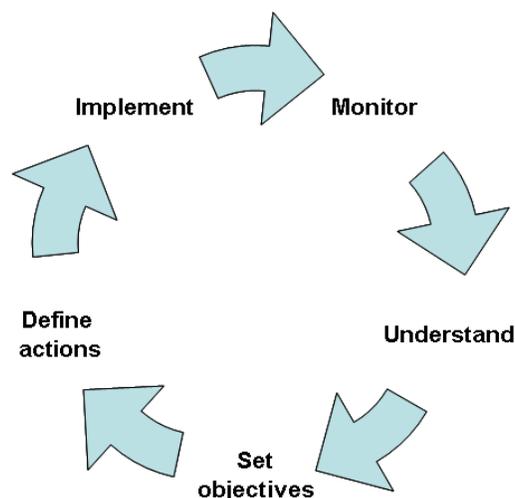
There is no current scheduled review plan for the LES, although it will evolve over time and be subject to regular review.

Area covered by the Strategy

The LES covers the whole geographic area of Scotland.

Summary of nature/content of the Strategy

The LES will provide detail on how local authorities could deliver action plans that will significantly contribute to improving air quality and how others with a role to play can contribute to this process. The aim will be to deliver both the legislative requirements whilst contributing to the Scottish Government’s ‘Good Places, Better Health’ initiative. The strategy will promote the development and implementation of actions through a national framework to ensure standard consistent approach across Scotland, whilst at the same time providing sufficient flexibility for addressing specific regional and local issues.



Proposed Strategy

Development of the LES is at an early stage but it is likely it will incorporate the following:

- The key objectives, including what the strategy will aim to achieve, such as better alignment with other policy areas to ensure air quality is adequately considered;
- Identification of the appropriate authorities, agencies and associated groups that will be encouraged to participate in joint working at the regional and local scale to develop plans in order to achieve the objectives of the strategy;
- Examples of best practice, introducing the concept of low emission zones and potential proposals for Scotland;
- A framework for identifying and understanding the local/regional issues, setting out appropriate objectives and actions to deliver improvements; and
- A reporting structure and a system of performance indicators in order to monitor progress towards achieving the objectives of the strategy.

Date

16 June 2014

2. Consideration of the likely significant environmental effects

Our determinations regarding the likely significance of effects of the Low Emissions Strategy on the environment are set out below. The screening was undertaken with reference to the criteria in Schedule 2 of the 2005 Act.

Title of plan/programme/strategy		
Low Emissions Strategy		
Responsible authority		
The Scottish Government		
Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment (para numbers refer to Schedule 2 of the Act)	Likely to have significant environmental effects? (Yes/No)	Summary of significant environmental effects (positive and negative)
The characteristics of plans and programmes		
1(a): The degree to which the Strategy sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources	No	Positive effects The LES will provide the direction for improving air quality. The LES will enhance the existing legislative provisions and provide a framework to assist local authorities in developing appropriate actions to fulfil their duties under the Environment Act, 1995 – review and assess local air quality and ensure compliance with European, and domestic air quality objectives. Local authorities and others will be encouraged to adopt measures at a regional and local scale in order to improve air quality and reduce overall emissions. The LES will not set out direct measures future projects that will have significant environmental effects.
1(b): The degree to which the Strategy influences other PPS including those in a hierarchy	Yes	Positive effects The LES will aim to align existing policies with the aim to deliver improvements to air quality. The LES will influence future policies and strategies at both the national and local scale. The LES will directly delivery the objectives for other air quality, sustainable development, transport, development and land use planning and climate change policies, whilst at the same time delivering co-benefits to wider environmental objectives. The overall aim of the LES is to therefore align existing policy areas with the intention to raise awareness of air quality and to ensure that it is properly considered across other PPS. This approach should result in overall environmental improvements however the level of

		significance is dependent on other PPS.
1 (c): The relevance of the Strategy for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	Yes	<p>Positive effects</p> <p>The LES will influence decisions on a range of activities, including the planning and development process, transport strategies and energy, with the overall aim of contributing to sustainable economic growth in Scotland, whilst taking in to account air quality issues.</p>
1(d): Environmental problems relevant to the Strategy	No	<p>Positive effects</p> <p>The focus on air pollution has shifted over the years due to changes in emissions and sources. Our knowledge and understanding has driven significant improvements in air quality, however there are still areas where poor air quality continues to affect human health and the environment. Emissions from road transport are now considered the main source of urban air pollution, with a continual rise in the number of local authority Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) being declared in relation to transport.</p> <p>The LES will bring together a number of policy and legislative measures that are in place, with the overall aim of reducing air pollution and improving human and environmental health. The strategy will provide the mechanism for introducing further measures that can be implemented at both regional and local levels in order to achieve our national air quality standards and objectives for protecting human health and the environment.</p> <p>The LES will consider land use and development planning, promoting the need to have air quality as a key considering factor in such plans. Although the strategy will aim for overall environmental improvements, these will not be considered significant in relation to the requirements of strategic environmental assessments.</p>
1(e): The relevance of the Strategy for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, PPS linked to waste management or water protection)	Yes	<p>Positive effects</p> <p>The LES has relevance to EU Directive 2008/50/EC – ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe and the proposed forthcoming revised EU Directive on air quality. The overall objective of the LES, in reducing air emissions will contribute to the delivery of a wider range of EU Directives, including: EU Climate Change Programme, EU Sustainable Development Strategy and international Conventions and Protocols on transboundary pollutants.</p>
Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected		

<p>2(a): The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Positive effects The aim of the LES is to improve air quality and reduce further national emission. The strategy will set out a national framework that will provide the mechanism for implementing a series of short and long-term measures for improving air quality. Although these measures are already set out in existing policy, the LES will align such measures to a national framework.</p> <p>The probability, duration and frequency of these effects are difficult to ascertain and may only be quantified either upon implementation or through continual monitoring of the actions generated.</p>
<p>2(b): The cumulative nature of the effects</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The LES will align existing PPS and provide a national standard framework for the implementation of actions to improve air quality at a regional and/or local scale. The implementation of these actions will have an overall positive and cumulative effect on air quality, human health and the environment across Scotland as a whole. On its own the effects of the LES would not be considered significant in relation to strategic environmental assessments, it is the future implementation of wider PPS incorporating the framework that will potential have a cumulative effect. This can only be considered speculative at this moment and can only be quantified either upon implementation or through continual monitoring of the actions generated.</p>
<p>2(c): Trans-boundary nature of the effects (i.e. environmental effects on other EU Member States)</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The focus for the LES is to progressively improve air quality, particularly within the urban environment. The development and implementation of associated actions at both regional and local scale will lead to the improvements of air quality across local authority boundaries. The overall reduction in emissions, particularly from transport will contribute to reducing national emissions and transboundary pollutants. However through the LES, such effects would not be considered significant for the purpose of undertaking a strategic environmental assessment.</p>
<p>2(d): The risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The overall aim of the LES is to improve air quality, which will improve both human health and the environment. Measures that will be set out within the strategy will include measures to enhance the environment as well as direct emission reduction measures. The LES will align other PPS in order to promote the adoption of air quality measures. This approach aims to identify conflicting issues and seek appropriate mitigation measures where</p>

		potential policy measures could have a negative effect on air quality. However such effects would not be considered significant for the purpose of undertaking a strategic environmental assessment and the success of the LES can only be quantified upon implementation and through continual monitoring.
2(e): The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	Yes	This is a national strategy that will provide the measures to implement actions at both a local and regional scales. The actions will therefore have measurable effects at both the local and national scale. The strategy will set out a national framework that will ensure a consistent approach is taken across Scotland. The framework itself will not result in significant improvements; these will come from the potential actions that will be implemented by local authorities.
2(f): The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or (iii) intensive land use.	No	<p>i) Through the national approach to implement measures for improving air quality and reducing air emissions there will be associated improvements to designated and natural habitats. These improvements will primarily come about by the contribution made in reducing the level of atmospheric pollutants and therefore reducing the rate of deposition on such habitats. Improvements in urban air quality will have benefits to the built environment, in particular those buildings with cultural and historical importance. Due to the contribution from other sources, the extent of reduction and improvement directly associated with the LES will not be considered significant to merit a full strategic environmental assessment.</p> <p>ii) The objective of the LES is to ensure further improvements in air quality. The strategy will provide a framework for implementing appropriate actions to deliver these improvements and to meet European and domestic air quality standards and objectives. The LES will complement the existing air quality policies that are there to implement measures for achieving national standards and objectives.</p> <p>iii) The strategy will not directly influence land use, however it will aim to improve the consideration of air quality within the planning and development process.</p>
2(g); The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national,	No	There are areas within Scotland where the deposition of atmospheric pollutants are of real concern; these areas include a number of Special

Community or international protection status		Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). The strategy aims to improve air quality and reduce associated emissions. Although these measures will have the potential to reduce the total deposition rates on sensitive habitats the extent of reductions through the implementation of the LES are not considered significant due to other emission sources not covered by the strategy.
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3. Summary of environmental effects

The LES will introduce a national framework for developing actions that will be undertaken at both regional and local levels in order to further improve air quality in Scotland. The strategy will aim to align existing policies to ensure air quality is considered appropriately across other areas, such as development planning and sustainable transport, contributing to better human and environmental health, and sustainable economic growth for Scotland.

The strategy aims to promote improvements in human health through a series of actions that will aim to reduce exposure to atmospheric pollutants. The strategy will also promote environmental enhancement measures that will promote local improvements to air quality. The strategy will promote sustainable transport, encouraging modal shifts towards integrated public transport and active transport.

The overall outcomes of the strategy will aim to improve air quality, human health and provide added benefits to the local environment. Although the aim is not to introduce additional legislative measures, the strategy will use existing measures to promote continual improvement to air quality and therefore any environmental improvements would not be considered significant enough to merit the requirements of a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

Record of comments from consultation authorities

Title of plan, programme or strategy

Low Emission Strategy

Responsible authority

The Scottish Government

Summary of consultation authority comments

Scottish Environment Protection Agency

Date comments received	Significant environmental effects	If Yes, note SEA topics/ issues here
3 July 2014	NO	Having reviewed the Screening Report, we consider that in respect of our main areas of interest (air, water, soil, human health, material assets (of which we have a specific interest in waste) and climatic factors) the strategy is unlikely to have significant environmental effects.

Scottish Natural Heritage

Date comments received	Significant environmental effects	If Yes, note SEA topics/ issues here
30 June 2014	NO	We understand the Strategy is being developed to ensure better implementation of existing policies and actions that have already been subject to assessment and no new actions specific to this Strategy are being considered at this time. We also note that the Strategy may consider the requirements for additional legislation. Should that be the case, it will be important to consider the need for assessment of the impacts of any new legislation at that stage. On this basis, we agree that the above Plan is not likely to have significant environmental effects.

Historic Scotland (The Scottish Ministers) – voluntary consultee

Date comments received	Significant environmental effects	If Yes, note SEA topics/ issues here
10 July 2014	NO	As the strategy is being prepared by the Scottish Government I have reviewed the screening report on a voluntary basis... I note that the screening report considered that, while there is potential for positive effects on the historic environment, these effects are unlikely to be significant as the strategy aims to align

		existing policies to ensure the appropriate consideration of air quality. I am therefore content to agree with the Scottish Government's view that significant effects on the historic environment as a result of the strategy are unlikely.
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Record of determination and post screening action

Title of plan, programme or strategy

Low Emissions Strategy

Responsible authority

The Scottish Government

Record of determination

In accordance with section 9(1) of the 2005 Act the Scottish Government submitted for consultation a screening report summarising its views as to whether the Low Emissions Strategy will have significant environmental effects. In formally determining whether an SEA is required, the Scottish Government has taken in to account the views of the Consultation Authorities.

The Scottish Government and the Consultation Authorities are in agreement that the Low Emissions Strategy **is not** likely to have significant environmental effects.

Formal determination	Statement of reason	Date
The above strategy is not likely to have significant environmental effects and therefore an SEA will not be undertaken.	The strategy will have benefits to the environment through improvements to urban air quality, however these benefits are not considered significant under the requirements of SEA.	29 July 2014

Publicity requirements for the determination

In accordance with section 10(1) of the 2005 Act, within 28 days of the determination having been made, the Scottish Government will send a copy of the formal determination and related statement of reasons (*prepared in accordance with section 8(2)(b)*) to the Consultation Authorities.

Have the above requirements been undertaken?

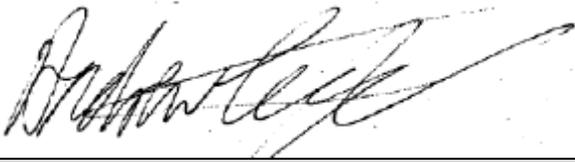
Yes

In accordance with section 10(2) of the 2005 Act, within 14 days of the determination having been made, the Scottish Government will make available to the public a copy of the determination and related documents (this must include; a copy publicly available at the principle office, a copy displayed on the Scottish Governments website and a notice secured in at least one newspaper circulated in the area relating to the Strategy).

Have the above requirements been undertaken?

Yes

Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Lee', is written over a light grey background.

Date

31 July 2014