

The Government's Guidance on SEA ¹ contains a quality assurance checklist to help ensure that the requirements of the SEA Directive are met. Those relevant to this stage have been highlighted below.

| Quality Assurance Checklist | |
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| Objectives and Context | |
| The plan's purpose and objectives are made clear. | Presented in Section 2 . |
| Environmental issues, including international and EC objectives, are considered in developing objectives and targets. | Section 3 and Appendix B identify the sustainability baseline issues and set out the environmental protection objectives and targets and how these are linked to the emerging SEA objectives. |
| SEA objectives are clearly set out and linked to indicators and targets where appropriate. | Section 4 presents the SEA objectives and guide questions. |
| Links to other related plans, programmes and policies are identified and explained. | Section 3 and Appendix B identify relevant plans and programmes. |
| Scoping | |
| The environmental consultation bodies are consulted in appropriate ways and at appropriate times on the content and scope of the Scoping Report. | <p>The initial Environmental Report, published in July 2010, was consulted on for a period of 12 weeks. Following resumption of the SEA process, the approach to scoping was reviewed and revised to reflect the more recent information available. A Scoping Report containing the revised approach was sent directly to UK statutory and other bodies over a 6 week period in July and August 2013.</p> <p>Their comments were used as the basis for deciding the scope and level of detail of the material included in the environmental reports. Consideration was also given to more detailed textual comments provided by the consultation bodies.</p> <p>Section 1.3 and Appendix A presents information on scoping consultation.</p> |
| The SEA focuses on significant issues. | Potential environmental issues that could arise from the implementation of the Licensing Plan have been identified in this Scoping Report (see Section 2). |
| Technical, procedural and other difficulties encountered are discussed; assumptions and uncertainties are made explicit. | Section 4 describes the key difficulties encountered during the preparation of this Scoping Report. |
| Reasons are given for eliminating issues from further consideration. | These are stated in Section 4 , as appropriate. |
| Alternatives | |
| Realistic alternatives are considered for key issues, and the reasons for choosing them are documented. | Alternatives were identified in Section 2.6 . |
| Alternatives include 'do minimum' and/or 'business as usual' scenarios wherever relevant. | Alternatives were identified in Section 2.6 . |
| The environmental effects (both adverse and beneficial) of each alternative are identified and compared. | Refer to Section 5.6 . |

¹ ODPM, Scottish Executive, Welsh Assembly Government, DoENI (2005) *A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive*, ODPM, London.

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| Inconsistencies between the alternatives and other relevant plans, programmes or policies are identified and explained. | Refer to Section 2.6 . |
| Reasons are given for selection or elimination of alternatives. | These are presented in Sections 2.6 and 5.6 |
| Baseline Information | |
| Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and their likely evolution without the plan are described. | Refer to Section 3 and Appendix B . |
| Characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected are described, including areas wider than the physical boundary of the plan area where it is likely to be affected by the plan where practical. | Refer to Appendix B . |
| Difficulties such as deficiencies in information or methods are explained. | These are stated throughout the report where appropriate and sections 3.4 and 4.5 . |
| Prediction and Evaluation of Significant Environmental Effects | |
| Effects identified include the types listed in the Directive (biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage and landscape) as relevant; other likely environmental effects are also covered as appropriate. | These are set out in Appendix B and summarised in Section 5 and 6 . |
| Both positive and negative effects are considered, and the duration of effects (short, medium, or long term) is addressed. | These are set out in Appendix B and summarised in Section 5 and 6 . |
| Likely secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects are identified where practicable. | These are set out in Appendix B and summarised in Section 5 and 6 . |
| Inter-relationships between effects are considered where practicable. | These are set out in Appendix B and summarised in Section 5 and 6 . |
| The prediction and evaluation of effects makes use of relevant accepted standards, regulations and thresholds. | Refer to individual topic chapters in Appendix B and Section 4 |
| Methods used to evaluate the effects are described. | These are described in Section 4 . |
| Mitigation Measures | |
| Measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the plan or programme are indicated. | These are set out in Appendix B and summarised in Section 5.7 . |
| Issues to be taken into account in project consents are identified. | If relevant, these are set out in Appendix B and summarised in Section 4 and 5 . |
| Environmental Report | |
| Is clear and concise in its layout and presentation. | The layout of the Environmental Report is set out in Section 1.5 . The structure was subject to early consultation and review as part of scoping. |
| Uses simple, clear language and avoids or explains technical terms. | The Environmental Report has been written in plain English as far as the technical nature of the report allows. |
| Uses maps and other illustrations where appropriate. | Figures and tables have been used throughout the SEA Report and in the Appendices where appropriate. |
| Explains the methodology used. | This is presented in Section 4 . |

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| Explains who was consulted and what methods of consultation were used. | This is covered in Section 1.3 . |
| Identifies sources of information, including expert judgement and matters of opinion. | References to information sources are provided throughout the report and appendices where appropriate. |
| Contains a non-technical summary covering the overall approach to the SEA, the objectives of the plan, the main options considered, and any changes to the plan resulting from the SEA. | An NTS is provided as a stand alone document. |
| Consultation | |
| The SEA is consulted on as an integral part of the plan-making process. | <p>The initial Environmental Report, published in July 2010, was consulted on for a period of 12 weeks. Following resumption of the SEA process, the approach to scoping was reviewed and revised to reflect the more recent information available. A Scoping Report containing the revised approach was sent directly to UK statutory and other bodies over a 6 week period in July and August 2013.</p> <p>Section 1.3 and Appendix A presents information on scoping consultation.</p> <p>This Environmental Report will be published for consultation in autumn 2013.</p> |
| Consultation Bodies and the public likely to be affected by, or having an interest in, the plan or programme are consulted in ways and at times which give them an early and effective opportunity within appropriate timeframes to express their opinions on the draft plan and Environmental Report. | <p>The initial Environmental Report, published in July 2010, was consulted on for a period of 12 weeks. Following resumption of the SEA process, the approach to scoping was reviewed and revised to reflect the more recent information available. A Scoping Report containing the revised approach was sent directly to UK statutory and other bodies over a 6 week period in July and August 2013.</p> <p>Section 1.3 and Appendix A presents information on scoping consultation.</p> <p>This Environmental Report will be published for consultation in autumn 2013.</p> |
| Decision-making and Information on the Decision | |
| The Environmental Report and the opinions of those consulted are taken into account in finalising and adopting the plan or programme. | This will be included in the Post Adoption Statement (to be issued following consultation). |
| An explanation is given of how they have been taken into account. | This will be included in the Post Adoption Statement (to be issued following consultation). |
| Reasons are given for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of other reasonable alternatives considered. | This will be included in the Post Adoption Statement (to be issued following consultation). |
| Monitoring Measures | |
| Measures proposed for monitoring are clear, practicable and linked to the indicators and objectives used in the SEA. | These are presented in Section 6.2 . |
| Monitoring is used, where appropriate, during implementation of the plan or programme to make good deficiencies in baseline information in the SEA. | Details of this are provided in Section 6.2 . |
| Monitoring enables unforeseen adverse effects to be identified at an early stage (these effects may include predictions which prove to be incorrect). | Details of this are provided in Section 6.2 . |

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Proposals are made for action in response to significant adverse effects.

This will be set out in the Post Adoption Statement (to be published following consultation).