

Draft Moray Woodland and Forestry Strategy

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

Finalised Version

April 2017

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## Summary

The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to be undertaken for all plans, policies, and strategies, which are likely to raise significant environmental impacts.

The Assessment process consists of “scoping” the vision, key objectives and identified opportunities within the Draft Woodland and Forestry Strategy against a set of 11 environmental objectives to identify whether there are likely to be significant environmental impacts. If the vision or any of the key objectives or identified opportunities are not considered to have a likely significant environmental impact they have been “scoped out” of further assessment and the reasons for doing so are indicated in the report.

The Assessment is informed by highlighting the main environmental issues affecting Moray and includes a detailed analysis of background statistics. This Report also identifies the many other sources of legislation, guidance and policies that are relevant to the preparation of Draft Woodland and Forestry Strategy which will be adopted as Supplementary Guidance.

The Assessment itself consisted of planning officers considering the 11 objectives, with a series of prompting questions, to complete a matrix showing the magnitude of effect of any likely environmental effects*.*

The Strategy is an influencing and supportive framework for woodland management and does not set out specific actions or proposals therefore it can be difficult to make an assessment on the impact on environmental receptors. The assessment concludes that overall the potential effects of the strategy are predominantly positive for the environment and as no significant adverse effects were identified during the assessment process there is no mitigation identified. In the absence of potential negative effects and a lack of specific actions within the strategy there are also no monitoring indicators identified.

The process and methodology adopted are shown in the form of a diagram in **[Appendix 1](#_Appendix_1_–)**.

Comments on this Environmental Report should be submitted by letter or by e-mail and sent to:

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**Comments should be submitted by 19 May 2017**. All comments received will be reported to and considered by the Council’s Planning and Regulatory Services Committee.

## Introduction

The Draft Woodland and Forestry Strategy is wide ranging and covers a variety of different forestry and woodland interests. The document is intended to provide a framework for the delivery of Scottish Government priorities including sustainable economic development, climate change and woodland creation.

The purpose of the strategy is to identify the key issues affecting Moray, highlight opportunities that exist across the sector, increase the profile of current activities and guide woodland creation to appropriate locations across Moray over the next 20years.

The strategy once adopted will become supplementary guidance to support the Moray Local Development Plan 2015.

## Requirement for Strategic Environmental Assessment

The EC Directive 2001/42/EC requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment to be carried out on Development Plan documents and supplementary planning guidance. The aim of the Directive is to provide for a high level of protection to the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development. The EC Directive was implemented in Scotland through the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005.

## Strategic Environmental Assessment Process

SEA is a systematic method for considering the likely environmental effects of certain plans, programmes and strategies (PPS). SEA aims to ensure that environmental factors are given the same consideration as social and economic factors and does this by promoting the following;

* integrate environmental factors into PPS preparation, decision making, and adoption processes
* early dialogue with consultees, particularly those with environmental expertise, but also the wider public thus increasing public participation in the decision making process
* full and objective consideration of alternatives to ensure that the best environmental options are identified and taken on board as far as possible; and
* facilitate openness and transparency of decision making, through the publication of the post-adoption SEA statement

The key stages of the SEA process are set out in Table 1

### Table 1: Key stages of the SEA

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Screening** | Determining whether the PPS is likely to have significant environmental effects and whether an SEA is required. |
| **Scoping** | Deciding on the scope and level of detail of the Environmental Report, and the consultation period for the report, done in consultation with Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Ministers (Historic Environment Scotland) and the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency. |
| **Environmental Report** | Publishing an Environmental Report on the PPS and its environmental effects and consult on the report |
| **Adoption** | Providing information on; the adopted PPS, how the consultation comments are taken into account, methods for monitoring the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the PPS. |
| **Monitoring** | Monitoring significant environmental effects in such a manner so as to also enable Responsible Authorities to identify any unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage and undertake appropriate remedial action. |

The purpose of this Environmental Report is to:

* provide information on the Draft Moray Woodland and Forestry Strategy;
* identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects of the Strategy and its reasonable alternatives;
* provide an opportunity for the Consultation Authorities and the public to offer views on any aspect of this Environmental Report.

## SEA Activities to Date

**Table 2: SEA activities**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **SEA Action/Activity** | **Dates** |
| SEA scoping | March 2017 |
| Consult Consultation Authorities | 17 March 2017 – 3 April 2017 |
| Production of Environmental Report | January 2017 – April 2017 |

The Consultation Authorities responses to the Scoping Report are set out in Appendix 6.

## Key Facts

The key facts relating to the Draft Moray Woodland and Forestry Strategy are set out in the table below.

### Table 3: Key Facts

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of Responsible Authority** | The Moray Council |
| **Title of PPS** | Draft Moray Woodland and Forestry Strategy |
| **Purpose of PPS** | Framework to guide woodland creation to appropriate locations across Moray and highlight opportunities across the forestry sector |
| **What Prompted the PPS** | National Planning Framework 3, Scottish Planning Policy and Scottish Forestry Strategy |
| **Subject** | Woodlands and Forestry |
| **Period covered by PPS** | 2017-2037 |
| **Frequency of updates** | 5 years |
| **Area covered by PPS** | Moray Local Development Plan Area |
| **Are there any proposed PPS objectives?** | High level objectives set around key themes of economic development, timber transport, education, training and skills, tourism, recreation and access, health and wellbeing, community ownership, the environmental quality of woodlands and new woodland creation |
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## Changes arising from SEA process

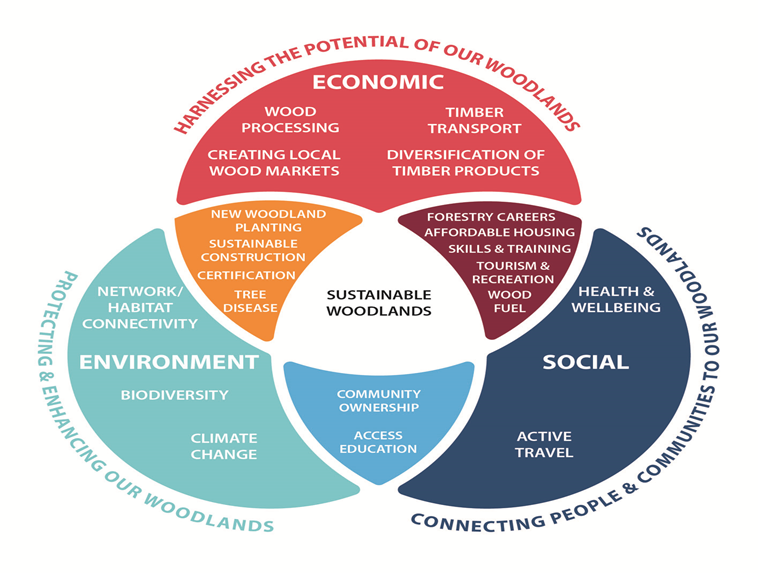
As the assessment process has demonstrated that the outcomes of the strategy are predominantly positive and no significant environmental effects have been identified, there are no changes to the strategy as a result of the SEA process.

## Vision of the Draft Moray Woodland and Forestry Strategy

The Strategy’s vision is:

*Moray has a network of multi-benefit sustainably managed woodlands that produce high quality timber to support jobs, attract visitors, provide educational opportunities and contribute to the health and wellbeing of our communities.*

The Strategy is divided into key themes that highlight the key issues and opportunities for the sector. The following diagram shows the framework for the development of the strategy.



The strategy and spatial mapping contained within it set out high level objectives and supporting statements. There are no detailed proposals identified within the strategy and this lack of detail is reflected within the assessment matrices.

The key supporting statements set out within the strategy are as follows:

**Economic Development**

* Recognise the contribution of the forestry sector to the local economy

• Promote high quality timber production in Moray

• Promote the planting of a wide range of coniferous species to help to diversify and expand the timber market

• Promote the use of locally grown timber in new buildings

• Encourage local timber processing

• Promote the expansion of local wood fuel markets

• Promote supply chain opportunities relating to wood fuel for small scale businesses

**Timber transport**

• Encourage increased collaboration between key sectors to explore funding options for road network improvements

• Promote a forward planning approach to identification of route improvements

• Support continued investment in techniques to reduce the impact of forest operations on the road network

• Promote local processing to reduce timber miles

**Education, training and skills**

• Encourage the forestry sector to raise awareness of the variety of career opportunities in the industry

**Tourism, recreation and access**

• Encourage Moray’s woodland tourism businesses to implement accessibility and inclusion best practice

• Support, encourage and market initiatives which open up our woodlands to visitors with additional access needs, for example, the use of all-terrain buggies, widening of trails and installation of accessible signage

• Encourage accommodation development and upgrading across Moray, in line with local planning strategy and policy

• Support development and expansion of existing accommodation provision

• Promote and encourage participation in VisitScotland’s QA schemes

• Identify opportunities for further accommodation investment

• Support local providers to develop schemes such as glamping or forest huts

• Support the initiatives to develop and expand Moray’s off-road trails, for example, at Glenlivet and Moray Monster Trails

• Support and encourage the development of off and on-road links in and around Fochabers and Keith.

• Encourage active travel connections between Moray’s trails, and develop cycling links into the National Park via the Dava Way, Glen Avon, Tomintoul and Glenlivet

• Support initiatives to develop MTB trails and accommodation at the Cabrach

• Support the development and promotion of long distance cycle routes, i.e. Nairn to Cullen and the Moray Way

• Support the development of Culbin Forest as a key family cycling destination

• Support the development of a region-wide Walkers are Welcome initiative, designed to deliver an integrated high quality, tourism focused walking offer

• Support and encourage development and management of our Core Paths network, raising awareness and improving branding across the region

• Support and encourage development of walking routes around and between Moray’s towns and villages, i.e. The Isla Way from Dufftown to Keith, the Fishwives Trail from Buckie to Keith and the development of a triangular long distance path linking Keith, Huntly and Dufftown

• Support and encourage efforts to improve walking links into the Cairngorms National Park

• Support and encourage the development of walking routes around the Moray Coastal Trail

• Establish and develop relationships with key stakeholders such as the Moray Way Association, encouraging cooperation focused on maximising the tourism benefits of the Dava Way, Speyside Way and Moray Way

**Health and wellbeing**

• Encourage and promote the use of woodlands to improve health and wellbeing

• Encourage and promote the use of woodlands and forests for outdoor learning experiences

• Promote the creation of woodlands close to towns and villages

• Prepare masterplans and development briefs for development sites to secure woodland creation, green infrastructure and green networks

**Community ownership**

• Encourage and promote community management and involvement in woodlands

• Encourage and promote community owned renewable energy projects in woodlands

• Encourage and promote a community led affordable housing pilot in Moray’s woodlands

**Environmental quality of woodlands**

• Support new woodland creation that is resilient to the negative effects of climate change and tree disease by encouraging a greater diversity of tree species and management practices

• Promote the opportunities for trees and woodlands to assist in natural flood management

• Promote trees and woodlands as a means to mitigate climate change through carbon sequestration

• Support the protection of existing woodland

• Promote woodland practices that protect and enhance environmental quality and biodiversity

• Support woodlands that restore, maintain and enhance biodiversity through the creation of habitat networks

• Encourage sustainable forest management that meets the UK Forestry Standard

**Opportunities for new woodland creation**

• Promote and increase the area of woodland cover in Moray

• Promote native woodland creation adjacent to existing native woodland.

## Alternatives / Options

The Environmental Report is required to consider whether there are alternatives to preparing the Woodland and Forestry Strategy and whether there are alternative aims/objectives and strategies which could be considered/included.

The preparation of a Forestry Strategy is not a statutory requirement however Scottish Planning Policy encourages local authorities to prepare a strategy. The alternatives considered related only to the overall strategy. The identified themes and key opportunities were identified following stakeholder engagement and steering group set up to oversee the preparation of the strategy. No alternative approaches to the individual themes or opportunities were proposed.

The alternative strategy approaches considered, with their advantages and disadvantages and reason for not pursuing them are set out in Table 4 below.

### Table 4: Draft Moray Woodland and Forestry StrategyAlternatives

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Alternative Strategy** | **Assessment of Approaches** | **Conclusion** |
| Business as Usual – No strategy | The previous Moray Forestry Strategy was published in 2002 and is now significantly out of date and is not an active document. To continue with no strategy could have a negative impact on the identified SEA objectives as there would not be an integrated approach to forestry in Moray. This could result in uncoordinated woodland expansion, failure to identify and capitalise on the multi-benefits of woodlands and failure to promote economic opportunities associated with forestry. | It is not considered feasible to continue with no strategy in place and this approach is ranked 3rd as it has the most potential to have a negative impact on the SEA objectives. This approach is therefore discounted. |
| High level strategy | Focuses on key issues affecting the forestry sector. This allows a more strategic approach to be taken and the identification of key environmental impacts. This is considered a proportionate approach that concentrates on the key issues and mains to maximise the benefits and minimise negative impacts. | This is the 2nd ranked approach in terms of environmental impact, but is a proportionate approach given the time and resources available to prepare the strategy and is seen as the most effective approach. |
| Detailed Strategy | The strategy could include specific proposals and specify types of trees in various locations.  Complex and time consuming to gather data to prepare a detailed strategy. Providing this level of detail could reduce flexibility and ability to adapt to changing circumstances. A detailed strategy would however have a significant positive impact on all of the SEA objectives. | A detailed strategy is 1st ranked approach as it offers the most potential to create significant environmental benefits. It is not the preferred option due to the time and complexity needed to assess impacts at a local level. |

## Relationship with other PPS and environmental protection objectives

The preparation of the Draft Moray Woodland and Forestry Strategy needs to take account of a range of: international; national; and local plans, programmes, and strategies (PPS). **[Appendix 2](#_Appendix_2)** summarises the main documents influencing preparation of the Strategy, and the implications for both the Strategy and the Environmental Assessment process. The final column in the table identifies the objective number contained within the Environmental Assessment which takes account of the PPS.

The key points of relevance for the strategy and the SEA are as follows;

* Promote woodland expansion in appropriate locations
* Promote sustainable economic development and maintaining a sustainable forestry industry
* Enhance opportunities for the public to access the natural environment
* Increase community engagement with the natural environment
* Limit or reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change
* Protect and enhance biodiversity, species and habitats landscape character and cultural and heritage assets
* Promote sustainable and efficient use of water and soils and natural resources
* Promote sustainable flood risk management
* Promote the health and wellbeing benefits associated with recreational and leisure use of woodlands

The SEA objectives set out in Table 5 are based on those identified and agreed for the Moray Local Development Plan (MLDP) 2015 and represent the key environmental considerations for the strategy. The objectives have remained broad as the strategy is wider ranging.

### Table 5: SEA objectives

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Objective** | **Aims of Objective** |
| 1. Improve Air Quality | * To protect and enhance the quality of local air quality in Moray and to ensure that emissions are below National Air Quality Standards and thus air quality objectives are met. |
| 1. Reduce the causes and impacts of climate change | * To reduce pollution * To promote sustainable use of resources * To reduce the risk of flooding through natural flood management |
| 1. Increase energy efficiency and proportion of energy generated from renewable sources | * To improve energy efficiency in buildings * To promote community renewable energy generation |
| 1. Protect and enhance the biodiversity and landscape | * To protect natural environment with particular emphasis on protected sites and species (Local, National and European) and to conserve the existing environment through enhancement schemes, mitigation and compensatory measures where necessary. * To promote people’s enjoyment, understanding and appreciation of the natural heritage and need for its protection |
| 1. Protect and enhance the cultural heritage and diversity | * To protect and, where appropriate, enhance the historic environment |
| 1. Protect and enhance the quality of the districts ground, river and sea water systems | * To protect watercourse from pollution * To protect and enhance the quality of the water environment within Moray including surface and groundwater features in addition to the North Sea coastline and the protected marine environment of the Moray Firth SAC. |
| 1. Improve soil quality and use soil in a sustainable manner | * To protect carbon rich soils from inappropriate development and safeguard prime agricultural land. |
| 1. Promote the use of sustainable transport | * Promote accessibility, health, and prosperity and quality of life benefits through active travel. * To improve, integrate and enhance the cycling and walking network in Moray to benefit the economy of Moray whilst maintaining sustainable principles. |
| 1. Ensure prudent use of natural resources | * To protect and, where appropriate, enhance the landscape and visual amenity of Moray * To safeguard and use natural resources sustainably |
| 1. Protect, enhance and create green spaces and to regenerate degraded environments | * To protect existing open spaces, create high quality green and open spaces and link them to existing open/green spaces. * Create new areas of woodland planting and promote planting of native species. |
| 1. To secure a better quality of life for local people, through improvements to service provision, sustain a healthy economy with high levels of employment and improve the health and well-being of local people. | * To protect and enhance the quality of life of Moray communities and visitors through employment and housing provision, good infrastructure, health and recreational opportunities. * Create opportunities for outdoor learning and improve health and wellbeing through recreational use of woodlands. |

## Environmental Problems

This section explains how existing environmental problems will affect or be affected by the Strategy, and whether it is likely to aggravate, reduce or otherwise affect existing environmental problems. Background information on the current state of the environment is included in **[Appendix 4.](#_Appendix_4_-_1)**

The significant environmental problems considered relevant to preparation of the Draft Moray Woodland and Forestry Strategy are;

**Biodiversity**

There is continued loss of biodiversity making it important to continue safeguarding international, national and local natural heritage designations from inappropriate development and where possible enhance them. There is also a need to address habitat fragmentation and the loss of greenspaces and focus on creating green linkages and wildlife corridors. Woodlands provide a rich and diverse range of habitats for wildlife and have a role in conserving nationally important species.

**Climate Change**

There is a need to adapt to and mitigate the predicted impacts of climate change. Woodlands and forests play an important role in mitigating climate change through carbon sequestration and woodlands can assist adaption through natural flood management. By increasing woodland cover there are opportunities to promote the sustainable use of natural resources, increase resilience to climate change and opportunities to support renewable energy generation.

**Cultural Heritage**

There is a need to safeguard listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments and archaeological sites from inappropriate development as they contribute to the distinctive character of Moray and provide a sense of identity and place.

**Landscape**

Designated landscapes and battlefields contribute to the landscape character qualities of Moray and also need to be protected from appropriate development. There is pressure for housing in the countryside and wind farms that threatens to erode landscape character.

**Woodlands and Forests**

Moray benefits from extensive coverage of the land area in woodlands, contributing to climate change targets and providing a range of economic, social and environmental benefits. Development pressure for tourist accommodation and housing in the countryside must be controlled through policies to ensure Moray’s woodlands are retained and potentially expanded.

**Water Environment**

Diffuse pollution from agriculture and forestry impacts upon the water environment. Sustainable woodland practices can also offer opportunities for improvements to the water environment. The creation and linkage of green and blue corridors and other biodiversity enhancements need to be promoted. There are potential opportunities to utilise planting to assist in natural flood management.

**Human Health and population**

Moray has an ageing population and there is a national issue in relation to obesity. Increasing the active use of woodland offers the opportunity to address inactivity and improve the health and wellbeing of our communities. As more people are living in urbanised environments there is a need to create a closer connection between people and the land.

**Soil**

Agriculture and forestry can lead to soil erosion and therefore land use management practices need to reduce the impact on soil. Large areas of Moray are identified as having carbon rich soils and new forestry proposals need to ensure there is no adverse impact on deep peat.

**Air Quality**

At present there are no air quality issues or identified air quality management areas within Moray. As the main towns continue to expand there is potential for this to become an issue in the future.

Table 6 below summarises these issues and identifies how the Strategy might affect them.

### Table 6: Significant Environmental Issues

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Significant Environmental Issue** | **How Draft Moray Woodland and Forestry Strategy addresses the issue** | **If Draft Moray Woodland and Forestry Strategy didn’t addresses the issue** | **Likely Impact Upon Issue** |
| **Biodiversity** | Takes account of and protect designated sites.  Promotes woodland creation and management practices that protect and enhance biodiversity.  Promotes habitat restoration and connectivity. | Continued loss of biodiversity.  Potential increase in fragmentation of habitats. Loss of opportunities for green linkages and wildlife corridors. | Promote benefits of good management of woodlands and forests. Promote the planting of a variety of tree species to increase resilience to tree disease and pests. Protection and enhancement of existing woodlands and forests. |
| **Climate Change** | Identifies opportunities for increased woodland cover to contribute to emission reductions and opportunities for natural flood management to adapt the impacts of climate change. | Failure to capitalise on the contribution forestry can make in addressing climate change. | Assist in contributing to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.  Promotes climate change adaptation.  Encourages community owned renewable energy projects.  Promotes resilient woodlands. |
| **Cultural Heritage** | Identifies cultural heritage assets as sensitive to new woodland planting. There is buffering around all scheduled ancient monuments. | No methodology for identifying appropriate locations for new woodland planting that safeguards cultural heritage. | Help protect cultural heritage assets from inappropriate development.  Promotes opportunities for enhancement of cultural heritage i.e. Lossiemouth Forest WWII heritage. |
| **Landscape** | Promotes the protection and enhancement of landscape. | Failure to identify landscape enhancement opportunities. | Promotion of resilient woodlands and forests. Promotion of good practice in woodland creation and management.  Help safeguard landscape from inappropriate development. |
| **Woodlands and Forests** | Identifies the environmental, social and economic opportunities in Moray relating to forestry and woodland ranging from climate change mitigation to job creation. | Lack of recognition of the environmental, social and economic benefits associated with forestry and woodlands.  Failure to adequately promote the opportunities for forestry in Moray and have a strategic overview of the sector. | Promotes multi-benefit woodlands that perform a number of roles. |
| **Water Environment** | Promotes land use management that can reduce flood risk. | Lack of recognition of the role of woodlands in contributing to natural flood management. | Promotes sustainable land use practices and natural flood management. |
| **Human Health and Population** | Identifies and promotes the health and wellbeing benefits associated with leisure and recreational access. | The multi-benefits including health and wellbeing of woodlands are not recognised or capitalised upon. | Promotes the active use of woodlands and the associated health and wellbeing benefits. |
| **Soil** | Carbon rich soils are specifically identified as requiring further investigation to protect carbon rich soils. | No methodology for identifying appropriate locations for new woodland planting that safeguards soils. | Helps protect carbon rich soils from inappropriate development. |
| **Air Quality** | Promote green infrastructure as a means of improving air quality. | Failure to recognise the advantages of green infrastructure in improving air quality | Air quality is not currently an issue and increasing woodland planting will have a positive impact on air quality. |

## Scoping Key Supporting Statements and Vision

The key supporting statements within the strategy have been scoped to identify which ones are likely to have a significant environmental impact.

**Table 7 – Scoping Key Supporting Statements and Vision**

|  | **Comment** | **Scoped in/out** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Economic Development** |  |  |
| Recognise the contribution of the forestry sector to the local economy | General statement with no detailed proposal to assess. | Out |
| Promote high quality timber production in Moray | General statement with no detailed proposal to assess. | Out |
| Promote the planting of a wide range of coniferous species to help to diversify and expand the timber market | General statement. Increasing variety of species would result in positive benefits in terms of resilience to tree disease and pests. | Out |
| Promote the use of locally grown timber in new buildings | There is no policy mechanism currently in place to deliver this. There are positive benefits in terms of sustainable use of resources. | Out |
| Encourage local timber processing | General statement that is an aspiration of the strategy, there are no detailed proposals and no approach to/or from forestry industry to take this forward. | Out |
| Promote the expansion of local wood fuel markets | Moray has a high percentage of woodland coverage which could support an uptake in local scale biomass. General statement no detailed proposal to assess. | Out |
| Promote supply chain opportunities relating to wood fuel for small scale businesses | General statement no detailed proposal to assess. | Out |
| **Timber Transport** |  |  |
| Encourage increased collaboration between key sectors to explore funding options for road network improvements | This statement relates to collaborative working between the various organisations dealing with timber transport. | Out |
| Promote a forward planning approach to identification of route improvements | This statement is about taking early account of timber transport planning. There are no specific timber transport routes identified. | Out |
| Support continued investment in techniques to reduce the impact of forest operations on the road network | Highlights the required ongoing investment in timber transport to minimise impact on roads network. No specific projects identified and therefore no detailed proposals to assess. | Out |
| Promote local processing to reduce timber miles | General statement no specific proposal reducing timber miles has a positive impact in reducing transport emissions. | Out |
| **Education, Training and Skills** |  |  |
| Encourage the forestry sector to raise awareness of the variety of career opportunities in the industry | No land use implications that could result in environmental impact. | Out |
| **Tourism, recreation and access** |  |  |
| Encourage Moray’s woodland tourism businesses to implement accessibility and inclusion best practice | General statement regarding accessibility. There are no specific proposals to assess environmental impact. Increased accessibility and increased usage are considered in respect of identified opportunities that are scoped in later in this table. | Out |
| Support, encourage and market initiatives which open up our woodlands to visitors with additional access needs, for example, the use of all-terrain buggies, widening of trails and installation of accessible signage | Intensification of use could have an impact on fragile habitats and species within the sensitive woodland settings. | In |
| Encourage accommodation development and upgrading across Moray, in line with local planning strategy and policy | There are identified opportunities for tourist accommodation and recreational activities within sensitive woodland locations including Culbin Forest and Darnaway Forest. | In |
| Support development and expansion of existing accommodation provision | There are identified opportunities for tourist accommodation and recreational activities within sensitive woodland locations including Culbin Forest and Darnaway Forest. | In |
| Promote and encourage participation in VisitScotland’s QA schemes | This is a certification process and does not have a land use implication. | Out |
| Identify opportunities for further accommodation investment | There are identified opportunities for tourist accommodation and recreational activities within sensitive woodland locations including Culbin Forest and Darnaway Forest. | In |
| Support local providers to develop schemes such as glamping or forest huts | There are identified opportunities for tourist accommodation and recreational activities within sensitive woodland locations including Culbin Forest and Darnaway Forest. | In |
| Support the initiatives to develop and expand Moray’s off-road trails, for example, at Glenlivet and Moray Monster Trails | Intensification of use could have an impact on fragile habitats and species within the sensitive woodland settings | In |
| Support and encourage the development of off and on-road links in and around Fochabers and Keith | Intensification of use could have an impact on fragile habitats and species within the sensitive woodland settings | In |
| Encourage active travel connections between Moray’s trails, and develop cycling links into the National Park via the Dava Way, Glen Avon, Tomintoul and Glenlivet | Intensification of use could have an impact on fragile habitats and species within the sensitive woodland settings | In |
| Support initiatives to develop MTB trails and accommodation at the Cabrach | Intensification of use could have an impact on fragile habitats and species. Development of tourist accommodation may have environmental impact. | In |
| Support the development and promotion of long distance cycle routes, i.e. Nairn to Cullen and the Moray Way | Intensification of use could have an impact on fragile habitats and species | In |
| Support the development of Culbin Forest as a key family cycling destination | Culbin is in close proximity to an SAC and SPA designation and therefore sensitive to disturbance to qualifying interests and conservation objectives. | In |
| Support the development of a region-wide Walkers are Welcome initiative, designed to deliver an integrated high quality, tourism focused walking offer | This is a certification process and does not have a land use implication. | Out |
| Support and encourage development and management of our Core Paths network, raising awareness and improving branding across the region | Intensification of use could have an impact on fragile habitats and species within the sensitive woodland settings | In |
| Support and encourage development of walking routes around and between Moray’s towns and villages, i.e. The Isla Way from Dufftown to Keith, the Fishwives Trail from Buckie to Keith and the development of a triangular long distance path linking Keith, Huntly and Dufftown | Intensification of use could have an impact on fragile habitats and species within the sensitive woodland settings | In |
| Support and encourage efforts to improve walking links into the Cairngorms National Park | Intensification of use could have an impact on fragile habitats and species within the sensitive woodland settings | In |
| Support and encourage the development of walking routes around the Moray Coastal Trail | Intensification of use could have an impact on fragile habitats and species within the sensitive woodland settings | In |
| Establish and develop relationships with key stakeholders such as the Moray Way Association, encouraging cooperation focused on maximising the tourism benefits of the Dava Way, Speyside Way and Moray Way | This is about building relationships between the key players to promote Moray’s tourism offer. | Out |
| **Health and Wellbeing** |  |  |
| Encourage and promote the use of woodlands to improve health and wellbeing | There is potential to intensify use of woodlands and this could have an environmental impact. | In |
| Encourage and promote the use of woodlands and forests for outdoor learning experiences | There is potential to intensify use of woodlands and this could have an environmental impact. | In |
| Promote the creation of woodlands close to towns and villages | There is potential to intensify use of woodlands and this could have an environmental impact. | In |
| Prepare masterplans and development briefs for development sites to secure woodland creation, green infrastructure and green networks | The masterplan sites will already have been subject to SEA as part of the Moray Local Development Plan 2015. | Out |
| **Community Ownership** |  |  |
| Encourage and promote community management and involvement in woodlands | This is a general statement and there is no specific proposal to assess. | Out |
| Encourage and promote community owned renewable energy projects in woodlands | Renewable energy proposals have the potential to have an negative environmental impact including tree felling and impact on watercourses etc. | In |
| Encourage and promote an community led affordable housing pilot in Moray’s woodlands | Proposals have the potential to have a negative environmental impact including tree felling. | In |
| **Environmental Quality of Woodlands** |  |  |
| Support new woodland creation that is resilient to the negative effects of climate change and tree disease by encouraging a greater diversity of tree species and management practices | There are positive environmental benefits associated with diversifying the species of trees planted in terms of resilience to tree diseases and pest and biodiversity value. | In |
| Promote the opportunities for trees and woodlands to assist in natural flood management | There is an opportunity to have a positive impact and adapt to climate change by utilising woodland planting for natural flood management. | In |
| Promote trees and woodlands as a means to mitigate climate change through carbon sequestration | Increasing woodland cover will assist in reducing carbon emissions. | In |
| Support the protection of existing woodland | This is a general statement and there is no specific proposal to assess, however it will have a positive environmental impact. | In |
| Promote woodland practices that protect and enhance environmental quality and biodiversity | This is a general statement and there is no specific proposal to assess, however it will have a positive environmental impact. | In |
| Support woodlands that restore, maintain and enhance biodiversity through the creation of habitat networks | There are positive environmental benefits associated with enhancing biodiversity and expanding habitat networks. | In |
| Encourage sustainable forest management that meets the UK Forestry Standard | Certification process that does not have a land use implication but should result in a positive impact for the environment. | In |
| **Opportunities for New Woodland Creation** |  |  |
| Promote and increase the area of woodland cover in Moray | Increasing woodland cover in Moray is beneficial in many ways including adapting to climate change, biodiversity enhancement, habitat expansion, timber production, creating employment opportunities and offers potential for tourism, leisure and recreational activities. | In |
| Promote native woodland creation adjacent to existing native woodland. | Promoting the planting of native woodlands adjacent to existing native woodlands has positive environmental benefits. | In |
| **Vision** |  |  |
| Moray has a network of multi benefit sustainably managed woodlands that produce high quality timber to support jobs, attract visitors, provide educational opportunities and contribute to the health and wellbeing of our communities. | The vision encapsulated the main aims of the strategy and provides a framework for the direction of the document. | In |
|  |  |  |

## Categorising the Scoped in Key Supporting Statements and Vision for the Assessment Process

The vision and various supporting statements set out within the strategy have been scoped in or out. To assist in the assessment process these statements have been grouped together as follows;

**Table 8 – Grouping Key Supporting Statements and Vision for the Assessment Process**

| **Category** | **Key Supporting Statement** |
| --- | --- |
| **Environmental Quality of Woodlands** | Support new woodland creation that is resilient to the negative effects of climate change and tree disease by encouraging a greater diversity of tree species and management practices  Promote the opportunities for trees and woodlands to assist in natural flood management  Promote trees and woodlands as a means to mitigate climate change through carbon sequestration  Support the protection of existing woodland.  Promote practices that protect and enhance environmental quality and biodiversity.  Support woodlands that restore, maintain and enhance biodiversity through the creation of habitat networks  Encourage sustainable forest management that meets the UK Forestry Standard |
| **Identified tourism and recreation opportunities in woodlands** | Encourage accommodation development and upgrading across Moray  Support development and expansion of existing accommodation provision  Identify opportunities for further accommodation investment  Support local providers to develop schemes such as glamping or forest huts  Support the development of Culbin Forest as a key family cycling destination |
| **Increased accessibility and intensification of use** | Support, encourage and market initiatives which open up our woodlands to visitors with additional access needs, for example, the use of all-terrain buggies, widening of trails and installation of accessible signage  Support the initiatives to develop and expand Moray’s off-road trails, for example, at Glenlivet and Moray Monster Trails  Support and encourage the development of off and on-road links in and around Fochabers and Keith  Encourage active travel connections between Moray’s trails, and develop cycling links into the National Park via the Dava Way, Glen Avon, Tomintoul and Glenlivet  Support initiatives to develop MTB trails and accommodation at the Cabrach  Support the development and promotion of long distance cycle routes, i.e. Nairn to Cullen and the Moray Way  Support and encourage the development of walking routes around the Moray Coastal Trail.  Support and encourage the development and management of our Core Paths network, raising awareness and improving branding across the region  Support and encourage development of walking routes around and between Moray’s towns and villages, i.e. The Isla Way from Dufftown to Keith, the Fishwives Trail from Buckie to Keith and the development of a triangular long distance path linking Keith, Huntly and Dufftown  Support and encourage efforts to improve walking links into the Cairngorms National Park  Encourage and promote the use of woodlands to improve health and wellbeing  Encourage and promote the use of woodlands and forests for outdoor learning experiences  Promote the creation of woodlands close to towns and villages |
| **Other identified development opportunities (renewable energy and affordable housing)** | Encourage and promote community owned renewable energy projects in woodlands  Encourage and promote an community led affordable housing pilot in Moray’s woodlands |
| **New Woodland Creation (**including Spatial Mapping Methodology) | Promote and increase the area of woodland cover in Moray  Promote native woodland creation adjacent to existing native woodland. |
| **Vision** | Moray has a network of multi benefit sustainably managed woodlands that produce high quality timber to support jobs, attract visitors, provide educational opportunities and contribute to the health and wellbeing of our communities. |

## Assessment Methodology and Assessment

A matrix has been completed for each of the grouped statements and opportunities following detailed assessment through the scoping process. The matrices assess the supporting statements, identified opportunities and spatial mapping against the 11 identified SEA objectives.

The assessment was carried out by Planning Officers from the Council’s Planning and Development section.

An assessment score has been inserted to identify whether effects will be;

Significantly positive ++

Positive +

Neutral/No significant effects 0

Unknown ?

Negative –

Significantly negative --

If an issue is not considered relevant then it has been marked as “N/A”.

Comments identify whether effects will be short or long term, temporary or permanent and whether there is likely to be any cumulative or secondary effects arising. Where there is likely to be an environmental effect the Council has identified safeguarding and mitigation measures. The overall results of the assessment as summarised in the table below. The detailed assessment matrices are set out in [**Appendix 5**](#_Appendix_5_–_1)**.**

**Table 9 Summary of Assessment Matrices**

| **Assessment** | **Comments/Significant Environmental Issues** | **Mitigation** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Environmental Quality of Woodlands  Creation | The creation of new woodlands and protection and enhancement of existing woodlands has positive environmental benefits, including habitat expansion, biodiversity enhancement, planting varied species of trees to increase resilience to diseases and pests and the impacts of climate change. | New woodland planting proposals must be agreed by the Forestry Commission Scotland and will be considered on a site by site basis to ensure the environmental impact of planting minimised. |
| Tourism and Recreation – tourist accommodation and recreational use | Improving Moray’s tourism offer by creating accommodation and recreational facilities in woodland settings has the potential to increase car journeys. This is however balanced against the health and wellbeing benefits of assisting in making communities in Moray more active by encouraging walking, cycling and other recreational pursuits. Tourism opportunities can help in creating new jobs and diversifying the economy of Moray. The planning process will ensure that environmental considerations are taken account of and development is located in the least environmentally sensitive locations. | HRA prepared to support strategy.  Outdoor access code.  Existing signposting in waymarked forests identifying sensitive areas.  Moray Local Development Plan (MLDP) 2015 |
| Increased accessibility and intensification of use | The promotion of woodlands and forests as visitor destinations with improved access and a long distance trails joining up woodlands have the potential to provide a number of health benefits and employment opportunities. There are no detailed proposals to assess impact, however woodlands in Moray are currently utilised in a responsible manner with landowners balancing access and recreation with commercial forestry and sensitive environments. There is safeguarding in place i.e. planning permission process to ensure the environmental impact is minimised. | HRA prepared to support strategy and identify impact on natura sites.  Outdoor access code.  Existing signposting in waymarked forests identifying sensitive areas.  Moray Local Development Plan (MLDP) 2015 |
| Other identified development opportunities – community renewables and affordable housing in woodlands | The development of community energy projects and affordable housing has benefits in terms of addressing climate change, energy security and creating employment and income generation for communities. Given there is no specific location for projects it is difficult to assess the environmental impact , there is safeguarding in place as proposals will be subject to the planning process and will need to comply with policies to protect the environment. In particular where tree removal is proposed there is a requirement to provide compensatory planting. | Moray Local Development Plan (MLDP) 2015 |
| New Woodland Creation (including spatial mapping methodology) | The high level and strategic nature of the spatial mapping has made it difficult to assess impact on a detailed level. There are positive environmental impact in terms of mitigating climate change, creating and sustaining local woodfuel markets, native tree planting, habitat expansion and biodiversity enhancement as well as associated economic opportunities. | New woodland planting proposals must be agreed by the Forestry Commission Scotland and will be considered on a site by site basis to ensure the environmental impact of planting minimised. |
| Vision | Despite not specifically referencing the environment, the vision in delivering sustainably managed, multi-benefit woodlands will have positive environmental impacts on climate change mitigation, habitat and biodiversity enhancement and the prudent use of resources. It will also have a positive impact on health and wellbeing through the promotion of active woodlands and support local job creation. | No safeguarding or mitigation has been identified due to the high level nature of the vision. |

## Mitigation Measures

The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires an explanation of “the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the strategy.

As the assessment indicates that overall the potential effects of the strategy are predominantly positive for the environment and there are no significant adverse effects identified during the assessment process there is no mitigation.

## Monitoring

The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires the Council to monitor significant environmental effects of the implementation of the strategy. Monitoring will assess the predicted effects arising from implementation of the strategy and assess identified mitigation measures. The Moray Woodland and Forestry Supplementary Guidance will be monitored as part of the Moray Local Development Plan 2015 monitoring.

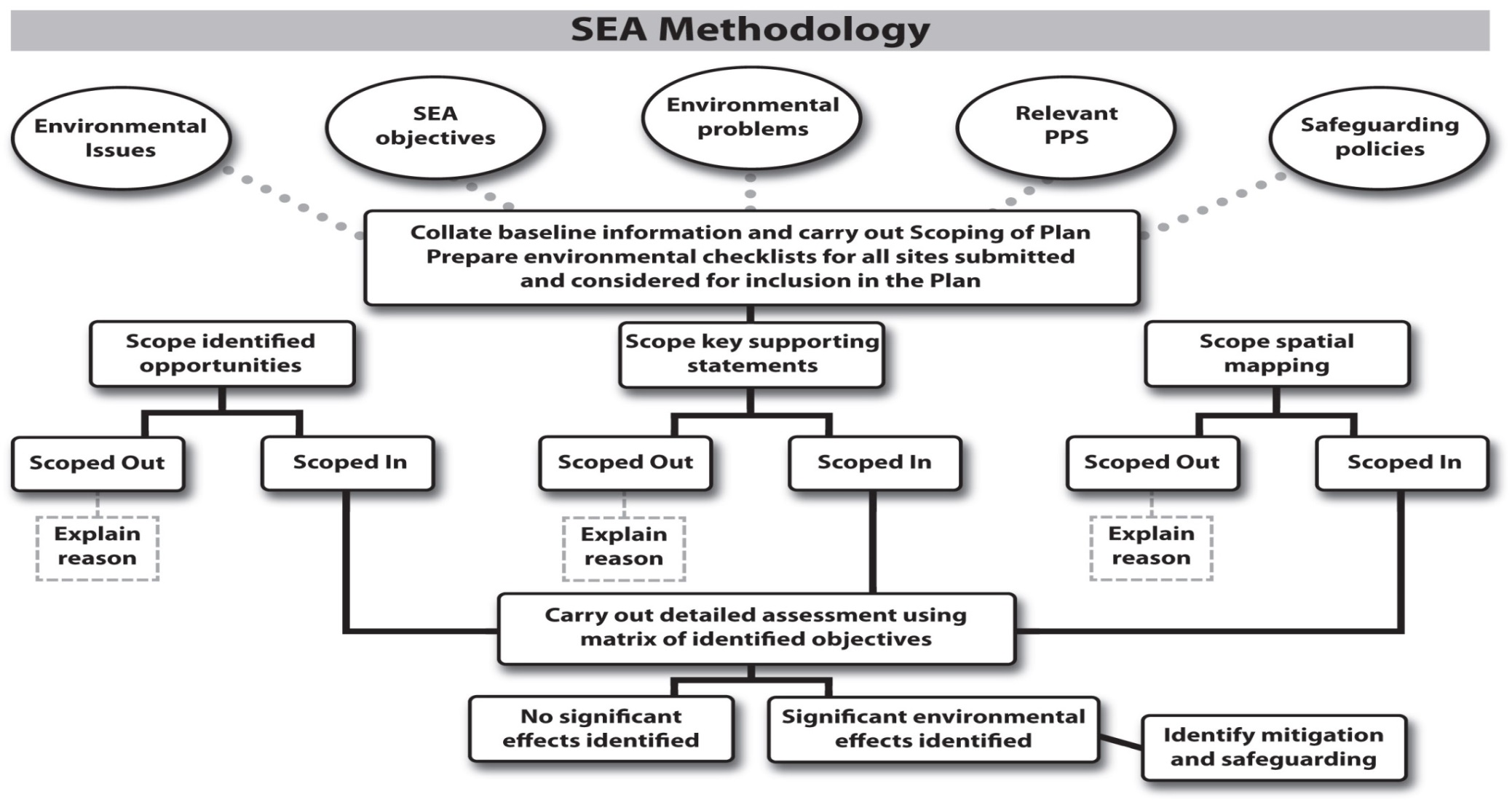
The assessment of the strategy indicates that there is no potential significant adverse effect relating to its implementation. In the absence of potential negative effects and a lack of specific actions within the strategy there are no monitoring indicators identified.

## Next Steps

The future milestones in progressing the Moray Woodland and Forestry Strategy and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) are indicated in the following table.

### Table 10: Next Steps

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 12 week consultation on proposed strategy and environmental report | Feb-May 2017 |
| Take account of comments to strategy and environmental report | May 2017 |
| Report finalised strategy, HRA and Environmental Report to Planning and Regulatory Services Committee | August 2017 |
| Adopted Strategy as Supplementary Guidance | Sept 2017 |

Appendix 1 - SEA Methodology 

## Appendix 2 - Link to other PPS and environmental objectives

### Table 11: PPS

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name of PPS** | **Requirements of PPS** | **Implications for Draft Moray Woodland and Forestry Strategy** | **Implications for SEA** | **SEA objective no** |
| **Planning Policy** |  |  |  |  |
| Scottish Government National Planning Framework 3  Scottish Planning Policy 2013 | Long term spatial strategy for Scotland identifying future land use planning challenges and strategic development priorities to support sustainable economic growth. | The Strategy should aim to support sustainable economic growth, new woodland creation.  Help in mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change. | Include SEA objectives to support the NPF and SPP’ including affordable housing, renewable energy, climate change, economic development, and biodiversity conservation. | 1-11 |
| The Planning Scotland Act 2006 | Range of planning reforms aimed at streamlining the system and increasing community involvement. | The strategy should promote the protection and enhancement of the rural environment. | Include SEA objectives to:  Protect and enhance biodiversity, water environment, soils, protect species etc. | 4,5,6,7 |
| **Woodlands and Forestry** |  |  |  |  |
| Right Tree, Right Place  Scottish Forestry Strategy  Scottish Government's rationale for woodland expansion  Policy on control of woodland removal  Woodland In and Around Towns (WIAT) | Planning document for the planting of trees and woodland in Scotland including the development of woodland and forestry strategies  Aims to protect and enhance Scotland’s forests and woodlands and increase their value to society and the environment.  Rationale for woodland expansion in Scotland.  Provides direction for decisions on woodland removal in Scotland  Aims to increase accessible woodlands in and close to towns and cities. | The strategy should aim to assist in the delivery of multiple benefits for society, environment and economy from forests and woodlands.  The strategy should protect and enhance existing and future woodlands.  The strategy should aim to;  Assist in increasing forest  cover.  Protect and enhance existing and future woodlands.  Encourage new woodland creation in and around towns and improve accessibility to existing and future woodlands. | Include SEA objectives to:  Promote sustainable development and to harness the many benefits associated with woodlands such as tourism, recreation and access.  Protect and enhance biodiversity, water environment, soils, protect species etc.  Promote walking and cycling and improve health and wellbeing | 11  4,5,6,7  8,11 |
| **Climate Change** |  |  |  |  |
| Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 | Promotes reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and mitigation and adaption to climate change. | The strategy should encourage sustainable development and land use and contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increase resilience to the impacts of climate change. | Include SEA objectives to;  Reduce the impacts of climate change and increase resilience to climate change. | 2,3,9 |
| **Land Use** |  |  |  |  |
| Land Use Strategy 2016 - 2021 | Long term Vision; three Objectives relating to the economy, environment and communities; and the Principles for Sustainable Land Use to guide policy and decision making. | The strategy should promote sustainable development, optimise public benefits delivered by the natural environment and protect natural assets for future generations. | Include SEA objectives to;  Reduce the impacts and causes of climate change, protect and enhance the natural environment, promote the prudent use of resources as well as improving quality of life and delivery of green infrastructure. | 1-11 |
| Green Infrastructure: Design and Placemaking 2011 | Promotes integration of and good design of green infrastructure. | The strategy should promote the provision of green infrastructure in new developments. | Include SEA objective to;  Reduce the impacts and causes of climate change and protect and enhance the natural environment. | 2,4,10,11 |
| **Water** |  |  |  |  |
| Water Framework Directive 200/60/EC | Protect and improve the water environment and ensure water quality and good ecological status are maintained. | The Strategy should support aims to maintain good ecological status and mitigate the impacts of flooding and support river basin management planning. | Include SEA objective to;  Protect and enhance the quality of the districts ground, river and sea water systems. | 4 |
| **Nature Conservation** | International |  |  |  |
| The Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC  The Birds Directive 2009/147/EC  EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020  Nature Conservation- the Ramsar  Convention | Protect habitat and species  Protection of birds and their habitats  Conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity  Protection of wetland birds | The Strategy should protect identified habitats, species and wetland birds and should support the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. | Include SEA objectives to;  Protect and enhance biodiversity including protection and enhancement of species. Habitats and landform. | 4 |
| **Nature Conservation and Biodiversity** | National |  |  |  |
| Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)  The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004  Scotland's Biodiversity: It's in Your Hands - A strategy for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in Scotland  2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity | Gives protection to wildlife and countryside.  Duties on public bodies to further the conservation of biodiversity and sets out measures to protect and enhance the biological and geological natural heritage. Protects individual sites and promotes conservation on a broader scale.  Aims to halt loss and reverse decline of species and habitats. | The strategy should avoid disturbance to wildlife and the countryside.  The strategy should aim to restore, maintain, conserve, promote and protect biodiversity, habitat and species. | Include SEA objectives to;  Protect and enhance biodiversity including protection and enhancement of species. Habitats and landform. | 4 |
| **Local Planning Policy** |  |  |  |  |
| Moray Local Development Plan 2015 | Guides development in Moray and sets out a framework for sustainable economic growth and addressing climate change. | The strategy should support the role of woodlands in delivering sustainable economic growth and tackling climate change. | SEA objectives;  To reduce the causes and impacts of climate change.  Ensure prudent use of resource.  Sustain a healthy economy. | 2,3,9,11 |
| **Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015** | Provides a framework to increase community empowerment and engagement. Targets regeneration and community participation. | The strategy should promote community empowerment and seek to engage communities in their environment. Community regeneration opportunities should be promoted. | Include SEA objectives;  Increase the proportion of energy generated through renewable sources.  Secure a better quality of life for local people. | 11,3 |
|  |  |  |  |  |

## Appendix 3 - Environmental Issues Scoping

### Table 12: Scoping SEA Objectives In / Out

| **SEA Issue and Objectives** | **Scoped In / Out** | **Justification** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1.Improve Air Quality  (**Air Quality**) | In | The strategy promotes tree planting which will have a positive impact on air quality. |
| 2.Reduce the causes and impacts of climate change  (**Climatic Factors**) | In | The strategy promotes tree planting which assists in reducing emissions. New woodland planting can also assist in natural flood management. |
| 3. Increase energy efficiency and the proportion of energy generated from renewable sources (**Climatic Factors and Material Assets**) | In | The strategy promotes community owned renewable energy generation, small scale biomass and the use of local timber in construction. |
| 4.Protect and enhance the biodiversity and landscape  (**Biodiversity, flora and fauna and Landscape**) | In | The strategy promotes the protection and enhancement of existing woodland and supports woodlands that restore, maintain and enhance biodiversity through the creation of habitat networks. |
| 5. To protect and enhance cultural heritage and diversity (**Cultural heritage**) | In | The strategy safeguards cultural heritage assets and seeks to promote enhancement of assets such as WWII heritage at Lossiemouth Forest. |
| 6. Protect and enhance the quality of the districts ground, river and sea water systems (**Water)** | In | The strategy promotes woodlands as a means of natural flood management. |
| 7. Improve soil quality and use soil in a sustainable manner (**soils and material assets**) | In | The strategy seeks to safeguard prime agricultural land and carbon rich soils |
| 8. Promote the use of sustainable transport (**Human Health and Climatic Factors**) | In | The strategy promotes the active use of woodlands and enhanced accessibility to encourage walking and cycling. |
| 10. Ensure prudent use of natural resources (**Material Assets and Soils)** | In | The strategy safeguards prime agricultural land and promotes the use of renewable technologies. |
| 11. Protect, enhance and create green spaces and to regenerate degraded environments ( **Landscape and Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna**) | In | The strategy promotes and supports the enhancement of greenspaces, the creation of green corridors and provision of green infrastructure. |
| 12. To secure a better quality of life for local people through improvements to service provision, sustain a healthy economy with high levels of employment and improve the health and well-being of local people (**Human health and Population**) | In | The strategy promotes opportunities to improve health and wellbeing. There are identified opportunities for tourism and recreation to support sustainable economic growth. |

## Appendix 4 - Current State of the Environment

**The current state of the environment**

**Background**

Moray is located in the North East of Scotland and extends to 2,238 km2. The Draft strategy covers all of Moray, excluding the southern part, which is within the Cairngorms National Park. Moray is a predominantly rural area with a population of 93,295 (2011 census). Approximately 57% of the population live in the 5 main towns of Elgin, Keith, Buckie, Forres and Lossiemouth.

The landscape of Moray is predominantly open countryside and woodland with only a small proportion covered by urban and rural development. This is reflected in a population density of 39 people per sq. km compared to the national average of 67.

There are many locations across Moray valued for their landscape, habitat or ecological importance and these are given protection by European, national and local designations.

**Landscape**

Moray enjoys a diverse landscape. The Moray and Nairn landscape Character Assessment identifies the predominant landscapes in Moray as Uplands, River Valleys, Coast and Coastal lowlands. The various landscape character types make it one of the most attractive rural areas in Scotland. There are seven designated Areas of Great Landscape Value and the southern part of Moray lies within the Cairngorms National Park.

The landscape quality of the coastline is protected through a Coastal Protection Zone controlling the types of development that are acceptable within it. To control higher development pressures around the five main settlements of Elgin, Forres, Keith, Buckie and Lossiemouth, a Countryside around Towns designation and policy limit the type of development in this area. The aim of the designation is to preserve the distinction between built up areas and the countryside. The wider landscape is also under pressure, principally through the cumulative effects of new housing in the countryside and wind turbine developments.

A Landscape Capacity Study for onshore wind turbines was commissioned and completed in 2016, which identifies opportunities and constraints for further wind turbine developments. The Study also identifies opportunities for repowering and extensions to existing/ consented wind farms. The Study highlights key sensitivities such as landmark hills, key scenic approaches and potential cumulative issues within some Landscape Character Types. The Study has informed updated Wind Energy Policy Guidance which is anticipated to be adopted in June 2017.

**Key Issues: Need to safeguard Moray’s landscape from inappropriate development and provide an up to date policy framework for housing in the countryside and wind turbines.**

**Population**

The 2015 population for Moray is 95,510; an increase of 0.8% from 84,770 in 2014. The population of Moray accounts for 1.8% of the total population of Scotland. In Moray, 16.2% of the population are aged 16 to 29 years. This is smaller than Scotland where 18.2% are aged 16 to 29 years. Persons aged 60 and over make up 26.5% of Moray. This is larger than Scotland where 24.2% are aged 60 and over. Since 1989, Moray’s total population has risen overall. Scotland’s population has also risen over this period.

By 2039 the population of Moray is projected to be 98,680, an increase of 4.1% compared to the population in 2014. The population of Scotland is projected to increase by 7.5% between 2014 and 2039. Over the 25 year period, the age group that is projected to increase the most in size in Moray is the 75+ age group. This is the same for Scotland as a whole. The population under 16 in Moray is predicted to decline by 8.1% over the next 25 year period.

Between 2014 and 2015 Moray experienced a 2.8 per cent decrease in the number of births, dropping from 931 in 2014, to 905 in 2015. The number of births in Scotland fell by 2.9 per cent. Fertility in Moray decreased from 56.1 births per 1,000 women aged 15 to 44 in 2014, to 54.8 in 2015. For Scotland as a whole, the general fertility rate decreased from 54.7 births per 1,000 women aged 15 to 44 in 2014, to 53.2 in 2015.

The number of deaths in Moray increased from 947 in 2014 to 1,054 in 2015. Over the period 2013 to 2015 the overall death rate was lower for males than for females. Compared to Scotland over the period 2013 to 2015, Moray had a higher death rate. The main cause of death in Moray was circulatory disease, followed by cancer.

Female life expectancy at birth (81.7 years) is greater than male life expectancy (78.7 years), and both were greater than the Scottish average. Male life expectancy at birth in Moray is improving more rapidly than female life expectancy. In Moray female life expectancy at age 65 (20.4 years) is greater than male life expectancy at age 65 (17.9 years).

On average in 2013-15 there was a net inflow of 494 people into Moray per year, meaning that more people entered Moray (3,566 per year) than left (3,072 per year). The 16 to 29 year olds age group accounted for the largest group of in-migrants into Moray. The largest group of out-migrants was also the 16 to 29 year olds.

In Moray, households headed by 60-74 year olds are projected to increase in number by 6 per cent, and those headed by the 75+ age group are projected to increase in number by 90 per cent between the years 2014 and 2039.

**Key Issues: Need to plan for growth, more housing, more employment opportunities, more services, opportunities and education opportunities for the 16-29 age group. Need to provide more facilities for the ageing population.**

**Biodiversity**

Moray benefits from a wealth of natural heritage sites and species designated for their importance including 275 of the nationally listed species of conservation concern. There is a wealth of designated sites within Moray including five Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), four Special Protection Areas (SPA) and 2 Ramsar sites. There are 35 national designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and various locally important sites and protected sites of local nature conservation value.

**Key Issues: Need to protect designated nature conservation sites and protected habitats and species from inappropriate development, also protect, and enhance wider biodiversity interests.**

**Agriculture**

Moray is a mixed farming area and the total agricultural output in 2014 was £67million. The sector is broken down as follows, dairy 2%, poultry and eggs 1.3%, pigs 18%, sheep 12.9%, beef 32.7%, intensive crops 8.2%, potatoes 7.3%, oilseed rape 0.9% and cereals 15.9%

There have been significant changes in the agricultural sector since 2007 with livestock numbers declining, the numbers of pigs has reduced by 63%, the dairy herd although always small has reduced by 84%, poultry has declined by 66% and feeding cattle by 16%.

There has also been a significant shift in cropping with wheat and oil seed rape production levels reducing and a 23% increase in the production of barley, in particular spring barley for use in the local maltings.

**Key Issue: Safeguard prime agricultural land and promote opportunities for economic diversification.**

**Forestry**

In Moray woodland covers approximately 33% of the total land area and plays an important role in the economic, social and environmental character of the area. This land cover is significantly higher than Scotland (17%) and Great Britain (11%) but low compared with France, Germany and the Scandinavian countries. Conifer woodland is the dominant forest type representing 74% of all woodland. The main conifer species is Scots Pine covering 18,243 hectares (34%) of all woodland. The next most dominant species are Sitka Spruce covering 11,001 hectares (20%) and Lodge pole Pine covering 9,560hectares (18%). Forests are an important recreational resource in Moray for walking, cycling, horse riding, mountain biking, and orienteering as well as contributing to health and wellbeing.

**Key Issues: To protect Moray’s woodland resources and recognise their wider contributions towards climate change, landscape value and sustainable economic development.**

**Flooding**

Moray suffered from extensive flood damage in 1997, 2002 and 2009, inundating hundreds of homes and businesses. The worst hit areas were Elgin, Forres, Rothes, and Lhanbryde where flood alleviation schemes have now been completed. Garmouth and Kingston have also been hit badly by flooding, although no Flood Alleviation Schemes are currently planned. Work is currently underway to prepare surface water management plans to address flooding in specific towns and villages in Moray.

**Key Issue: Controlling development within areas at risk of flooding and promoting opportunities for natural management.**

**Economy**

The unemployment rate in Moray is lower than the Scottish average. In March 2015 the unemployment rate in Moray was 1.3% compared to a national average of 2%. Compared to Scottish or UK levels, average incomes in Moray are low. The average wage in 2016 was £491 per week in comparison to £535 in Scotland. The figures reflect the large amount of part-time employment, with fewer qualified workers and less managerial and professional jobs.

The proportion of the workforce employed in the public sector in Moray is slightly higher than the proportion in Scotland. There were 8,200 public sector employees in Moray in 2014, 13.0% fewer than in 2009. In contrast, private sector employment was 7.1% higher, with total employment 1.5% higher. The number of full-time employees in Moray increased by 4.7% between 2009 and 2014, whilst the number of part-time employees decreased by 3.7%.

The majority of the population is employed in the public sector, food and drink and defence sector. The Moray economy has been a defence depended economy, relying upon the Ministry of Defence presence at Kinloss and Lossiemouth. In 2005, bases contributed £156.5 million (including civilian expenditure) to the Moray economy, of which £76.6 million was retained and spent locally. The station at Kinloss closed as a Royal Air Force base in 2012 and has been utilised as an Army barracks since.

Tourism is an important sector within the Moray economy. Moray and the North East of Scotland attract a significant number of visitors each year to attractions such as whisky distilleries, castles and other local visitor attractions. Moray is a popular destination for outdoor pursuits including walking, cycling, and water sports.

**Key Issues: Promote economic opportunities associated with woodlands and forests.**

**Housing**

The 2015 estimate of the number of households in Moray is 41,641. This is a 0.9 per cent increase in the 2014 figure of 41,288, compared to a 0.6 per cent increase in Scotland as a whole. The proportion of these households receiving a single adult Council Tax discount is 34.1 per cent. For Scotland, this figure is 37.4 per cent.

The total number of households in Moray is projected to change from 41,288 in 2014 to 46,832 in 2039, which is an increase of 13 per cent. In Scotland as a whole, the projected number of households is set to increase by 14 per cent over the same 25 year period.

In Scotland, the number of lone adult households is projected to increase by 31 per cent over the 25 year period. In Moray, the number of lone adult households is projected to increase by 31 per cent, and the number of larger households in Moray is projected to fall, with the number of households of 2 or more adults with children decreasing by 16 per cent over the 25 year period. The average household size is projected to decrease from 2.24 in 2014 to 2.04 in 2039.

With regards to the dwellings in Moray, 95 per cent are occupied, 4 per cent are vacant and 2 per cent are second homes. The proportions of dwellings in Scotland which are vacant and second homes are 3.1 per cent and 1.1 per cent, respectively. The 2015 estimate of the number of dwellings in Moray is 44,096. This is an increase of 0.7 per cent from 2014 and compares to a 0.7 per cent increase across Scotland as a whole.

The Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2011 provides a baseline for identifying housing land requirements. The annual requirement identified through the HNDA is for 538 units per annum for the period 2011 to 2023. Approximately 74% of this requirement is for affordable dwellings.

**Key Issue- Promote opportunities for affordable housing provision set within woodlands.**

**Transport**

Car dependency in Moray is relatively high and there is a higher availability of cars per household than the national average. In 2001 there was an average of 1.09 cars per household compared to an average of 0.93 cars per household in Scotland.

Data from the 2011 census showed that Moray is placed within the top 5 authorities in Scotland for the proportion of people who cycle to work regularly. According to the 2011 census data 64.6% of all journeys within Moray are 5km or less which is an ideal length for making as active travel journeys. Additionally the census data states that 17.7% of households do not have access to a car (for private use) whilst 55% of all households have access to one or more bicycles (for private use) showing that many people could use bicycles for these short journeys below 5km.

Buses, coaches and on demand responsive bus services provide the principal public transport capacity within Moray. Around 10% of travel to work trips in Moray are made by bus; this proportion is considerably lower than the overall Scottish average of 16.5% reflecting the lower service provision compared to more built up parts of Scotland.

Moray has a high level of rural primary industries, creating additional pressure on the road and bridge infrastructure from heavy good and farm vehicles. Recent road improvements include the Mosstodloch/Fochabers bypass which was completed in 2012.

Moray connects with other parts of Scotland, Europe and beyond through the trunk road and rail networks. The two trunk roads in the area are the A96 (Aberdeen to Inverness) and the A95 (Keith to Aviemore). The Aberdeen to Inverness rail line includes stations at Elgin, Forres and Keith. The two nearest airports are Inverness and Aberdeen. The Scottish Government has announced plans to dual the A96 and the A9, which in the longer term will greatly improve connectivity and improve Moray’s economic prospects.

**Key Issue: Continued promotion of active travel and the creation of long distance routes for leisure use and commuting. Support continued investment in timber transport routes.**

**Pollution**

Due to the rural nature of Moray there is a high dependency on the use of the private car. This can contribute to local air quality issues. Since 1999 Moray Council has monitored levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO2) at a number of locations across Moray. To date the Council has not declared a Local Air Quality Management Area.

There are no known bathing water pollution issues in Moray or other significant pollution risks.

**Key Issue: Promote the provision of green infrastructure and new woodland planting to assist in reducing air pollution.**

**Contaminated, Vacant and Derelict Land**

The Council maintains a database of former industrial sites where contamination may be present. Although these sites are mainly in urban areas, forestry sites may be affected a legacy of, for example, landfills and waste tips, military activity, sawmills and agro-industrial uses.

Figures from the 2015 Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey show that there is approximately 8 ha of derelict land and 7 ha of vacant land in Moray.

**Key Issue: Promote re-use and remediation of contaminated sites where feasible.**

**Open Space**

Moray is generally very well provided for in terms of open space, particularly in the Natural/Semi Natural typology. The Moray Local Development Plan 2015 contains extensive areas of “ENV” designations which are protected through policies.

An audit of the open space in Moray’s main towns was carried out in the summer of 2016 which showed that Elgin had a total of 820.21 ha of open space, Forres 356.28ha, Buckie 97.32ha, Keith 58.6ha, Lossiemouth 175.87ha, Aberlour 58.6ha and Dufftown 29.13 ha. This equates to approximately 713.36m² per household in Elgin, 708.59m² in Forres, 227.01m² in Buckie, 440.13m² in Keith, 531m² in Lossiemouth, 1033.51m² in Aberlour and 338.72m² in Dufftown.

The audit has been used to develop an Open Space Strategy that will be consulted on over the Spring of 2017. The Strategy will provide a strategic vision for the provision, development, maintenance and management of open space within Moray. The Strategy will be used to inform decision making on existing open space and open space within new development. As Supplementary Guidance the Strategy will help to inform the planning application process and support Local Development Plan Policy E5 Open Spaces.

**Key Issue: Need to promote green corridors and networks connecting high quality greenspaces.**

**Renewable Energy**

Renewable energy in Moray has predominantly focused on wind energy and consent has been granted for large scale wind farms at Rothes, Berryburn, Paul’s Hill, Hill of Towie, Hill of Glaschyle, Edintore, Dorenell, Meikle Hill and Kellas.

The scale and nature of wind turbine applications has changed considerably in the last few years. The reduction in grant incentives has greatly reduced the number of applications for turbines below 35m to blade tip. Applications for wind turbines have reduced yearly from 54 in 2012 to 23 in 2013, 13 in 2014, 6 in 2015 and 1 in 2016 (up to 31/7/2016).

The distilling industry has invested in renewable technologies and there are a number of bioenergy, anaerobic digestion and biomass projects with planning consent that are currently under construction.

**Key Issue: Contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and direct renewable energy proposals to the least environmentally sensitive locations.**

**Health**

Overall the population of Moray benefits from better health than in Scotland as a whole with nearly 93% of the population reporting good to fair health and just 7% reporting not good health. This compares with 90% and 10% nationally. The % of the population that has a limiting long term illness is approximately 3% lower in Moray than nationally at 17% of the population compared with 20%.

Obesity is an issue across Scotland and in 2013/14 in Moray 10.5 per thousand population were classed as obsess this is down from 10.88 per thousand population in 2010-11 but still above the national average of 8.05 per thousand population.

**Key Issue: Promote health and wellbeing through the creation of recreational and leisure opportunities in woodlands across Moray.**

**Geology**

There are three sites designated for geological interest in Moray, Cutties Hillock, Findrassie SSSI and Spynie Quarry SSSI.

**Key Issue: Protection of designated sites**

**Water**

The main rivers within Moray are the River Spey, River Lossie, River Isla, River Findhorn, River Avon and River Deveron. There are various bodies of standing water in Moray, varying from upland lochs to reservoirs including Loch Dallas, Lochindorb, Glenlatterach Reservoir, Clunas Reservoir and Loch Spynie SPA and Ramsar site.

Water is an essential resource to Moray‘s economy given the strong presence of the food and drink industries and the traditional industries of agriculture and fishing in the area. There are over 50 distilleries in Moray, the highest concentration of distilleries in Scotland, including international brand names such as Glenfiddich, Macallan, Strathisla and Glenlivet. Key food businesses include Walkers Shortbread and Baxters Food Group.

45% of Moray water bodies were in good or better condition in 2008. A breakdown by type indicates that all of Moray’s coastal waters, transitional waters and lochs are in good or better condition. 88% of groundwater bodies are in good to better condition but just 27% of Moray’s rivers were assessed as in good or better condition. Indicators of ecological condition for rivers include the status of water plants/communities, fish, insects and other invertebrates, levels of nutrients, oxygen, acidity, temperature, toxic pollutants, condition of the beds, banks and shores, continuity of fish migration and water flows and levels. The common pressure on Moray’s river environment is morphological alterations.

The Scottish River Basin Management Plan aims for 98% of water bodies to be at good or higher status by 2027. Improvements to Moray’s water bodies are included within the North East Scotland and North Highland Area Management Plans.

**Key Issues: Promote improvement of water bodies.**

**Climate**

Moray has a temperate maritime climate having mainly cool summers but with relatively mild winters. There is variation between the coastal areas and the Cairngorms to the south. Climate change is predicted to result in shorter drier summers, longer wetter winters and an increased frequency and duration of heavy rain events and storms. This has potential to increase flood events across Moray.

Climate change is a primary policy in the Moray Local Development Plan 2015. Climate Change Supplementary Guidance has been prepared and requires new developments of 10 or more houses to evidence how climate change has been taken into account in the design process and actions taken to reduce emissions.

**Key Issues: Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change.**

**Cultural Heritage**

Moray benefits from a number of important sites for cultural heritage including 1668 listed buildings, 80 Ancient Monuments, 2211 Archaeological sites, 7 Garden and Design Landscapes, 18 Conservation Areas and a 1 Historic Battlefield. Collectively this heritage contributes greatly to the Moray character and provides a sense of place. The conservation, enhancement and promotion of Moray’s built heritage are therefore important.

**Key Issue: Safeguard Moray’s cultural heritage.**

## Appendix 5 - Key Supporting Statements Assessment Matrices

### Increased accessibility and intensification of use

### This matrix considers the environmental impact associated with improving access to woodlands and forests in Moray and attracting more local people and visitors to use our woodlands and forests. This includes encouraging long distance cycle routes, developing and expanding Moray’s off-road trails, creating active travel connections between Moray’s trails and supporting and encouraging links into the Cairngorms National Park. As well as encouraging the increased use of woodlands for health and wellbeing and outdoor learning.

| **Objective** | Questions | **Long/Short Term.**  **Permanent / temporary** | **Scale-local /trans-boundary /cumulative** | **Env Impact** | **Comments** | **Safeguarding / mitigation** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1.To improve air quality within the Moray Council area | Will it help to comply with air quality standards by minimising/reducing air pollution? |  |  | O | Potential to increase car usage to access woodlands. The increase in numbers is not considered significant enough to impact upon air quality. There are no air quality management areas or identified air quality issues in Moray. | None |
| 2. To reduce the causes and impact of climate change | Will it contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in line with the national targets?  Will it actively seek to manage or avoid flood risk? |  |  | O | Potential to increase car usage to access woodlands. The increase in numbers is not considered significant enough to impact upon greenhouse gas emissions and needs to be balanced against increasing cycling and walking by providing high quality routes and good access. | None |
| 3.To increase energy efficiency and proportion of energy generated from renewable sources | Will it promote the use of sustainable design and construction?  Will it lead to an increased proportion of renewable energy needs being met from renewable sources?  Will energy usage be positively influenced by location and development? |  |  | N/A | There are no physical buildings proposed when considering improved access and increased numbers. This is considered in another matrix. |  |
| 4.To protect and enhance the biodiversity and landscape of Moray Council Area Including the protection and enhancement of species, habitats, geology and landform | Will it contribute to the protection and enhancement of the biodiversity in the Moray Council area?  Will it have a detrimental effect on protected species?  Will it contribute to improving or/and maintaining the favourable condition of designated sites of scientific or natural interest?  Particular attention should be paid to natura sites.  Will it contribute to achieving local, regional and national biodiversity action plan targets?  Will it have a detrimental effect on landscape character and designations? | Permanent | Local | - | Increased use of woodlands and forests could have an impact upon species and habitats.  Potential landscape impacts associated with hill tracks and mountain bike trails. These impacts can be minimised through the planning application process. | Outdoor access code.  Existing signposting in waymarked forests identifying sensitive areas.  Moray Local Development Plan Policies including  E1 – Natura Sites  E2 – Local Nature Conservation Sites and Biodiversity  E3 – Protect species  E7 – Areas of Great Landscape Value  An HRA has been prepared to accompany the strategy. |
| 5. To protect and enhance cultural heritage and diversity within the Moray Council area. | Will it protect and enhance the districts sites and features of historical, cultural and archaeological importance? | Permanent | Local | + | There are no specific proposals to assess, however there is reference to raising awareness of cultural heritage assets utilising interpretation for example WWII heritage at Lossiemouth Forest. | None |
| 6. To protect and enhance the quality of the districts ground, river and sea water systems | Will it help to prevent deterioration of the ecological status of the water environment and help to achieve good ecological status in the water environment? |  |  | ? | There are no specific proposals to assess impact. | None |
| 7.To improve soil quality and use soil in a sustainable manner | Will it protect and improve the quality of the soil? |  |  | ? | There are no specific proposals to assess impact. |  |
| 8. To promote the use of sustainable transport options | Will it improve public transport?  Will it encourage walking and cycling?  Will it reduce the need to travel by car?  Will it shorten the duration of journeys? |  |  | 0 | Potential to increase car usage to access woodlands. The increase in numbers needs to be balanced against increasing cycling and walking by providing high quality routes and good access. |  |
| 9.To ensure the prudent use of natural resources | Will it minimise the use of water?  Will it minimise the demand for raw materials?  Will it protect and enhance the use of prime agricultural land? |  |  | ? | There are no specific proposals to assess impact.  Prime agricultural land is class 1, 2 and 3.1 is safeguarded from inappropriate development | Moray Local Development Plan (MLDP) 2015  ER5 - Agriculture |
| 10. To protect, enhance and create green spaces to regenerate degrade environments | Will green spaces be promoted?  Will it result in the loss of greenspaces?  Will it make a significant contribution towards the regeneration of an area?  Will it result in further degradation of the environments? | Permanent | Local | + | Promotes connection of greenspaces by means of walking and cycling. | Outdoor access code.  Existing signposting in waymarked forests identifying sensitive areas. |
| 11. to secure a better quality of life for local people through improvements to service provision, sustaining a healthy economy with high levels of employment and improving the health and wellbeing of local people | Will it contribute to adequate access to and provision of services and leisure and recreational facilities for all including, those with mobility difficulties?  Will it help to maintain high level s of employment?  Will it help to deliver affordable housing or general market housing to a good design standard?  Will it help to maintain a healthy economy?  Ensure accessibility for all to jobs?  Encourage redevelopment of brownfield land?  Ensure the provision of employment land?  Improve access to health facilities? | Permanent | Local | ++ | Increasing accessibility to woodlands and creating good quality trails for walking and cycling promotes the health and wellbeing benefits of woodlands.  Promotes increased accessibility for all.  Utilising education and recreational opportunities in woodland which in turn creates employment opportunities. | None |

### Conclusions:

The promotion of woodlands and forests as visitor destinations with improved access and a long distance trails joining up woodlands has the potential to provide a number of health benefits and employment opportunities. There are no detailed proposals to assess impact, however woodlands in Moray are currently utilised in a responsible manner with landowners balancing access and recreation with commercial forestry and sensitive environments. There is safeguarding in place i.e. planning permission process to ensure the environmental impact is minimised.

### New Woodland Creation including spatial mapping methodology

**This matrix considers the environmental impact associated with new woodland creation and the spatial mapping methodology used to identify the preferred areas for new planting.**

| **Objective** | **Questions** | **Long/Short Term.**  **Permanent / temporary** | **Scale-local /trans-boundary /cumulative** | **Env Impact** | **Comments** | **Safeguarding / mitigation** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1.To improve air quality within the Moray Council area | Will it help to comply with air quality standards by minimising/reducing air pollution? | Permanent | Local | + | Increasing tree planting in Moray will have a positive impact on air quality and reducing air pollution. |  |
| 2. To reduce the causes and impact of climate change | Will it contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in line with the national targets?  Will it actively seek to manage or avoid flood risk? | Permanent | Local | + | Tree planting will assist in mitigating climate change and reducing emissions.  New tree planting can assist by offering opportunities for natural flood management. In order to promote this Class 3.2 agricultural land and above is upgraded to preferred status whether there is identified flood management potential. | None |
| 3.To increase energy efficiency and proportion of energy generated from renewable sources | Will it promote the use of sustainable design and construction?  Will it lead to an increased proportion of renewable energy needs being met from renewable sources?  Will energy usage be positively influenced by location and development? | Permanent | Local | + | Increased woodland coverage can help in creating and sustaining local wood fuel markets and increased uptake of local scale biomass projects.  Promoting high quality timber production will assist in promoting the use of local timber and sustainable construction techniques. | None |
| 4.To protect and enhance the biodiversity and landscape of Moray Council Area Including the protection and enhancement of species, habitats, geology and landform | Will it contribute to the protection and enhancement of the biodiversity in the Moray Council area?  Will it have a detrimental effect on protected species?  Will it contribute to improving or/and maintaining the favourable condition of designated sites of scientific or natural interest?  Particular attention should be paid to natura sites.  Will it contribute to achieving local, regional and national biodiversity action plan targets?  Will it have a detrimental effect on landscape character and designations? | Permanent | Local | + | Increased woodland coverage allows for habitat expansion.    Planting of native species is promoted.  Planting varied species of trees increase resilience to the impacts of tree disease and pests.  Within the methodology for the spatial mapping the following natural heritage assets have been identified as sensitive and therefore not suitable locations for new woodland planting. Local nature reserves, national nature reserves, wetlands of international importance (Ramsar), special areas of conservation, special protected areas and sites of special scientific interest. | None |
| 5. To protect and enhance cultural heritage and diversity within the Moray Council area. | Will it protect and enhance the districts sites and features of historical, cultural and archaeological importance? |  |  | O | The high level nature of the spatial mapping makes it difficult to assess impact on cultural heritage assets.  Cultural heritage assets are identified as sensitive in the mapping and therefore not suitable for tree planting. There is a 20m buffer around scheduled ancient monuments. | Identified as sensitive in spatial mapping and therefore an unlikely location for new woodland planting.  Proposals for new woodland planting will also be subject to agreement with Forestry Commission Scotland and at this stage proposals can be considered on a site for site basis. |
| 6. To protect and enhance the quality of the districts ground, river and sea water systems | Will it help to prevent deterioration of the ecological status of the water environment and help to achieve good ecological status in the water environment? |  |  | ? | The high level nature of the spatial mapping makes it difficult to assess impact on the water environment. | Proposals for new woodland planting will also be subject to agreement with Forestry Commission Scotland and at this stage proposals can be considered on a site for site basis. |
| 7.To improve soil quality and use soil in a sustainable manner | Will it protect and improve the quality of the soil? |  |  | 0 | Carbon rich soils are identified as requiring further survey work to assess the appropriateness of a specific proposal.  Prime agricultural land class 1, 2 and 3.1 is identified as sensitive and therefore not suitable for tree planting. | Proposals for new woodland planting will also be subject to agreement with Forestry Commission Scotland and at this stage proposals can be considered on a site for site basis. |
| 8. To promote the use of sustainable transport options | Will it improve public transport?  Will it encourage walking and cycling?  Will it reduce the need to travel by car?  Will it shorten the duration of journeys? | Permanent | Local | + | Connecting woodlands and creating circular and long distance routes will promote walking and cycling. Promoting woodlands in and around towns in particular can reduce car journeys as communities are close to woodlands. | None |
| 9.To ensure the prudent use of natural resources | Will it minimise the use of water?  Will it minimise the demand for raw materials?  Will it protect and enhance the use of prime agricultural land? | Permanent | Local | + | Multi use woodlands can serve various functions economic, environmental and social i.e. timber production, biodiversity value and for educational and recreational activities maximising the benefits of a natural asset.  Prime agricultural land class 1, 2 and 3.1 is identified as sensitive and therefore not suitable for tree planting. | None |
| 10. To protect, enhance and create green spaces to regenerate degrade environments | Will green spaces be promoted?  Will it result in the loss of greenspaces?  Will it make a significant contribution towards the regeneration of an area?  Will it result in further degradation of the environments? | Permanent | Local | + | New woodland creation has the potential to connecting woodlands. The protection and enhancement of existing woodlands is also promoted.  The spatial mapping promotes this opportunity by creating a 500m buffer around existing woodlands upgrading class 3.2 and above agricultural land to preferred status. | None |
| 11. to secure a better quality of life for local people through improvements to service provision, sustaining a healthy economy with high levels of employment and improving the health and wellbeing of local people | Will it contribute to adequate access to and provision of services and leisure and recreational facilities for all including, those with mobility difficulties?  Will it help to maintain high level s of employment?  Will it help to deliver affordable housing or general market housing to a good design standard?  Will it help to maintain a healthy economy?  Ensure accessibility for all to jobs?  Encourage redevelopment of brownfield land?  Ensure the provision of employment land?  Improve access to health facilities? | Permanent | Local | ++ | New woodland creation and management can create employment opportunities.  Creation of new woodlands offers the opportunity to create opportunities for recreation and leisure and the associated health and wellbeing benefits. | None |

### Conclusions:

The creation of new woodlands and protection and enhancement of existing woodlands has positive environmental benefits, including habitat expansion, biodiversity enhancement, planting varied species of trees to increase resilience to diseases and pests and the impacts of climate change. The high level and strategic nature of the spatial mapping has made it difficult to assess impact on a detailed level. There is safeguarding in place as proposals for new woodland planting must be agreed by the Forestry Commission Scotland where proposals will be considered on a site by site basis and environmental impact of planting minimised.

### Other identified development opportunities (renewable energy and affordable housing)

**This matrix assesses the environmental impacts of community owned renewable energy projects and community led affordable housing projects set within woodlands and forests.**

| **Objective** | **Questions** | **Long/Short Term.**  **Permanent / temporary** | **Scale-local /trans-boundary /cumulative** | **Env Impact** | **Comments** | **Safeguarding / mitigation** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1.To improve air quality within the Moray Council area | Will it help to comply with air quality standards by minimising/reducing air pollution? |  |  | O | The community renewable energy is of a local scale and an affordable housing pilot is anticipated to be for a limited number of units and therefore there should be no impact upon air quality.  There are no air quality management areas in Moray or any identified air quality issues. | None |
| 2. To reduce the causes and impact of climate change | Will it contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in line with the national targets?  Will it actively seek to manage or avoid flood risk? | Permanent | Local | ++ | Promotes community owned renewable energy that reduces emissions and increases energy security.  Development proposals will not be permitted in identified areas of flood risk. This will be addressed through the planning application process. | Moray Local Development Plan (MLDP) 2015  EP7 – Control of Development in Flood Risk Areas |
| 3.To increase energy efficiency and proportion of energy generated from renewable sources | Will it promote the use of sustainable design and construction?  Will it lead to an increased proportion of renewable energy needs being met from renewable sources?  Will energy usage be positively influenced by location and development? | Permanent | Local | ++ | Promotes local scale community energy generation utilising renewable sources. | None |
| 4.To protect and enhance the biodiversity and landscape of Moray Council Area Including the protection and enhancement of species, habitats, geology and landform | Will it contribute to the protection and enhancement of the biodiversity in the Moray Council area?  Will it have a detrimental effect on protected species?  Will it contribute to improving or/and maintaining the favourable condition of designated sites of scientific or natural interest?  Particular attention should be paid to natura sites.  Will it contribute to achieving local, regional and national biodiversity action plan targets?  Will it have a detrimental effect on landscape character and designations? | Permanent | Local | - | Potential for tree removal to be undertaken to accommodate proposals in particular renewable energy. Moray Council operates a compensatory planting process.  Safeguarding in places through the planning process. | Moray Local Development Plan (MLDP) 2015  E1 – Natura sites  E2 – Local Nature Conservation and Biodiversity  E3 – Protect Species  E4 – Trees and Development  ER2 – Development in Woodlands  E7 – Areas of Great Landscape Value  ER2 – Development in Woodlands |
| 5. To protect and enhance cultural heritage and diversity within the Moray Council area. | Will it protect and enhance the districts sites and features of historical, cultural and archaeological importance? |  |  | ? | There are no specific proposals to assess impact.  Safeguarding in places through the planning process. | Moray Local Development Plan (MLDP) 2015  BE1 – Scheduled Monuments and National Designations |
| 6. To protect and enhance the quality of the districts ground, river and sea water systems | Will it help to prevent deterioration of the ecological status of the water environment and help to achieve good ecological status in the water environment? |  |  | ? | There are no specific proposals to assess impact.  Safeguarding in places through the planning process. | Moray Local Development Plan (MLDP) 2015  EP6 – Waterbodies |
| 7.To improve soil quality and use soil in a sustainable manner | Will it protect and improve the quality of the soil? |  |  | - | Proposals for physical development could have a negative effect on soils unless suitable mitigation is in place.  Safeguarding in places through the planning process. | Moray Local Development Plan (MLDP) 2015  ER6 – Soil Resources |
| 8. To promote the use of sustainable transport options | Will it improve public transport?  Will it encourage walking and cycling?  Will it reduce the need to travel by car?  Will it shorten the duration of journeys? |  |  | 0 | A small pilot affordable housing project is not considered to significantly increase car travel. There are no identified locations but it would be close to services.  A small scale development of this nature will not influence public transport delivery. | None |
| 9.To ensure the prudent use of natural resources | Will it minimise the use of water?  Will it minimise the demand for raw materials?  Will it protect and enhance the use of prime agricultural land? | Permanent | Local | + | A renewable energy project will utilise natural resources and can reduce reliance on fossil fuels and increase energy security/ | None |
| 10. To protect, enhance and create green spaces to regenerate degrade environments | Will green spaces be promoted?  Will it result in the loss of greenspaces?  Will it make a significant contribution towards the regeneration of an area?  Will it result in further degradation of the environments? | Permanent | Local | \_ | Potential for tree removal to be undertaken to accommodate proposals in particular renewable energy. Moray Council operates a compensatory planting process.  Safeguarding in places through the planning process. | Moray Local Development Plan (MLDP) 2015  E4 – Trees and Development  ER2 – Development in Woodlands |
| 11. to secure a better quality of life for local people through improvements to service provision, sustaining a healthy economy with high levels of employment and improving the health and wellbeing of local people | Will it contribute to adequate access to and provision of services and leisure and recreational facilities for all including, those with mobility difficulties?  Will it help to maintain high level s of employment?  Will it help to deliver affordable housing or general market housing to a good design standard?  Will it help to maintain a healthy economy?  Ensure accessibility for all to jobs?  Encourage redevelopment of brownfield land?  Ensure the provision of employment land?  Improve access to health facilities? | Permanent | Local | ++ | Renewable energy and affordable housing provision has the potential to create employment opportunities and generate income for communities.  Potential to aid in the delivery of affordable housing utilising local timber. | None |

### Conclusions:

The development of community energy projects and affordable housing has benefits in terms of addressing climate change, energy security and creating employment and income generation for communities. Given there is no specific location for projects it is difficult to assess the environmental impact , there is safeguarding in place as proposals will be subject to the planning process and will need to comply with policies to protect the environment. In particular where tree removal is proposed there is a requirement to provide compensatory planting.

### Identified tourism and recreation opportunities in woodlands

**This matrix assesses the environmental impact of developing new tourism accommodation including glamping and hutting and expanding existing accommodation within woodlands and forests. Promoting locations such as Culbin Forest as family cycling destination**

| **Objective** | **Questions** | **Long/Short Term.**  **Permanent / temporary** | **Scale-local /trans-boundary /cumulative** | **Env Impact** | **Comments** | **Safeguarding / mitigation** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1.To improve air quality within the Moray Council area | Will it help to comply with air quality standards by minimising/reducing air pollution? |  |  | O | Potential to increase car usage to access woodlands. The increase in numbers is not considered significant enough to impact upon air quality. There are no air quality management areas or identified air quality issues in Moray. | None |
| 2. To reduce the causes and impact of climate change | Will it contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in line with the national targets?  Will it actively seek to manage or avoid flood risk? | Permanent | Local | + | Buildings should be designed to be energy efficient and developments should demonstrate actions taken to address climate change and reduce emissions.  Development will not be permitted in areas of identified flood risk. | Moray Local Development Plan (MLDP) 2015  PP2 – Climate Change and Climate Change Supplementary Guidance  EP7 – Control of Development in Flood Risk Areas  Building Standards Regulations |
| 3.To increase energy efficiency and proportion of energy generated from renewable sources | Will it promote the use of sustainable design and construction?  Will it lead to an increased proportion of renewable energy needs being met from renewable sources?  Will energy usage be positively influenced by location and development? | Permanent | Local | + | Sustainable construction techniques and the use of local timber are promoted. | None |
| 4.To protect and enhance the biodiversity and landscape of Moray Council Area Including the protection and enhancement of species, habitats, geology and landform | Will it contribute to the protection and enhancement of the biodiversity in the Moray Council area?  Will it have a detrimental effect on protected species?  Will it contribute to improving or/and maintaining the favourable condition of designated sites of scientific or natural interest?  Particular attention should be paid to natura sites.  Will it contribute to achieving local, regional and national biodiversity action plan targets?  Will it have a detrimental effect on landscape character and designations? | Permanent | Local | - | Potential for tree removal to be undertaken to accommodate proposals. Moray Council operates a compensatory planting process. | Outdoor access code.  Existing signposting in waymarked forests identifying sensitive areas.  Moray Local Development Plan (MLDP) 2015  E1 – Natura sites  E2 – Local Nature Conservation and Biodiversity  E3 – Protect Species  E4 – Trees and Development  ER2 – Development in Woodlands  E7 – Areas of Great Landscape Value  ER2 – Development in Woodlands |
| 5. To protect and enhance cultural heritage and diversity within the Moray Council area. | Will it protect and enhance the districts sites and features of historical, cultural and archaeological importance? |  |  | ? | There are no specific proposals to assess impact.  Safeguarding in places through the planning process. | Moray Local Development Plan (MLDP) 2015  BE1 – Scheduled Monuments and National Designations |
| 6. To protect and enhance the quality of the districts ground, river and sea water systems | Will it help to prevent deterioration of the ecological status of the water environment and help to achieve good ecological status in the water environment? |  |  | ? | There are no specific proposals to assess impact.  Safeguarding in places through the planning process. | Moray Local Development Plan (MLDP) 2015  EP6 – Waterbodies |
| 7.To improve soil quality and use soil in a sustainable manner | Will it protect and improve the quality of the soil? |  |  | ? | There are no specific proposals to assess impact.  Safeguarding in places through the planning process. | Moray Local Development Plan (MLDP) 2015  ER6 – Soil Resources |
| 8. To promote the use of sustainable transport options | Will it improve public transport?  Will it encourage walking and cycling?  Will it reduce the need to travel by car?  Will it shorten the duration of journeys? | Permanent | Local | 0 | Improved tourism offer will lead to an increase in the use of cars to access woodlands. The level of increased car use is not likely to be significant and needs to be balanced against health and wellbeing benefits associated with increased levels of cycling, walking and other recreational activities in woodlands.  Visitors will utilise woodlands for walking and cycling and improved tourism facilities increases the opportunity for holidaying more locally.  It is unlikely that there will be a significant increase in the number of visitors to improve public transport infrastructure. | None |
| 9.To ensure the prudent use of natural resources | Will it minimise the use of water?  Will it minimise the demand for raw materials?  Will it protect and enhance the use of prime agricultural land? |  |  | 0 | The use of local timber in new buildings is promoted.  There are no specific proposals to assess impact.  Safeguarding in places through the planning process. | Moray Local Development Plan (MLDP) 2015  PP2 – Climate Change and Climate Change Supplementary Guidance.  ER5 - Agriculture |
| 10. To protect, enhance and create green spaces to regenerate degrade environments | Will green spaces be promoted?  Will it result in the loss of greenspaces?  Will it make a significant contribution towards the regeneration of an area?  Will it result in further degradation of the environments? | Permanent | Local | - | Potential for tree removal to be undertaken to accommodate proposals in particular renewable energy. Moray Council operates a compensatory planting process.  Safeguarding in places through the planning process | Outdoor access code.  Existing signposting in waymarked forests identifying sensitive areas.  Moray Local Development Plan (MLDP) 2015  E4 – Trees and Development  ER2 – Development in Woodlands |
| 11. to secure a better quality of life for local people through improvements to service provision, sustaining a healthy economy with high levels of employment and improving the health and wellbeing of local people | Will it contribute to adequate access to and provision of services and leisure and recreational facilities for all including, those with mobility difficulties?  Will it help to maintain high level s of employment?  Will it help to deliver affordable housing or general market housing to a good design standard?  Will it help to maintain a healthy economy?  Ensure accessibility for all to jobs?  Encourage redevelopment of brownfield land?  Ensure the provision of employment land?  Improve access to health facilities? | Permanent | Local | + | Improved tourism offer will create employment opportunities and diversify the economy.  Providing facilities and improving access to all will have health and wellbeing benefits. | None |

### Conclusions:

Improving Moray’s tourism offer by creating accommodation and recreational facilities in woodland settings has the potential to increase car journeys. This is however balanced against the health and wellbeing benefits of assisting in making communities Moray active and encouraging walking, cycling and other recreational pursuits. Tourism opportunities can help in creating new jobs and diversifying the economy of Moray. The planning process will ensure that environmental considerations are taken account of and development is located in the least environmentally sensitive locations.

**Environmental Quality of Woodlands**

**This matrix considers the environmental impact associated with new woodland creation that is resilient to climate change, woodlands that restore, maintain and enhance biodiversity through habitat networks and the protection and enhancement of existing and future woodlands including promoting practices that protects and enhances environmental quality and encouraging compliance with the UK Forestry Standard.**

| **Objective** | **Questions** | **Long/Short Term.**  **Permanent / temporary** | **Scale-local /trans-boundary /cumulative** | **Env Impact** | **Comments** | **Safeguarding / mitigation** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1.To improve air quality within the Moray Council area | Will it help to comply with air quality standards by minimising/reducing air pollution? | Permanent | Local | + | Increasing tree planting and sustainably managing existing forests and woodlands will have a positive impact on air quality and reducing air pollution. | None |
| 2. To reduce the causes and impact of climate change | Will it contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in line with the national targets?  Will it actively seek to manage or avoid flood risk? | Permanent | Local | + | Tree planting will assist in mitigating climate change by reducing emissions.  Promoting the enhancement and protection of existing and future woodlands and forests alongside new tree planting can offer opportunities for natural flood management. | None |
| 3.To increase energy efficiency and proportion of energy generated from renewable sources | Will it promote the use of sustainable design and construction?  Will it lead to an increased proportion of renewable energy needs being met from renewable sources?  Will energy usage be positively influenced by location and development? | Permanent | Local | + | Increasing woodland coverage can help in creating and sustaining local wood fuel markets and increased uptake of local scale biomass projects.  Promoting high quality timber production through encouraging the UK Forestry Standard and high environmental quality practices will assist in further developing the use of local timber and its use sustainable construction techniques. | None |
| 4.To protect and enhance the biodiversity and landscape of Moray Council Area Including the protection and enhancement of species, habitats, geology and landform | Will it contribute to the protection and enhancement of the biodiversity in the Moray Council area?  Will it have a detrimental effect on protected species?  Will it contribute to improving or/and maintaining the favourable condition of designated sites of scientific or natural interest?  Particular attention should be paid to natura sites.  Will it contribute to achieving local, regional and national biodiversity action plan targets?  Will it have a detrimental effect on landscape character and designations? | Permanent | Local | + | Promotion of compliance with the UK Forestry Standard and practices to protect and enhance forests and woodlands will have a positive impact on habitats, species and biodiversity.  Increased woodland coverage allows for habitat expansion and opportunities to enhance biodiversity.    Planting of native species is adjacent to existing native species is encouraged within the strategy to create habitat connectivity and the creation of green corridors.  Planting varied species of trees increase resilience to the impacts of tree disease and pests. | None |
| 5. To protect and enhance cultural heritage and diversity within the Moray Council area. | Will it protect and enhance the districts sites and features of historical, cultural and archaeological importance? |  |  | O | To minimise the potential impact on cultural heritage as a result of new woodland creation, cultural heritage assets are identified as sensitive in the mapping and therefore not suitable for tree planting.  There is a 20 m buffer around scheduled ancient monuments. | Identified as sensitive in spatial mapping and therefore an unlikely location for new woodland planting.  Proposals for new woodland planting will also be subject to agreement with Forestry Commission Scotland and at this stage proposals can be considered on a site for site basis. |
| 6. To protect and enhance the quality of the districts ground, river and sea water systems | Will it help to prevent deterioration of the ecological status of the water environment and help to achieve good ecological status in the water environment? | Permanent | Local | + | Promotion of compliance with the UK Forestry Standard and adherence to practices that protect and enhance environmental quality should contribute to safeguarding the water environment from negative impacts. | Proposals for new woodland planting will also be subject to agreement with Forestry Commission Scotland and at this stage proposals can be considered on a site for site basis. |
| 7.To improve soil quality and use soil in a sustainable manner | Will it protect and improve the quality of the soil? |  |  | 0 | Carbon rich soils are identified as requiring further survey work to assess the appropriateness of a specific proposal.  Prime agricultural land class 1, 2 and 3.1 are identified as sensitive and therefore not suitable for tree planting. | Proposals for new woodland planting will also be subject to agreement with Forestry Commission Scotland and at this stage proposals can be considered on a site for site basis. |
| 8. To promote the use of sustainable transport options | Will it improve public transport?  Will it encourage walking and cycling?  Will it reduce the need to travel by car?  Will it shorten the duration of journeys? | Permanent | Local | + | Connecting woodlands in combination with creating circular and long distance routes will promote walking and cycling.  Promoting, protecting and enhancing woodlands in and around towns in particular can reduce car journeys as communities are close to woodlands. | None |
| 9.To ensure the prudent use of natural resources | Will it minimise the use of water?  Will it minimise the demand for raw materials?  Will it protect and enhance the use of prime agricultural land? | Permanent | Local | + | Multi use woodlands can serve various functions economic, environmental and social i.e. timber production, biodiversity value and for educational and recreational activities maximising the benefits of a natural asset.  Prime agricultural land class 1, 2 and 3.1 are identified as sensitive and therefore not suitable for tree planting. | None |
| 10. To protect, enhance and create green spaces to regenerate degrade environments | Will green spaces be promoted?  Will it result in the loss of greenspaces?  Will it make a significant contribution towards the regeneration of an area?  Will it result in further degradation of the environments? | Permanent | Local | + | New woodland creation has the potential to connecting woodlands. The protection and enhancement of existing woodlands is also promoted to improve the condition of existing woodlands. | None |
| 11. to secure a better quality of life for local people through improvements to service provision, sustaining a healthy economy with high levels of employment and improving the health and wellbeing of local people | Will it contribute to adequate access to and provision of services and leisure and recreational facilities for all including, those with mobility difficulties?  Will it help to maintain high level s of employment?  Will it help to deliver affordable housing or general market housing to a good design standard?  Will it help to maintain a healthy economy?  Ensure accessibility for all to jobs?  Encourage redevelopment of brownfield land?  Ensure the provision of employment land?  Improve access to health facilities? | Permanent | Local | ++ | New woodland creation and the ongoing management of existing woodlands can create employment opportunities.  Creation of new woodlands and enhancement of existing woodlands and forests offers the opportunity to create opportunities for recreation and leisure and the associated health and wellbeing benefits. | None |

**Conclusions:**

The creation of new woodlands and protection and enhancement of existing woodlands has positive environmental benefits, including habitat expansion, biodiversity enhancement, planting varied species of trees to increase resilience to diseases and pests and the impacts of climate change. Promoting compliance with the UK Forestry Standard and adherence to practices to protect and enhance environmental quality of woodlands offers significant environmental benefits. Woodland restoration and enhancement alongside new planting also offers up the opportunity for natural flood management. Given the strategic nature of the strategy, it is not possible to consider the impact on a detailed level however, there is safeguarding in place as proposals for new woodland planting must be agreed by the Forestry Commission Scotland where proposals will be considered on a site by site basis and the environmental impact of planting minimised.

**Strategy Vision**

**This matrix considers the environmental impact associated with the draft strategy vision “Moray has a network of multi-benefit sustainably managed woodlands that produce high quality timber to support jobs, attract visitors, provide educational and recreational opportunities and contribute to the health and wellbeing of our communities.”**

| **Objective** | **Questions** | **Long/Short Term.**  **Permanent / temporary** | **Scale-local /trans-boundary /cumulative** | **Env Impact** | **Comments** | **Safeguarding / mitigation** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1.To improve air quality within the Moray Council area | Will it help to comply with air quality standards by minimising/reducing air pollution? | Permanent | Local | 0 | There is no specific reference to air quality within the vision. Although the benefit of promoting new woodland creation which is alluded to in the reference to a network of multi-benefit sustainably managed woodlands would contribute to improving air quality. This needs to be balanced against increasing tourist and recreational use which may increase car journeys. It is not considered the increase in car use will have a significant impact on air quality.  There are no identified air quality issues or designated air quality management areas. | None |
| 2. To reduce the causes and impact of climate change | Will it contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in line with the national targets?  Will it actively seek to manage or avoid flood risk? | Permanent | Local | + | Promoting sustainably managed forests is considered to include increasing resilience to climate change and opportunities for natural flood management are promote within the strategy.  Increasing tourist and recreational use may increase car journeys. It is not considered the increase in car use will be significant so as to significantly increase emissions and will have to be balanced against increased walking and cycling.  New woodland creation  will contribute to reducing emissions | None |
| 3.To increase energy efficiency and proportion of energy generated from renewable sources | Will it promote the use of sustainable design and construction?  Will it lead to an increased proportion of renewable energy needs being met from renewable sources?  Will energy usage be positively influenced by location and development? | Permanent | Local | + | Producing high quality timber will assist in creating demand for locally grown timber for the construction industry. There is considered to be potential to create local jobs in sustainable construction and renewable energy such as local scale biomass. | None |
| 4.To protect and enhance the biodiversity and landscape of Moray Council Area Including the protection and enhancement of species, habitats, geology and landform | Will it contribute to the protection and enhancement of the biodiversity in the Moray Council area?  Will it have a detrimental effect on protected species?  Will it contribute to improving or/and maintaining the favourable condition of designated sites of scientific or natural interest?  Particular attention should be paid to Natura sites.  Will it contribute to achieving local, regional and national biodiversity action plan targets?  Will it have a detrimental effect on landscape character and designations? | Permanent | Local | + | Promoting sustainably managed forests and woodlands will impact positively on biodiversity. The vision references a network of woodlands which would create habitats connectivity and green corridors this will be beneficial in terms of species and biodiversity. | None |
| 5. To protect and enhance cultural heritage and diversity within the Moray Council area. | Will it protect and enhance the districts sites and features of historical, cultural and archaeological importance? |  |  | N/A | There is no specific reference to cultural heritage within the vision itself. Cultural heritage will however have a role in attracting visitors to woodlands i.e. WWII heritage at Lossiemouth forest. |  |
| 6. To protect and enhance the quality of the districts ground, river and sea water systems | Will it help to prevent deterioration of the ecological status of the water environment and help to achieve good ecological status in the water environment? |  |  | ? | There is no specific reference to the water environment within the vision.    Sustainably managed forests by their very nature will have taken account of environmental sensitivities such as air, water and soil to minimise any negative impacts. Given the high level nature of the vision it is difficult to assess impact. |  |
| 7.To improve soil quality and use soil in a sustainable manner | Will it protect and improve the quality of the soil? |  |  | ? | There is no specific reference to the water environment within the vision.  Sustainably managed forests by their very nature will have taken account of environmental sensitivities such as air, water and soil to minimise any negative impacts. Given the high level nature of the vision it is difficult to assess impact. |  |
| 8. To promote the use of sustainable transport options | Will it improve public transport?  Will it encourage walking and cycling?  Will it reduce the need to travel by car?  Will it shorten the duration of journeys? | Permanent | Local | 0 | Attracting visitors and providing educational and recreational opportunities will result in increasing car journeys to woodlands. It is not anticipated to result in significant volumes of visitors.  This needs to be balanced against increasing cycling and walking within woodlands especially those close to towns. Increasing tourism provision also offers the opportunity to holiday more locally.  It is unlikely the level of usage is sufficient to result in improvements to public transport. | None |
| 9.To ensure the prudent use of natural resources | Will it minimise the use of water?  Will it minimise the demand for raw materials?  Will it protect and enhance the use of prime agricultural land? | Permanent | Local | + | The promotion of high quality timber is intended to continue to develop a demand for locally grown timber.  The vision makes reference to sustainably managed woodlands and is considered to extend to natural resources. Prime agricultural land class 1, 2 & 3.1 is identified as sensitive and therefore not a suitable location for new woodland creation. | None |
| 10. To protect, enhance and create green spaces to regenerate degrade environments | Will green spaces be promoted?  Will it result in the loss of greenspaces?  Will it make a significant contribution towards the regeneration of an area?  Will it result in further degradation of the environments? | Permanent | Local | + | Sustainably managed woodlands that deliver multi-benefits will need to be managed and maintained and in doing to protected and enhanced. The vision of the strategy is to create high quality woodlands that will function as attractive green spaces that are well used and maintained. | None |
| 11. to secure a better quality of life for local people through improvements to service provision, sustaining a healthy economy with high levels of employment and improving the health and wellbeing of local people | Will it contribute to adequate access to and provision of services and leisure and recreational facilities for all including, those with mobility difficulties?  Will it help to maintain high level s of employment?  Will it help to deliver affordable housing or general market housing to a good design standard?  Will it help to maintain a healthy economy?  Ensure accessibility for all to jobs?  Encourage redevelopment of brownfield land?  Ensure the provision of employment land?  Improve access to health facilities? | Permanent | Local | ++ | The multi-benefit woodlands referenced within the vision are intended to serve a number of functions including promoting active woodlands for recreational activities and the associated health benefits related to this. Woodlands can also be utilised for educational and outdoor learning activities. There are also economic opportunities related to tourism and recreation, renewable energy and affordable housing. | None |

**Conclusions:**

The vision set out within the strategy is formulated to encapsulate the key aims of the strategy and is a high level statement. There is no specific reference to the environment within the vision, however in creating a network of sustainably managed woodlands that provide high quality timber, attract visitors and provide educational, recreational, tourism and health and wellbeing opportunities, the protection and enhancement of the environment will be an important element in achieving the vision. It has proven difficult to assess the impact of the vision and no safeguarding or mitigation has been identified due to the high level nature of the vision. Overall it is considered the vision will have an environmentally positive impact.

## Appendix 6 – Consultation Responses

**Comments from Consultation Authorities on the Scoping Report**

**Table 13 Consultation Authorities Responses**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Consultation Authority | Issue Raised | Comment | Action |
| Scottish Natural Heritage | Scope and Level of Detail | Agree with the scope and level of detail to be included in the environmental report. | Noted |
| Scottish Natural Heritage | Consultation Period for Environmental Report | Note the proposed consultation period of 6 weeks and are content with that. | Noted |
| Historic Environment Scotland | Scope and Level of Detail | Have no detailed comments at the point but note that the historic environment has been scoped into the assessment. Content to agree this. | Noted |
| Historic Environment Scotland | Consultation Period for Environmental Report | Note the proposed consultation period of 6 weeks and are content with that. | Noted |
| Scottish Environment Protection Agency | Alternatives | Note that alternatives outlined which relate to different approaches to be taken with the overall strategy. Query whether alternative approaches to individual themes or actions within the strategy were considered. This should also be assessed in the Environmental Report. | The alternatives considered related only to the overall strategy. The identified themes and key opportunities were identified following stakeholder engagement and steering group set up to oversee the preparation of the strategy. No alternative approaches to the individual themes or opportunities were proposed. |
| Scottish Environment Protection Agency | Scoping and Level of Detail | Expect all aspects of the strategy that could have significant effects to be assessed. | All significant environmental effects will be scoped in, whether positive or negative impacts have been identified. |
| Scottish Environment Protection Agency | Consultation Period | Content with the proposed 6 week consultation. | Noted |