# Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report

Step 1: Details of the Plan

* 1. Please provide the Name of the Responsible Authority:

Falkirk Council

* 1. Please state the Title of the Plan:

Falkirk Council: Active Travel Strategy

1.3 Please specify what prompted the Plan:
(e.g. a legislative, regulatory or administrative provision):

Legislative – Climate Change (Emissions Reductions Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019

Climate Change Act (2009) and Climate Change Bill (2019)

1.4. Please specify the Plan Subject:

(e.g. transport):

Active Travel – walking, cycling, and wheeling

1.5 Screening is required by the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005:

**1.5a If an SEA is required, as the environmental effects are likely to be significant, please State whether this Plan falls within:**
Section 5 (3) (please specify Yes or No) : Yes

Section 5 (4) (please specify Yes or No) : No

**1.5b** **If an SEA is not required, as the environmental effects are likely to be significant, please State whether this Plan falls within:**

Section 5 (3) (please specify Yes or No) : No

Section 5 (4) (please specify Yes or No) : No

1.6. Please provide contact details:

Name: Lynn Slavin

Title/Department: Transport Planning Officer

Email Address: lynn.slavin@falkirk.gov.uk

Telephone Number: 01324 504818

1.7 Please insert date: 22 July 2022

# Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

# Screening Report

Step 2: Context and Description of the Plan

* 1. Please provide details of the Context of the Plan:

The Scottish government has declared a climate emergency and has committed, through its Climate Change Act 2009, to reduce emissions year on year by 2032. This Act was updated in 2019 to commit to zero emissions by 2045.

All transport contributes to 37% of carbon emissions, with road transport contributing 67% of these emissions. In light of this, Falkirk Council have committed to producing an Active Travel Strategy (ATS); which will set out the policy direction relating to active travel.

* 1. Please provide a Description of the Plan:

Until 2021 Falkirk Council’s policy direction, on active travel, was contained within Falkirk Council’s Local Transport Strategy. Due to the climate emergency, there is more emphasis on active travel interventions to reduce the need for single occupancy car trips. The Scottish Government has increased the budgets to Local Authorities to deliver these interventions.

A decision was made by Falkirk Council to produce an Active Travel Strategy (ATS); which will set out the policy direction relating to active travel and also produce a series of active travel corridors for development. This strategy is due for publication in spring 2023.

* 1. Please specify the Key Components of the Plan:

Falkirk Councils’ forthcoming ATS will have two components.

Section One: Policy Direction

Section Two: Active travel proposals

* 1. Please specify if any of the Components of the Plan have been considered in previous SEA work:

No

* 1. In terms of your response to questions 2.3 and 2.4, please set out those components of the plan that are likely to require screening:

The active travel proposals will be subject to a SEA

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# Screening Report

Step 3: Identifying Interactions of the Plan with the Environment and Considering the Likely Significance of any Interactions

* 1. Section 3.1 Policy Components:

**Please specify which of the following Environmental Topic Areas are applicable to the Policy Components of the Plan (please specify all those which apply):**
a) Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna

b) Population and Human Health

c) Soil

d) Water

e) Air

f) Climatic Factors

g) Material Assets

h) Cultural Heritage

i) Landscape

j) Inter-Relationship Issues

* 1. .1 Please provide an Explanation of Potential Environmental Effects:

Policy Components

Policies and proposals will support a modal shift and increase access to active travel modes, which will likely result in reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and noise and air pollution from the road network. This is likely to have indirect positive effects on human health, landscape and cultural heritage.

* 1. .2 Please provide an Explanation of Significant Effects:

Active Travel Proposals

Active travel proposals could require large land take which could have both direct and indirect negative effects on biodiversity, soils, cultural heritage and landscape, depending upon their location e.g. located within local landscape areas, arable agricultural land, areas of peatland or areas with high cultural heritage value (particularly Antonine Wall and Falkirk’s conservation areas).

Both the active travel policies and proposals could present opportunities to enhance natural capital and ecological networks, through the addition of green infrastructure. Proposals may also present opportunities for positive placemaking, by generating activity and vitality, helping to define the character of schemes distinctive to the surrounding areas and the wider region. Increased connectivity provided by active travel schemes could result in more people being able to access and explore Falkirk’s unique landscape and townscape.

* 1. Section 3.2 Active Travel Proposals:

Please specify which of the following Environmental Topic Areas are applicable to the Active Travel Proposals of the Plan (please specify all those which apply):

a) Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna

b) Population and Human Health

c) Soil

d) Water

e) Air

f) Climatic Factors

g) Material Assets

h) Cultural Heritage

i) Landscape

j) Inter-Relationship Issues

* 1. .1 Please provide an Explanation of Potential of Significance:

Policy Components

The Active Travel Strategy has the potential to result in significant positive effects on the population and human health through increased opportunities to undertake active pursuits and improve health and wellbeing.

* 1. .2 Please provide an Explanation of Significant Effects:

Explanation of Significance

Depending upon the effectiveness of proposals and policies, there is potential for a considerable modal shift which could result in significant positive effects on greenhouse gas emissions and noise and air pollution.

The significance of effects on some topics such as biodiversity, cultural heritage, water, soils and landscape will be highly dependent upon the nature of the policies and proposals outlined within the Active Travel Strategy. The Strategy could result in significant positive effects through contributions to biodiversity net gain and positive placemaking but could also result in significant negative effects if large land take is required.

# Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

# Screening Report

Step 4: Statement of the Findings of the Screening

**Please provide a summary of the interactions with the environment and statement of findings of the Screening (including an outline of the likely significance of any interactions, positive or negative, and explanation of conclusion of the screening exercise):**

As outlined above, the Active Travel Strategy presents opportunities for significant positive effects on population and human health. Depending upon the effectiveness of proposals and policies, there is potential for a considerable modal shift which could result in significant positive effects on greenhouse gas emissions and noise and air pollution.

The significance of effects on some topics such as biodiversity, cultural heritage, water, soils and landscape will be highly dependent upon the nature of the policies and proposals outlined within the Active Travel Strategy.

Given the current level of uncertainty as well as the potential for significant effects, it has been determined that under Section 5(3) of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, a full SEA is required.

**When completed please email to:** SEA.gateway@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

**or post to:**The SEA Gateway
Scottish Government
Area 2H (South)
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh EH6 6QQ

# Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

# Screening Report Completion Guidance

(Please delete before submission)

A link to the SEA Guidance can be found at:
 [Strategic Environmental Assessment: Guidance](https://www.gov.scot/publications/strategic-environmental-assessment-guidance/)

**Section 1.1**

Name of the organisation that is responsible for the plan.

**Note:** The responsible Authority is any person, body or office holder exercising functions of a public Character. Where more than one authority is responsible for a plan, they should reach an agreement as to who is responsible for the SEA. 67ygfv Where an agreement cannot be reached, the Scottish Ministers can make the determination (Extract from SEA Guidance: Glossary (Page 50)).

**Section 1.2**

Title of the plan.

**Note:** The 2005 Act applies to plans which relate to matters of a public character. The term ‘plan’ within guidance also covers policy, programme and strategy (Extract from SEA Guidance: Glossary (Page 50)).

**Section 1.3**

In terms of screening, knowing why a plan is being produced is one of the key components in understanding whether the plan falls into Section 5(3) or 5(4) of the 2005 Act.

**Section 1.4**

The 2005 Act outlines the sectors as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town & country planning and land use.

**Section 1.5**

As well as briefly describing what the plan is intended to do and how it will achieve it, it is important to outline whether the plan sits within a hierarchy and its relationships with other plans and policies.

Schedule 2 part 1 of the 2005 Act details criteria relating to a plan setting a framework for projects and other activities and influencing other plans including those in a hierarchy.

**Section 2.1**

In terms of screening for likely environmental effects, knowing the context of a plan and where it will sit in a hierarchy of other plans is a key component in understanding the likely scope and remit of the plan and where the most appropriate assessment should take place. The description of the context should build on the information provided for section 1.3 and contain sufficient information to allow those reading the screening report to understand the role of the plan in the wider policy context. Brief descriptive information such the relationship of the plan with overarching policy, links with other plans, and the influence on and from overarching ambitions or objectives should be considerations. This type of information can help paint a clear screening picture and whether an SEA of the plan is suitable in the circumstances.

**Section 2.2**

The description of the plan being screened has to contain sufficient information to allow those reading the notification to understand the objectives of the plan and how the Responsible Authority aims to deliver them. This may differ between spatial plans, policy-based plans and aspirational plans (or a mix of these). The description should include:

The focus and direction of the plans – Including the ‘powers’ it will have, the direction, status and importance it may bring, the ‘targets’ it will set, the legislation it will initiate, etc.

Its spatial scope - i.e. will it be nationally, regionally or locally focused, will there be specific area, location or boundary outlined?

Its temporal scope – i.e. will it be introduced for a set period of time before the next iteration?

The individual components of the plan – Including policy areas and plan components that it will cover (e.g. the sectors covered in a plan, specific technologies that will be considered, any new restrictions to be introduced, or measures that could be considered intrinsic mitigations).

Any new powers the plan may be given or may give to other activities.

The vision, objectives and aims of the plan where these are clear.

It may also prove helpful to include other information in a summary, such as whether the plan is expected to improve or strengthen the current approach, the reason the plan is being prepared, who it would apply to and the timescale for delivery. This type of information should build upon that provided for section 1.5 and can help paint a clear picture of whether screening is suitable in the circumstances.

**Section 2.3**

Information included in this section should clearly set out the components of the plan (e.g. policy areas covered or the relevant likely sections of the plan) and allow the reader to see which components of the plan are being considered in the screening process.

**Section 2.4**

Are you confident that all significant environmental effects arising from this plan have already been covered in earlier SEA work?

Most plans sit in a wider policy hierarchy, influenced by and/or influencing other plans and policies within the hierarchy. In many cases, previous SEA work is likely to have been undertaken on other plans and policies, and these may be of relevance to the consideration of the likelihood of significant environment effects associated with the development of the plan.

These assessments may have considered components of the plan, and in some cases, there may be the possibility of screening out certain components of a plan as these have been previously assessed (e.g. through SEA of an overarching policy, or assessment of a previous plan that includes several components duplicated within the current plan). It is essential to have full confidence that components have been previously assessed, to an appropriate level, prior to its removal from further consideration. Even a small deviation from previously assessed policy, changes in the sensitivity or knowledge of environmental receptors affected, and length of time since assessment are likely to result in the need for new assessment.

Information included in this section should clearly identify the plan components and refer to the previous assessment work undertaken to demonstrate that they have been ‘captured’ in the SEA process in accordance with the requirements of the 2005 Act and the satisfaction of the Consultation Authorities.

**Section 2.5**

Based upon the content of the previous sections of 2.3 and 2.4, this section should identify the components of the plan that require screening. These components can then be taken forward into the next section of the screening process.

**Section 3.1**

Is the plan, and its components, likely to have potential interactions with the environment, either direct or indirectly?

The next step in this approach is identifying the potential for interactions of the plan with the environment. A table such as that provided could aid in identifying the likely interactions of the policy and its components against each of the environmental topic areas set out in Schedule 2 of the 2005 Act. This step is aimed at helping Responsible Authorities to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of the 2005 Act and transparency in reaching their conclusions of the screening process.

Note that the Responsible Authority should refer to and, where appropriate, address the criteria outlined within Schedule 2 of the 2005 Act in determining the likely significance of effects on the environment. Therefore, it is recommended that the Responsible Authority consider the probability, duration, frequency, reversibility, magnitude and spatial extent of any potential effects; the cumulative and transboundary nature of effects; the value and vulnerability of the area(s) likely to be affected; and risk to human health and the environment; amongst others. Further explanation of the criteria detail in Sections 1(a) – 1(e) and 2(a) – 2(g) is provided in the Scottish Government’s SEA Guidance (Section 3.3: Making a Screening Determination, Available at [**SEA Guidance Section**](http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2013/08/3355/3)).

**Please note**: The 2005 Act does not distinguish between positive and negative environmental effects and either, if significant, could trigger an SEA.

**Section 3.1.1**

Upon consideration of the previous sections, a Responsible Authority should make a finding on whether there is the likelihood of significant environmental effects associated with adoption of the plan.

The information in this section should provide a summary of the likely interactions of the plan with the environment and conclude whether the Responsible Authority consider that an SEA is required or not.

**Section 3.1.2**

If likely significant effects are identified by a Responsible Authority, then an SEA must be undertaken and the decision to do this advertised. The information presented at screening and Consultation Authority views on this can also help to inform the next stage of the SEA process (Scoping). Similarly, if no significant effects are identified a determination to that effect must be undertaken and then advertised.