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SB
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By email: sea.gateway@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Dear Mr Dean

**Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005
Clackmannanshire Council Core Paths Plan – Environmental Report**

I refer to your Environmental Report consultation submitted under the above Act in respect of the Clackmannanshire Council Core Paths Plan. This was received by SEPA via the Scottish Government SEA Gateway on 30 July 2008.

SEPA has used its Scoping consultation response of 15 January 2008 to consider the adequacy of the Environmental Report and this is used as the framework for detailed comments which can be found in Appendix 1. For convenience, these comments have been structured to reflect that of the Environmental Report. Please note, this response is in regard only to the adequacy and accuracy of the Environmental Report and any comments SEPA may have on the plan itself will be provided separately.

As the plan is finalised, Clackmannanshire Council as the Responsible Authority, will require to take account of the findings of the Environmental Report and of views expressed upon it during this consultation period. As soon as reasonably practical after the adoption of the plan, the Responsible Authority should publish a statement setting out how this has occurred. SEPA normally expects this to be in the form of an "SEA Statement" similar to that advocated in the Scottish Government SEA templates and toolkit which is available at www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/09/13104943/13. A copy of the SEA statement should be sent to the Consultation Authorities via the Scottish Government SEA Gateway on publication.

If you wish to discuss anything in this response please do not hesitate to contact me on 0131 4497296 via SEPA's SEA Gateway at sea.gateway@sepa.org.uk.

Yours sincerely,



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Appendix 1: Comments on the Environmental Report

1. General Comments

SEPA was of the opinion that, in a SEA context, the Plan was unlikely to have significant environmental effects in respect of SEPA's areas of competence: water, soil, air and climatic factors. The Responsible Authority chose to include the some of these SEA issues in the assessment as a precautionary measure and SEPA welcomes this.

Generally, SEPA considers that the Environmental Report provides an adequate assessment of the potential significant environmental effects of the Clackmannanshire Council Core Paths Plan.

2. Detailed Comments

Non-Technical Summary

SEPA considers that the non-technical summary adequately summarises the key points in the assessment.

1. Introduction; 2. Appraisal Methodology; 3. Plan context; and 4. Environmental baseline

SEPA considers that relevant background information is presented in relation to the Core Paths Plan. The Environmental Report clearly states which environmental issues are scoped into the assessment (Section 2.5) and supports the decisions with adequate justification.

SEPA welcomes the inclusion of a summary of the responses from Consultation Authorities at scoping stage (Section 2.7) and how these comments have been taken into account in the Environmental Report (Annex E).

The relationship between the Core Paths Plan and relevant policies, plans and programmes are described in detail in Appendix B and Table 3.2 summarises relevant environmental objectives and corresponding implications for the Core Paths Plan.

Section 4 provides a description of the current environmental baseline in the Clackmannanshire area and Appendix 2 provides relevant information from the draft state of the environment report. Table 4.1 describes the evolution of the environment without the implementation of the Core Paths Plan.

5. Assessment of the environmental effects and proposed mitigation

SEPA agrees with the summary of the assessment findings provided in Table 5.1 which describes as neutral the likely effects on soil and land, the water environment, air quality, climatic factors and waste from the proposals in the Core Paths Plan.

Proposed mitigation measures are described in Section 5.5 and it is considered that due to mainly the neutral impacts predicted, specific measures to mitigate these impacts are not considered necessary. SEPA notes that it is proposed that particular attention is given to flood prevention in relation to ongoing maintenance of the path network and SEPA welcomes this. SEPA also welcomes early consideration of a monitoring approach.