

Strategic Environmental Assessment

Post Adoption Statement

East Airdrie Link Road Scheme
North Lanarkshire Council

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Quality information

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background to the Scheme

- 1.1.1. The East Airdrie Link Road scheme is a significant sub-project of the Pan-Lanarkshire Orbital Transport Corridor Project. As part of Glasgow City Region City Deal, a £1.13bn infrastructure investment programme, the Pan Lanarkshire orbital transport corridor ('Pan-Lan') will create new and upgraded transport infrastructure in North Lanarkshire.
- 1.1.2. The Pan-Lanarkshire Orbital Transport Corridor Project seeks to deliver the transport infrastructure needed to improve connectivity between centres of population and employment sites in North Lanarkshire, unlocking the economic development potential of the former steelworks site of Ravenscraig.
- 1.1.3. The Pan-Lanarkshire Orbital Transport Corridor Project will provide:
- New and upgraded road infrastructure on an orbital route from the M74 at Motherwell, through the strategic economic investment site of Ravenscraig to the M8 at Eurocentral/Newhouse Industrial Estate/Chapelhall and onward past Airdrie via a new link road, to connect with the A73 to the south of Cumbernauld.
 - An improved public transport interchange at Motherwell train station, incorporating access improvements, enhanced public realm, park and ride expansion and active travel links.
 - The spine of North Lanarkshire's Active Travel Network (north/south).
- 1.1.4. AECOM has been commissioned to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of North Lanarkshire Council's emerging East Airdrie Link Road scheme.
- 1.1.5. SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the potential impacts of emerging plans and programmes, and potential alternatives in terms of key environmental (and more broadly, 'sustainability' issues). In the case of the East Airdrie Link Road Scheme an SEA was not previously carried out for the
- 1.1.6. Scheme at an emerging plan or programme level and as such this SEA has been undertaken at a scheme level to ensure the Scheme is compliant with the requirements of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005.
- 1.1.7. An environmental options assessment for the Scheme was previously carried out in line with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) guidance documents¹. In 2020, eight strategies underwent DMRB Stage 1 'Preliminary Assessment'. A DMRB Stage 2 'Route Options Assessment' assessment of five shortlisted options is currently being carried out.

¹ The full suite of Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) guidance documents can be found here: <https://www.standardsforhighways.co.uk/dmrb/>

1.2. Approach to the East Airdrie Link Road SEA

SEA Scoping

- 1.2.1. The purpose of the SEA scoping stage was to describe the environmental context, by establishing the relevant baseline information, reviewing other plans, programmes, and strategies (PPS) and identifying environmental problems and opportunities. The scoping stage was informed by environmental workshops and engagement carried out as part of the scheme development and DMRB options assessment, as described in Section 4 (Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement) of the Environmental Report.
- 1.2.2. The Scoping Report was intended to provide sufficient information about the East Airdrie Link Road Scheme and the relevant environmental baseline and PPS to allow the Consultation Authorities to provide an informed view regarding the environmental themes to be included in the SEA. The Scoping Report also provided a proposed methodology to be used for assessing these potential environmental effects.
- 1.2.3. The Scoping Report was submitted to Scotland's SEA Gateway for a statutory five-week consultation in January 2022. Section 4 (Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement) of the Environmental Report describes this and other SEA consultation requirements.
- 1.2.4. Feedback from the Consultation Authorities on the baseline, PPS and proposed methodology provided in the Scoping Report have been responded to in the Environmental Report and the responses are summarised in Appendix A 'Summary of Consultation' of the Environmental Report.

SEA Environmental Report

- 1.2.5. The East Airdrie Link Road Scheme has been developed in the context of relevant plans, policies, and strategies (PPS) from national, regional and local strategic levels in Scotland. A comprehensive review of PPS from national, regional and local strategic levels was therefore provided in Appendix B (Plans, Policies and Strategies Review) of the Environmental Report.
- 1.2.6. Section 4 (Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement) sets out details of the consultation required throughout the SEA process in line with the Scottish Government's SEA Guidance (2013). In addition a summary is provided of consultation responses received to date. As stated above Appendix A 'Summary of Consultation' includes a summary of the comments received from Consultation Authorities at scoping and how these comments have been addressed in the Environmental Report.
- 1.2.7. As the SEA has been undertaken in parallel with the wider DMRB scheme assessment, the assessment of alternatives has been aligned with the approach set out in the DMRB guidance documents. Section 5 (Development of Options) provides an outline of the reasons and assessment methodology for the selection of the Scheme Options which were considered within the Environmental Report. A description of these Scheme Options is provided in Section 6 (Description of Options)).
- 1.2.8. SEA Guidance and specific environmental theme guidance were used to carry out the environmental assessment of the Scheme in conjunction with the SEA objectives. Appendix C

(Baseline Information) of the Environmental Report provided a colour-coded scoring of each corridor option and a narrative that provided the rationale to the scoring. Due to the strategic nature of the SEA and the significant land area covered by the study, the assessment and narrative will necessarily be high-level. Section 8 (Environmental Assessment) of the Environmental Report builds on the baseline information set out in Appendix C by setting out the relevant existing environmental problems ('Key Sustainability Issues') and providing a summary of the environmental impacts and assessment of each theme.

- 1.2.9. Following the environmental assessment undertaken under each SEA theme, the mitigation, enhancement and monitoring measures will also be set out under each theme, in Appendix C, ('Design Development, Mitigation and Enhancement Recommendations') and summarised in Section 11 (SEA Mitigation and Monitoring) of the Environmental Report.

1.3. Purpose of the SEA Post Adoption Statement

- 1.3.1. The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Post Adoption Statement sets out how the findings of the SEA of the East Airdrie Link Road have been considered, and how views expressed during the consultation period have been taken into account in the consideration of issues to inform the selection of a preferred route option.
- 1.3.2. The SEA Post Adoption Statement is a statutory requirement under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 ('the Act'). The table below sets out the requirements of the Act and where they have been addressed within this document.

Table 1.1 Requirements for the SEA Post Adoption Statement

Requirements of the Act	Location in this Statement
(a) How environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme	Section 2, Table 2.1
(b) How the environmental report has been taken into account	Section 2, Table 2.1
(c) How the opinions expressed in response by each consultation authority have been taken into account	Section 3
(d) How the results of any transboundary consultations have been taken into account	Not Applicable
(e) The reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in light of the other reasonable alternatives considered	Section 4
(f) The measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme	Section 5

2. Integration of Environmental Considerations

- 2.1.1. This section of the SEA Post Adoption Statement provides an overview of where the SEA process has addressed and documented the range of environmental issues considered as appropriate at the strategic programme level.
- 2.1.2. Table 2.1 below lists the various stages and outputs of the SEA process by identifying where particular issues or comments have been considered.

Table 2.1 Integration of Environmental Considerations

Environmental Issues Considered	SEA Stage/ Output	Integration of SEA Outputs into the EALR Scheme
SEA Scoping Stage		
Review of wide range of other plans, policies, and strategies (PPS) from national, regional and local strategic levels to identify key relevant environmental policy themes.	Scoping Report Appendix B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates the policy context for the EALR Scheme. • Informed the identification of wider environmental protection objectives and issues that the Scheme should take cognisance of. • Informed the identification of key sustainability issues and the scoping in of all SEA themes.
Current and future baseline review informed by desk-based research and site visits.	Scoping Report Appendix A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informed the identification of wider environmental protection objectives and issues that the Scheme should take cognisance of. • Informed the identification of key sustainability issues and the scoping in of all SEA themes. • Informed the environmental assessment in the SEA Environmental Report and the DMRB Stage 2 Options Assessment.
Identification of 'Key Sustainability Issues' based on the 'Legislative and Policy Context' (Section 4) combined with the 'Current Baseline' and 'Future Baseline' set out in this section (Section 5)	Scoping Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informed the scoping in of all SEA themes and provided a particular focus for the Environmental Report.
Identification of 'SEA Objectives and Assessment Questions' developed based on the previously determined 'Key Sustainability Issues' and aligned with the High-Level Objectives and relevant Sub-Objectives set out in North Lanarkshire Council's Proposed Local Development Plan (LDP) SEA Environmental Report	Scoping Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informed the environmental assessment in the SEA Environmental Report and ensured alignment with the North Lanarkshire Council's Proposed Local Development Plan (LDP) SEA Environmental Report (within which the Proposed Scheme is identified).
Environmental Report Stage		
Responses to Consultation Authority feedback on SEA Scoping Report.	Environmental Report Appendix A - Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided a full record on how the Environmental Report addressed specific comments, or provides a justification as to why particular issues were not addressed.
Updated SEA methodology (including SEA questions and objectives)	Environmental Report Appendix A - Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated SEA questions and objectives following feedback on the SEA Scoping Report. • Informed the environmental assessment in the SEA Environmental Report.
Updated baseline constraints.	Environmental Report Appendix A - Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided updated baseline constraints for consideration through the SEA process following feedback on the SEA Scoping Report. • Informed the identification of key sustainability issues and the scoping in of all SEA themes. • Informed the environmental assessment in the SEA Environmental Report and the DMRB Stage 2 Options Assessment. • Reviewed and updated the baseline constraints following feedback on the SEA Environmental Report.
Updated and revisions to PPS Review.	Environmental Report Appendix A - Consultation Appendix B - PPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional range of PPS were considered and documented in the Environmental Report following Consultation Authority feedback on the SEA Scoping Report. • Demonstrates the policy context for the EALR Scheme.

Environmental Issues Considered	SEA Stage/ Output	Integration of SEA Outputs into the EALR Scheme
Assessment of environmental constraints and issues using agreed SEA Objectives and Assessment Questions.	Environmental Report Appendix C – Baseline Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlights a range of potential impacts of the proposed Scheme on environmental receptors. Reviewed and updated the assessment of environmental constraints and issues following feedback on the SEA Environmental Report.
Summary of key findings, presented by SEA theme.	Environmental Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key findings from SEA analyses, in terms of significant environmental effects and any potential benefits associated with the proposed Scheme. The SEA has found that all five possible route options would need further survey and assessment at DMRB Stage 3 to effectively mitigate the potential negative environmental effects described in the Environmental Report.
SEA Recommendations	Environmental Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SEA finds that none of the possible Scheme Options should be discounted on environmental grounds and in many instances, due to the stage of assessment and lack of design detail, it is difficult to differentiate between the possible route options and their associated environmental effects. The SEA shows that overall Options B2, B3 and B4 would result in more limited overall environmental effects and can be more easily delivered with environmental protection and enhancement as part of the project. This would also help to reduce the time required for additional iterative design and approvals, such as environmental licences.
SEA Mitigation and Monitoring	Environmental Report Section 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On implementation of the actions recommended in the Environmental Report it will be ensured that the SEA influences the future implementation of the project to minimise adverse effects and maximise opportunities for environmental enhancements. Reviewed and updated the proposed mitigation and monitoring following feedback on the SEA Environmental Report.

3. Consideration of Consultation Responses

3.1.1. Throughout each stage of the SEA process, all consultation opinions and comments received have been recorded and individually addressed. Table 3.1 below provides an overview of consultation responses received from consultees and how this has been considered in the adoption of the EALR Scheme.

Table 3.1 Summary of Consultation Responses

Consultee	Consultation Summary	How comments have been considered
Historic Environment Scotland (HES)	HES are content to agree with the findings of the Environmental Report in relation to the historic environment.	No additional consideration required.
NatureScot	NatureScot have recommended that the potential for indirect effects on Protected Areas should be considered uncertain at this stage.	The SEA Environmental Report has been updated accordingly and the updated information will be used to inform future DMRB design and assessment stages.
	NatureScot would be pleased to review and offer comment on the assessment of potential effects on these sites carried out to date if this would be helpful at this stage.	Request for further engagement at the project level has been noted for future DMRB design and assessment stages.
	NatureScot note that the overall strategy being taken forward scored least favourably in respect of minimising intrusion on the natural environment and state that of the options assessed, Option B4 appears to offer the potential for less extensive, although potentially still significant, impacts on those interests within their remit.	Comment has been noted and NatureScot will continue to be consulted throughout the DMRB design and assessment stages.
	NatureScot provided additional comments regarding baseline conditions, likely significant effects and proposed mitigation measures and monitoring.	The SEA Environmental Report and associated appendices have been updated accordingly and the updated information will be used to inform future DMRB design and assessment stages.

4. Assessment of Reasonable Alternatives

4.1.1. The SEA of the East Airdrie Link Road scheme aimed to objectively assess and compare the potential environmental impact of eight route options. These options have been assessed at various stages including through the SEA and DMRB assessment processes.

- 4.1.2. Each stage of assessment worked to progressively sift through a range of strategies/options, resulting in detailed comparative assessments. This options sifting process was informed by analyses of a range of environmental constraints within the study area, which enabled an objective assessment of the relative levels of environmental risk/ impact associated with each option.
- 4.1.3. The transparent assessment methods applied, the detailed level of engagement with the Statutory SEA Consultees and other stakeholders has enabled the SEA process to recommend Option B4 as having the most limited impact on the environment, followed closely by Options B3 and B2.

5. SEA Monitoring Framework

- 5.1.1. Part 3, Section 18(3)(f), and Section 19, of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires the Responsible Authority to identify the measures to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the Plan or Programme. SEA monitoring should enable the identification of unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage, as well as enable appropriate remedial action.
- 5.1.2. Table 11.1 of the Environmental Report provides a preliminary framework based on the design development, mitigation and enhancement recommendations in the assessment of the SEA themes presented in Appendix C (Baseline Information and Assessment) and summarised in Section 8 (Environmental Assessment).
- 5.1.3. This framework will be updated to include any additional recommendations from the supporting strategic studies that are also being progressed, including the Habitats Regulations Appraisal and Natural Capital Assessment.

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