

Post-Adoption SEA Statement – Cover Note

Responsible Authority:	Orkney Islands Council.
Title of the Plan:	Supplementary Guidance Natural Environment
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Post-adoption Statement: Key Facts

This Post-Adoption document has been prepared in accordance with Section 18 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005.

The Supplementary Guidance *Natural Environment* as adopted, along with the Final Environmental Report and Post-adoption Statement, is available on the Orkney Islands Council website at <http://www.orkney.gov.uk>. All three documents may also be inspected free of charge (or a copy obtained for a reasonable charge) from Monday to Friday between the hours of 09:00 and 17:00 at the Council Offices, School Place, Kirkwall KW15 1NY.

Post-adoption Statement: Key Facts	
Purpose of Supplementary Guidance <i>Natural Environment</i>	Supplementary Guidance <i>Natural Environment</i> provides additional policy guidance on the range of natural heritage considerations which must be considered during the determination of planning applications.
What prompted the SG?	<p>The Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006.</p> <p>The Council is required by law to prepare and keep under review a Development Plan which sets out the Council's planning policies on the use and development of land in the County. This Supplementary Guidance document provides the detail for Sections A-E of Orkney Local Development Plan Policy 9 <i>Natural Heritage and Landscape</i>.</p> <p>During the Development Plan review a boundary review has also been undertaken of the suite of Local Nature Conservation Sites and the updated information on these sites is included as Annex 1 to the SG.</p>
Subject	Town and Country Planning and Land Use
Period covered	2017-2022
Frequency of updates	Following adoption, the Supplementary Guidance will be monitored; it will be reviewed every five years and updated if necessary.
Area covered by the Plan	The administrative area of the Orkney Islands
Summary of nature / content of the Plan	<p>Supplementary Guidance <i>Natural Environment</i> comprises the following sections:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Introduction 2 Natural Environment Considerations 3 Site Appraisal and Ecological surveys 4 Good Design, Mitigation and Enhancement 5 Assessment of Planning Applications Affecting Natural Heritage Interests 6 Species Licencing Requirements
Date adopted	18 April 2017
Contact name and job title	Eileen Summers Environment Officer

Post-adoption Statement Strategic Environmental Assessment process

Supplementary Guidance *Natural Environment* (the SG) has been subject to a process of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), as required under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. This has included the following activities:

- Taking into account the views of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Scottish Natural Heritage and Historic Environment Scotland) regarding the scope and level of detail that was appropriate for the Environmental Report
- Preparing an Environmental Report on the likely significant effects on the environment of the draft SG which included consideration of:
 - the baseline data relating to the current state of the environment;
 - links between the SG and other relevant strategies, policies, plans, programmes and environmental protection objectives;
 - existing environmental problems affecting the SG;
 - the SG's likely significant effects on the environment (positive and negative);
 - measures envisaged for the prevention, reduction and offsetting of any significant adverse effects;
 - an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives chosen;
 - monitoring measures to ensure that any unforeseen environmental effects will be identified allowing for appropriate remedial action to be taken;
 - Consulting on the Environmental Report;
 - Taking into account the Environmental Report and the results of consultation in making final decisions regarding the SG; and
 - Committing to monitoring the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the SG. This will also identify any unforeseen adverse significant environmental effects and to enable taking appropriate remedial action.

Table 1: SEA progress to date

Milestone activity.	Date.
Scoping statutory consultation.	1 st June – 6 th July 2016.
Draft Supplementary Guidance Natural Environment and Environmental Report consultation.	12 October – 16 November 2016.
Supplementary Guidance Natural Environment adopted.	18 April 2017.
Post adoption statement published.	11 May 2017

How environmental considerations have been integrated into Supplementary Guidance Natural Environment

This section of the Post Adoption Statement sets out how environmental considerations have been taken into account when preparing Supplementary Guidance Natural Environment and how they have broadly influenced its shape. It provides information on how the following have been addressed in the Plan:

- Environmental issues identified by the Environmental Report
- Assessment and Mitigation
- Significant positive effects
- Significant negative effects

Environmental Issues

Table 2 below outlines the environmental issues which were identified in the Environmental Report and how these have been addressed in the preparation of Supplementary Guidance *Natural Environment*.

Table 2: Environmental Issues identified by the Environmental Report

Environmental issues highlighted by the Environmental Report	Integrated into Plan?	How integrated or reason for not being taken into account
CLIMATIC FACTORS		
<p>Certain habitats and geomorphological features help protect against coastal erosion and flood risk (coastal, fluvial and drainage) and they have an ongoing role in helping communities to adapt to future changes to the climate.</p> <p>These habitats/features are vulnerable to development.</p>	Yes.	<p>Paragraphs 2.18 explains that habitats such as coastal sand dunes, shingle banks and saltmarshes help protect against coastal erosion and flood risk and have an ongoing role in helping communities adapt to climate change and rising sea levels. It also highlights their vulnerability to disturbance.</p>
<p>Loss of, or disturbance to, peatland can cause the release of stored carbon to the atmosphere.</p>	Yes.	<p>Paragraph 2.31 explains that peatlands represent important sinks and storage areas for carbon, as well as valuable resources for water regulation and purification. It also points out that the purpose of Policy 9E is to minimise any negative impact of development on Orkney’s peat and soils and their ability to store carbon, filter and buffer pollutants and maintain resilience to high intensity rainfall events.</p> <p>Paragraph 2.33 provides a link to the Carbon and Peatland Map (2016) on the SNH website.</p> <p>Paragraph 2.34 provides a link to guidance which will assist developers when preparing a peatland management plan.</p> <p>Paragraph 2.35 provides examples of measures for the protection and restoration</p>

Environmental issues highlighted by the Environmental Report	Integrated into Plan?	How integrated or reason for not being taken into account
		of peatland that should be included in a peatland management plan.
BIODIVERSITY, FLORA AND FAUNA		
Development can lead to loss and fragmentation of natural habitat with further impacts on protected and priority species and habitats.	Yes.	<p>Section 2 Natural Environment Considerations expands on Policy 9 <i>Natural Heritage and Landscape</i> of the Orkney Local Development Plan 2017 by providing further information on how certain habitats and species and habitats are protected, e.g. through legislation and planning policy. It also highlights how, outside designated sites, certain habitats and species are identified as priorities for conservation and are protected through planning policies.</p> <p>Table 1 lists protected species that are found in Orkney, and Table 2 provides examples of development activities than may affect protected species.</p> <p>Guidance on how to protect and enhance the water environment, avoid or minimise disturbance to peat and manage wastes such as soils all seek to ensure the protection of natural habitats and the species they support.</p> <p>The suite of Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS) represents Orkney’s most significant areas of value for biodiversity, outside of the nationally and internationally designated sites. Site statements, including Phase 1 habitat maps, are provided for each site and, where development is proposed which could impact on a LNCS, this information will help inform planning decisions.</p>
Inappropriately designed and sited projects to enhance biodiversity can lead to adverse environmental effects, e.g. through the introduction of non-native species	Yes.	Paragraphs 2.41 -2.47 provide guidance relating to development and Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS). This includes a short paragraph on the legislative requirements, links to websites where further information is available, both on the effects of INNS on the natural environment and advice on their disposal.

Environmental issues highlighted by the Environmental Report	Integrated into Plan?	How integrated or reason for not being taken into account
which may have potential to be invasive.		<p>Guidance on <i>Good Design, Mitigation and Enhancement</i> is provided in Section 4 of the SG.</p> <p>Figure 3 <i>Utilising on-site opportunities to enhance development design</i> highlights a range of practical examples for on-site biodiversity enhancement.</p>
There is potential for ecological surveys to be undertaken at inappropriate times of the year, resulting in the submission of poorly informed environmental reports to support planning applications	Yes.	<p>Guidance on site appraisal and ecological survey is provided in section 3 of the SG.</p> <p>Paragraphs 3.09 – 3.12 provide guidance on the timing of ecological surveys. A calendar indicating the most appropriate times to undertake surveys for various species and habitats in Orkney is provided in Table 3.</p>
WATER		
Inappropriately designed and/or sited development can lead to negative impact upon water quality.	Yes.	<p>Paragraph 2.25 explains that the siting and design of development should be informed by the natural flow paths of water through the site. New development, including drainage systems, which would adversely impact on a water body, will generally not be supported.</p> <p>Paragraph 2.26 requires all planning proposals involving engineering activities in or adjacent to a water body, to be accompanied by sufficient information to enable a full assessment of the likely impacts of the development on the water environment.</p> <p>Paragraph 2.27 requires the installation of private waste water drainage systems to be appropriately designed and sited to maximise efficient operation and avoid</p>

Environmental issues highlighted by the Environmental Report	Integrated into Plan?	How integrated or reason for not being taken into account
		<p>causing adverse impact on the water environment.</p> <p>Paragraph 2.29 encourages the inclusion of measures to enable a reduction in water usage.</p> <p>Paragraph 2.30 encourages the establishment of development-free buffer zones between a development and water body as an effective way of helping protect the water body and its bank-side habitats. It also provides a link to further guidance on the SEPA website.</p>
SOILS		
<p>Inappropriate development and site drainage may lead to increased soil erosion.</p> <p>Clarification that planning approval is required to dispose of topsoil from development sites would be useful.</p>	Yes.	<p>Paragraph 2.32 explains that the purpose of Policy 9E Peat and Soils is to minimise any negative impact of development on peat and soils, and protect their ability to store carbon, filter and buffer pollutants and maintain resilience to high intensity rainfall events.</p> <p>Paragraph 2.36 provides guidance on how to store, transfer or dispose of excess soil resulting from a development.</p> <p>Paragraph 2.37 highlights the potential for impaction and soil sealing which can reduce its ability to regulate water storage with potential to cause flooding.</p> <p>Paragraph 2.39 requires all construction works to be undertaken according to best practice as outlined in the relevant Pollution Prevention Guideline Notes which are available on SEPA's website.</p>

Assessment and mitigation

Significant positive effects identified in the Environmental Report

Climatic factors

There is potential for moderate localised benefit, for example where measures may be undertaken to restore and protect damaged peatland, in line with guidance included in Supplementary Guidance Natural Environment.

The SG highlights some of the key benefits provided to society by the natural environment, for example the protection against coastal erosion and flood risk that is afforded by habitats such as coastal sand dunes and geomorphological features such as shingle ayres. Similarly, it emphasises the role played by peat and soils in storing carbon, regulating water storage and removing pollutants from water. The inclusion of this information in the SG will help raise awareness of these benefits and should ensure that, where there is potential for development proposals to impact on habitats and features that provide ecosystem services such as these, appropriate mitigative or enhancement measures are put in place.

Biodiversity

There is potential for moderate localised benefit, for example where biodiversity enhancement projects are undertaken, in line with the guidance and suggestions included in the SG.

Throughout the document, information is provided on ways in which development can impact on the natural environment and biodiversity. For example Table 1 lists the range of protected species that can be found in Orkney and Table 2 highlights the vulnerability of these species to certain types of development. Emphasis is given to the importance of considering the effects of a development proposal on the natural environment at an early stage and providing the appropriate level of information to support a planning application

There is potential for ecological surveys to be undertaken at inappropriate times of the year, resulting in the submission of poorly informed environmental reports to support planning applications. This issue has been addressed in the SG through the inclusion of an ecological survey calendar which outlines the appropriate timing of surveys and takes account of local variations in seasonality. Links are also provided to websites which provide more detailed guidance on survey methods.

The issue of invasive non-native species is addressed in section 2.8 where the potential for INNS to impact on the natural environment is explained, along with information on the legislative requirements and the responsibilities of developers to ensure that where INNS are found to be present on a site, they are dealt with appropriately and are not allowed to spread from the site. A link is provided to the Scottish Government's Non-Native Species Code of Practice and guidance on how to manage INNS on development sites is also included.

Section 4 provides guidance and suggestions for biodiversity enhancement projects and a range of options for biodiversity are set out in table 6. These encourage the use of appropriate native species – again this will help avoid the introduction of non-native and potentially invasive species.

The LNCS boundary review resulted in the removal of 336.29 acres of semi-improved grassland from 43 sites, as well as a further 112.54 acres of improved grassland, arable land or tall ruderals. However the procedure followed when reviewing the LNCS included checks to ensure no reduction to the overall scoring of individual sites, therefore the removal of these areas is unlikely to lead to significant adverse effects on biodiversity, flora or fauna.

Water

There is potential for moderate localised benefit, for example where enhancement projects may be carried out in line with the guidance and suggestions included in Section 4 of the SG.

Section 2.6 sets out the Council's duties in relation to the Water Framework Directive and the Water Environment and Water Services Act 2003, to protect, improve and promote the sustainable use of the water environment, as well as its purpose in ensuring that new development supports the delivery of River Basin Management Planning objectives.

The establishment of development-free buffer zones alongside waterbodies is promoted, as well as the need to ensure that private waste water treatment systems are appropriately sited and designed.

Some of the areas visited during the LNCS review were associated with small lochs and ponds and represented drier areas beyond the marshy margins, many of which are likely to be grazed on a seasonal basis. Others had no association with water bodies. The removal of areas of semi-improved grassland from Local Nature Conservation Sites is unlikely to impact significantly upon the water environment.

Soil

Effects are likely to be broadly neutral.

Changes recommended to the Local Nature Conservation Sites as a result of the boundary review are unlikely to impact upon peat or soils. None of the areas recommended for removal are underlain by peat and the LNCS designation has no influence on how they are managed for agriculture.

Geology

Effects are likely to be broadly neutral.

Changes to the Local Nature Conservation Sites as a result of the boundary review are unlikely to impact upon geology or geomorphology.

Interrelationships

Moderate benefit is likely.

Implementation of the SG is likely to lead to an increased awareness of the extent to which there is interrelationship between environmental receptors. It also provides information on the benefits provided by certain habitats and geomorphological features, perhaps most notably in their contribution towards mitigating and adapting to the effects of a changing climate and rising sea levels.

By providing information on a range of ways in which development can impact on the natural environment the SG seeks to ensure that appropriate measures can be identified to avoid or at least minimise these impacts.

Mitigation measures

Schedule 3 paragraph 7 of 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 plan or programme.”

The purpose of Supplementary Guidance *Natural Environment* is to protect the environment; assessment found that significant adverse environmental effects are unlikely to occur as a result of its implementation. There was therefore no need to identify mitigative measures.

How opinions expressed during the consultation have been taken into account

Responses received during consultation on the Scoping Report and Environmental Report associated with Supplementary Guidance *Natural Environment* are set out in Tables 3 and 4 below, along with an explanation of how these have been taken into account.

Table 3: Summary of Responses to Consultation on the Scoping Report and Action Taken

Consultee	Section of Scoping Report	Summary of comments	How the comment was taken into account in the Interim Environmental Report.
Scottish Natural Heritage	General comment	We are content with the proposed scope of the assessment and with the suggested approach.	Noted.
	Consultation period	We note that a period of at least six weeks is proposed for consultation on the Environmental Report and we are content with this proposed period.	Noted.
Scottish Environment Protection Agency	Baseline information	Please refer to section 3.1 of the baseline information which describes Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems. The correct acronym should be amended to <i>GWDTE</i> and not <i>GDTE</i> as currently stated.	Noted – Section 3.1 has been amended accordingly.
	Alternatives	We note that no alternatives have been considered when preparing the supplementary guidance. We appreciate that there may be no reasonable alternative to preparing guidance on this topic but suggest that if you are considering different ways of delivering the guidance (e.g. different priorities, different structure etc.) then these should be assessed as reasonable alternatives.	Noted.
	Scoping in / out of environmental	We are satisfied with the environmental topics scoped into this assessment in this instance. Impacts to the natural environment could positively affect local air quality and population and human health; however	Noted.

Consultee	Section of Scoping Report	Summary of comments	How the comment was taken into account in the Interim Environmental Report.
	topics	based on the plan subject areas we are satisfied that these affects will not be significant in the context of this assessment.	
	Procedure for assessing environmental effects	We support the use of SEA objectives as assessment tools as they allow a systematic, rigorous and consistent framework with which to assess environmental effects. We are content with the proposed assessment matrix and particularly welcome the commentary box labelled 'Notes'. This should fully explain the rationale behind the assessment results. It is helpful that the assessment matrix directly links the assessment result with proposed mitigation measures.	Noted.
	Mitigation and enhancement	<p>We would encourage you to use the assessment as a way to improve the environmental performance of individual aspects of the final option; hence we support proposals for enhancement of positive effects as well as mitigation of negative effects.</p> <p>We would encourage you to be very clear in the Environmental Report about mitigation measures which are proposed as a result of the assessment. These should follow the mitigation hierarchy (avoid, reduce, remedy or compensate).</p>	Noted.
	Monitoring	Although not specifically required at this stage, monitoring is a requirement of the Act and early	Noted – a table indicating proposed monitoring measures

Consultee	Section of Scoping Report	Summary of comments	How the comment was taken into account in the Interim Environmental Report.
		consideration should be given to a monitoring approach particularly in the choice of indicators. It would be helpful if the Environmental Report included a description of the measures envisaged to monitor the significant environmental effects of the plan.	has been included in the Environmental Report.
	Consultation period	We are satisfied with the proposal for a minimum 6 week consultation period for the Environmental Report.	Noted.
Historic Environment Scotland	Scope and level of detail	It is my understanding that the Supplementary Guidance: Natural Environment (the SG) will provide further detail to support Policy 9 of the Local Development Plan, and will help developers consider the way in which their proposals will affect the natural environment. Whilst you consider that there will be significant environmental effects on some SEA topics, you have scoped cultural heritage out of the assessment on the basis that significant effects are unlikely. I am content with this approach as I agree that significant effects for the historic environment are unlikely. I have no further comments to make on the scoping report.	Noted.
	Consultation period for the Environmental Report	I am content with the proposed minimum six week period for consultation on the draft SG and the Environmental Report. Please note that, for administrative purposes, Historic Environment	Noted.

Consultee	Section of Scoping Report	Summary of comments	How the comment was taken into account in the Interim Environmental Report.
		Scotland consider that the consultation period commences on receipt of the relevant documents by the SEA Gateway.	

Table 4: Summary of Responses to Consultation on the Interim Environmental Report and Action Taken

Consultee	Section of Environmental Report	Summary of comments	How the comment was taken into account in the Final Environmental Report.
Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)	General comment.	Overall, we consider the assessment of likely significant effects on the environment has been carried out satisfactorily and we agree with the findings.	Noted.
Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)	General comment.	We have reviewed the ER and consider that it provides a good overview of the assessment process and we are generally content with the result. Having considered the detailed assessment we agree that environmental effects on the aspects of the environment, in which we have an interest, are likely to be broadly neutral, with potential for moderate localised benefit.	Noted.
	Alternatives.	We welcome that the “Likely evolution of the environment without Supplementary Guidance Natural	Noted.

Consultee	Section of Environmental Report	Summary of comments	How the comment was taken into account in the Final Environmental Report.
		Environment” has been considered within the ES.	
	Methodology for assessing environmental effects and mitigation	We note that the existing draft PPA Natural Heritage, which would continue to be used in the absence of this SG <i>“includes limited guidance on water or peat and soils and does not address the issue of invasive non-native species. With further emphasis on incorporating biodiversity enhancement in new developments there is also a risk that, without adequate guidance and links to further information, inappropriately designed enhancement projects may be undertaken which could result in the introduction of non-native and potentially invasive species.”</i>	Noted.
	Monitoring	<p>Under the Climatic factors/soil on page 7 and in Table 5 it appears the SEA Objective for Climatic factors has been allocated the indicator for Soil.</p> <p>The SEA Objective given is “Promote a precautionary approach to flood risk from all sources.” however the Indicator is “Number of planning applications to develop on areas of peat identified in the national peatland map.”</p> <p>While we would agree that peatlands store water and can potentially play a role in mitigating flooding</p>	<p>Peatlands represent important sinks and storage areas for carbon, as well as valuable resources for water regulation. These are ecosystem services which relate to climatic factors.</p> <p>The monitoring table has been amended to reflect this, and the indicator <i>“Number of planning applications to develop on areas of peat</i></p>

Consultee	Section of Environmental Report	Summary of comments	How the comment was taken into account in the Final Environmental Report.
		<p>downstream we would recommend that the Indicator for the flood risk SEA objective is amended, for example “Number of planning applications to develop on areas of flood risk identified in the SEPA Flood Maps.” and a second SEA objective is added for Soil, for example protect soils from damage, which has the “Number of planning applications to develop on areas of peat identified in the national peatland map” as the indicator.</p>	<p><i>identified in the national peatland map” now relates to the SEA objective: Recognise the environmental benefits provided by soils and protect their quality and quantity.</i></p> <p>The monitoring indicator for flood risk is included in Table 7 of the Local Development Plan Post-Adoption Statement.</p>
		<p>Under “Safeguard valuable habitat from loss and fragmentation through development” the indicator is “Number of proposals approved where it has not been possible to incorporate appropriate mitigative or compensatory measures to safeguard habitats from loss and fragmentation.”</p> <p>There are limited cases where it would not be possible to incorporate <u>any</u> mitigative or compensatory measures on site. We there recommend you consider changing this indicator to also include the “Number of proposals approved where mitigative or compensatory measures have been incorporated to safeguard habitats from loss and fragmentation”. This would</p>	<p>An additional indicator has been included:</p> <p><i>“Number of proposals approved where mitigative or compensatory measures have been incorporated to safeguard habitats from loss and fragmentation”.</i></p>

Consultee	Section of Environmental Report	Summary of comments	How the comment was taken into account in the Final Environmental Report.
		enable the sets of figures to be compared to see how many proposals were on peat, how many require appropriate mitigation and if there were any where no appropriate mitigation was possible.	
		We welcome the indicator for water but recommend this could be expanded to also include protection, for example “establishing development-free buffer zones adjacent to water bodies”, by adding the following underlined wording “Number of proposals including measures to <u>protect and</u> improve the water environment.”	The indicator for water has been amended to: <i>“Number of development briefs requiring the establishment of a development-free buffer zone.”</i>
Historic Environment Scotland (HES)	General comment.	At scoping, you considered that significant effects on the historic environment were unlikely and that the historic environment should therefore be scoped out of the assessment. We were content to agree with this conclusion. We note from the Environmental Report that you did indeed scope the historic environment out of the assessment, and on this basis I have no comments to offer on the Environmental Report.	Noted.

Monitoring Programme

The purpose of monitoring is to ensure that any proposed mitigation is effective and that unexpected effects can be detected at an early stage, so that appropriate remedial action can be put in place. Over time it is expected that environmental benefits will become apparent through the trends highlighted by the monitoring programme. Monitoring will be used to provide essential information upon which to base future development policies.

In the Proposed Plan Environmental Report a set of monitoring indicators was identified which related closely to the SEA objectives for the Orkney Local Development Plan. These have since been updated, to take account of responses received during the consultation process and also to ensure that they can feasibly be monitored.

The full set of indicators is set out in Table 7 of the OLDP Post-adoption Statement and a sub-set of indicators which are relevant to Supplementary Guidance *Natural Environment* is reproduced in **Table 5** below.

SEA receptor	SEA Objective	Indicator	Data source	Monitored by:
Biodiversity.	Safeguard valuable habitat from loss and fragmentation through development.	Number of proposals approved where mitigative or compensatory measures have been incorporated to safeguard habitats from loss and fragmentation.	OIC Development & Marine Planning Section	Environmental Policy Officer
		Number of proposals approved where it has not been possible to incorporate appropriate mitigative or compensatory measures to safeguard habitats from loss and fragmentation.	OIC Development & Marine Planning Section.	Environmental Policy Officer.
	Conserve protected sites and species.	Condition of internationally & nationally designated biological natural heritage sites.	SNH website - sitelink http://gateway.snh.gov.uk/sitelink/index.jsp	Environmental Policy Officer.
		Number of proposals approved where it has not been possible to incorporate appropriate mitigative or compensatory measures to safeguard protected species.	OIC Development & Marine Planning Section.	Environmental Policy Officer.
Water.	Promote the protection and improvement of the water environment, including burns, lochs, estuaries, wetlands, coastal waters and groundwaters.	Water quality and overall status of monitored watercourses.	Scotland's Environment Web http://www.environment.scotland.gov.uk/get-interactive/data/water-body-classification/	Environmental Policy Officer.
		Number of approved development briefs requiring the establishment of a development-free buffer zone.	OIC Development & Marine Planning Section.	Environmental Policy Officer.
Soil & Climatic	Recognise the environmental	Number of proposals approved to develop on areas of peat identified in the national peatland map.	OIC Development Management Section.	Environmental Policy Officer.

factors.	benefits provided by soils and protect their quality and quantity.			
Geology.	Protect designated and undesignated sites which are recognised and valued for their geological or geomorphological importance.	Condition of nationally designated geological / geomorphological natural heritage sites.	SNH website - sitelink http://gateway.snh.gov.uk/sitelink/index.jsp	Environmental Policy Officer.

Reasons for choosing Supplementary Guidance Natural Environment 2017

Supplementary Guidance *Natural Environment* replaces the previous document Planning Policy Advice *Natural Heritage* which was published in 2012.

The Supplementary Guidance accompanies Policy 9 *Natural Heritage and Landscape* of the Orkney Local Development Plan 2017 which, in turn, reflects the current planning position of the Scottish Government as set out in Scottish Planning Policy 2014 and National Planning Framework 3.

It provides additional information on natural heritage designations, protected species, the wider biodiversity and geodiversity, the water environment, peat and soils and aims to help planning stakeholders fully consider the wildlife and environmental implications of proposals which require planning permission.

The SEA process has informed preparation of the Supplementary Guidance by identifying gaps in the previously available planning advice and also suggesting a number of policy areas where additional guidance and information would be useful, both to enable development-related environmental impacts to be avoided or minimised, and to encourage the incorporation of appropriate biodiversity enhancement measures into new development projects.

The Supplementary Guidance was assessed against a subset of the SEA objectives which were established for assessment of the Local Development Plan and it was found to demonstrate a high level of compatibility. Throughout the SEA process the Consultation Authorities have confirmed their agreement with these objectives and the overall assessment approach adopted.

Supplementary Guidance *Natural Environment* was approved by Orkney Islands Council on 9th March 2017 and formally adopted on 18 April 2017.