

Scottish business urged to have it's say on SEPA's next nine sector plans

23 January 2019

Scottish businesses across agriculture, manufacturing and infrastructure are being urged to have their say on nine 'sector plans' currently out for consultation by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA).

- Scottish business urged to have its say on SEPA's next nine sector plans.
- Plans remain open for consultation across agriculture, manufacturing and infrastructure.
- 16 sector plans will be launched this year in line with the regulator's One Planet Prosperity strategy.

In response to mounting scientific evidence about climate change, environmental impact and resource scarcity, the sector plans set out a range of actions to help all regulated businesses meet – and go beyond – their compliance obligations.

The sector plans set out how SEPA will ensure all businesses comply with environmental laws. They also set out series of 'beyond compliance' goals to help organisations recognise the economic opportunity of sustainable business models by reducing the amount of materials, energy and water used across the sectors, promote innovation and reduce overall impact.

"We are transforming our regulatory approach in order to create a world-class environment protection agency fit for the challenges of tomorrow, and sector planning will drive this new approach. Our regulatory delivery will shift from working in the different regulatory regimes to being grounded in working across whole sectors," says SEPA Chief Executive Terry A'Hearn.

"Full compliance with environmental regulations will not, by itself deliver the transformational change required to secure our One Planet Prosperity objectives," Mr A'Hearn adds. "Our sector plans need to unlock the potential for businesses to gain strengths in resource efficiency and environmental innovation that will help them to succeed in their markets."

The nine plans, which opened for consultation on 21st December and close on 15th February are:

- Chemicals manufacturing
- Crop production
- Dairy processing
- Dairy production
- Housing
- Leather
- Nuclear power generation and decommissioning

- Strategic infrastructure (transport and utilities)
- Water supply and waste water

Getting feedback from our communities, partners and stakeholders is important and your feedback is critical to the success of our sector planning approach. Everyone with an interest in the environment and involved in these sectors is encouraged to visit our dedicated sector webpage, sectors.sepa.org.uk.

Dairy and crops

Dairy production is an important sector for Scotland and dairy processing turns Scottish farm produce into products that are sold in domestic and export markets. Alongside crops, these sector plans focus on the agricultural and land management community and their supply chains.

Tackling the compliance issues across the sectors, the key areas being diffuse pollution, the plans set out a series of actions which SEPA will progress including understanding the causes pathways of diffuse pollution and applying increasing scrutiny, prescription, fees and the use of enforcement and monetary penalties for those who fail to comply.

Opportunities for beyond compliance activities that would benefit the sectors and the environment will also be realised through implanting the plans and SEPA working with the sector to use improved technologies that increase precision and drive efficiencies and sharing best practice and techniques by working with partners and industry bodies to develop guidance and facilitate stakeholder engagement.

Strategic infrastructure, housing, water and nuclear

These plans will support a Scotland that is well connected, resilient and successful. Encouraging investment in innovation that leads to modern infrastructure a strong economy is built on while ensuring that development is compliant with environmental legislation. With around 80% of Scotland's current *housing* stock planned to be in use by 2050, *delivering home improvements which use materials sourced from a responsible supply chain and which improve environmental performance* will be key.

Across the strategic infrastructure (transport and utilities), housing, water supply and waste water the management of waste is a common area of non-compliance and this plan sets out how SEPA will tackle this, and other compliance issues. The agency recognises that to achieve beyond compliance behaviour success will come from working closely with the other regulators and agencies in these sectors and harnessing the influence it has in the boardroom as well as day to day regulation.

SEPA regulates the nuclear power generation and decommissioning sector for its radioactive substances activities involving the management of radioactive waste. Nuclear power continues to play a key role in providing low-carbon energy. The sector has a good record of compliance across all the regimes SEPA regulates it under, and in 2017 achieved 100% compliance. SEPA commits in the plan to continue to have experienced staff to continue to regulate the

sector and support continued high levels of compliance.

Manufacturing

The chemicals manufacturing plans focuses on chemical and biochemical manufacturing in Scotland, from base chemical manufacture to the formulation and packaging of final products. The operation and development of chemicals manufacturing sites within larger industrial complexes, close to communities, needs to be managed so as not to harm those communities. Key issues contributing to non-compliance in 2017 were due to noise issues associated with unplanned flaring events, and associated operation and maintenance of plant due to noise and vibration issues.

Although the sector is broadly compliant, due to the nature of operations, potential impacts of any compliance issues are significant. SEPA is determined to assist the Scottish chemicals manufacturing sector to be a world-leader in producing products that serve the needs of society in ways that further drive down environment impact that also negatively impacts the communities around sites.

The leather plan also focuses on the manufacturing sector of our economy and builds innovative processes that the Scottish leather sector has already developed. It aims to improve environmental performance throughout the supply chain. Through investment activities, the sector has almost achieved excellent at all sites so the sector plan focused on unlocking beyond compliance behaviours that will realise the benefits of the circular economy and low resource use,

Beyond compliance will be sought through the use of materials, transport, energy, air quality, water use and social responsibility.

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Sector plans

SEPA is changing today, creating a world-class environment protection agency fit for the challenges of tomorrow. By moving away from the traditional site by site regulation to grounding our regulation and activities across whole sectors, we will shape our interactions with every sector and the businesses in them.

Sector plans will be at the heart of everything we do and will help regulated businesses operate successfully within the means of one planet. In every sector we regulate, we will have two simple aims.

We will ensure that:

- every regulated business fully meets their compliance obligations
- as many regulated businesses as possible will go beyond the compliance standards.

Scotch Whisky was one of three sector plans consulted on in 2018 and is the first to be launched. A draft sector plan for tyres and oil and gas

decommissioning will also soon be launched for consultation.

SEPA has launched a new, dedicated space on its website for sector plans
<https://sectors.sepa.org.uk>

News story: National Drought Group – EA Chairman’s Statement – January 2019

The National Drought Group (NDG) met on Monday 21 January, chaired by Harvey Bradshaw, Executive Director at the Environment Agency, to assess the water resource situation and actions being taken to reduce risk for summer 2019.

BGS and Heriot-Watt scientists join £20million programme to tackle threats to world oceans

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Lucky 13 in national final

Top apprentices and trainees from SRUC represent more than half the line-up at this year’s Land-based and Aquaculture Learner of the Year Awards.

Vision to revitalise River Leven

communities secures major investment

✘ 21 January 2019

A project to revitalise the River Leven in Fife as a great regional asset has received more than £300,000 in funding.

One of the first initiatives of The Leven Catchment Project has been awarded £250,000 through Sustrans Scotland's Community Links scheme and £65,000 from the Scottish Environment Protection Agency's Water Environment Fund.

The funding from Sustrans and SEPA will finance feasibility and scoping work, starting this month, for the 'Connectivity Project'. This is one of a series of smaller initiatives designed to help deliver the wider vision for the region and focuses on a 5km stretch of the river Leven at Levenmouth.

Plans include developing a series of paths to connect the isolated communities to and along the river, and unlocking opportunities on vacant and derelict land in the area.

"The River Leven catchment in mid Fife was historically home to several hundred mills and factories, with a proud population of miners and workers in manufacturing industries," explains SEPA water specialist Pauline Silverman.

"But there are serious environmental challenges in the area and the river has become a barrier between communities – disconnecting people and towns from each other. The purpose of the Leven Catchment Project is to achieve environmental improvements whilst working with key partners and communities to maximise social and economic opportunities."

Key partners in the project with SEPA so far are Fife Council, Forth Rivers Trust, Scottish Natural Heritage, Sustrans, Fife College and Scottish Water.

By 2030, the partners' goals include the region becoming a 'go to' destination and tourism becoming one of the region's key economic contributors. The vision also includes the River Leven catchment being a dynamic hub for social enterprise, youth and education, and the region having a natural environment that will support a diverse ecology and celebrate its social history.

Reconnecting people and place is a key focus of the initiative, and plans involve developing a wide range of linkages along the River Leven between the catchment communities, Loch Leven – where the river originates – and the coast.

Community Links is funded by the Scottish Government and delivered by Sustrans Scotland, the sustainable transport charity, in partnership with local authorities, statutory bodies and educational institutions for the creation of cycle network infrastructure for everyday journeys. Since 2010, the programme has funded more than 500 projects across Scotland.

Karen Ridgewell, Project Coordinator for Sustrans Scotland, said "We are very pleased to be working with SEPA and the other partners in the Leven Catchment Project to develop new links between the many communities in the area. We look forward to engaging with the local communities to help make new paths and spaces for walking, cycling, scootering and wheeling."

SEPA's remit includes improving or removing environmental pressures, including barriers to fish migration, water quality issues and physical modifications to the rivers.

The Water Environment Fund is an annual grant provided by the Scottish Government and administered by SEPA to improve the physical condition of water environments that have been damaged by historical activities. This includes financial support for removing or reducing the impact of redundant structures that are barriers to fish migration, and projects to restore natural river shape and function.

Cllr Ross Vettraino, Convener – Environment, Protective Services & Community Safety Committee at Fife Council, said: "Fife Council is delighted to be a partner on The River Leven connectivity project. This large partner project offers the Levenmouth valley area a great opportunity for positive change. Working together, we will pool resources and skills to ensure this project puts local people and the environment at its heart and that the benefits are long term.

"This feasibility stage, which looks to see how we can restore the river, create a river park with amenities and a path network that links everyone in the area, is very exciting. I look forward to seeing the opportunities offered by this stage of the project and being involved in the design and engagement programme with the local communities this summer."

Rhona McInroy, Forth Operations Manager at Scottish Natural Heritage, said: "We are proud to be part of this exciting project and look forward to working with our partners and the communities of Levenmouth to enhance the fabulous natural assets of the River Leven and surrounding area."

Alison Baker, Director of the Forth Rivers Trust said: "The River Leven is a ribbon of life through the heart of the Levenmouth area and we are delighted to be involved in this work to improve it and the wildlife it supports, for the enjoyment and benefit of local communities and people. Linking the river to local neighbourhoods will provide access for day to day use and will inspire recreational and enterprising use of the river corridor once again."

John Wincott, Environmental Services Coordinator at Fife College, said: "Fife College is delighted to be a partner in this venture, which is enabling our talented students to make use of their creative skills in a live project which benefits the environment and the local community.

"Our students' skills are wide ranging, from creative arts and video production to aerial surveying and graphic design. Those involved so far have thoroughly enjoyed the experience – many of our students, from the wider College community, live in and around the Levenmouth area, which makes the

experience even more relevant.

“This is an excellent example of partnership working where a range of organisations bring a different mix of skills and knowledge together to form exciting results. We very much look forward to being involved in further stages of this very worthwhile project.”

A Scottish Water spokeswoman said: “We are currently putting the finishing touches to a new £4 million sewer pipe to help protect the environment for the long-term in the River Leven. The 190-metre-long pipe goes into Levenmouth waste water treatment works – which serves a quarter of a million people in Fife. We are delighted to support this project to enhance and improve access to the natural assets in the area.”

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