

## **SEPA: Councilor Information Sheet**

### **Who are we:**

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) is Scotland's environmental watchdog. We aim to protect and improve Scotland's environment and human health. We do this by being an excellent environmental regulator and an effective and influential authority on the environment, limiting climate change and preparing Scotland for a sustainable future.

### **Our area of expertise within the planning system:**

We enable good development and protect Scotland's environment through the planning system by ensuring that economic development is balanced against environmental concerns. This is achieved by working in partnership with planning authorities to overcome environmental constraints and identify opportunities for improvement.

When consulted on a planning application we consider the acceptability of the development as a land use e.g. housing located on flood plains. This involves consideration of the sensitivity of the receiving environment, including adjacent land uses and potential environmental regulation. However, layout and design can also be important e.g. ensuring there is sufficient space within a site to accommodate SUDS.

When consulted on development plan policies we provide advice on whether the policy will afford sufficient environmental protection.

### **What we comment/provide advice on:**

- We provide advice to help create safe communities that are resilient to the impacts of a changing climate by commenting on **flood risk** to ensure that new development is protected and will not increase flooding elsewhere.
- We provide advice to help create sustainable communities by promoting **sustainable waste management**, and ensuring the design of developments adequately protects the **water** and **marine** environments.
- We provide advice to help create healthy communities by promoting good **air quality**, ensuring that residential amenity and sensitive receptors are protected from **noise** and **odour** (in relation to SEPA regulated processes), and risks to environment or human health from **radioactively contaminated land** are avoided.
- We also provide advice on aspects of a proposal that fall under **environmental regulation** and confirm whether or not we will be able to ensure an acceptable level of environmental and health protection (insofar, as these are relevant to our remit).

In our responses we provide clear advice as to whether or not an objection is being made in principle (e.g. the location is unacceptable) or whether or not the objection can be removed subject to design modifications or submission of additional information.

### **Links to website and web based guidance:**

We have a number of guidance notes in relation to our role and responsibilities in the planning process. Links to all these documents are available on the main page of our planning webpage at <http://www.sepa.org.uk/planning.aspx>