

Historic Environment Scotland's Properties and Collections Strategy: towards sustainable Stewardship

Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report

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1. Introduction

What is Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)?

When public bodies are preparing plans, programmes and strategies, an assessment of their effect on the environment is undertaken. The public bodies preparing plans, programmes or strategies are the ‘Responsible Authorities’ for those documents.

The purpose of SEA is to ensure that information on the environmental effects of a plan, programme or policy is gathered and made available to plan-makers and decision takers as it is prepared and implemented. The overarching aim of SEA is to provide a high level of protection for the environment, to reduce environmental impact and to enhance environmental outcomes. It also ensures that policies and proposals are informed by relevant environmental information and provides further opportunities for people to get involved in the process.

In doing so, SEA aims to:

- integrate environmental factors into plan preparation and decision-making
- improve plans and enhance environmental protection
- increase public participation in decision making
- facilitate openness and transparency

The key stages of SEA for HES’ Properties and Collections Strategy (‘the Strategy’) involve:

Stage	Activity
Screening	Determining if the Strategy is likely to have significant environmental effects and whether an SEA is required.
Scoping	Deciding on the scope and level of detail for the assessment and the consultation period. This is done in liaison with NatureScot (NS) and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA).
Assessment, mitigation & enhancement	Testing the contents of the Strategy as it is developed, identifying mitigation measures and looking at ways to enhance positive effects.
Environmental Report	Publishing an Environmental Report on the findings of the assessment and consulting on that report and the Strategy.
Adoption & monitoring	Providing information on the adopted the Strategy, how consultation comments have been considered and methods for monitoring the significant environmental effects arising from its implementation.

What is the purpose of this report?

The purpose of this report is to document the findings of our environmental assessment of the draft Strategy. In doing so it highlights the types of environmental issues that we have considered, at a strategic level, as being relevant for the actions that are likely to be brought forward. Where possible we have sought to identify the most significant effects (both positive and negative) and where relevant, suggest mitigation measures or opportunities for enhancement.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. This legislation sets out the process of undertaking SEA, from screening (where relevant) and scoping at the outset, to assessment, the preparation of an Environmental Report, and public consultation.

Background to the Strategy

In 2014 the Historic Environment (Scotland) Act 2014 created Historic Environment Scotland (HES) and placed various duties on HES for the care, protection, and promotion of Properties in Care. At this time an Estate Asset Management Project and subsequent [Asset Management Plan](#) was developed (2014-18) which broadly carried forward arrangements for their care and management for HES's predecessor organisation (Historic Scotland).

Looking ahead and against a significantly different backdrop, a new strategy has been developed to address several related objectives for the long-term care and management of these nationally important assets. The purpose of the Strategy is to:

- Demonstrate compliance with our statutory obligation under Section 3 of the Historic Environment (Scotland) Act 2014 as delegated to HES by Scottish Ministers our general functions of managing the Properties in Care including: ensuring their conservation; articulating and safeguarding their cultural significance; in providing public access for current and future generations and managing the associated commercial operations
- Set out how we deliver sustainable management and prioritise resources
- Set out how we deliver public benefit now and in the future
- Re-establish our Stewardship approaches, building resilience into asset management and innovation in our management approaches

Key drivers of the Strategy are:

- The increasing rate of climate change and resultant impacts on assets
- Substantial investment need for the HES Estate
- Increasing visitor expectations of access and experience
- The opportunities of unlocking increased benefits from the assets for people and place

For the purposes of the Scoping Report, we gave the Strategy and its outcomes the working title of "Strategy for the Properties in Care and Associated Collections of

Scottish Ministers”. The proposed title for final publication is “HES’ Properties and Collections Strategy – towards sustainable Stewardship”.

What was the process for developing the draft Strategy?

The Strategy Team was formed to gain a deeper understand the challenges and opportunities of HES Estate management, and to develop a long-term plan to address these challenges and realise opportunities.

In this regard, we shaped the Vision for the Strategy early on: ‘to increase understanding and achieve sustainable management of the Properties and Collections in our care’. This is our overarching aim and the long-term future we wish to see.

Engagement with HES colleagues began in mid-2024. Teams across the organisation took part in introductions on the need for a long-term Strategy and its potential scope, as well as workshops to explore approaches with specialists. Through this process, the Strategy Team gathered insights from colleagues involved in management and decision making for the HES Estate.

The team also led a ‘round table’ discussion with heritage asset managers in Scotland, inviting the National Trust for Scotland, the Built Environment Forum Scotland, Scottish Canals, the Church of Scotland, Archaeology Scotland, Historic Houses Association, Stirling City Heritage Trust and Scotland’s Regeneration Forum (SURF). Learning from these organisations enabled the team to understand approaches taken to address the same challenges HES faces. Understanding development and application of the Sustainable Investment Tool, developed by the sector and the Built Environment Forum Scotland, and NTS’ use of the tool in their Portfolio Review was particularly useful.

Sector dialogue continued on key challenges including climate change impacts, adaptation to built fabric and managing associated decay and loss and mitigation strategies. Partners included The National Trust, Historic England and English Heritage.

Following engagement, a Strategy outline was developed with review from Executive Leadership Team and HES Board. Further workshops were held to refine thinking in early 2025. A draft Strategy document was approved for public consultation by HES Board and the Scottish Government in September 2025.

Consultation

Your views are invited on this Environment Report.

With regard to the environmental assessment, the detailed findings and predictions for likely significant effects are set out in Annex A and summarised in Section 5. The main questions to consider are:

- **Has our environmental assessment identified the likely environmental effects of the options?**

- **Do you think there are any additional mitigation, enhancement or monitoring measures that should be considered?**
- **Do you have any other comments on the environmental assessment?**

The Environmental Report accompanies our public consultation on the Strategy. This is a 15-week public consultation taking place between October 2025 and January 2026.

The public consultation takes the form of a questionnaire and can be accessed here: <https://haveyoursay.historicenvironment.scot/comms-media/pac-strategy>

Environmental Context

What environmental information has been used to inform the assessment?

One of the early stages of the SEA process is to consider the relationship of the Strategy to other relevant policies, plans, strategies (PPS) and their environmental objectives. This allows key environmental objectives to be identified for consideration during the Strategy preparation process. It's also important to identify both the plans, programmes and strategies that will influence the Strategy and those that will be influenced by the Strategy itself. An understanding of the context and the hierarchy that the Strategy sits within is also useful for giving early thought to mitigation measures and where they may be best implemented.

Annex D contains a detailed review of the list of key plans, programmes and strategies and current legislation considered to be most directly relevant to the Properties and Collections Strategy and includes details of how those environmental objectives have been considered as part of the scoping exercise.

What existing environmental objectives have been considered?

The key environmental protection objectives identified from our review of legislation, policies, plans and strategies therefore are:

- To halt the loss of biodiversity and continue to remediate previous losses through targeted action for species and habitats
- To protect and enhance species, habitats and ecosystems
- To protect, enhance and restore landscape character, local distinctiveness and scenic value
- To protect and enhance the historic environment
- To increase awareness, understanding and enjoyment of the natural and historic environment
- To promote and encourage opportunities for people of all abilities to responsibly enjoy the countryside
- To promote sustainable development
- To reduce the exposure of sensitive receptors to poor air quality

- To protect and enhance the water environment (with a requirement to ensure that the status of all waters is protected from deterioration)
- To protect soil resources from erosion and pollution
- To reduce our contribution to climate change and be positioned to respond to the predicted effects of climate change
- To improve health and wellbeing through access (including equality of access) to good quality natural, historic and built environments.
- To recognise the need to shape places which are nurturing of positive health, wellbeing and resilience
- To make plans for local areas which meet the needs and ambitions of local people, and which give weight to the voice and views of local communities
- To ensure that Scotland's cultural heritage remains one of the main motivators for visits to Scotland

What environmental baseline information has been gathered?

In order to establish the environmental effects of the Strategy, it is necessary to understand the environmental baseline of the area that is likely to be affected. Schedule 3 of the [Environmental Assessment \(Scotland\) Act 2005](#) lists the environmental topics that should be considered in SEA. To focus the SEA, baseline information has been gathered on the environmental issues that are likely to be affected by the Strategy. Given that the assets in our Estate are located across Scotland, a national baseline has been reviewed. Annex B provides a detailed baseline, information about the environmental issues relevant to the Strategy, and baseline sources.

Approach to the Assessment

What aspects of the environment could the Strategy affect?

A key part of the scoping process in SEA is to identify whether the environmental receptors set out in Schedule 3 of the Act are likely to be affected by the Strategy. This can lead to some environmental receptors being 'scoped out' of the assessment. The scoping process helps to focus the SEA on the key significant issues.

Based on the environmental protection objectives identified above and in Annex D, an assessment was undertaken to identify the environmental topics that are likely to be affected by the Strategy. The Consultation Authorities were broadly supportive of this approach, with some specific recommendations which are detailed at Annex C.

Table 2 below sets out the scoping of SEA environmental receptors:

Table 2: Scoping in/out of environmental topics

Environmental topic	Scoped in/out	Potential issues arising from the strategy and justification for scoping in/out
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	In	Many of the Properties play an important role in supporting positive outcomes for nature. We consider that the strategic priorities and targets in the strategy may affect biodiversity, flora and fauna, but are unsure whether this is likely to be significant. Consequently, in light of the nature crisis, we propose to scope this topic into the assessment as a precautionary measure to help identify potential enhancements in relation to this topic.
Landscape (including seascapes and urban and suburban landscapes)	In	The links between cultural and natural landscapes are recognised and the potential for significant effects on the baseline condition of Scotland’s natural landscape character and scenic value will be explored. In light of this, landscape has been scoped into the assessment.
Cultural Heritage	In	The key focus of the Strategy is on cultural heritage and the long-term management of the Properties and Collections on behalf of the nation. The Strategy may identify operating models and management approaches that will influence decisions at individual sites, as well as strategically. It will also address community needs and tourism impacts and opportunities at the Properties.
Population and Human Health	In	The Strategy will provide a long-term approach for the safe management of the Properties, building on ongoing work around our High-Level Masonry Programme and our obligations for the safety of staff and visitors. The Strategy is also likely to have significant effects for population and human health through outcomes and targets which will lead to improved access to the Properties and Collections and activities relating to further interpretation and understanding of these assets and the role they have in supporting communities and places. This includes both the Properties and their associated Collections. There may also be effects on

		communities in terms of employment, volunteering and the local economy through the introduction of a values-based approach that considers social, environmental and economic benefits as well as cultural, as part of the Strategy.
Soil	Out	Although there may be some effects for soil as a result of the priorities set out in the Strategy, we do not consider these will be strategically significant. Project level detail in support of strategic priorities and outcomes will be set out in lower-level business plans. Consequently, we scoped this topic out of the assessment.
Water	Out	Although there may be some effects for water (e.g. water quality, flow, flooding or pollution) as a result of the priorities set out in the Strategy, we do not consider these will be strategically significant. Consequently, we scoped this topic out of the assessment.
Air	Out	The Strategy may affect air quality, but we do not think this is likely to be significant. Consequently, we scoped this topic out the assessment.
Climatic Factors	In	The Strategy could contribute to reducing the causes of climate change by setting targets for reduced emissions/efficiency at Properties in Care, ancillary buildings and associated infrastructure. The predicted effects of climate change are also likely to have implications for the historic environment at a strategic level particularly through coastal erosion and increased incidence of extreme weather. A climate change risk assessment has been undertaken for all PICs and the strategy will seek to take the findings of this forward in various ways.
Material Assets	In	The priorities and targets in the Strategy will affect some of Scotland's most significant tourism assets. There may also be effects from the Strategy on local places and infrastructure.

How has the Strategy been assessed?

SEA objectives were developed for each of the environmental receptors scoped into the assessment. These are supported by more detailed assessment criteria. The SEA objectives and criteria are set out in Table 3.

Table 3: SEA Objectives and Assessment Criteria

Environmental Topic	SEA Objective	How will the strategy and operating models affect...
Biodiversity	To safeguard, enhance and restore biodiversity	Habitats and green / blue networks
Cultural heritage	Safeguard and enhance the historic environment	<p>The safeguarding of designated tangible features of the historic environment</p> <p>The safeguarding of undesignated / unknown tangible features of the historic environment</p> <p>The safeguarding of intangible features of the historic environment</p> <p>Elements of the historic environment which have been identified as at risk</p> <p>The consequences of climate change for the historic environment</p> <p>The provision of skills and materials needed to safeguard the historic environment</p>
Landscape (including urban and suburban landscapes)	To safeguard and enhance the distinct identity, the diverse character and the special qualities of Scotland's landscapes as a whole	<p>The safeguarding and enhancement of natural characteristics and qualities of Scotland's landscapes</p> <p>A unified approach to managing change in landscapes</p>

Population and Human Health	<p>Promote celebration, understanding, enjoyment and access to the natural and cultural heritage</p> <p>Support healthy living and working environments</p> <p>To reduce inequalities</p>	<p>Access to the historic environment</p> <p>Understanding of the value of the historic environment</p> <p>Community involvement in decisions affecting their places and spaces</p> <p>The condition of the historic environment as a place to work and live</p>
Climatic factors	<p>Reduce the causes of climate change</p> <p>Contribute to effective adaptation to the predicted effects of climate change</p>	<p>CO2 and greenhouse gas emissions</p> <p>Effective adaptation to the effects of climate change</p>
Material assets	<p>To support high quality place making</p> <p>To support sustainable, inclusive growth</p>	<p>Management of agricultural and forestry assets in our care</p> <p>Management of infrastructure in our care</p> <p>Management of infrastructure affected by our assets</p> <p>Creation of high-quality places and spaces</p> <p>The contribution of the historic environment to tourism in Scotland</p> <p>The contribution of the historic environment to local services, economies and work opportunities</p>

How were alternatives identified and assessed?

The preferred approach to the strategy has been assessed in terms of the strategic environmental impacts. This includes the following sections:

- The preferred Vision statement
- The sustainable Stewardship overarching aim
- The eight strategic objectives of sustainable Stewardship

We also assessed the environmental effects of reasonable alternatives. These are:

- To continue running the Estate following current approaches to Stewardship and asset management
- To develop a more commercially driven approach to Estate management, focusing on profitability

The assessments for each approach have considered whether effects would be positive or negative and short, medium, or long term. Once each option had been assessed, the findings were brought together to identify whether preferred elements of the Strategy are likely to generate cumulative effects on any of the environmental receptors scoped into the assessment.

How has the SEA helped to avoid or minimise negative environmental impacts and enhance positive effects?

Environmental considerations have informed the development of the draft Strategy from the start. The findings of this SEA will be used to inform the final iteration of the Strategy prior to adoption, followed by the detailed design and development process for related activity. Key mitigation / enhancement measures are incorporated into the design, development and operation of any Strategy activity going forward.

2. Assessment findings

Summary of Assessment Findings

Assessment matrices setting out the detailed findings in relation to each outcome, and underpinning aspirations, are provided in Annex A. We have provided a narrative summary of those findings below.

Preferred option

The assessment of the preferred Strategy found generally **significant positive** effects for **cultural heritage**. However, some **significant negative** effects for **cultural heritage** were also identified as a result of potential ‘managed loss’ approaches, though this approach would be as a last resort and following other measures to mitigate physical loss of fabric.

Effects for **population and human health** were largely **positive**, some significant where objectives focused on collaborative working and community. Effects for **biodiversity, climatic factors, landscape and material assets** were mainly **neutral or minor positive**, due to the introduction of a holistic, place-based approach and a focus on climate change adaptation and mitigation. In some cases, the effects were uncertain, as they depend on actions defined at a lower level. No negative effects were identified for these SEA topics.

Reasonable alternative: focusing more on profitability and commercial interests

The assessment found **mixed effects** for **cultural heritage**, with some **significant negative** effects due to prioritisation of economic value alone over other values. Effects on the **remainder of the SEA topics** were mainly **neutral or minor positive**, with some more **significant negative** effects for **population and human health**. There are heightened risks associated with short term investment, and it does not put sustainable, place-based development at the heart of a strategic approach to asset management.

Reasonable alternative: continuing to manage the Estate using existing approaches

The assessment found **mixed effects** for **cultural heritage**. Several objectives were **minor positive** as they maintained a heritage focused approach. **Minor negative** effects were also identified for some objectives as this approach does not address long-term challenges and the need for a more sustainable approach to Stewardship, including adaptations to mitigate climate change impacts.

Effects on the **remainder of the SEA topics** were mainly **neutral or minor negative**.

Cumulative effects

The assessment methodology incorporates a cumulative assessment of actions, which has contributed to the findings for the overarching outcomes. We also considered whether delivery of the outcomes in combination would have cumulative effects and have concluded that this will not result in any significant additional effects.

Mitigation, recommendations, and monitoring

Mitigation and enhancement measures are set out in detail in the detailed assessment matrices and will be embedded into the decision-making processes for the implementation of the Strategy.

It will be important to understand how the Strategy is affecting the environment once it is implemented. This will help to identify any effects arising which were not predicted through the assessment and allow appropriate mitigation to be sought.

Monitoring of the Strategy is currently under development. We will ensure that environmental indicators and the issues identified in this assessment are factored into this process, and the monitoring programme will incorporate monitoring of

environmental effects. We will set out the monitoring approach in more detail in the Post Adoption Statement.

Next Steps

The public consultation on the draft Strategy ends on Friday 23 January 2026. A final version of the Strategy will be prepared, taking feedback into account, following the consultation period.

All changes will be screened to consider if they raise significant environmental issues that have not already been taken into consideration in the environmental assessment. If the potential for significant environmental effects is identified, an assessment will be undertaken of the impact and reported in the SEA Post Adoption Statement. This will be published along with the finalised plan.

The SEA Post Adoption Statement, which will be published along with the final version of our plan, will show how the ER (and all the comments expressed on it) has been considered in the adopted Strategy.

Milestones	Date
Public consultation on the Environmental Report and draft Properties and Collections Strategy	6 October 2025 – 23 January 2026
Finalise Properties and Collections Strategy on the basis of consultation responses	March/April 2026
Publish finalised Strategy and Post-Adoption SEA Statement	June 2026

Annex A - detailed assessment matrices

Legend:

++	Significantly positive effects.
+	Positive effects.
0	Minor or neutral effect.
?	Uncertain effects.
-	Adverse effects.
--	Significantly adverse effects.

Vision							
	How will the purpose affect...	Biodiversity, flora and fauna	Climatic factors	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material assets	Population and human health
Preferred Vision Statement: Our Vision is 'to increase understanding and achieve sustainable management of the Properties and Associated Collections in care'	Score	?	?	++	?	?	?
	<i>Commentary:</i> Preferred vision would have potential positive outcomes for heritage assets as it focuses on research and knowledge of assets to inform actions taken. The emphasis on sustainable management sets a high-level expectation that environmental objectives will be considered in delivery of the Vision. The extent to which this has positive environmental effects across the SEA topics will depend on the actions which are developed to deliver the Vision.						
	<i>Mitigation / Enhancement:</i> To achieve positive results for other environmental objectives, the vision would need to ensure that any actions support habitat enhancement, lower emissions, reduce waste and make data informed decisions that deliver multiple benefits.						
Reasonable alternative: To continue managing the Estate in the current approach.	Score	0	-	--	0	0	0
	<i>Commentary:</i> Staying as is would likely have negative impacts on climate and heritage assets as it would not resolve ongoing requirements for the long-term approach to retrofit and restoration of assets.						
	<i>Mitigation / Enhancement:</i> Mitigations would be required to monitor the deterioration of assets and would require transparent metrics to balance ecological, climate and cultural needs.						
Reasonable alternative: Focus on commercial management of Estate.	Score	-	-	-/+	0	0	-
	<i>Commentary:</i> Commercialisation comes at risk of over tourism for areas, which could have negative impacts in terms of biodiversity, climate and population. Could be negative or positive outcomes for heritage depending on approach taken to individual sites.						
	<i>Mitigation / Enhancement:</i> This approach would need to be underpinned by continual monitoring and adaptation to prevent commercialisation exacerbating biodiversity, climate, heritage and communities.						

Achieving Sustainable Stewardship							
	How will the vision affect...	Biodiversity, flora and fauna	Climatic factors	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material assets	Population and human health
Preferred option / action / approach: Re-considering our portfolio and the concept of Collective Stewardship	Score	0	0	++	0	0	++
	<i>Commentary:</i> This could have significant positive impacts on cultural heritage and population and human health as it encourages collective stewardship and place-based solutions.						
	<i>Mitigation / Enhancement:</i> The strategy will need to ensure new stewardship models embed a stable governance framework and can secure long term revenue streams and manage liabilities. Any localised approaches will still require balancing climate, biodiversity and landscape with cultural heritage needs. A framework of environmental assessment of projects could mitigate this risk.						
Reasonable alternative: To continue managing the estate in the current approach.	Score	0	-	-	0	-	-
	<i>Commentary:</i> Continuing without taking an overview of the estate would create risk of uninformed decision making, specifically in terms of climate change, the impact on cultural heritage assets and material assets as well as people's experience of it.						
	<i>Mitigation / Enhancement:</i> A clear set of environmental priorities could mitigate this approach but is unlikely to prevent inconsistencies of approach.						

Reasonable alternative: Focus on commercial management of estate, prioritising the most profitable parts of the portfolio.	Score	0	-	+/-	0	-	0
	<i>Commentary:</i> The focus on the most profitable areas of the estate risks negative impacts on climate due to the potential impacts of over tourism and interventions that enhance visitor experience but do not provide wider benefits. Whilst investment in the most commercially viable assets could bring some positives to cultural heritage, it would also have negative impacts on assets that were not invested in.						
	<i>Mitigation / Enhancement:</i> The commercial approach would be required to ensure it met with national objectives that focused on reducing emissions, nature restoration and reduction in waste. Allowing for slow decline of assets could allow for habitat creation and alternative uses that might benefit local communities.						

Achieving Sustainable Stewardship: Objective 1							
	How will the vision affect...	Biodiversity, flora and fauna	Climatic factors	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material assets	Population and human health
Preferred option / action / approach: Take the long view, reflecting on the past to inform the future	Score	0	+	++	0	0	+
	<i>Commentary:</i> This scores positively as it aims to identify long term solutions, using research and knowledge of heritage management and past experiences to inform future actions. This will have significant positive impacts on cultural heritage as it will ensure evidence-based decision making. The long-term view allows for adaptability through evidence and identifying good practice. The proposed focus on climate change should lead to some positive effects in mitigation and adaptation, and the Collective Stewardship approach will strengthen opportunities for community empowerment, partnerships and other beneficial governance models.						
	<i>Mitigation / Enhancement:</i> This approach requires a systematic assessment and comparison of strategic alternatives with multiple futures. Any actions will need to be evidenced based and transparently decided to ensure that we maximise on our understanding of what works best in place. There is risk around data collation and interpretation. Engagement with communities of place should be undertaken to ensure sensitivities are identified and inform decision making. Monitoring on cumulative impacts will be an important part of strategy development, ensuring an iterative process						
Reasonable alternative: To prioritise immediate issues identified for the Estate.	Score	0	-	+	0	0	0
	<i>Commentary:</i> This approach would be positive in terms of heritage assets but could create risks in terms of a long-term sustainable approach, with specific risks to climate, due to prioritising short-term solutions and not managing the longer-term view.						
	<i>Mitigation / Enhancement:</i> Prioritising immediate issues would require assessments on the impacts in the longer term to ensure that actions do not have detrimental impacts that have not been identified in the short-term action.						
Reasonable alternative: To continue as operating in current form.	Score	0	-	-	0	0	-
	<i>Commentary:</i> Continuing operating in the current approach raises known risks as it will not resolve estate management issues and consequently could impact on climate, heritage and population if longer term solutions are not identified.						
	<i>Mitigation / Enhancement:</i> There are considerable challenges already identified which mean that continuing as is would risk exacerbating issues for climate, heritage and population.						

Achieving Sustainable Stewardship: Objective 2							
	How will the vision affect...	Biodiversity, flora and fauna	Climatic factors	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material assets	Population and human health
Preferred option / action / approach: Prioritise cultural significance, targeting our research and innovation	Score	?	?	+	?	0	0
	<i>Commentary:</i> This approach could have positive impacts on cultural heritage using research and innovation to identify priorities and actions. It has unknown impacts on biodiversity, climate and landscape depending on what actions are proposed.						
	<i>Mitigation / Enhancement:</i> Embedding cultural values from the outset will require robust baseline analysis, inclusive governance and adaptive monitoring. Actions will need to scope out the broader implications for biodiversity, climate and landscape to ensure that approaches to prioritisation don't have cumulative negative impacts.						

Reasonable alternative: Focus on commercial success, prioritising profitable assets.	Score	0	+/-	+/-	0	0	-
	<i>Commentary:</i> This could have some positive impacts on specific assets which are profitable but risks the broader Estate deteriorating and having consequential negative impacts on climate and human health as it could lead to over tourism and deteriorating, inaccessible assets. Focus on profitability could provide opportunities to generate revenue for maintenance, restoration and conservation on individual assets but risks areas being exposed to greater levels of tourism and non-profitable assets going into further decline.						
	<i>Mitigation / Enhancement:</i> Any commercial intensification would require a balanced approach that does not lead to over tourism and a rise in emissions. It would also need to scope the loss of assets if a profit led approach meant the decline of other assets.						
Reasonable alternative: Continue managing estate in current form.	Score	0	-	-/+	0	-/+	-
	<i>Commentary:</i> This approach risks negative or unknown impacts on a range of environmental indicators and would not address the current issues that have been identified through the strategy development.						
	<i>Mitigation / Enhancement:</i> Current approach would still require long term planning of asset investment and consequential impacts.						

Achieving Sustainable Stewardship: Objective 3							
	How will the vision affect...	Biodiversity, flora and fauna	Climatic factors	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material assets	Population and human health
Preferred option / action / approach: Increase focus and investment in our associated Collections and Archives	Score	-	-	++	-	++	+
	<i>Commentary:</i> This will have significant positive impact on cultural heritage and material assets as it ensures the continuance of research materials and archives. It would have minor improvements for population and human health, as it will support our visitor experience, knowledgebase and evidence as well as research and educational opportunities. The approach could have minor negative impacts on climate, biodiversity and landscape depending on requirement for development, potential storage emissions and energy usage for digitisation.						
	<i>Mitigation / Enhancement:</i> Any requirements for space and storage are carefully scoped in terms of the impacts on biodiversity, climate and landscape to ensure that the approach is energy efficient and does not have significant green field requirements or visual impacts. To mitigate, the strategy should identify review triggers, specifically in terms of low carbon storage, focusing on reuse and adaptation for storage facilities. Decisions around storage need and the balance of digital collections verses physical collections would reduce footprint requirements.						
Reasonable alternative: Limit investment in collections and archives.	Score	0	0	--	0	-	-
	<i>Commentary:</i> This approach would have significant negative impacts as it would not create opportunities for education, research and could lead to a loss of cultural heritage. It would have minor impacts in terms of population and human health as it would limit the research opportunities and knowledge base that collections and archives provide.						
	<i>Mitigation / Enhancement:</i> Strategic approach would be required to balance competing needs of storage requirements and significant collections to minimise loss of assets and educational opportunities.						
Reasonable alternative: Continue in current form.	Score	0	0	-	0	-	-
	<i>Commentary:</i> This has potential negative impacts on heritage assets as it would not resolve storage requirements and would prevent expansion of collections. This could lead to loss of assets in the longer term.						
	<i>Mitigation / Enhancement:</i> Storage requirements focus on reuse of brownfield land and digitisation to reduce carbon emissions.						

Achieving Sustainable Stewardship: Objective 4							
	How will the vision affect...	Biodiversity, flora and fauna	Climatic factors	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material assets	Population and human health
Preferred option / action / approach: Integrate sustainable development to our investment planning and asset management approaches	Score	+	+	++	+	+	+
	<i>Commentary:</i> This objective has a positive impact on environmental factors as it will ensure that investment is focused on sustainable development. This approach should ensure natural capital gain, monitoring and a lifecycle focus are key design principles of the strategy.						
	<i>Mitigation / Enhancement:</i> When establishing actions for the objective, a clear, established assessment of sustainable development approaches will be required to ensure mitigations and enhancements are clearly identified and designed in to ensure the objective is fulfilled. It will require data-driven, adaptive monitoring to allow for continuous improvement.						

Reasonable alternative: Focus on commercial priorities for investment planning	Score	0	-	+	0	0	-
	<i>Commentary:</i> Focusing on commercial investment for prioritisation would have some limited positives outcomes in terms of cultural heritage as it would maximise funds for specific sites. It may have a negative impact on climate and population as commercialisation could encourage over tourism and not allow for inclusive growth						
	<i>Mitigation / Enhancement:</i> Prioritising commercial assets would need to be balanced with responsible tourism approaches and local infrastructure, and services would need to inform decision making.						
Reasonable alternative: Continue investment in current form	Score	0	-	-	0	0	0
	<i>Commentary:</i> Continuing with current prioritisation comes with known risks. Many assets require considerable upgrading and restoration and managing them in the longer term without investment could lead to loss of heritage.						
	<i>Mitigation / Enhancement:</i> Retrofit requirements and health and safety measures would need to be balanced against commercial success.						

Achieving Sustainable Stewardship: Objective 5							
How will the vision affect...	Biodiversity, flora and fauna	Climatic factors	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material assets	Population and human health	
Preferred option / action / approach: Embed democratic participation and empowerment, involving people and shaping plans together	Score	0	0	++	0	0	++
	<i>Commentary:</i> The focus on co-design, co-creation and the Place Principle to identify collaborative approaches to Properties and Collections could be positive or neutral as it embeds collective decision making into any actions. This ensures a partnership approach that can identify opportunities and risks and make informed decisions that are place based.						
	<i>Mitigation / Enhancement:</i> All actions will require early scoping to identify who partners in place are and what implications proposed actions have on environmental issues. Key stakeholders, including environmental bodies and local communities, will need to be engaged with at the scoping stage in developing the actions plan. Monitoring of cumulative impacts of risks and trade-offs will be required to adapt the Strategy.						
Reasonable alternative: Determine approach based on commercial viability	Score	0	0	+/-	0	0	--
	<i>Commentary:</i> This approach is focused on commercial viability and the focus on plans to maximise revenue. There could be a significant negative impact on population and human health as it would not focus on working with communities to support local aspirations and Community Wealth Building opportunities. It could also place greater pressure on local services and amenities if the focus is solely on commercial gain. There could positive and negative outcomes for heritage depending on location and local infrastructure.						
	<i>Mitigation / Enhancement:</i> Any proposals would still require significant input from communities in place to ensure it met with community empowerment legislation.						
Reasonable alternative: Continue current approach	Score	0	0	+/-	0	0	-
	<i>Commentary:</i> Continuing to manage with the current approach would not resolve the required redistribution of resources and need for carefully balanced strategic priorities.						
	<i>Mitigation / Enhancement:</i> Any proposals would still require significant input from communities in place to ensure it met with community empowerment legislation.						

Achieving Sustainable Stewardship: Objective 6							
How will the vision affect...	Biodiversity, flora and fauna	Climatic factors	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material assets	Population and human health	
Preferred option / action / approach: Strengthen our response to climate change and its impacts, adapting our management approaches	Score	+	+	++ / - / --	+	+	+
	<i>Commentary:</i> This scores well for most environmental objectives as it aims to proactively respond to climate through management of sites, and has consequential positive impacts on biodiversity, landscape, material assets and human health. Responding to climate change is likely to be predominantly positive for heritage assets as it will increase their resilience. Retrofitting heritage assets will need to respond sensitively to ensure it minimizes any interventions and supports the integrity of heritage assets. However, in some cases, negative effects may occur through the unavoidable loss of historic fabric. These effects are likely to be mostly minor, but there is potential for isolated significant negative effects.						
	<i>Mitigation / Enhancement:</i> Any actions must be balanced with the protection of key cultural heritage features and mitigations identified. Climate interventions must be scoped to balance this with aesthetic or authenticity of historic sites and the need to remain a visitor attraction.						

Reasonable alternative: Focus adaptation on only commercially successful assets.	<i>Score</i>	0	-	-	0	-	-
	<i>Commentary:</i> This approach doesn't focus on wider environmental responsibility of HES and could have specific connotations for climate change as it would not ensure the estate is supporting climate action consistently. There is a balance to adaptation needs verses historic integrity.						
	<i>Mitigation / Enhancement:</i> Any actions must be balanced with the protection of key cultural heritage features and mitigations identified. Climate interventions must be scoped to balance this with aesthetic or authenticity of historic sites and the need to remain a visitor attraction.						
Reasonable alternative: Continue managing assets in current form.	<i>Score</i>	0	+	+	0	0	0
	<i>Commentary:</i> This approach could continue to have positive impacts in terms of climate and heritage but less opportunity to integrate into wider environmental plans.						
	<i>Mitigation / Enhancement:</i> Any actions must be balanced with the protection of key cultural heritage features and mitigations identified. Climate interventions must be scoped to balance this with aesthetic or authenticity of historic sites and the need to remain a visitor attraction.						

Achieving Sustainable Stewardship: Objective 7							
	How will the vision affect...	Biodiversity, flora and fauna	Climatic factors	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material assets	Population and human health
Preferred option / action / approach: Increase productive, sustainable and compatible use of the assets in our care	<i>Score</i>	0	+	++	0	+	++
	<i>Commentary:</i> Integrating productive, sustainable and compatible use of assets could have positive impacts for material assets as it supports regenerative development and reduces pressure on land, whilst ensuring the longevity of our historic assets through reuse. It aims to build skills and knowledge of the sector and support community wealth building and a wellbeing economy, which should result in positive effects for population and human health. The development of traditional skills and use of traditional materials should have some positive effects for climate change mitigation.						
	<i>Mitigation / Enhancement:</i> Procurement approaches will require an understanding of local needs and support sustainable models of business. Training should be focused on supporting a wider reach for traditional skills.						
Reasonable alternative: Prioritise commercial requirements as driver for use of assets.	<i>Score</i>	0	-	+	0	0	0
	<i>Commentary:</i> This could have potential positive impacts on cultural heritage as it would prioritise resources to sites that are most commercially viable, but it does not focus on resilience and would neglect the wider portfolio. It could lead to over tourism and consequent local impacts on infrastructure.						
	<i>Mitigation / Enhancement:</i> Preventing over tourism and impacts on infrastructure for local areas will need to carefully be worked in tandem with regional approaches and investment. Sustainable travel, supporting local businesses and encouraging the development of skills would mitigate these impacts.						
Reasonable alternative: Continue managing assets in current form.	<i>Score</i>	0	0	+	0	0	0
	<i>Commentary:</i> Continuing to manage in current approach would not address the need to develop skills and reuse of assets to ensure long term solutions for maintenance and management. Whilst it would still bring some positives to the historic environment, it would not be as holistic as the integration of skills development and reuse.						
	<i>Mitigation / Enhancement:</i> Preventing over tourism and impacts on infrastructure for local areas will need to carefully be worked in tandem with regional approaches and investment. Sustainable travel, supporting local businesses and encouraging the development of skills would mitigate these impacts.						

Achieving Sustainable Stewardship: Objective 8							
	How will the vision affect...	Biodiversity, flora and fauna	Climatic factors	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material assets	Population and human health
Preferred option / action / approach: Set a direction of travel for each asset, developing clear and proportionate plans	<i>Score</i>	+	+	++ / --	+	+	+
	<i>Commentary:</i> This will have significant positive impacts on cultural heritage as it will identify long term plans as to how assets will be managed sustainably and aims to provide a framework for action. There is potential for some plans to identify managed loss as the only viable approach where there is no other alternative. This would have significant negative effects on affected historic environment assets, while some positive effects through mitigation could be achieved. The values-based approach encourages the identification of social, environmental, economic and cultural benefits, which is likely to lead to some positive effects across the SEA topics, although the extent of these is not known at this stage.						

	<i>Mitigation / Enhancement:</i> Decision making will require sustainability assessments, that prioritise conservation and adaptive reuse, landscape and nature restoration, research and digital innovation, and infrastructure improvements. All plans will require to be embedded in place-based approaches that are linked with wider place planning and community aspirations.						
Reasonable alternative: Focus on commercial interests and dispose unprofitable assets.	Score	0	-	+/-	0	0	-
	<i>Commentary:</i> This could have both positive and negative impacts on cultural heritage as a focus on commercial interests only would prevent exploring more holistic approaches to managing the estate and risks assets going into decline. This could have implications for climate and human health as it would direct investment to the most successful assets, ignoring the impact that declining assets would have on the places they are located.						
	<i>Mitigation / Enhancement:</i> This approach would need to be mitigated by seeking opportunities for community stewardship and place solutions for assets no longer commercially prioritised. Decision making will require sustainability assessments, that prioritise conservation non-intervention, retrofit and adaptive reuse, landscape and nature restoration and infrastructure upgrade.						
Reasonable alternative: Continue managing assets in current approach.	Score	0	0	-/+	0	0	-/+
	<i>Commentary:</i> Continuing to manage assets in current form will still require some reprioritisation to ensure the estate is accessible and safe. This approach managing the estate with key priorities will not always identify local opportunities and place specific approaches to sites.						
	<i>Mitigation / Enhancement:</i> Decision making on priorities will require sustainability assessments, that prioritise conservation non-intervention, retrofit and adaptive reuse, landscape and nature restoration and infrastructure upgrade.						

Annex B – Environmental Baseline

Environmental baseline

In order to establish the environmental effects of the Strategy it is necessary to understand the environmental baseline of the area that is likely to be affected. Schedule 3 of the Act lists the environmental topics that should be considered in SEA. To focus the SEA, baseline information has been gathered on the environmental issues that are likely to be affected by the Strategy. Given that the Strategy covers Historic Environment Scotland’s activities Estate-wide across Scotland, a national baseline has been reviewed. A summary of the key baseline information for each relevant environmental topic is set out below.

Cultural Heritage

Baseline Data	Sources
Properties in Care	https://portal.historicenvironment.scot/
Properties in Care Annual Reports	https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/publication/?publicationid=875ff68a-5e41-4d67-9f58-b27500b14ea2
Scotland’s Historic Environment Audit 2024	https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/publication/?publicationId=316d0ecc-350a-417c-a44c-b1da00f70e08
Properties in Care Designated as Listed and Scheduled	www.trove.scot
Properties in Care Collections	http://www.trove.scot

The Properties and Collections in care are a group of nationally significant cultural assets, attracting millions of visitors each year and generating income and jobs across Scotland. They make a valuable contribution to the Scottish Government’s strategic objectives and the purpose, values and national outcomes stated in the National Performance Framework.

There are 336 Properties in Care across Scotland. This includes prehistoric and historic monuments, as well as associated Collections and Archives, representing around 5,000 years of Scotland’s past. The scope of the Strategy also includes ancillary properties, depots, and operational infrastructure, potentially necessary to enable or enhance projects.

The way HES manages access to the Properties in Care is largely governed by [legislation](#) that determines how we govern access to the assets in our care. There is site specific legislation in place for some Properties, such as Holyrood Park and Linlithgow Peel and Loch. We have additional legal powers to manage access to - and use of - those Properties. Access rights are set out in the [Scottish Outdoor Access Code](#). The general right of access does not always apply to Properties in Care.

The majority of the Properties are [free to everyone](#) and accessible throughout the year. Around 75 Properties are managed through specific opening hours and admissions charges. We care for a number of sites where operations are managed by third party organisations such as museum, community and church organisations. Further information on access to Properties can be found here: [Managing Access to Properties in Care June 2024](#)

The majority of Properties in Care are scheduled monuments and may also incorporate other historic environment designations.

Population and Human Health

Baseline Data	Sources
Access to historic environment sites, records and collections	Historic Environment Scotland Visit Scotland
Tourism revenue and visitor numbers	NHS Scotland Scottish Government
Health and Place data	SEPA Guidance on consideration of health factors in SEA
Socio-economic data	

The environment provides a variety of services that are beneficial to human health including opportunities for education and recreation. Access to historic environment sites, forests, woodlands and nature conservation sites as well as the wider environment can help to promote healthier lifestyles, having positive effects on both physical and mental health. A [HES survey](#) in 2019 found that 76% of people surveyed self-reported that their overall life satisfaction is improved through their engagement with the historic environment.

The quality of the environment and places and buildings in which we live can also impact on our quality of life. High quality urban environments, including natural landscapes, can create a sense of place and improve well-being. Poorly maintained housing and neglected community spaces can have a negative impact on physical and mental well-being.

The historic environment needs to be managed in a sustainable way to ensure that the positive and distinctive contribution it can make to our well-being, landscape, and sense of history, identity and place can be realised.

Community Planning is an increasingly important area in which the connection between people and place and the associated impacts (for example, health, wellbeing and social inclusion) can be seen as a driver towards better outcomes in these areas.

Climatic Factors

Baseline Data	Sources
CO2 Emissions	SNIFFER
Carbon Footprint	SEPA Guidance on consideration of climatic factors in Strategic Environmental Assessment
SNIFFER 2014 Online Handbook of Climate Trends across Scotland	UKCIP
United Kingdom Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP) Climate Modelling	Historic Environment Scotland – climate change research and reports
Dynamic Coast – National Coastal Change Assessment	Dynamic Coast
Flood risk	SEPA Flood Hazard maps SEPA Flood Risk Management plans

Our archaeology and coastal landscapes are vulnerable to coastal erosion, rises in sea level, flooding and storminess. Some of Scotland’s unique and special sites such as Skara Brae in Orkney are most at risk. Built heritage can also suffer adverse effects from storms, subsidence and increased wetting and weathering. More rainfall will mean that traditional buildings will be wetter for longer periods of time resulting in increased weathering of stone, algal and fungal growth, corrosion of metals and timber decay. The spread of pests and disease as a result of a warmer climate and milder wetter winters can also have effects upon various materials and furnishings. Measures to improve energy efficiency in traditional buildings need to be considered carefully with thought

given to the carbon footprint, embodied energy, longevity and sustainability of existing and replacement materials.

For example, reducing air leakage in traditional buildings to prevent heat loss might result in condensation and mould growth, with damaging effects on the building fabric and the health of those living there. Careful consideration also needs to be given to the renewable energy projects (such as micro renewables) which may have a detrimental effect on the character or setting of historic environment features, landscapes and townscapes.

We also need to be mindful of the relationship between resource use and work in the area of waste reduction and their link with climatic factors.

HES' [Climate Change Risk Assessment Report](#) presents the results of an initial baseline assessment of natural hazard risk to inform a Climate Change Risk Assessment of Historic Environment Scotland's (HES's) Properties in Care. It uses a number of existing natural hazard datasets, which determine the risk of damage and loss to sites, as indicators of susceptibility to climate change. Initial analysis of the results indicated that out of the 352 'sites' investigated, 89% are exposed to high, or very high levels of risk (some of our 336 PICs have more than one area of 'guardianship' or 'ownership', meaning we ran the assessment for 352 'sites'). When we then consider the mitigating factors and controls already in place, such as routine maintenance and ongoing conservation work, the number of sites classified as 'at risk' is reduced to 53%.

Landscape (including seascapes and urban and suburban landscapes)

Baseline Data	Sources
Wild land	Historic Land Use Assessment
National, Regional and Country Parks	NatureScot
National Scenic Areas	Coastal Character Assessment
Local Landscape Areas	Landscape Character Assessment and associated guidance
Historic Land Use	National Scenic Areas and their Special Qualities
Coastal Character	Wild land
Landscape Character	HES Landscape Conservation Plans for PICs
Natural Heritage Futures	Natural Heritage Futures

Scotland's diverse and distinctive landscapes are a significant part of the country's natural and cultural heritage, making an important and positive contribution to the economic, cultural and social wellbeing of the nation.

The European Landscape Convention aims are to promote protection, management and planning of all landscapes, not just protected areas. Landscape is a component of a number of environmental designations and there is an intricate relationship between landscape, conservation, other environmental objectives, community identity and wellbeing and economic development. It is a key part of our cultural heritage which has huge economic potential and is a vital part of our sense of place and general well-being. This relationship between the perception of natural and historic landscape means that the sustainable management of the historic environment can impact on landscape as a whole.

NatureScot have, in partnership with others, produced a series of 30 regional Landscape Character Assessment studies that identify and map the landscape character of all of Scotland. These are currently being reviewed with the aim of producing a single national dataset. The Landscape Character Assessments are used heavily in policy making, development planning and management and form an important tool in the appropriate consideration of landscape-scale change.

Work in the area of Coastal Character Assessment is also being brought forward by Scottish Natural Heritage with a Guidance Note on the topic published in 2017. Coastal Character Assessment identifies, describes and maps Scotland's coasts and these will underpin marine plans, development plans and specific development proposals. Coastal Character Types have been identified at a national level and a Coastal Character Assessment for Orkney and Caithness in 2016.

HES has published Landscape Conservation Management Plans for the following PICs:

- [Blackness Castle](#)
- [Dryburgh Abbey](#)
- [Doune Castle](#)
- [Holyrood Park](#)
- [Melrose Abbey](#)

Material assets

Baseline Data	Sources
Agricultural and forestry land use data	Scottish Government
Housing supply data	Transport Scotland
Transport data	Forestry Commission Scotland
Tourism revenue and visitor numbers	SEPA Guidance on consideration of material assets in Strategic Environmental Assessment
Waste data	Visit Scotland

Agricultural and forestry policies promote sustainable land use, environmental protection and stewardship, and emphasise the importance of delivering public goods out with market mechanisms. The Scottish Government's Draft Climate Change Plan, published in January 2017, sets specific targets for future woodland expansion to cover 21% of Scotland by 2032. To deliver this, the draft plan proposes that the rate of new afforestation rises to 15,000 hectares per year by 2024. Scotland's forests are the most productive in the UK. Our woodlands and forests offer many benefits: economic (including timber, non-timber and tourism), health and wellbeing, carbon storage and ecosystems services. The National Forest Estate covers nearly 9% of Scotland, extending to over 650,000 hectares. There are 323 Scheduled Monuments and 31 listed buildings on the Forestry Commission Scotland Designated Historic Assets Register. There are also around 12,000 individual historic environment features on the Forester GIS (Geographic Information System) Heritage Module. Around 80% of Scotland's land mass is used for agriculture, and agricultural practices, both historic and current, have helped shape our landscape and historic environment.

Construction accounts for about 50% of all waste in Scotland and is a major influence on efficient use of resources. The Scottish Government has published a strategy – Safeguarding Scotland's resources – that focuses on waste prevention and the circular economy. It includes a target to reduce the amount of waste generated in Scotland by 15% by 2025. The historic environment and its ongoing upkeep is inherently sustainable as it reuses existing buildings and minimises the use of new resources. Traditional buildings have embedded energy (the energy required to extract, process, manufacture, transport and install building materials). Although traditional buildings usually have a lower thermal performance than new buildings, continuing to use them can avoid some new carbon by reducing the need for new buildings. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions associated with the upkeep of old buildings, while maintaining their cultural significance, is a challenge. All measures to improve energy efficiency in traditional buildings need to be considered carefully with thought given to the carbon footprint, lifespan and the sustainability of existing and replacement materials. In improving energy efficiency, it is important to avoid damaging effects on traditional buildings. For example, reducing air leakage in buildings to prevent heat loss may result in condensation and fungus growth, with damaging effects on the fabric of the building and the health of people using it.

Traditionally constructed buildings including housing make a major contribution to Scotland's existing built environment. The Scottish House Condition Survey (SCHS) 2015 estimates that around 20% of Scottish dwellings were built before 1919 (488,000 dwellings). 68% of pre-1919 buildings had a degree of critical element disrepair in 2015, compared to 72% in 2014 and 73% in 2013. The Scottish average was 52% in 2015, 53% in 2014 and 57% in 2013. Around 9% of households live in conservation areas, which cover about 0.3% of Scotland's land area. The Scottish Government's Strategy for Housing states a need for new housing supply, and also that bringing empty homes back into active use would represent an important contribution to effective new supply.

Scotland’s transport infrastructure is also a key asset in connecting our urban and more remote rural areas and supporting future growth. Many elements of the road, rail and canal networks across the country are of traditional construction.

Tourism is a key economic driver, and the historic environment is one of the main motivators for tourism activity in Scotland.

The Properties and Collections HES looks after attract visitors from around the world who would otherwise not come to Scotland: half of all international visitors state heritage attractions as a motivation for visiting Scotland. The Properties also move visitors from Scotland around the country, distributing their spend across all thirty-two local authority areas. This spend generates positive impacts and supports jobs in hospitality, retail, transport and other recreational activities. Our direct investment in maintenance and improvement of the Properties supports construction and traditional skills.

By welcoming millions of visitors from around the world, we generate just under £1 billion (£935m) annually for Scotland’s economy, supporting over 20,000 FTE jobs around Scotland.

Source: modelled in-house estimate based on ONS visitor surveys and site data. Full method available at: [Social and Economic Research | Featured Projects | Historic Environment Scotland](#)

Biodiversity, flora and fauna

Baseline Data	Sources
Special Protection Areas	NatureScot
Special Areas of Conservation	SiteLink
Sites of Special Scientific Interest	
National Nature Reserves	
Local Nature Reserves	
Woodland (including ancient and semi-natural)	

Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are selected to protect one or more rare, threatened or vulnerable bird species listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive, or certain regularly occurring migratory species. Scotland is internationally important for many species of wild birds due to our location in north-west Europe, and our varied range of wild and semi-natural habitats.

Scotland has 162 classified SPAs, from the north of Shetland to the cross border Solway Firth SPA, as well as within inshore and offshore waters. This also includes a suite of [12 marine SPAs](#) which were classified in December 2020. Together they cover an area of around 2.75 million hectares (27,500 square kilometres) of Scotland's land and sea. Find out more about [marine European sites](#).

A Special Area of Conservation (SAC) protects one or more special habitats and/or species – terrestrial or [marine](#) – listed in the [Habitats Directive](#). Scotland has 243 designated SACs, including three that straddle the border with England and two which straddle the 12nm inshore/offshore territorial boundary. There are also eight designated SACs entirely in Scotland's offshore waters. Together they cover more than 3.84 million hectares (38,400 square kilometres) of Scotland's land, inshore and offshore waters.

National Nature Reserves (NNRs) are areas of land set aside for nature. As in other countries, the accolade is given to Scotland's best wildlife sites, to promote their conservation and enjoyment. Most reserves contain nationally or internationally important habitats and species, so the wildlife is managed very carefully. Visitor facilities are designed and managed to ensure that people can enjoy NNRs without harming or disturbing the wildlife that lives there.

[Scotland has 43 NNRs](#); these are special places, showcasing the very best of Scotland's nature, and cover just under 2% of Scotland's land area. Included in the series are mountain tops, ancient woodlands, remote islands with huge colonies of breeding seabirds, and lowland lochs that are vitally important staging posts for migrating birds.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are those areas of land and water that are considered to best represent our natural heritage in terms of their:

- flora – i.e. plants
- fauna – i.e. animals
- geology – i.e. rocks
- geomorphology – i.e. landforms
- a mixture of these natural features

Scotland has 1,422 SSSIs, covering around 1,011,000 hectares or 12.6% of Scotland's land area (above mean low water springs). Sites range in size from the very small, like Bo'mains Meadow SSSI, at just under a hectare, to the vast Cairngorms SSSI, which extends to more than 29,000 hectares. Many SSSIs are also designated as [European sites](#) – whether as [Special Areas of Conservation](#) or [Special Protection Areas](#).

Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are areas of natural heritage that are at least locally important. There are 75 LNRs in Scotland, usually close to towns and cities. Local authorities select and designate LNRs under Section 21 of the [National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949](#) (as amended).

Native tree and shrub species provide much of our native wildlife with its natural habitats, so are a valuable part of Britain's nature and landscapes. Woodland's importance for biodiversity is closely related to its age. In Scotland, ancient woodland is defined as land that is currently wooded and has been continually wooded since at least 1750. The wildlife communities, soils and structure of ancient woodlands have had the longest time to develop. So, these aspects are generally, but not always, richer than in more recent woods.

Not all of Scotland's woodlands are in as good condition as they might be, because of problems and poor management. Overgrazing and undergrazing, invasive species and pathogens, fragmentation, neglect and climate change all threaten the condition of our woodlands.

Many properties in the care of Historic Environment Scotland are within, or near to, land which has been designated for its natural environment value, and many will also be close to, or contain, woodland of biodiversity value, including ancient and semi natural woodland.

Scotland has the most diverse geology for a country of its size providing remarkable geoheritage and benefits for people and nature. This geodiversity has a profound influence on landscape, the economy, historical and cultural heritage, habitats and species, education, health and well-being.

Annex C – Scoping comments from Consultation Authorities

SEPA comments	Our response
<p>As required under Section 15(2) of the Act, we have considered the document submitted and comment as follows in respect of the scope and level of detail to be included in the Environmental Report (ER). We agree with the proposed scope of the assessment and are satisfied with the proposed assessment methodology and consultation period for the ER.</p>	<p>Noted</p>
<p>On completion, the Environmental Report and the strategy to which it relates should be submitted to the Scottish Government SEA Gateway (SEA_Gateway@gov.scot) which will forward it to the Consultation Authorities.</p> <p>In this case we will not be providing a detailed assessment of the Environmental Report.</p>	<p>Noted</p>
NatureScot comments	Our response
<p>NatureScot has considered your scoping report using the criteria set out in Schedule 2 of the 2005 Act. Having reviewed the Scoping Report, we agree that the Strategy is likely to have significant environmental effects. Based on the information available to date we consider that significant effects are most likely with respect to issues which fall within our remit of biodiversity flora and fauna, climatic factors, landscape, and population (health and wellbeing (access & recreation and participation & engagement)).</p>	<p>Noted</p>
<p>We agree with the proposed scope of the assessment. We could make one very minor suggestion. In Table 2, the final paragraph in the ‘summary of environmental objectives’ under ‘landscape’ might imply that Natural Heritage Futures are policy documents, which they are not: they provide</p>	<p>Amended accordingly</p>

information. Listing them in Table 4, Baseline Data, may be clearer.	
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Annex D - Other plans, programmes, strategies and environmental objectives

Table 4 below summarises the findings of the review of the current legislation, policies, plans and strategies that are considered to be most directly relevant to the HES Properties and Collections Strategy. It has been assumed that the key environmental protection objectives for each of the environmental topics identified in Schedule 3 of the Act are translated into national policy and strategy. The environmental protection provided by European legislation has not been reviewed in detail. Instead, the focus has been to review the key areas of legislation relevant to the Strategy and its assessment.

Table 4: Environmental Policy Context for the HES Properties and Collections Strategy

SEA topic	Summary of environmental objectives	Plan, Programme or Strategy
<p>Climatic factors</p>	<p>Policies focus on the need to cut greenhouse gas emissions. National targets are net zero by 2045, making a contribution to climate change abatement targets set at the UK, EU and international levels.</p> <p>Energy policy highlights the importance of energy efficiency, and the need to achieve a shift from fossil fuels to renewable sources of energy. There is also a need for adequate, planned adaptation to future climates in order to increase the resilience of communities, and natural and economic systems.</p> <p>The HES Climate Action Plan details our climate action ambitions for the historic environment for 2020–2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK Climate Change Act 2008 • Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 • Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 • Climate Change Delivery Plan (2009) • Climate Change Adaptation Corporate Plan (2009) • UK Low Carbon Transition Plan (2009) • Climate Change Plan update • Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme (SCCAP) • Conserve and Save: Consultation on the Energy Efficiency Action Plan (2010) • HES Climate Action Plan (2020-2025) • Climate Ready HES • Scottish National Adaptation Plan 2024-29 (DRAFT)

<p>Population and Human Health</p>	<p>Policies outlines the need to seek to improve health and quality of life.</p> <p>There is now a growing recognition of an additional need to shape places which are nurturing of positive health, wellbeing and resilience.</p> <p>Community Planning Partnerships, which involve a number of public bodies, including HES, have a duty to make plans for local areas which meet the needs and ambitions of local people. Community planning priorities stress the important role played by communities in shaping and making local decisions.</p> <p>The Islands Bill is emerging legislation (currently before Parliament) with provision to ‘island-proof’ decision-making across the public sector will ensure the interests of islanders are reflected in future legislation and policy from the very outset.</p> <p>The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 gives everyone rights of responsible access to most land in Scotland. The Scottish Outdoor Access Code sets out the responsibilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving Health in Scotland – the Challenge (2003) • Community Empowerment Act (Scotland) 2015 • The Islands (Scotland) Bill (emerging legislation) • Creating Places - A policy statement on architecture and place for Scotland • Homes fit for the 21st century – the Scottish Government’s Strategy for Housing 2011-2020 • Good Places Better Health (2008) • Equally Well: Implementation Plan (2008) and 2010 Review Recommendations • Scotland’s Economic Strategy • The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003
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<p>Landscape</p>	<p>Landscape policies aim to not only safeguard protected areas, but to recognise and conserve wider landscapes. These may not be formally designated but make an important contribution to the quality of environment.</p> <p>The Strategic Historic Environment Forum’s vision is for the historic dimension of landscape to be fully acknowledged and valued. It is at the core of a shared and unifying approach to managing change in our landscape in ways which maximise public benefit for present and future generations. Our landscapes are changing and will continue to change. People, Place and Landscape sets out our approach, working towards a shared vision where all of our landscapes are vibrant, resilient, inspiring, and beneficial.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council of Europe, European Landscape Convention (2000) • NatureScot Futures • Scotland’s Landscape Charter • Landscape and the Historic Environment – A Common Statement (Strategic Historic Environment Forum) • NatureScot’s Landscape Policy Corporate Plan: Policy Statement No. 05/01 • The Town and Country Planning (National Scenic Areas) (Scotland) Designation Directions 2010 • People, Place and Landscape: A position statement from NatureScot and Historic Environment Scotland
<p>Cultural Heritage</p>	<p>Historic environment policies aim to identify and protect historic buildings and sites from inappropriate development and damage. Policies extend beyond specific designated sites to reflect the value of undesignated / unknown sites, wider townscapes, the setting of monuments and historic buildings, and wider cultural landscapes.</p> <p>The Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (HEPS) sets out principles and policies to direct decision-making which affects the historic environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic Environment Scotland Act 2014 • Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (2019) • Historic Environment Scotland Corporate Plan • Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) (2014) • SG Culture Strategy (Emerging) • PAN 2/2011 Planning and Archaeology • Managing Change in the Historic Environment Guidance Notes • Our Place in Time: The Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland (2014) • Other Historic Environment Scotland guidance documents • Monument Investment Plans

<p>Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna</p>	<p>Biodiversity policies from international to local levels aim in particular to conserve habitats, species and ecosystems. Halting the decline of key species is important, and where possible remedial action and enhancement should be implemented in degraded areas. Policies also note the importance of an ecosystem approach – a holistic, landscape approach to biodiversity conservation that goes beyond the traditional emphasis on protecting individual sites.</p> <p>The draft Scottish Biodiversity Strategy sets out Scottish Government’s likely direction of travel going forward.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Birds Directive 2009/147/EC • The Habitats Directive 1992/43/EEC • Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 • Conservation (Natural habitats &c.) Amendment (Scotland) Regulations 2007 • Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2007 • UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Corporate Plan • Scotland’s Biodiversity – It’s In Your Hands (2004) • 2020 Challenge for Scotland’s Biodiversity (2013) • draft Scottish Biodiversity Strategy
<p>Soil</p>	<p>Policies on soil seek to protect resources from a range of impacts, including soil sealing by development, increased susceptibility to erosion and soil pollution.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scottish Soil Corporate Plan (2009) • National Peatland Plan
<p>Water</p>	<p>Water related policies aim to protect water resources and achieve an improvement in their ecological condition where appropriate. River Basin Management Plans, which were prepared under the Water Corporate Plan Directive and WEWS Act set specific objectives for the protection and improvement of water resources within each river basin.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Groundwater Directive 2006/118/EC • Water Corporate Plan Directive 2000/60/EC • Water Environment and Water Services (Scotland) Act 2003 (WEWS) Act • Water Environment (River Basin Management Planning: Further Provision) (Scotland) Regulations 2013 • Cross-Border River Basin Districts (Scotland) Directions 2014 • River Basin Management Plan for Scotland 2021-2027 • River Basin Management Plan for the Solway Tweed River Basin District: 2021

<p>Air</p>	<p>Air quality targets have been set at the European and UK levels. The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland sets objectives for Particulate Matter (PM), oxides of nitrogen (NOx), sulphur dioxide (SO2) and ozone (O3) amongst others. Good progress is being made towards meeting them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2008/50/EC Directive on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe • The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (2007) • The Air Quality Standards (Scotland) Regulations 2010 • The Air Quality (Scotland) Regulations 2000 • The Air Quality (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2016 • Cleaner air for Scotland: the road to a healthier future
<p>Material Assets</p>	<p>Agricultural and forestry policies promote sustainable land use, environmental protection, and stewardship, and emphasise the importance of delivering public goods out with market mechanisms. Policy sets a target of increasing forest cover to 25% of land cover.</p> <p>The planning system highlights the need to allow the development of high quality, well designed, energy efficient housing. Efficient design will contribute to climate change abatement targets, as will transport emission reductions.</p> <p>Redevelopment of urban and rural brownfield sites is preferred to development on greenfield sites</p> <p>Place is an agent of change. Good buildings and places can enrich our lives as individuals and as a society in many different ways.</p> <p>The Town Centre First Principle asks that government, local authorities, the wider public sector, businesses and communities put the health of town centres at the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scottish Forestry Strategy • National Transport Strategy • The Strategic Transport Review Project (STPR) (2008) • Local Housing Strategies • Scottish Planning Policy • National Planning Corporate Plan 3 • Draft National Planning Corporate Plan 4 • A Vision for Scottish Agriculture • Town Centre First Principle • Creating Places - A policy statement on architecture and place for Scotland • Homes fit for the 21st century – the Scottish Government’s Strategy for Housing 2011-2020 • The Future for Scottish Agriculture (2015) • The Future for Scottish Agriculture and Summary of the National Discussion (2016) • Scotland Outlook 2030 • People make Heritage 2020 • Giant Strides 2020-25 • Forthcoming Outdoors Tourism Strategy

	<p>heart of proportionate and best-value decision making.</p> <p>The Scottish Government’s Strategy for Housing states a need for new housing supply, and also that bringing empty homes back into active use would represent an important contribution to effective new supply.</p> <p>Tourism is a key economic driver, and the historic environment is one of the main motivators for tourism activity in Scotland.</p> <p>To cut emissions significantly and meet ambitious waste and recycling targets, action across society must accelerate to reduce the demand for raw material in products and encourage reuse and repairs through responsible production and consumption and recycle waste and energy to maximise the value of any waste that is generated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor management strategic Corporate Plan for Scotland • Waste (Scotland) Regulations • proposed Circular Economy Bill and Route Map • emerging National Litter and Flytipping Strategy • Scotland’s Zero Waste Plan
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