



HISTORIC
ENVIRONMENT
SCOTLAND

ÀRAINNEACHD
EACHDRAIDHEIL
ALBA

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SCOTLAND

DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2025-28

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT
ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT –
NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

OCTOBER 2024

**Historic Environment Scotland Corporate Plan 2025-28
Strategic Environmental Assessment
Environmental Report – Non-Technical Summary**

Contents

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. What is Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)?**
- 3. Context**
- 4. Assessment Methodology**
- 5. Consideration of alternatives**
- 6. Summary of assessment findings**
- 7. Mitigation and enhancement**
- 8. Monitoring**
- 9. Next steps**
- 10. Consultation**

1. Introduction

What is the purpose of this report?

The purpose of this report is to document the findings of our environmental assessment of the draft HES Corporate Plan 2025-28. 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 HES Corporate Plan 2025-28

HES is a charitable Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) whose statutory functions are set out in the Historic Environment Scotland Act 2014. Its primary purpose is to investigate, care for and promote Scotland's historic environment and to manage its collections as a national resource for reference, study and research - as set out in the Framework Document between Historic Environment Scotland and the Scottish Government.

HES's purpose, strategic aims and objectives, as agreed by the Scottish Ministers, are published in the HES Corporate Plan approved by Scottish Ministers. The Plan aligns to and leads the delivery of the priorities of the historic environment sector set out in historic environment strategy, "[Our Past Our Future](#)" and supports the Scottish Government's Purpose delivered through the [National Performance Framework](#). The Corporate Plan provides strategic direction for our shorter term annual plans such as the [Annual Operating Plan](#), annual Directorate Plans and individual performance objectives.

The current Corporate Plan '*Heritage for All*' commenced in April 2019 and was developed through comprehensive consultation with staff, external stakeholders and included wider audiences whose voices are not often heard in conversations about history and heritage. The feedback helped to fundamentally shape our aims and objectives and develop the five outcomes we were looking to achieve over a 3-year period - that the Historic Environment:

- makes a real difference to people's lives
- is looked after, protected, and managed for the generations to come
- makes a broader contribution to the economy of Scotland and its people
- inspires a creative and vibrant Scotland
- is cared for and championed by a high performing organisation

The last iteration of the Corporate Plan was undertaken in 2022. Due to the ongoing pandemic, a light touch review was undertaken, which did not materially change from the 2019 version.

The plan for 2025-28 has undergone a more comprehensive review and, as such, requires a full SEA.

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 are 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 the HES Corporate Plan 2025-28 involve:

Stage	Activity
Screening	Determining if the HES Corporate Plan 2025-28 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 HES Corporate Plan 2025-28 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 HES Corporate Plan 2025-28.
Adoption & monitoring	Providing information on the adopted the HES Corporate Plan 2025-28, how consultation comments have been taken into account and methods for monitoring the significant environmental effects arising from its implementation.

What was the process for developing the draft HES Corporate Plan 2025-28?

Thus far, the development of the Corporate Plan has been undertaken through extensive consultation with HES staff and external stakeholders from across the historic environment sector, and reference to the engagement and consultation findings around development of *Our Past, Our Future: The Strategy for Scotland's Historic Environment*. A draft of the Corporate Plan is now published for a 10-week online public consultation. As part of this, we are holding specific engagement events, focusing on areas where we are conducting impact assessments, including island communities and groups representing those seldom heard voices in conversations about heritage. The consultation asks a series of questions about the Plan's environmental impact and this report, and feedback from these responses will be considered for incorporation into the final version of the Plan.

Consultation

The Environmental Report accompanies the draft Plan for a 10-week public consultation between 23rd October 2024 and 3rd January 2025. Any comments that you would like to make on either document are welcomed. A number of questions are listed in the Response Form which you are encouraged to use to help structure your response to the draft plan and this Environmental Report.

With regards to the Environmental Report, and its detailed findings and predictions for likely significant effects 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 plan?

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?

2. Context

One of the early stages of the SEA process is to consider the relationship of the HES Corporate Plan 2025-28 to other relevant policies, plans, strategies (PPS) and their environmental objectives. This allows key environmental objectives to be identified for consideration during the Corporate Plan preparation process. It is also important to identify both the plans, programmes and strategies that will influence the Corporate Plan and those that will be influenced by the Corporate Plan itself. An understanding of the context and the hierarchy that the Corporate Plan sits within is also useful for giving early thought to mitigation measures and where they may be best implemented.

Annex D of the full report contains a detailed review of the list of key plans, programmes and strategies and current legislation considered to be most directly relevant to the HES Corporate Plan 2025-28 and includes details of how their environmental objectives have been considered as part of the scoping exercise.

3. Assessment Methodology

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 Corporate Plan affect...
Biodiversity, flora and fauna	To safeguard and enhance biodiversity	Habitats Species Green / blue networks
Climatic Factors	Reduce the causes of climate change Contribute to effective adaptation to the predicted effects of climate change	CO2 and greenhouse gas emissions Effective adaptation to the effects of climate change
Cultural Heritage	Safeguard and where appropriate enhance the historic environment	The safeguarding of designated tangible features of the historic environment The safeguarding of undesignated / unknown tangible features of the historic environment The safeguarding of intangible features of the historic environment Elements of the historic environment which have been identified as at risk Address the consequences of climate change for the historic environment
Landscape (including seascapes, 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.	The protection of landscape character, local distinctiveness and scenic value
Material assets	Sustainable use of existing assets Support local infrastructure	Sustainable use or reuse of existing infrastructure, materials or assets

	To support high quality place making Support circular economy and zero waste principles	Creation of high quality places and spaces Reduce waste and promote uptake of sustainable, traditional materials
Population and Human Health	Promote celebration, understanding, enjoyment and access to the natural and cultural heritage Support healthy living and working environments To reduce inequalities	Access to the historic environment Understanding of the value of the historic environment Community involvement in decisions affecting their places and spaces. The condition of the historic environment as a place to work and live.

4. Consideration of alternatives

The Historic Environment Scotland Act 2014 requires Historic Environment Scotland to prepare a Corporate Plan. Strategic alternatives to the preparation of the Corporate Plan are therefore relatively constrained and the 'do nothing' approach is not considered to be reasonable in this case. In view of this, our assessment of alternatives focussed on the contents of the plan. We assessed the environmental effects of preferred and reasonable alternatives that were considered during the plan preparation process.

The following plan elements were assessed:

- Purpose
- Vision
- Priorities
- Outcomes

All alternative options were assessed to the same level of detail. The assessments 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 elements of the Corporate Plan are likely to generate cumulative effects on any of the environmental receptors scoped into the assessment.

The draft of the Corporate Plan issued for consultation contains a series of indicative actions. These actions are examples of how HES might deliver against the outcomes, and included to help consultees see the types of work that HES might be undertaking across the next three years. They have been clearly labelled as indicative in both the draft Plan, and corresponding consultation questions. Therefore, they have not been assessed as part of the impact assessments.

5. Summary of assessment findings

Assessment matrices setting out the detailed findings in relation to each element of the Plan are provided in Annex A of the full report. We have provided a narrative summary of those findings below.

As may be expected, we have found that the biggest impact of the Corporate Plan will be on cultural heritage, with almost every element of the plan assessed as having a positive impact on this area. As our core functions are to investigate, care for and promote Scotland's historic environment, it makes sense that this would be the case. In every area of our work as outlined in the plan, the successful delivery of the outcomes sought will make a positive impact.

As might also be anticipated, this leads to an overall either positive or neutral effect on material assets and landscape, both through any work that we might look to undertake with our own properties around conservation and sustainable management, developing much needed skills to conserve the historic environment, and through the advice and support that we will give to the historic environment sector. This positive impact also results from the focussing on the role that the historic environment can play in placemaking.

We have also found that the Corporate Plan will have either a positive or neutral impact on climatic factors and a largely neutral effect on biodiversity, flora and fauna. In particular, our work around progressing to net zero, sustainably managing our historic assets, supporting retrofit of historic buildings and ensuring that the historic environment is capable of adapting to and mitigating against the effects of climate change will make a positive impact in this area.

Our impact on population and human health will, again, be either positive or neutral. These are most noticeable in our proposed work around enhancing the visitor experience, developing historic skills and making the historic environment a valued resource for learning. In delivering these, we will ensure that we can broaden those engaged with and participating in activities through the historic environment, and all the health and wellbeing benefits that that will bring.

We assessed all outcomes and aspirations in the Framework for environmental effects. The detailed findings of how these affect the environment are contained within Annex A of the full report.

The assessment methodology incorporates a cumulative assessment of the priorities and outcomes. This is outlined in the summary above, and in the detailed assessment matrices.

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.

6. Mitigation and enhancement

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 Corporate Plan .

It will be important to understand how the Corporate Plan 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.

7. Monitoring

Monitoring of the Corporate Plan will likely rely on Key Performance Indicators, which are currently under development. We will ensure that environmental indicators and the issues identified in this assessment are factored into this process.

Jnaua

8. Next steps

The public consultation period on our draft HES Corporate Plan 2025-28 ends on 3rd January 2025. A final version of our Corporate Plan will be prepared following the consultation period to take into account comments made.

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 their 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 taken into account in the adopted HES Corporate Plan 2025-28.

Milestones	Date
Public consultation on the Environmental Report and draft HES Corporate Plan 2025-28	October 2024 - January 2025
Finalise HES Corporate Plan 2025-28 on the basis of consultation responses	January – March 2025
Publish finalised Corporate Plan and Post-Adoption SEA Statement	31 st March 2025

9. Consultation

The Environmental Report accompanies the draft Plan for a 10 -week public consultation between 23rd October 2024 and 3rd January 2025. Any comments that you would like to make on either document are welcomed. A number of questions are listed in the Response Form which you are encouraged to use to help structure your response to the draft plan and this Environmental Report.

With regards to the Environmental Report, and its detailed findings and predictions for likely significant effects 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 plan?

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?

We are the lead public body established to investigate, care for and promote Scotland's historic environment.

We want to make sure Scotland's heritage is cherished, understood, shared and enjoyed with pride by everyone.

We are committed to ensuring this publication is accessible by everyone. If you need it supplied in a different format or language, get in touch.



OGILBY

© Historic Environment Scotland 2020

You may re-use this information (excluding logos and images) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated.

To view this licence, visit <http://nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3> or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gov.uk

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

Any enquiries regarding this document should be sent to us at:

Historic Environment Scotland

Longmore House
Salisbury Place
Edinburgh
EH9 1SH
+44 (0) 131 668 8600

www.historicenvironment.scot

Scottish Charity No: SCO45925

