

THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY FOR SCOTLAND

Ro-innleach Àrainneachd Eachdraidheil do dh'Alba

Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report – Non-Technical Summary

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1. Introduction

The Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland has been developed as part of the review and refresh into Our Place in Time, the Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland 2014-2024.

Our Place in Time (OPiT) was published in 2014 and set out the vision of how Scotland's historic environment can be understood, valued, cared for and enjoyed.

In February 2022, the Minister for Culture, Europe and International Development, and Minister with Special Responsibilities for Ukrainian Refugees, Neil Gray MSP, commissioned Historic Environment Scotland to conduct a review of OPiT.

The commission noted that the strategic context had changed considerably since OPiT was first published, highlighting the increased focus on tackling inequality, on community empowerment, on digital, and on prioritising work to combat the effects of the climate emergency. The review provides an opportunity to redefine the context and set the direction of this important strategy.

The objectives of the review were to:

- Ensure that OPiT is fit for purpose in a post-COVID world and sets the right direction for the sector for the next 5-10 years.
- Involve stakeholders, partners, and communities in the review and development of the new strategy, by adopting an inclusive and participatory approach to engagement.
- Ensure that the new strategy aligns to and supports the achievement of Scotland's National Performance Framework and other Scottish Government strategies and priorities, including National Planning Framework 4 and the national strategies for culture and Scotland's museums.
- Prioritises Scotland's recovery and renewal post COVID-19, and the creation of a more resilient and sustainable sector.
- Articulates the contribution the historic environment makes to Scotland's wellbeing economy and net zero commitments.

Following screening, and comments received from the Consultation Authorities, Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and NatureScot (NS), we determined that the review is likely to have significant environmental effects and so have carried out a strategic environmental assessment prior to its adoption.

2. 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

Table 1: The key SEA Stages for The Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland

Stage	Activity
Screening	Determining if The Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland 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 and enhancement	Testing the contents of The Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland 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 Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland.
Adoption & Monitoring	Providing information on the adopted The Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland, how consultation comments have been taken into account and methods for monitoring the significant environmental effects arising from its implementation.

Following scoping, and comments received from the Consultation Authorities, the assessment process has been structured around the scoped in SEA topic areas. These are: Biodiversity, flora and fauna, Climate factors, Cultural heritage, Landscape, Material assets and Population and human health.

The full Environmental Report has been published, and consists of:

- The environmental and policy context of the draft strategy
- How the environmental assessment was carried out
- The detailed findings of the environmental assessment (**Annex A**)
- Enhancement and mitigation
- Recommendations to the plan-makers
- Key aspects of the environmental baseline and sources used

SEPA and NatureScot were consulted on the approach taken to the environmental assessment. **Annex C** shows how their comments have been taken into account.

3. Context

One of the early stages of the SEA process is to consider the relationship of the draft Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland 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 is also important to identify the plans, programmes and strategies that will influence the strategy, and what the strategy should be aligned to, along with those that will be influenced by the strategy itself. **Annex B** in the full report sets out the environmental policy context for the review.

4. Assessment methodology

SEA objectives were developed for each of the environmental receptors scoped into the assessment. The environmental objectives come from our review of plans, programmes, and strategies that we talked of above.

For each receptor, questions related to how the action or activity would affect different components of the receptor were considered, as shown in Table 2.

Not all actions and KPIs have been assessed as not all have strategic environmental impact. These have been 'greyed out' in the detailed assessment (**Annex A**).

The cumulative effects of the actions have been considered under each Priority, whilst the mission has been assessed as the cumulation of all actions and KPIs, and so is the overall environmental effect of the strategy.

Table 2: The SEA Objectives and assessment criteria

Environmental receptor	SEA objective	How will the strategy affect...
Biodiversity, flora & fauna	To safeguard and enhance biodiversity	Habitats and green / blue networks
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>
Cultural heritage	Safeguard and, where appropriate, 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>Address the consequences of climate change for the historic environment</p>
Landscape	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

Environmental receptor	SEA objective	How will the strategy affect...
Material assets	<p>Sustainable use of existing assets</p> <p>Support local infrastructure</p> <p>To support high quality place making</p> <p>Support circular economy and zero waste principles</p>	<p>Sustainable use or reuse of existing infrastructure, materials or assets</p> <p>Creation of high quality places and spaces</p> <p>Reduce waste and promote uptake of sustainable. traditional materials</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>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, live and play</p>

5. Consideration of alternatives

Alternatives identified during the process of developing the KPIs and actions have been included in the assessment matrix under the relevant KPI. These alternatives were assessed against the assessment criteria and compared to the environmental effects they would produce against those of the selected action.

Retaining the same strategic priorities of the current OPiT have also been considered.

Final inclusion, exclusion, and amendments to the priorities, including the mission, the KPIs and their actions, will be informed by the consultation results and further planned engagement during the public consultation period.

6. Summary of assessment findings

The mission, KPIs and actions have all been assessed. No significantly negative environmental effects have been identified.

The overall environmental effects of the strategy have been assessed as being significantly positive for: Climatic factors, Cultural heritage, Landscape, and Population and human health.

The effects on Material assets have been assessed to be significantly positive, but with potential to have an uncertain effect. This is because the receptor accounts for manmade material assets, such as existing infrastructure, where the assessment has identified significantly positive effects; and also natural material assets, such as forestry, where the environmental effect has been assessed as uncertain. This assessment is due to the full detail of all actions and activity not being known at this stage. The risk of adverse effects on material assets is, however, considered to be low, with greater likelihood of there being positive environment effects, given the mitigation in place, and the principles through which the strategy will be delivered.

The environmental effects on Biodiversity, flora and fauna have been assessed to have an uncertain effect. This is due to the full detail of all actions and activity not being known at this stage. The risk of adverse effects on biodiversity, flora, and fauna is considered to be low, with greater likelihood of there being significantly positive effects overall, given the mitigations in place, and the principles through which the strategy will be delivered.

Limitations to the strategy's delivery and impact have been recognised where relevant. Recommendations, where identified, have been included throughout.

7. Mitigation and enhancement

Mitigation and enhancement measures, where identified, are included in the detailed assessment matrices and will be factored in during the design and delivery of the actions and priorities, where they have been identified and recommended.

8. Monitoring

Monitoring of the strategy will be through annual reporting and performance measurement against the strategy's KPIs. It will be important to understand how the strategy is affecting the environment once it is implemented, especially for those receptors assessed to be uncertain. Alongside annual reporting and performance measurement, a delivery mechanism is to be established, where monitoring of environment effects can be incorporated into remits. Monitoring via the delivery mechanism should help identify any unintended environmental effects, or those not predicted through the assessment, and allow for appropriate mitigation to be sought. Both monitoring and reporting should provide a way for additional enhancement measures to be considered.

9. Next Steps

The Environmental Report accompanies the draft strategy for a 12-week public consultation between Monday 28 November 2022 and Monday 20 February 2023.

Following close of the consultation, and subsequent analysis of responses, the final version of the strategy will be prepared.

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

The SEA Post Adoption Statement will show how the Environmental Report (and all the comments expressed on it) has been taken into account in the adopted Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland.

10. Consultation

The public consultation period is for 12 weeks and will end on Monday 20 February 2023. The consultation can be accessed via Historic Environment Scotland Citizen Space portal: <https://haveyoursay.historicenvironment.scot> and the strategy draft, the pre-consultation engagement report, and both the Islands Communities and Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment can be downloaded from the 'Publications' section of the Historic Environment Scotland website.

Any comments you would like to make on either document are welcomed.

With regards to the Environmental Report, we would welcome views on any aspect of it, but in particular, the detailed findings and predictions for likely significant effects set out within Section 4 of the full report, 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?

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