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CORPORATE PLAN 2025-2028

SEA POST ADOPTION STATEMENT

Corporate Plan 2025-2028 – SEA Post Adoption Statement

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Post Adoption Statement is attached for the plan, programme or strategy (PPS) entitled:
Historic Environment Scotland – Corporate Plan 2025-2028

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I. INTRODUCTION

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.

I.1 BACKGROUND TO THE CONSULTATION

The above legislation provides a statutory obligation for HES to prepare a Corporate Plan that sets out a strategic direction for the organisation. Our first Corporate Plan (2016-19) looked at our priorities for the whole of Scotland.

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, required a full SEA.

2. STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS

2.1 THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) 2005 Act (hereafter referred to as the 2005 Act) requires public bodies in Scotland to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) on certain plans, programmes and strategies. SEA is a way of examining plans as they develop and to identify any significant effects they may have on the environment. It ensures that environmental considerations are taken into account and, where required, proposes mitigation measures to avoid or minimise any potentially significant adverse effects on the environment.

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; and
- facilitate openness and transparency

The Environmental Report which documented the potential significant effects of the draft Corporate Plan was made available for consultation alongside the draft Plan. This post adoption statement forms the final output from the SEA process and is required under the 2005 Act. It will outline how the findings of the SEA and the views of consultees have been taken into account in the development of the drafting of the final Corporate Plan.

2.2 INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED IN THE SEA

Structure of this Post Adoption Statement Section 18(3) of the 2005 Act sets out the information that should be included in this SEA Statement.

In summary, it should include:

- how the environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan, programme or strategy;
- how the Environmental Report has been taken into account;
- how the opinions expressed by consultees have been taken into account;
- the reasons for choosing the plan, programme or strategy as adopted, in light of the other reasonable alternatives considered; and
- measures to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan, programme or strategy

3. OPINIONS EXPRESSED DURING THE CONSULTATION

3.1 THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

We consulted on our draft Corporate Plan between 23rd October 2024 and 3rd January 2025. A total of 35 consultation responses were received: 19 from individuals and 16 from organisations.

Table 1.1: Profile of consultation responses

Main area of interest	Number
Organisation - Archaeology	2
Organisation - Built heritage	6
Other organisation	7
Total organisations*	16
Total individuals	19
Total respondents	35

* Total organisations do not add precisely due to non-responses at Q4 (main area of interest)

HES also ran engagement sessions internally and externally, both before and during the consultation period, with some 200 participants across all sessions. We promoted the consultation in the national press and via social media to encourage as many responses as possible. A toolkit for responding to the consultation was sent to the following organisations: BEMIS, CEMVO, Scottish Refugee Council, Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (CRER), MECOPP (Minority Ethnic Carers of People Project, Intercultural Youth Scotland, Scottish Ethnic Minority Older People Forum, Youth Scotland, Scottish Youth Parliament, Stonewall Scotland, Equality Scotland, LGBT Health and Wellbeing, LEAP Sports Scotland, LGBT Youth Scotland, Scottish Trans, Enable, Capability Scotland, RNIB Scotland, British Deaf Association, Scottish Autism, Disability Equality Scotland, Inclusion Scotland, Scottish Commission for Learning Disability, Trussell, Inspiring Scotland, The Wise Group, Fare Share, The Poverty Alliance, The Robertson Trust, and Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) Scotland.

3.2 COMMENTS ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

The consultation asked two questions in relation to the Environmental Report: “Has our environmental impact assessment identified the likely environmental effects of the new plan?” and “Do you think there are any additional environmental mitigation enhancement or monitoring measures that should be considered?”

Table 1.2 - Table of responses

	Yes, has identified likely	No, not identified likely	No response
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	environmental impact	environmental impact	
Archaeology (2)	-	-	2
Built heritage (6)	2	-	4
Other organisation (7)	4	-	3
Total organisations (16)	6	-	10
Individual (19)	9	6	4
Total respondents (35)	15	6	14

Only seven respondents opted to provide any further commentary in support of their response to the first question and of these, two stated that there wasn't enough detail to respond to the question and one questioned if the SEA met the threshold of global standard measures verifiable through environmental experts.

For the second question, ten respondents made additional comments. Four of these repeated their answers to the first part of the question. Other measures were suggested by a single respondent, the most relevant of which included monitoring and mitigation for climate and weather risks, the development of HES's role in relation to Scotland's landscapes and land ownership issues.

The only other comment on the SEA criticised the document for being too long.

4. HOW THE ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT AND CONSULTATION HAS BEEN TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT

4.1 KEY FINDINGS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

The focus of our Corporate Plan is on outcomes and is a response to the high level of engagement that has been carried out in its preparation. The high level nature of the plan and its assessment therefore mean that it is important that we consider the potential for significant environmental effects as a result of the actions, activities and strategies that we carry out in delivering the plan's objectives. In light of this the plans, programmes and strategies that are prepared over the plan period will be required to be considered for qualification under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 on a case by case basis and, where applicable, a full assessment will be carried out.

The assessment was an iterative process with the process testing the wording of the outcomes as they were drafted. Overall, our assessment found that many of the priorities identified within the plan are likely to have significant positive effects, particularly in relation to the historic environment, access and climatic factors topics. We have not identified any potentially significant negative effects.

4.2 ALTERNATIVES

It is a requirement of the 2005 Act that reasonable alternatives be considered during the SEA process. The commitment to prepare a Corporate Plan is established in the Historic Environment Scotland Act 2014. Strategic alternatives to the preparation of our Corporate Plan are therefore relatively constrained and the 'do nothing' approach was not considered to be reasonable in this case. The outcomes in the Corporate Plan are considered to have positive or neutral environmental effects. This is due to the level of detail available at this level and consideration will need to be given to these areas further down in our plan hierarchy. We will therefore consider the plans, programmes and strategies that we will prepare over the plan period for further environmental assessment.

4.3 COMMENTS FROM THE CONSULTATION AUTHORITIES

The SEA Act requires Responsible Authorities to engage with the statutory Consultation Authorities for SEA¹.

NatureScot responded to the Environmental Report, with a nil response from SEPA. NatureScot was supportive of the conclusions we had reached and stated: "We agree with your findings. We particularly welcome your mention of aspects such as nature-positive approaches, placemaking, and developing skills."

¹ The Consultation Authorities are The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and Historic Environment Scotland (HES). Given HES are the Responsible Authority for this plan and its SEA, as is normal practice, we did not fulfil our Consultation Authority on this occasion.

4.4 OUR RESPONSE TO OTHER REPRESENTATIONS ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

We welcome the comments received on the Environmental Report, the majority of which agreed with the recommendations we had identified and are taking forward. We are content that the Strategic Environmental Assessment process offers a robust and appropriate framework for identification and mitigation of environmental effects, with expert scrutiny from the Consultation Authorities. In addition, some of the comments from the consultation focussed on operational areas and were not considered relevant to the corporate plan, as a strategic document. These can, however, be fed down into other plans and strategies as they are developed.

It is accepted that the high level nature of the plan and its assessment make it challenging to be specific in relation to the assessment findings. This is reflected in the findings and has been noted as an area where the lower level plans, programmes and strategies will add further detail. In light of this, these plans will be considered for their potential for environmental effects with full assessment carried out where required. The Corporate Plan recognises the challenges associated with climate change and contains a specific commitment to making responding to these challenges central to our policy and practice. This is reflected in the significant positive effects predicted for the climate change topic against the priority “Climate Action” and outcomes 7, “By 2028 we will have led the way in reducing our climate impacts” and 8, “By 2028 we will have made Scotland’s heritage central to the just transition to net zero”.

4.5 ENVIRONMENTAL MITIGATION & ENHANCEMENT

As the environmental assessment notes, the openness of the priorities and outcomes are such that it was challenging to offer specific mitigation at this level. However, the outputs of the assessment will help to focus our thinking on the environmental effects of our strategic outcomes in preparing lower level plans, programmes and strategies.

4.6 MONITORING

Section 19 of the 2005 Act requires the Responsible Authority to monitor significant environmental impacts of the implementation of the plan, programme or strategy. The purpose of the monitoring is to identify any unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage and to enable them to take appropriate remedial action. While no specific negative effects have been predicted through our assessment, it will still be important to understand how our plan is affecting the environment once it is being 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 our plan will rely on the Key Performance Indicators that are presented in our Corporate Plan. These indicators describe what success will look like and will be underpinned by targets set out in our annual operating plans. Our performance against these will be published each year in an Annual Report.

4.7 FINALISATION OF THE CORPORATE PLAN.

Overall, we consider that the Corporate Plan fulfils its purpose by providing a clear framework to direct our activities in an environmentally sustainable way, incorporating wider environmental issues as far as reasonably possible.

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.



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