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DRAFT RESPONSIBLE TOURISM FRAMEWORK

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT
ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT –
NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

SEPTEMBER 2022

**Responsible Tourism Framework
Strategic Environmental Assessment
Environmental Report – Non-Technical Summary**

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1. Introduction

The HES Responsible Tourism Framework has been developed to define the organisation's understanding of, and role in, responsible tourism. It outlines the principles guiding Historic Environment Scotland's (HES) decision-making and sets out how tourism in the historic environment can contribute to better quality of life and meaningful experiences for all.

Globally, there is growing recognition of the importance of transforming tourism to a force for good by mainstreaming environmental, social, and economic sustainability in all tourism related activity. Responsible tourism addresses existing and future negative impacts of tourism on resources, the environment, communities, and economies. It creates new opportunities for HES to pro-actively manage the balance between deriving benefits from cultural heritage while sustaining it for future generations.

Our Place in Time (OPiT), Scotland's strategy for the historic environment, has identified the historic environment as key to Scottish tourism, and as Scotland's lead public body for the historic environment and the largest operator of paid-for visitor attractions, HES has a responsibility to show leadership in the just transition to a low carbon economy, in which responsible tourism will play a significant role in.

Responsible tourism is cross-cutting, guided by and forming part of various national policies and legislation, such as the global climate emergency, the shift to a circular economy, the transformation to a wellbeing economy, the just transition to net zero and the place principles. Adopting responsible tourism principles also supports the national tourism strategy, Scotland Outlook 2030: Responsible Tourism for a Sustainable Future, developed by the Scottish Tourism Alliance.

As Scotland's lead public body for the historic environment and the largest operator of paid-for visitor attractions, HES has a responsibility to show leadership in the just transition to a low carbon economy. HES's commitment to responsible tourism is rooted in the HES Corporate Plan – Heritage for All. Responsible tourism is also a key part of the HES Climate Action Plan 2020-2025, which sets out, across seven themes, how the organisation will place the environmental impact of its activities at the heart of decision-making. As well as highlighting the approach to properties in care (PICs), the framework will also cover HES's work with partners and other stakeholders on responsible tourism related activities and has the potential to serve as inspiration for the wider historic environment and tourism sector.

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

The key stages of SEA for the HES Responsible Tourism Framework involve:

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

The assessment process is structured around SEA topic areas. These topic areas are the range of environmental issues which should be explored through the assessment. They include biodiversity, flora and fauna, population and human health, water, soil, air, climate, material assets, cultural heritage and landscape.

The Environmental Report:

- Describes the environmental and policy context of the draft HES Responsible Tourism Framework
- Describes the relevant aspects of the environmental baseline
- Explains how the environmental assessment was carried out and which parts of the framework were assessed
- Sets out the findings of the environmental assessment
- Discusses options for improving the positive effects and mitigating the negative effects of the framework where appropriate

SEPA and NatureScot were consulted on the approach taken to the environmental assessment. **Annex C** of the full report demonstrate 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 HES Responsible Tourism Framework 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 both the plans, programmes and strategies that will influence the Framework and those that will be influenced by the Framework itself. **Annex D** of the full report sets out our review of the legislation, policies, plans and strategies that are considered to be of most direct relevance to the Framework.

In order to help consider the effects of the draft Framework we gathered information about relevant aspects of the environmental baseline. Given that it covers our estate across Scotland, a national baseline has been reviewed. **Annex B** of the Environmental Report provides a detailed environmental baseline.

4. Assessment Methodology

SEA objectives were developed for each of the environmental receptors scoped into the assessment. These are supported by more detailed assessment criteria, as shown below. This approach helps to make the assessment systematic and consistent. The environmental objectives come from our review of plans, programmes and strategies that we talked of above, and the performance of our activities against these objectives is tested by a series of questions that help to focus the assessment.

Environmental Topic	SEA Objective	How will the HES Responsible Tourism Framework affect...
Cultural Heritage	Safeguard and where appropriate enhance the historic environment	<p>...designated tangible features of the historic environment?</p> <p>...undesigned / unknown tangible features of the historic environment?</p>

		<p>...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>
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.	...landscape character, local distinctiveness, and scenic value?
Biodiversity, flora and fauna	To safeguard and enhance biodiversity	<p>...species and habitats?</p> <p>...green / blue networks?</p> <p>...woodland (including ancient and semi-natural)?</p> <p>...opportunities for increased biodiversity?</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> <p>...the reduction of inequalities?</p>
Air Quality	Improve air quality	<p>...tourism related travel emissions?</p> <p>...other tourism related emissions?</p>
Material Assets	<p>Protect and promote tourism assets</p> <p>Support local infrastructure</p> <p>To support high quality place making</p>	<p>...HES tourism assets?</p> <p>...local tourism assets?</p> <p>...management of infrastructure?</p>

	Support circular economy and zero waste principles	...creation of high-quality places and spaces? ...the reduction of waste?
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?

5. Consideration of alternatives

The outcomes and aspirations set out in the draft HES Responsible Tourism Framework highlight how it will strengthen the ambitions of the HES Climate Action Plan 2020-2025, introducing positive environmental actions into operations across HES whilst reducing carbon emissions, increasing resilience against climate change impacts, and enhancing sustainability, social, economic, cultural, as well as environmental.

The inclusion and exclusion of aspirations in the Framework presented for consultation has been discussed through internal workshopping and discussions. Final inclusion, exclusion or any amendments to the aspirations will be informed by the consultation results.

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 Framework are likely to generate cumulative effects on any of the environmental receptors scoped into the assessment.

6. Summary of assessment findings

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.

Overall, our assessment shows that the outcomes, and aspirations that underpin them, will generally have positive effects across those environmental topics that have been scoped into the assessment. We have identified one potentially negative effect at this level; however, mitigation measures have been identified to address this. The outputs of our assessment will inform the detailed delivery of activities.

The assessment methodology incorporates a cumulative assessment of aspirations, which has contributed to the findings for the overarching 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.

7. Mitigation and enhancement

One negative environmental impact has been identified. Existing mitigation measures can help to address this.

There are areas where consideration should be given to approaches that would enhance the positive effects identified, and where care should be taken in delivery of the Framework, in order to balance the competing interests on the historic environment and their impacts, to ensure a sustainable future for the resource.

As openness of some of the Framework's aspirations makes it challenging to offer specific mitigation at this level. It is recommended that in these cases, the focus should instead be on influencing the delivery mechanisms that will underpin the aspirations.

8. Monitoring

It will be important to understand how the Framework 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 Framework 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.

9. Next steps

The public consultation period on our draft HES Responsible Tourism Framework ends on 30 November 2022. A final version of our Framework 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 Responsible Tourism Framework.

10. Consultation

The Environmental Report accompanies the draft Framework for a 9-week public consultation between 28 September and 30 November 2022. 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 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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Historic Environment Scotland

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

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