



DESIGNATIONS STRATEGY

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
PRE-SCREENING REPORT

16 April 2025

To: sea.gateway@gov.scot

SEA Gateway
The Scottish Government
Area 2-H South
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh EH6 6QQ

A SEA Pre-Screening Report is attached for the plan, programme or strategy (PPS) entitled: HES Designations Strategy

Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005: We consider the above strategy qualifies under section 5(4) of the above legislation.

The Responsible Authority is: Historic Environment Scotland

Contact:

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Title: HES Designations Strategy

What is the purpose of the strategy?

Our Designations Strategy will set out a sustainable long-term approach to delivery of national-level designation in Scotland.

What prompted the strategy?

Delivery of national-level designations is a key function of Historic Environment Scotland (HES) and a foundation for a range of decision-making, from planning and land use decisions to maintenance of historic properties, and investigation of archaeological sites.

Heritage designation has been in place across the UK since the 19th century. The context for our work has undergone huge change through the 20th century and this is continuing. Society values heritage in different ways and how we operate has also evolved to reflect changing practices and priorities.

Delivery of national-level heritage designation is resource-intensive for HES and more widely. As with any other public body, we must think carefully about where to put our resources.

Since 2023, we have been working on a strategic review to consider if the current approach is the right one and fit for future challenges. The strategy addresses the key findings of the review.

Subject and period covered?

Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage.

The strategy will set a vision for 2035 and identify priorities for the period 2025-28.

What is the area covered by the strategy?

All HES designation operations across Scotland.

What will the strategy contain?

The strategy describes a vision for designations in 2035, our mission, our approach to designation and includes a series of priorities and initiatives that will drive our work over the next three years (2025-28). The strategy will guide how we deploy our resources on national-level designation, including how we engage with Scotland's people to inform designation decisions and how we will improve the quality of our records, and how we will approach our decision-making. It also includes priorities to gather evidence about the impacts of designation, and for HES to lead a conversation to develop long-term priorities for heritage protection in Scotland.

Will the strategy have environmental effects?

With reference to the criteria specified in Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 we consider that the strategy will have minimal

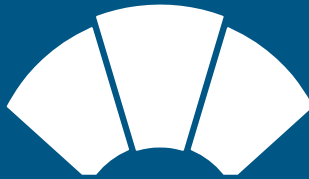
environmental effects. This is principally due to its role in continuing to deliver a range of existing statutory functions and because the priorities that will guide the strategy have been considered and assessed at a strategic level through the environmental assessment for [Our Past, Our Future](#) and mostly recently in the emerging [HES Corporate Plan 2025-2028](#) and its [environmental assessment](#). The strategy will also focus upon administrative functions associated with designations, with no material change to the purpose of the various designation systems and its outcomes.

Both environmental assessments mentioned above identified the importance of supporting a wide range of environmental issues, particularly climate change adaptation and mitigation and this will continue to form a core part of our current activities and be reflected in our designation strategy. We have also recently committed to reviewing the [Historic Environment Policy for Scotland](#) which sets the overall policy framework for the management of Scotland's historic environment, and which will be considered for SEA separately in due course.

Historic Environment Scotland's determination

Based on the information provided above, we consider our Designations Strategy is likely to have minimal environmental effects. It is the view of Historic Environment Scotland that, under Section 7 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, a strategic environmental assessment is not required prior to its adoption.

Historic Environment Scotland
16 April 2025



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