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OUTLINE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR HOLYROOD PARK

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
SCREENING DETERMINATION

22 September 2023

By email to: sea_gateway@gov.scot

Longmore House
Salisbury Place
Edinburgh
EH9 1SH
Alasdair.McKenzie@hes.scot
T: 0131 668 8924

SEA Gateway ref: 01803 Screening

22 September 2023

**Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005
Holyrood Park Outline Strategic Plan – Strategic Environmental Assessment
determination**

Following the submission of our Screening Report for the Holyrood Park Outline Strategic Plan, submitted to the SEA Gateway on 11 May 2023, I write to confirm our formal determination on the requirement for environmental assessment under the above legislation.

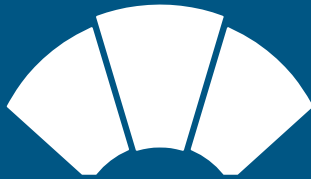
Screening process

Historic Environment Scotland has consulted The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and NatureScot on their view as to whether the Holyrood Park Outline Strategic Plan is likely to have significant environmental effects (Screening reference [01803](#)). With reference to their environmental areas of interest, both SEPA and NatureScot have agreed that there are unlikely be significant effects.

Our determination

Taking these views into account and with reference to the criteria included in [Schedule 2](#) of the Act, we have now formally determined that our Outline Strategic Plan for Holyrood Park is unlikely to have significant environmental effects. A Strategic Environmental Assessment is therefore not required. I would be grateful if you could forward this to determination the Consultation Authorities and advise that we will shortly publish the enclosed notification in The Edinburgh Evening News.

**Historic Environment Scotland
22 September 2023**



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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
VAT Number: GB 221 8680 15

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HOLYROOD PARK OUTLINE STRATEGIC PLAN

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
SCREENING REPORT

11 May 2023

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: Holyrood Park Outline Strategic Plan

Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005: We consider the above plan qualifies under section 5(3) of the above legislation.

The Responsible Authority is: Historic Environment Scotland

Contact:

Peter Buchanan
Historic Environment Scotland
Longmore House
Salisbury Place
Edinburgh
EH9 1SH

peter.buchanan.@hes.scot

07990 600 104

Title: Holyrood Park Outline Strategic Plan

Purpose of plan: The Outline Strategic Plan is the first step on a journey that will need to be shaped with communities and stakeholders to ensure that a sustainable and bold future emerges for the Park. Three key steps have been identified to further develop the strategy and provisional project ideas, namely engagement with stakeholders and partners, public engagement and the development of the project. These would occur throughout 2023 and 2024.

The intention is to establish a clear Purpose for the Park to shape and guide its evolution, a purpose rooted in community, climate and place.

Alongside this, the Plan sets out a clear Vision and suite of Objectives to direct the evolution of its landscape over the next decade or so. The Plan also explores new approaches to the Governance and the regulatory regime for the Park. Finally, the Plan provides a preliminary list of additional plans that will be developed to inform the brief and design stages to achieve the Vision and meet the Objectives.

What prompted the plan: Holyrood Park is truly a city park like no other, a remarkable upland landscape at the heart of Scotland's capital city that shapes the City's identity and encompasses a range of habitats and heritage. While it is recognised as a place of outstanding value and importance, it has vast potential to offer even greater benefits than it currently does for people, nature and understanding our cultural heritage. It has the potential to measurably improve peoples' lives and wellbeing; to help us adapt to the ongoing and deepening climate crisis; to support the City's visitor economy; and to provide an exemplary model of integrated 21st century approaches to land management and change.

The Outline Strategic Plan is being prepared for consultation on a range of issues, including those listed below, which affect the future management of the park.

Subject: Cultural heritage, biodiversity, flora and fauna, landscape, people.

Period covered & frequency of updates: 5 years or as required.

Area covered by the plan: Holyrood Park and surrounding area (see [map](#)). Holyrood Park is a small area, covering 259ha, with a circumference of 8km.

Summary of the plan: The outline strategic plan will provide a vision, series of principles and objectives for the future management of the park. This is expected to include:

- landscape management
- access and movement
- facilities
- inclusive learning and education
- governance and stewardship

Environmental issues: Since its enclosure in c. 1541 by James V, the Park has been largely undeveloped (excepting some quarrying, land drainage and military activity), with agricultural activity continuing until the 1970s. The sustained grazing of the site over the centuries created a network of grassland habitats, in particular acid and calcareous lowland unimproved grasslands. The habitats were a key reason, along with the remarkable geology, for the Park's designation as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in 1953, 1972, 1986 and 2011. Since the cessation of almost all grazing in the 1970s (HES believe due to increasing conflict between the management of the sheep flocks and recreational users of the Park), these grassland habitats have been subject to different management regimes and are now in an unfavorable and declining condition. The Park is also of exceptional interest due to the diversity of plant species present including many rare vascular species.

Holyrood Park is a large, complex and challenging place set in a mixed and hanging urban environment. There are many existing challenges with further on the immediate horizon. These include:

- Climate change
- User number growth
- Declining habitat and water quality
- Natural regeneration and recolonisation
- Highly degraded path network
- Traffic management and conflict
- Active travel patterns
- User safety issues
- Rockfall
- Community engagement
- Funding and finance

Screening assessment: With reference to the criteria specified in Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 we consider that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects. This is mainly because the priorities which will delivery of the plan have been considered and assessed at a strategic level through the previous environmental assessments for Our Place in Time 2014 ([SEA/00783](#)) and HES's previous Corporate Plan 2015-19 ([SEA/01049](#)) and/or will be considered through project level consenting procedures (such as SSSI or Scheduled Monument Consent).

Our [Corporate Plan](#) for 2022 onwards has recently been updated and our determination for this ([SEA/01673](#)) was that, pending a wider review in 2023/24, the findings of this previous assessment remain valid. Our Place in Time has also recently updated and replaced with Our Past, Our Future and a SEA has been undertaken as part of this process ([SEA Environmental Report](#)).

The vision, principles and objectives for the park will also be influenced by the Historic Environment Policy for Scotland ([SEA/01365](#)) and related policies for

heritage management, including the [Scheduled Monuments Consents Policy](#) and guidance on [Developing with Nature](#). Where relevant (e.g. if planning permission is required), actions flowing from the plan will also be delivered in line with the National Planning Framework and City of Edinburgh Local Development Plan and other relevant plans and strategies.

We have also recently produced a Responsible Tourism Framework ([SEA Environmental Report](#)) which sets our strategic approach to the management of tourism aspects of Properties in Care, including Holyrood Park.

All of these previous assessments 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 approach for Holyrood Park and other properties in our care.

Finally, while the Plan may set play a part in setting the framework for the future consent of (non-EIA) projects (e.g. works requiring planning permission or scheduled monument consent), these will relate to the use of small areas at a local level and any environmental effects are unlikely to be strategically significant.

Historic Environment Scotland's view

Based on the information above, we consider that the outline strategic plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects. We would welcome the views of the Consultation Authorities on this.

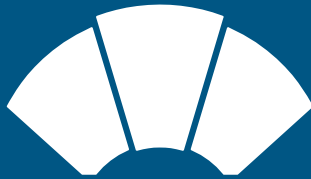
Historic Environment Scotland
11 May 2023

HOLYROOD PARK



[View Holyrood Park on a Google map](#)

[View Holyrood Park on Scotland's environment map](#)



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