

HISTORIC SCOTLAND CORPORATE PLAN 2012 -15

Environmental Report – Non-technical summary
October 2011



1. Non technical summary

1.1 Introduction

Historic Scotland is an Executive Agency of the Scottish Government. All functions performed by the Agency are carried out on behalf of Scottish Ministers. The Historic Scotland [Framework Document 2008](#) sets out the aims of the Agency in contributing to the Government's purpose of increasing sustainable economic growth. Historic Scotland's current Corporate Plan covers the period 2008–2011. A revised Corporate Plan needs to be developed to cover the period 2012–2015. The purpose of the plan is to set out Historic Scotland's priorities over the next three years in line with Scottish Government Purpose, Strategic Priorities and National Outcomes.

Plans, programmes and strategies with the potential to have significant environmental effects are to be subject to environmental assessment prior to adoption. This is called 'strategic environmental assessment'. Historic Scotland considered that its Corporate Plan 2012 – 2015 has the potential to result in significant environmental effects and so this report documents the assessment we have undertaken.

1.2 What is Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)?

SEA is a systematic method for considering the likely environmental effects of certain plans, programmes and strategies. 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

SEA is required by the [Environmental Assessment \(Scotland\) Act 2005](#). The key stages involve:

Stage	Activity
Screening	Determining whether the plan 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 Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA).
Assessment	Testing the contents of the plan 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 plan.
Adoption & monitoring	Providing information on the adopted plan, 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 our Corporate Plan 2012–15
- ◆ Describes the relevant aspects of the environmental baseline
- ◆ Explains how the environmental assessment was carried out and which parts of the plan were assessed
- ◆ Sets out the findings of the environmental assessment
- ◆ Makes recommendations for improving the positive effects and mitigating the negative effects of the plan
- ◆ Proposes indicators for monitoring significant or unknown effects

SEPA and SNH were consulted on the approach taken to the environmental assessment. Section 2.2 and Annex 2 demonstrate how their comments have been taken into account.

1.2 Context

One of the early stages of the SEA process is to consider the relationship of the plan to other relevant policies, plans, strategies and environmental objectives. This allows key environmental issues to be identified for consideration during the plan preparation process. It is also important to identify both the plans and strategies that will influence the plan and those that will be influenced by the plan. Annex 1 sets out the review of the legislation, policies, plans and strategies that are considered to be of most direct relevance to the plan.

We also considered, in consultation with SNH & SEPA, the scope of our assessment. We decided to focus upon five topics – cultural heritage, climatic factors, population, human health and material assets. Annex 2 sets out our reasoning for this.

In order to help consider the effects of the draft plan we gathered information about relevant aspects of the environmental baseline. Because the plan will identify priorities for both our own estate and Scotland as a whole a national baseline was reviewed. Section 3 of the Environmental Report summarises the environmental baseline.

1.3 Assessment of the environmental effects of the draft plan

A framework has been used to help predict the environmental effects of the plan. This is shown in Table 2 and allows questions to be asked whilst stepping through the requirements of SEA. This approach helps to make the assessment systematic and consistent.

1.4 Effects of our strategic priorities

The strategic priorities included in the draft plan are organised under five headings:

- ◆ Championing Scotland's historic environment;
- ◆ Contributing to sustainable economic growth;
- ◆ Managing Scotland's historic environment creatively;
- ◆ Supporting the transition to a low carbon economy; and
- ◆ Delivering our business.

Not all of the strategic priorities identified will lead to significant environment effects on the ground. This is because some relate to the way in which we do business and the values that our staff uphold. Other effects may arise, not as specific tangible impacts, but as a result of the influence our plan is likely to have across the heritage sector. For completeness, all of the strategic priorities have been assessed against the four assessment questions and where there is no strong link or limited interaction this has been noted.

1.5 Consideration of alternatives

The preparation of the plan is required by our framework agreement with the Scottish Government. We therefore did not consider alternatives to having a plan – instead we looked at alternative ways of delivering our Vision for the historic environment. Our primary focus has been upon the alternative strategic priorities that have been considered during the plan preparation process. For example, alternative priorities and where choices are being made about where we focus our resources. That is the level at which significant effects are most likely to arise.

1.6 Assessment method

We developed a criteria to test the priorities within the draft plan. They are:

- ◆ **Historic Environment:** Will the priority help to safeguard or improve the condition of the historic environment?
- ◆ **Population and Human Health:** Will the priority promote access to the historic environment for recreation, understanding or enjoyment?
- ◆ **Climatic Factors:** Will the priority help to reduce the causes of climate change?
- ◆ **Climatic Factors:** Will the priority help to deliver adaptation to the effects of climate change?
- ◆ **Material Assets:** Will the priority help to reduce waste, encourage reuse and promote sustainable practice?

1.7 Assessment findings

We assessed all of our strategic priorities for environmental effects - the specific priorities can be found in the consultative draft plan on pages 9 to 11. The detailed findings of how these affect the environment are contained within Annex 3 and can be summarised as follows:

Championing Scotland's Historic Environment

We found that many of these priorities would have **positive** effects due to their potential to aid both decision making for the betterment of the historic environment and exploration of alternative approaches to the management of sensitive sites. The priorities also score strongly against the environmental objectives in that they are focused on promoting access and in particular widening that access to a greater spectrum of Scottish society.

While unlikely to be significant at this level, potential carbon savings could be made through the innovative ways of interpreting sites. We are currently looking at ways to address this issue through our carbon management plan which is reviewing and challenging the way in which our estate is managed.

Contributing to Sustainable Economic Growth

The majority of these priorities will make a **positive** contribution towards the promotion of and access to the historic environment both at a local level by getting more people to visit sites as well as at a national level by capitalising upon the desirability of Scotland as a place to live and work by attracting business and investment. There are many environmental benefits from this, including regeneration which could in turn help to improve the condition of heritage assets (e.g. renovation and re-use of historic buildings) and create better places to live and work.

However, our assessment also highlighted the potential for some priorities to have **negative** effects due to increased pressure on sensitive and finite heritage assets. This highlights the importance of developing a sustainable tourism policy and a robust approach to heritage management. It is also important to note however that these priorities will also bring opportunities to improve the condition of the historic environment and this is particularly true where we can attract investment and create employment in traditional skills (e.g. thatching, stonemasonry) as this will help to safeguard and improve the condition of our historic environment in the long term (i.e through our [Traditional Skills Strategy](#)).

We need to bear in mind however that encouraging more visitors to our Properties in Care and heritage assets more generally can place pressures on their management and will have implications for CO₂ emissions due to increased travel (to often remote areas). We should ensure that we promote sustainable travel and work with partners in delivering not just cost effective, but carbon friendly ways of facilitating access.

Managing Scotland's historic environment creatively

All of these priorities make a **positive** contribution towards the safeguarding and improvement of the historic environment – for example, our work with Scottish Government, fellow key agencies and other partners will help to enable quicker, more informed and creative outcomes through the development planning and management processes. Getting more communities involved in the management of the historic environment can improve the condition of certain elements which otherwise may not be cared for or proactively managed. Getting more people involved in the management of the historic environment can also open up the benefits it can bring to a far wider audience, helping to increase awareness and understanding. In particular, the priority to retain and reinvest earned income and commercialise certain activities will enable us to plan ahead and be more creative in the way we safeguard and promote the historic environment.

The priorities that have been identified as having **positive** effects highlight the opportunities to better integrate national priorities for tackling climate change and waste reduction (e.g. delivery of the Zero Waste plan) at various levels – from our review of national policy through to work being taken forward on the buildings at risk project.

Finally, our review of our grants for major projects and procurement activities not only provide an opportunity to help deliver our vision for the heritage sector but also provide a great opportunity to help deliver other national priorities. For example, the review should take into account the potential for our grants to help meet our climate change obligations, commitments under the zero waste plan and other environmental priorities. For example, can we prioritise our grant giving criteria to reflect these and other cross cutting ambitions?

Supporting the transition to a low carbon economy

These priorities make a **positive** contribution to the safeguarding and improvement of the historic environment through informed decision making and developing carbon friendly ways of managing heritage assets – from advice on the thermal properties of windows through to the sensitive re-use of industrial buildings. The priority relating to indigenous material combined with our research will aid in improving the integrity and authenticity of works carried out across the heritage sector. In terms of research, it is important that information about sustainable heritage management is disseminated widely - particularly to those involved in both day-to-day and strategic decision making.

Overall, each priority under this theme is likely to make a **positive** contribution towards tackling and adapting to climate change. However, we need to bear in mind that while there would be a reduction in emissions associated with importing conservation building material it is important that the **potential negative** effects associated with the methods employed in obtaining indigenous materials (e.g. slate and sandstone mining) are fully considered and mitigated.

The priority to encourage sustainable tourism and develop practical solutions will play an important role in **mitigating** the predicted effects of increasing tourism to our Properties in Care and beyond.

1.8 Mitigation measures / recommendations

Through the strategic environmental assessment, mitigation can be achieved in a number of different ways. It can involve making changes to the plan itself e.g. amending our priorities, adding environmental priorities to the plan to strengthen the inclusion of environmental issues or proposing more detailed measures that should be considered as the plan is implemented.

Overall, we found that the plan has the potential to result in significantly positive effects on the historic environment. No significant negative effects were predicted during the course of the assessment which would require specific mitigation measures to be identified. Although there were areas where our priorities could result in a conflict/tension between two environmental interests in some areas it is possible to offset these through the contributions made by another (mitigating) priority. The assessment has therefore been helpful in illustrating these issues and refining the priorities developed so far.

It was also possible to make a number of changes to further improve the clarity and coverage of the draft plan and to enhance the positive effects identified. Other recommendations to be considered as we finalise the plan are summarised below:

- ◆ Can the review of our grant giving criteria reflect not only our vision for the historic environment but other cross cutting national ambitions?
- ◆ Develop a clearer understanding of the efficient use of materials within HS's estate through further analysis and discussion with SG & SEPA on measuring address data gaps
- ◆ Examine sustainable ways of promoting our sites and work in partnership with transport providers to reduce emissions and increase efficiency

We would welcome your views on any other environmental matter which you think we should consider in finalising the plan.

1.9 Monitoring

While no specific significantly negative effects have been predicted through the assessment it will still be important to understand how the 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 the plan will likely rely on the Key Performance Indicators (already

established) and a series of indicators developed to measure performance towards the delivery of our vision. In April 2012 we will publish a long-term analytical strategy which will show, among other things, how we intend to measure progress over the plan period and beyond in achieving the Vision and we will ensure that environmental indicators and the issues identified in this assessment are factored into this process.

1.10 Consultation

This Environmental Report accompanies the draft plan for a six week public consultation between **5th October 2011** and **16th November 2011**. 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 question to consider is:

Do you agree with the results of the environmental assessment and have the key issues associated with the environmental implications of the draft Plan been identified?

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