



**Scottish Natural Heritage
Corporate Strategy 2008-2013
Corporate Plan 2008-2011**

**Strategic Environment
Assessment**

**Post Adoption
Statement**

September 2008

POST-ADOPTION SEA STATEMENT – COVER NOTE

PART 1

To: SEA.gateway@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
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PART 2

A post-adoption SEA statement is attached for the PPS entitled:

SNH Corporate Strategy 2008-2013 and SNH Corporate Plan 2008-2011

The Responsible Authority is:

Scottish Natural Heritage

PART 3

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Signature & date	

Post Adoption Statement for Scottish Natural Heritage Corporate Strategy 2008-2013 and Corporate Plan 2008-2011

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) is a non-departmental public body (NDPB), responsible through Ministers to the Scottish Parliament. SNH's remit is to promote the care and improvement, responsible enjoyment, greater understanding and appreciation and sustainable use of the natural heritage, now and for future generations.
- 1.2. This Statement prepared as part of the Strategic Environmental Statement undertaken by SNH in support of the development of SNH's Corporate Strategy and Plan, and in accordance with Section 18 of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. It follows the public consultation on an Environmental Report and draft Corporate Strategy carried out earlier in 2008.

Where to access documents

- 1.3. The Corporate Strategy 2008-2013 and Corporate Plan 2008-2011 as adopted, together with the Environmental Report and this Post Adoption Statement are available on SNH's website at www.snh.org.uk-strategy-pd00.htm.
- 1.4. Copies are also available for inspection free of charge at SNH's corporate office at:

Great Glen House
Leachkin Road
Inverness
IV3 8NW
Tel: 01463 725000. Office hours 0830-1700, Monday-Friday.
- 1.5. If you would like copies of any of these documents, please contact:

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1.6 The following are the **Key Facts about SNH's Corporate Strategy and Plan:**

Responsible Authority	Scottish Natural Heritage
Title of Plan	SNH's Corporate Strategy 2008-2013 SNH's Corporate Plan 2008-2011
Plan Subject	Natural heritage
Period Covered	5 years (Financial years 2008/9 – 2013/14)
Requirement for the Plan	SNH's last Corporate Strategy was published in 2003 and formed the basis for the previous Corporate Plan, which expired in March 2008. The Corporate Strategy needed to be renewed to reflect changes in the strategic direction for SNH including the wider public policy agenda.
Frequency of Updates	Every 4 years
Plan area	The Strategy & Plan cover the whole of Scotland
Summary of content /nature of plan	The Corporate Strategy sets out the strategic direction for Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and the priorities for delivering this over the next 5 years. The Corporate Plan sets out more detailed actions for the period 2008-2011.
Date Adopted	29 August 2008

2. Strategic Environmental Assessment of SNH's Corporate Strategy and Plan

- 2.1. The Corporate Strategy 2008-2013 and Plan 2008-2011 have been subject to a process of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), as required under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. This has included the following activities:
- Taking into account the views of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency and the Scottish Ministers (Historic Scotland) regarding the scope and level of detail that was appropriate for the Environmental Report
 - Preparing an Environmental Report on the likely significant effects on the environment of the draft Strategy which included consideration of:
 - the baseline data relating to the current state of the environment;
 - links between the Strategy and other relevant strategies, policies, plans, programmes and environmental protection objectives;
 - existing environmental problems affecting the Strategy;
 - the plan's likely significant effects on the environment (positive and negative);
 - measures envisaged for the prevention, reduction and offsetting of any significant adverse effects;
 - an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives chosen;
 - monitoring measures to ensure that any unforeseen environmental effects will be identified allowing for appropriate remedial action to be taken.
 - Public consultation on the Environmental Report alongside the draft Corporate Strategy 25th January – 24th March 2008.
 - Taking into account the Environmental Report and the results of consultation in completing the Corporate Strategy
 - Committing to monitoring the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the Corporate Strategy. This will also identify any unforeseen adverse significant environmental effects such as to enable taking appropriate remedial action.
- 2.2. The Corporate Strategy sets out the strategic direction for SNH, the priorities for delivering this over the next 5 years, and the main actions intended. The Corporate Plan sets out more detailed activities under a set of Programmes that will take forward these Actions over the next 3 years, and identifies measures of success for each Programme. The Strategic Environmental Assessment assessed the environmental effects at the level of the Strategic Priorities and Actions. The key activities for the next 3 years that were identified for the draft Corporate Plan were considered in light of the Environmental Report prepared for the Corporate Strategy. We concluded that the Environmental Report adequately identifies the environmental effects of these activities, i.e. that for each of these, the environmental effects are identified by the assessment of effects for the relevant Strategic Priorities and Actions in the Corporate Strategy (including the amendments made in response to the public consultation).

3. Consideration of the environment in the preparation of the Strategy including the Environmental Report and comments on it

- 3.1. This section outlines how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Corporate Strategy and Plan and how the environmental report has been taken into account, including comments on the Report from the public consultation.
- 3.2. SNH's Corporate Strategy has five strategic Priorities:
- **Caring for nature:** Enhancing Scotland's biodiversity and re-kindling the relationship between people and the natural world
 - **Responding to climate change:** Understanding the effects of climate change and helping to deliver the contribution that the natural heritage can make in limiting it and adapting to it.
 - **Delivering health and well-being:** Creating places where people want to live or visit, enhancing landscapes, providing opportunities for healthier and greener lifestyles and enabling people to enjoy the natural heritage
 - **Supporting the Scottish economy:** Identifying and helping to deliver the contribution that the natural heritage can make to sustainable economic growth.
 - **Delivering a high quality public service:** Maintaining an efficient, responsive and environmentally responsible organisation which provides effective guidance on the natural heritage and value and satisfaction for customers, and working jointly with other agencies to ensure an integrated and streamlined approach
- 3.3. These priorities clearly set out an agenda to deliver positive environmental benefits. The Actions identified under each Priority take account of recent environmental trends as summarised in the environmental baseline for Environmental Report.
- 3.4. The Environmental Report identifies the positive effects of the Actions in the Corporate Strategy across the range of environmental factors included in the SEA. These include those which are part of the natural heritage, its enjoyment and sustainable use, and therefore central to SNH's priorities, e.g. biodiversity, landscape, public access and sustainable use. The assessment demonstrates that other environmental factors should also benefit from implementation of the Actions, including climate change, public health, soil, water quality and the historic environment. These potential positive benefits can be enhanced through making the links, for example between the natural and cultural heritage, and between access and public health, as identified in the Priority *Delivering Health and Well-being*. They will also be enhanced through close working between SNH and others, as will be taken forward under the Priority *Delivering a High Quality Public Service* which includes a focus on working in collaboration with others.
- 3.5. The only area where the Environmental Assessment identified potential negative impacts was from SNH's advice on renewable energy development in support of the outcome under the Priority *Responding to Climate Change*. As acknowledged by the consultation authority, Historic Scotland, these potential negative effects should be addressed through the planning process.
- 3.6. The assessment of the alternative of SNH not carrying out the Actions identified under the Strategic Priorities demonstrated that in the absence of SNH action, the significant positive environmental benefits would not be achieved. All the Actions

identified have therefore been included in the adopted Corporate Strategy (with some amendments in light of the public consultation as summarised in section 4 below).

- 3.7. The following table sets out the comments received in response to the consultation on the Environmental Report and how these have been addressed. A revised Environmental Report is available from the same address, or through the same weblink, as this Statement (see section 1 above). This revised Report will be used as part of the monitoring of the Corporate Strategy (see section 5) and in future reviews of the Strategy and Plan.

Table 1: Comments on the Environmental Report and how these have been addressed

Consultee	Comment	How it has been addressed
Historic Scotland	Content with scope and level of detail of the assessment	Noted
Historic Scotland	Welcome intention to consider whether significant environmental affects are likely to emerge from the detailed actions in the Corporate Plan	The detail in the Corporate Plan has now been assessed as set out in paragraph 2.2 above. No additional environmental effects have been identified.
Historic Scotland	It would be useful to include information on the characteristics of the historic environment and its relationship with the natural environment and landscape in Appendix B	Noted for future SEA.
Historic Scotland	Content with approach to alternatives but suggest it may have been useful to focus on actions where SNH has flexibility, excluding actions relating to statutory obligations.	Noted. This was considered in determining the approach to alternatives but it was concluded that it is difficult to separate out SNH's statutory duties from those where it has flexibility, since SNH's statutory remit as set out in the Natural Heritage (Scotland) Act 1991 is quite broadly defined, and does not relate to just, for example, designated areas.
Historic Scotland	Responding to Climate Change: agree that potential negative effects from renewable energy developments that provide overriding climate change benefits should be addressed through the planning process but do not agree that it can be stated that these will not be significant. SNH's Corporate Strategy will not capture historic environment interests in influencing development planning decisions.	Agreed. SNH's role is not primarily to promote renewable energy but to advise on minimising its impacts, whilst taking account of the potential climate change benefits of infrastructure. This action in itself is not likely to have significant effects on the historic environment. Environmental Report amended.
Historic Scotland	Responding to Climate Change: The positive links between better understanding and management of peatland and carbon rich soils and the historic environment could be	Agreed. Positive benefits, e.g. for preserving archaeological features, added to the assessment.

	identified in the detailed assessment	
Historic Scotland	Delivering health & well-being: Whilst desirable, do not agree that positive effect from integrating the historic environment into access management will arise directly from the Corporate Strategy – but rather from a combination of plans and strategies.	Agreed. Positive effects removed from assessment.
Historic Scotland	Supporting the Scottish economy: question whether it is intended that action related to tourism considers cultural heritage objectives and suggests that it may not be appropriate to do so.	Noted. The assessment simply highlights the opportunity for integrating cultural heritage with natural heritage in developing places for visitors.
Historic Scotland	Monitoring: Note the intention to take account of national trends for the historic environment, public health and sustainable travel patterns, not covered by Natural Heritage Indicators, State that this is different from monitoring the effects of the strategy on the historic environment but recognise difficulty in developing appropriate indicators.	Noted. SNH considers that it is outwith its role to develop indicators for areas that others are monitoring, but takes account of these in developing its policies in delivery of its Corporate Strategy. However, SNH will seek to identify where it can contribute positively to these other objectives.
SEPA	Content with the approach adopted taken throughout the Report. Welcomes the proposals for mitigating the few potential adverse effects.	Noted
SEPA	Context: Suggest that the Significant Water Management Issues reports for the Scotland and Solway Tweed River Basin Management Plans and the Plans themselves when developed will be helpful in future SEA work. Also highlight the Scottish Climate Change Bill.	Noted for future SEAs.
SEPA	Responding to Climate Change: 1 st action could also lead to better decision making in respect of population, soil and water.	Added to assessment
SEPA	Responding to Climate Change: 3 rd action – SNH's advice could also lead to effective protection of water, particularly water dependent habitats	Added to assessment
SEPA	Responding to Climate Change: 7 th action – highlight possible tensions between flood management and natural heritage. Add effects on population and human health.	Added to assessment
SEPA	Supporting the Economy: 8 th action on environmental renewal could	Added although SNH's involvement in environmental

	have positive effects for soil and water, e.g. through addressing contaminated land, promotion of SUDS in urban areas and greenspace initiatives.	renewal whilst taking account of these aspects may not lead to significant effects over and above the actions of others.
SEPA	Supporting the Economy: final action could lead to effects on soil and water from new development and on climatic factors from travel, though accept these are difficult to predict	SNH's involvement in promoting tourism relating to the natural heritage, whilst taking account of them, is unlikely to lead to significant effects on these aspects over and above the actions of others.
SEPA	Monitoring: a wide ranging programme that is tailored towards the areas of influence of the Corporate Strategy and Plan	Noted
British Trust for Ornithology	Welcome the proposed use of indicators and implicit importance of long-term monitoring. Note that the importance of climate change in the Strategy is not reflected in the indicators. Highlight need for further cross-disciplinary research on climate change in Scotland.	Noted. SNH will be considering climate change monitoring and research further as part of the implementation of the Strategy, particularly the Action to increase understanding.
Mountaineering Council of Scotland	Responding to Climate Change: Seek more transparency in assessment processes involved in weighing local impact from renewable development against wider benefit – one example of balancing duty in the Strategy	Noted as an issue for planning policy including SNH's involvement in planning which the Strategy identifies as a priority for Action under Supporting the Economy (using SNH's planning review as a starting point).
Central Scotland Forest Trust	Assessment's conclusions of very positive effects and limited negative effects correctly reflects the value of SNH's contributions. They also highlight the downside to SNH not acting.	Noted.
Central Scotland Forest Trust	Environmental Baseline – landscape: recommend SNH develops indicators to assess the visual, physical and biological quality of Scotland's landscapes, particularly urban and urban fringe landscape, to help measure progress towards Central Scotland Forest Trust etc.	Noted as an issue for future work on landscapes including indicators.

4. Changes to the Corporate Strategy following the public consultation and implications for the environmental assessment

- 4.1. A report of the public consultation on the draft Corporate Strategy including a summary of responses has been prepared and is available on SNH's website at www.snh.org.uk-strategy-pd00.htm.
- 4.2. In finalising the Strategy the responses to the public consultation were reviewed and a number of changes and additions made to the draft. Most of these were simply to improve clarity or tighten the existing wording. In addition, the following new Actions have been added:

Caring for Nature

- communicate more widely the nature and value of Scotland's protected areas

Supporting the Scottish Economy

- encourage the development of sustainable rural land uses which protect and enhance the natural heritage resource

Delivering a high quality public service

- work with the Deer Commission for Scotland and its stakeholders to integrate its staff and functions with SNH, making whatever changes are required to do so successfully
- use effective and focused communications to raise awareness of issues affecting the natural heritage and of SNH's role and collaborative contribution

- 4.3. No additional environmental effects have been identified from the addition of these actions which generally expand on existing Actions, but the changes (including changes to wordings of existing Actions) have been made to the Environmental Report for completeness.

5. Monitoring

- 5.1. The significant positive environmental effects of implementing the Corporate Strategy will be monitored as part of the monitoring of the outcomes of the Corporate Strategy through SNH's Natural Heritage Indicators which are under development. These will provide periodic updates to the information identified in the environmental baseline, and in some cases provide information on new aspects.
- 5.2. SNH will not be monitoring the indirect positive effects of the Corporate Strategy on other aspects such as the historic environment as it would be very difficult to differentiate the effects of the Strategy from the actions of others, and the overall trends in these factors are more appropriately monitored by others such as, in the case of the historic environment, Historic Scotland. However all of these factors, including the results of monitoring by others, will be considered in future reviews of the Corporate Strategy (every 4 years) and Plan (every 2 years), so that any unforeseen effects can be addressed.