



HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SCOTLAND'S
BIODIVERSITY DELIVERY STATEMENT WITH THE SCOTTISH
GOVERNMENT

SCOTTISH BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY: 2020 CHALLENGE FOR SCOTLAND'S BIODIVERSITY



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SCOTLAND'S 2020 BIODIVERSITY CHALLENGE:

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SCOTLAND (HES) DELIVERY STATEMENT

I. INTRODUCTION

Historic Environment Scotland (HES) is a non-departmental public body (NDPB) of the Scottish Government and a registered charity. We want to make sure Scotland's heritage is cherished, understood, shared and enjoyed with pride by everyone.

The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 places a statutory duty on all public sector bodies in Scotland to further the conservation of biodiversity. The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 also introduced a requirement for all public bodies to make a report publicly available on their compliance with biodiversity duty. Biodiversity duty reports are required every three years.

Historic sites can be special for biodiversity. Many have been protected from development, particularly agricultural improvement, which has allowed the preservation of local habitats and species. Historic sites can therefore be reservoirs of wildlife which can support conservation initiatives, with important local populations of plants and animals. Larger sites and linear features, such as the Antonine Wall, are important contributors to the wildlife corridors which allow plants and animals to migrate and spread as a result of pressure from development and climate change.

SNH in its leadership role of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy, on behalf of Scottish Government, has requested HES to confirm how it will contribute to the objectives of the 2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity through this Delivery Statement, as our contribution to Scotland's Biodiversity Strategy (SBS).

Our [Biodiversity Report 2015-17](#) provides more detail on all of our Biodiversity work so far.

2. KEY ACTIONS AND DELIVERABLES

HES commits to ensure that biodiversity is broadly taken into account through our policies, actions and activities that might directly or indirectly impact biodiversity. Through business planning, the following HES documents contain objectives and deliverables that relate to biodiversity and the SBS 2020 Challenge, under the wider themes of nature, environment and Sustainability.

Whilst there is much work going into biodiversity across our organisation – as highlighted in our [Biodiversity Report 2015-17](#) – in the future we plan to commit to ensure that biodiversity is highlighted more closely through our policies.

2.1. [Our Place in Time \(OPliT\): The Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland](#)

Our OPIT sets out our vision and associated outcome in relation to our historic environment, which is detailed as follows:

- **Vision:** Scotland's historic environment is understood and valued, cared for and protected, enjoyed and enhanced.
- **Outcome:** To ensure that the cultural, social, environmental and economic value of Scotland's heritage makes a strong contribution to the wellbeing of the nation and its people.

2.2. [Historic Environment Scotland: Corporate Plan 2016-19](#)

Our corporate plan states that *"we are a charity dedicated to the advancement of heritage, culture, education and environmental protection."* A major part of our mission is to *"protect, conserve and manage the historic environment for the enjoyment, enrichment and benefit of everyone - now, and in the future."*

Underlying this are 5 strategic themes: 'Lead', 'Understand', 'Protect', 'Value' and 'Perform'. Each theme encompasses biodiversity in its broadest sense, and are detailed as follows:

Lead

- We will grow the contribution the historic environment makes to the cultural, social, environmental and economic life of Scotland; by widening public access and participation through collaboration, and focusing on delivering wider benefits in health, wellbeing, education and employment.
- We will work to address the impact of climate change by leading the way in the adaptation of the historic environment to climate change, contributing to national targets and increasing resilience against the physical impacts of climate change.
- We will empower and enable communities and others to care for their historic environment by working collaboratively with those who take an interest in and responsibility for the historic environment.

KPI 3: Managed the impact of climate change by improving knowledge and understanding.

Understand

- We will identify, research, survey and record the historic environment to improve our knowledge and understanding by undertaking programmes of field investigation, survey, desk based studies and collections research.
- We will work with others to continue to improve the quality and extent of information about the historic environment.

Protect

- We will enable others to protect and conserve the historic environment and its archive collections through direct and indirect investment.
- We will protect, conserve and manage the properties and collections in our care.

- We will protect the historic environment through designation and by supporting others to manage it through enabling regulation.
- We will help to ensure that the appropriate advice, knowledge, skills and materials are available to sustain Scotland's historic environment into the future.

KPI 6: Improved the condition of Scotland's historic environment.

Value

- We will encourage engagement, participation and enjoyment of the historic environment and improve access for all.
- We will promote discovery, learning and education to enhance knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of the historic environment.

Perform

- We will address the impact of our activities on climate change.

KPI 9: We are an efficient, resilient and sustainable organisation.

2.3. [Annual Operating Plan: 2017-18](#)

Our Annual Operating Plan sets out to improve accountability and transparency through publishing an annual Sustainability Report which reports our performance in relation to greenhouse gas emissions, energy, waste management, business travel, water consumption, action on biodiversity, sustainable procurement and adaptation.

2.4. [Business Plan 2016-17](#)

Whilst biodiversity is not a core part of our corporate functions, many of our actions deliver broad environmental benefits and are of benefit to biodiversity objectives. KPI 3 measures our effectiveness in delivering against the Scottish Government's Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme (SCCAP) which mandates HES to conduct and disseminate research into managing the impacts of climate change in the historic environment.

3. HES ACTIONS

Our actions are summarised in Annex A as priority actions to contribute to the objectives of the 2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity.

4. PARTNERSHIP WORKING

We aspire to develop and expand upon existing partnership working and joint working initiatives. We are engaged in a number of partnerships across the organisations including:

- Supporting local and national Biodiversity Action Plans such as the Edinburgh City Biodiversity Action Plan.
- Working on delivery of the Edinburgh Adapts Action Plan on Natural Environment and Greenspace Actions including ensuring our sites continue to act as corridors for species to migrate through, altering grass cutting regimes and meadow management.
- Working with Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and the National Trust for Scotland (NTS) to protect a newly nesting pair of peregrine falcons at Threave Castle. We again partnered with the NTS Osprey viewing facility to raise awareness to visitors of the nesting birds.
- Supporting the 'Inner Forth Landscape Initiative' – a Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) led project aimed at increasing opportunities for birds around the Forth Estuary, with other key partners including SNH (Chair) and Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA).

5. HOW SBS IS CURRENTLY EMBEDDED IN THE ORGANISATION

Our corporate approach to asset management is underpinned by leveraging additional cultural, social, environmental and economic benefits. We also use research to understand and manage the historic environment, and care for and promote the value of the historic environment. A core objective is that our cultural heritage is perpetuated and encouraged

Our [Asset Management Plan 2018](#) states that we are required to fulfil a range of operational, legislative and regulatory frameworks in relation to the properties in care and our operations. One of such legislative frameworks highlighted is *the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act (2004)*. Our activities cover a vast number of areas of responsibility ranging from managing visitor safety to testing Mechanical & Electrical (M&E) systems and managing bats at our sites.

Through Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC), we have a duty to assess the impact of any proposed works on European Protected Species, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSI), special protection areas and special areas of conservation. SMC is the mechanism by which Historic Environment Scotland ensures that any changes to monuments of national importance are appropriate and sympathetic to their character. It helps to protect what is a

rare and unique resource. Conservation of the historic environment is in general beneficial to biodiversity.

Before applying for Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC), applicants must consider what (if any) protected species might be present on the site, or close by, and the effect the proposed works might have on them. This will often involve consideration of wider biodiversity issues at the sites concerned. If European Protected Species are present and likely to be affected, applicants are advised to seek specialist advice as they may require an ecological survey or licence to support their scheduled monument consent application.

SBS 2020 CHALLENGE NARRATIVE

Delivery statements are meant to be concise, strategic documents which set out in broad terms the commitments that an organisation is making to deliver for biodiversity. Where possible they should draw on existing priorities from business plans and strategic commitments. The main components are:

1. Introduction

A general statement of commitment to the SBS process. Where you have key roles in delivery and the SBS relevance to your organisation.

2. Key Actions/ Deliverables

What your organisation is committed to through your business planning. It is more than the business as usual it is the aspirational work in future planning cycles.

3. Delivery table setting out detailed activities (Annex 1)

Setting out your organisations overall role, how you contribute to the SBS Challenge 2020 and Route Map and targets.

4. Summary of partnership / collaborative working

A summary of collaborative and partnership working that contributes to SBS. Key projects, groups, networks, lead supporting roles

5. How SBS is embedded in what you do (What you are doing not what you want to be done)

A summary of how SBS aims are embedded in the organisation, for example in change programmes, ways of working, with stakeholder engagement, changes to approaches in research and knowledge exchange.

Annex 1. SBS 2020 Challenge: Historic Environment Scotland Delivery statement table

Big Steps for Nature		Contributing action		
ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION 2020 Challenge Outcome: Scotland's ecosystems are restored to good health so that they provide robust ecosystem services and build our natural capital		HES's Overall role: Work to identify, recognise and support both the natural and cultural significance of the ancient and veteran woodland/tree resource which relates to the Properties In Care.	Route Map Priority Projects: 2. Restoration of native woodland 3. Restoration of Freshwaters	Targets: Achieve agreed ecological water quality objectives under the WFD
1.1	Encourage and support ecosystem restoration and management, especially in catchments that have experienced greatest degradation	We will work with partner organisations to mitigate impacts of Eutrophication upon water bodies within and around our Properties in Care where practical. We will explore ways to support biodiversity across our estate through traditional building materials projects, procurement and specification. We will commission a feasibility study to explore and recommend potential heritage crop projects which would support and promote biodiversity. We will commission a feasibility study to explore and recommend potential for coppicing woodland both across the HES estate and woodland owned by partners. We will work to identify, recognise and support both the natural and cultural significance of the ancient and veteran woodland/tree resource which relates to the Properties In Care.		
1.2	Use assessments of ecosystem health at catchment level to determine what needs to be done	Develop and improve the depth and detail of existing surveys such as Statements of Natural Heritage Significance to further improve understanding of Biodiversity at Properties in Care.		
1.3	Government and public bodies will work together towards a shared agenda for action to restore ecosystem health at a catchment scale across Scotland	Identify opportunities to increase support, where possible, to relevant public and national bodies and partners with ecosystem health at catchment scale across Scotland. We will work with partners preparing and implementing land management plans, including the Land Use Strategy and its regional pilots, Local Development Plans and other strategies concerned with stewardship of the environment and land use decisions.		

		We will support River Basin Planning and catchment initiatives which will often require careful consideration for a wide range environmental factors.		
1.4	Establish plans and decisions about land use based on an understanding of ecosystems and take full account of land use impacts on the ecosystem services that underpin social, economic and environmental health.	<p>Expand the implementation of surveys to all HES sites so that all management decisions are made appropriately in response to the guidance given in our Statements of Natural Heritage Significance.</p> <p>Work to include the results of surveys and assessments within our GIS systems and asset database going forward.</p> <p>Encourage collaborative and practical research on ecosystems management.</p> <p>Ensure that future iterations of our Asset Management Plan take into account land use impacts that affect ecosystem services (i.e. supporting, regulating, provisioning and cultural services).</p> <p>Incorporate information in any revised and new Statements of Significance for Properties in Care about the social, economic and environment benefits and services that are or can be realised from the land.</p> <p>Participate in the development and implementation of land management plans that utilise an ecosystem service approach as a plan-making tool, including any links with their environmental assessment.</p>		
INVESTMENT IN NATURAL CAPITAL 2020 Challenge outcome: Natural resources contribute to stronger sustainable economic growth in Scotland and we increase our natural capital to pass onto the next generation.		HES's Overall role: Continue to support the conservation, management and restoration of peatland, particularly in areas where it is likely to have additional benefits for archaeological remains.	Route Map Priority project: 4. Securing economic benefits from, and investment in, natural capital	Target: Businesses are more aware of their reliance on, and more investment is being made in, Scotland's natural capital
2.3	Undertake a major programme of peatland conservation, management and restoration	<p>In many areas, blanket bogs conceal and protect ancient land surfaces which retain extensive remains of human settlement and landuse, as well as places of burial and ritual. We therefore will continue to support the conservation, management and restoration of peatland, particularly in areas where it is likely to have additional benefits for archaeological remains.</p> <p>We will encourage consideration of how the principles of peatland restoration interrelate with policies on the protection of the historic environment.</p>		

		We will encourage further research into remote sensing techniques used to identify archaeological sites buried in peat.		
QUALITY GREENSPACE FOR HEALTH AND EDUCATION BENEFITS 2020 Challenge outcome: Improved health and quality of life for the people of Scotland, through investment in the care of green space, nature and landscapes		HES's Overall role: Develop and deliver national and local participation through, events and activities, outreach work and national campaigns (e.g. Year of Young People) targeted at under-represented groups.	Route Map priority projects: 5. More people experiencing and enjoying nature 6. Taking learning outdoors 7. Developing Scotland's <i>natural</i> health service	Target: Increase regular visits and active travel in greenspace through improved infrastructure, information, and campaigns, and the provision of activities and events
3.1	Provide opportunities for everyone to experience and enjoy nature regularly, with a particular focus on disadvantaged groups	Develop and deliver national and local participation through, events and activities, outreach work and national campaigns (e.g. Year of Young People) targeted at under-represented groups. Develop further opportunities for public engagement through volunteering, Junior Ranger & Junior Guide programmes & citizen science projects. Work with partner organisation such as SNH, Forestry Commission, etc. to encourage and develop outdoor learning opportunities for all. We will make our Statements of Natural Heritage Significance readily available to the public online. Continue to invest available resources into maintaining high quality facilities that encourage and help visitors to the Estate experience and enjoy and hence appreciate the outdoor environment. Aim to increase opportunities to experience and enjoy nature through increased engagement with, and uptake of, junior rangers and volunteers. Better target and increase support of disadvantaged groups through improving our baseline of activities to see where this is going. Aim to increase and improve existing nature spotting sheets for other sites for visitors to better understand nature and biodiversity at our sites. Aspire to build on and expand the work we do with disadvantaged groups and the organisations that help to facilitate this. Through our replacement to Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statement (HESPS) aspire to integrate biodiversity into broader historic environment policy.		

		Aim to increase the range of opportunities by engaging with other directorates on biodiversity through events, learning and inclusion.
3.2	Support local authorities and communities to improve local environments and enhance biodiversity using green space and green networks, allowing nature to flourish and so enhancing the quality of life for people who live there	<p>Continue to engage with local communities to improve local historic and natural environments and Biodiversity.</p> <p>We will support the delivery of biodiversity, green spaces and networks through the Local Development Planning process and related place making initiatives.</p> <p>We will work in partnership with other Key Agencies in the planning system to provide advice and guidance relating to the maintenance and creation of successful places.</p> <p>Through our various roles within the planning system, we will provide advice and guidance that supports understanding and appreciation of local landscape character and its historic context.</p> <p>We will publish our Litter Prevention Action Plan and review it annually to ensure that we are fulfilling our actions against the Scottish Government's national litter strategy, and to help us identify areas where we can make further progress.</p>
3.3	Build on good practice being developed by the National Health Service (NHS) and others to help encourage greenspace, green exercise and social prescribing initiatives that will improve health and wellbeing through connecting people with nature	<p>Work with partner organisations such as local authorities to support, where practical, Active Travel initiatives.</p> <p>Explore opportunities to work with a wider array of organisations to provide relevant activities on our Properties in Care.</p> <p>Aim to expand the Health & Wellbeing work of HES Rangers to accommodate more of the public and potential volunteers.</p> <p>We will support the NHS, Architecture & Design Scotland and other partners in promoting the Place Standard Tool as a practical way of highlighting the ways in which the environment contributes to health and wellbeing.</p>
3.4	Increase access to nature within and close to schools, and support teachers in developing the role of outdoor learning across the Curriculum for Excellence.	<p>Continue to develop and deliver wide ranging learning programmes and activities for inclusive audiences, linked to our Properties in Care, to support national education policy. We will aspire to increase engagement through our programmes and projects providing enhanced access to natural spaces and urban greenspaces, opportunities to participate in outdoor learning and support regeneration projects.</p> <p>To commit to maintaining the World Heritage Sites as accessible green spaces and promote their use to teachers as 'outdoor classrooms' for cross curricular learning, and to continue to develop</p>

		and expand cross-curricular learning and teaching materials, including resources that cover topics around biodiversity and sustainability, for our World Heritage Sites.		
3.5	Encourage public organisations and businesses to review their responsibilities and action for biodiversity, and recognise that increasing their positive contribution to nature and landscapes can help meet their corporate priorities and performance.	Continue to use the Sustainability Test and other related tools within the organisation, as part of our wider sustainable procurement approach - including biodiversity and habitats. Aspire to have joint policy statements on landscape. Aspire to develop more special landscape areas.		
CONSERVING WILDLIFE IN SCOTLAND 2020 Challenge outcome: The special value and international importance of Scotland's nature and geodiversity is assured, wildlife is faring well, and we have a highly effective network of protected places		HES's Overall role: Through our Statements of Natural Heritage Significance expand the implementation of surveys to all HES Properties in Care (1.4) Work more closely with relevant internal teams, District Architects and Directorates to improve understanding and implementation of required and recommended actions;	Route Map priority projects: 8. Protected areas in good condition	Target: At least 80% of designated 'features' in favourable condition
4.1	Ensure that the management of protected places for nature also provides wider public benefits.	Improve understanding of sense of place, biodiversity and history of our sites through the provision of relevant information, signage and infrastructure to more sites. - Through signing of the Geodiversity Charter. Seek to ensure that our cultural heritage is perpetuated and encouraged (asset management plan - P.9).		
4.2	Align habitat restoration on protected areas with national goals for improving ecosystem health, with local priorities determined at the catchment or landscape scales.	HES will continue to support national and local biodiversity action plans and processes. Continue to ensure that HES Properties in Care, located in SSSI's, are effectively managed to maintain and improve ecosystem health. Ensure our approach to Asset Management, particularly on larger sites and landscapes, align with catchment or and wider level priorities for protected areas and important habitats.		

4.3	Integrate protected areas policy with action for wider habitats to combat fragmentation and restore key habitats.	Identify and maintain local reservoir and linear sites of Biodiversity as wildlife corridors, protected areas, etc.		
4.4	Develop a wildlife management framework to address the key priorities for sustainable species management, conservation and conflict issues, including reintroductions and invasive non-native species.	Through our Statements of Natural Heritage Significance expand the implementation of surveys to all HES Properties in Care (1.4) Work more closely with relevant internal teams, District Architects and Directorates to improve understanding and implementation of required and recommended actions. Work to include the results of these assessments within our GIS systems and PICAMS going forward.		
4.5	Involve many more people than at present in this work and improve our understanding of the poorly known elements of nature.	Work to improve efforts to ensure that biodiversity is taken into account in all appropriate decision making within the organisation. Expand and increase involvement of relevant stakeholders across the organisation in the Biodiversity, Conservation and maintenance of our sites. Work more closely with relevant external environmental bodies such as SNH, BGS, SEPA, etc. Aspire to develop and rollout a regular Biodiversity Working Group for the organisation. Aspire to better finance landscape projects and to include Biodiversity in funding plans.		
SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF LAND AND FRESHWATER 2020 Challenge outcome: Nature is faring well, and ecosystems are resilient as a result of sustainable land and water management		HES's Overall role: We will continue to support implementation of land use strategy and regionally focused frameworks.	Priority projects: 10. Improving ecological connection 11. Sustainable land management	Target: Improve connectivity between habitats and ecosystems Promotion of measures to support biodiversity under CAP.
5.1	Promote an ecosystem approach to land management that fosters sustainable use of natural resources and puts biodiversity at the heart of land-use planning and decision-making.	As also stated in Section 1.3. We will continue to support implementation of land use strategy and regionally focused frameworks.		

5.2	Ensure that measures taken forward under the Common Agricultural Policy encourage land managers to develop and retain the diversity of wildlife habitats and landscape features.	We will work with The Scottish Government and partners to ensure delivery of schemes under the Scottish Rural Development Programme (2014-20), including Agri-environment Climate Scheme, Advisory Services and Forestry Grant Scheme.		
5.3	Support 'High Nature Value' farming and forestry.	We will engage during the preparation and implementation of long term land management plans that support, forestry, farming and other land uses.		
5.5	Ensure that biodiversity and ecosystem objectives are fully integrated into flood risk management plans, and restore wetland habitats and woodlands to provide sustainable flood management.	Fully engage over forestry design plans or Land Management Plan. Climate Change Risk Assessment - Phase II - aspire to include Biodiversity in this.		
5.6	Restore and extend natural habitats as a means of building reserves of carbon and to help mitigate climate change.	Where possible, work to support the restoration and extension of natural habitats as a means of building reserves of carbon and to help mitigate climate change.		
5.7	Provide clear advice to land and water managers on best practice.	We will participate in the creation and delivery of strategies for water management e.g. through participation in of Local Flood Risk Management planning and through engagement on specific water management projects.		
Marine and Coastal		HES's Overall role:	Priority projects:	Target:
2020 Challenge outcome: Scotland's marine and coastal environments are clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse, meeting the long term needs of people and nature.		Will continue to work with partners in developing further regional marine plans across Scotland.	12. Increase environmental status of our seas.	10% of Scotland's seas to be incorporated in nature conservation Marine protected Areas.
6.1	Adopt a Scottish Marine Plan and develop regional marine plans to aid balanced decision -making in the marine environment.	We participated in the first pilot Regional Marine Plan for Orkney and the Pentland Firth and will continue to work with partners in developing further regional marine plans across Scotland. We will support the preparation of coastal development strategies and their links with terrestrial planning. We will work with Marine Scotland and other partners in the development and implementation of sectoral plans for offshore wind, wave and tidal energy.		

6.2	Establish a coherent network of Marine Protected Areas, promoting sustainable use and conservation	We will work with Marine Scotland, SNH and other partners in taking forward the Marine Protected Area Network. In particular, we will work with MS and SNH in taking forward any historic-Marine Protected Areas (MPA) which can also contribute to biodiversity policy aims - for example where they interact with the wider MPA network and conservation objectives for other sites.
6.6	Implement a rapid response framework to prevent colonisation of new invasive species in Scotland's seas and islands.	Aspire to Implement a rapid response framework to prevent colonisation of new invasive species in islands, such as St Kilda and Inchcolm, etc.
6.7	Improve the monitoring of the marine environment to identify changes and guide progress towards the above outcome	Where we have shared interests, we will look for opportunities to join up our monitoring work on Historic MPAs with Marine Scotland, SNH and other partners involved in the Scottish Marine Protected Areas Monitoring Strategy.
6.8	Improve understanding of how coastal ecosystems are likely to adapt to climate change and develop strategies for coastal zone management	<p>We will work with partners in taking forward findings and outputs from 'Dynamic Coast' - Scotland's National Coastal Change Assessment (NCCA) - and where appropriate, encourage these to be embedded within coast zone management frameworks and feed into specific coastal development projects.</p> <p>We will continue to be fully engaged with Dynamic Coast and are already represented on steering group.</p>



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