

Designations: natural heritage, landscape, historic

This is an old version of the page

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For recent changes to this guidance, please see the [bottom of the page](#).

Introduction

If you intend to apply to this scheme on any land that is within a designated site, or will affect a designated site, you must take this into account when preparing your application.

There are three types of designation that may impact on an application:

- [natural heritage designations](#): Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and European sites formally known as Natura sites – Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Special Area of Conservations (SAC)
- [landscape and recreational designations](#): National Scenic Area, Regional Park, Country Park, National Park
- [historic and archaeological designations](#): Scheduled Monuments

Note that from 1 January 2021 the term 'European site' is being used to refer to what were previously known as 'Natura' sites. This recognises that Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) protect species and habitats shared across Europe and were originally designated under European legislation.

Natural heritage designations

Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Natura Sites

You can find details of the SSSIs and European sites on your land using [NatureScot's SiteLink website](#).

On the SiteLink home page you can click on a site name to find a list of features for that site that are of special interests and for which the site was designated. For example, "Corncrake" or "Sand Dunes". You can also find a site map, and a Site Management Statement with information on managing the features. On the SiteLink home page, you can also click on "Map Search" to find sites in your area.

For further information on SSSIs or European sites, or advice on managing your SSSI or European site land through this scheme, please contact NatureScot.

You are strongly advised to seek advice from NatureScot before drafting an application for a designated site. If you do not, and NatureScot has significant issues with the management you propose for the designated site, this may prejudice the success of your application.

[Contact NatureScot](#)

Providing information in your application

In your online application, you will be asked to list any SSSIs or European (Natura) sites involved and the features for which the sites were designated.

For some options and capital items, you may be required to complete a specialist management plan. You will have to refer to your designated site within such a plan.

Availability of options

If you wish to carry out management to benefit an SSSI and / or European site, you can apply for any management options (with the exception of the Hen Harrier Grassland Management option which is only available in Orkney) or capital items which will benefit the special features of the site, even if they do not appear on your list of [targeted options](#). However, if you wish to apply for an option that does not

appear on your targeted list then you must first obtain an [endorsement](#) from NatureScot and submit this along with your Agri-Environment Climate Scheme application. For 2021 applications, if you received a NatureScot (SNH) endorsement for your 2015 or 2016 round contract for the same option on the same land, please submit this with your 2021 application.

Assessment of applications for SSSIs or European sites

Your case officer will consider the effects of your proposed management on the SSSI and / or European site features and consult NatureScot and other relevant regulatory bodies.

If your proposed management is likely to damage any features the application cannot be approved.

SSSI consents

You do not need separate SSSI consent from NatureScot for works on or affecting an SSSI which are included in your contract, for the duration of that contract.

It is possible that you may have existing consents from NatureScot (formerly Scottish Natural Heritage) that are not compatible with the management required under this Scheme; for example, you may have a consent for grazing sheep, but you are applying to graze cattle instead under this scheme. In such cases, the AECS contract requirements take precedence over the existing consent, but only for the duration of the contract.

Landscape and recreational designations

There are 40 National Scenic Areas in Scotland, covering 13 per cent of the country. They include mountain areas such as the Skye Cuillins, Ben Nevis and Glencoe, and island landscapes within the Hebrides and the Northern Isles. You can find out more about these areas using the link below, along with information around planning and development.

[National Scenic Areas](#)

Historic and archaeological designations

Scheduled monuments

Scheduled monuments are protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979). Historic Environment Scotland encourages positive management of scheduled monuments to ensure these nationally important sites are preserved for future generations to enjoy. Most works on scheduled monuments do however require scheduled monument consent and it is an offence to undertake works without consent. This includes any ground-breaking works, fencing, drainage, tree removal, paths, steps and flooding works.

There is no specific funding for management works on scheduled monuments within the this scheme. However, a number of annual recurrent options and capital items have the potential to offer dual benefits to both the environment and the long-term management of scheduled monuments. The guidance note 'Scotland Rural Development Programme – Management of Scheduled Monuments: Management options and capital items', gives more details on relevant options and capital items. This can be downloaded below.

Not all options and capital items are suitable for scheduled monuments, so it is important that you contact Historic Environment Scotland for advice at an early stage of your planning. Applications to Historic Environment Scotland for scheduled monument consent are normally dealt with within nine weeks.

You can get advice on scheduled monuments and the scheduled monument consent process from:

[Historic Environment Scotland](#)

Longmore House
Salisbury Place
Edinburgh
EH9 1SH

0131 668 8716

HMconsultations@hes.scot

If you are carrying out any agri-environment options, you may be penalised if inspections show that you have knowingly damaged or destroyed a scheduled monument. You may also have committed a criminal offence and face prosecution. It is therefore important that you are aware of the location, nature and extent of any scheduled monuments on your land. It is advisable to mark these clearly and accurately on any plans you prepare and particularly on any information that you provide to a contractor or other third party working on the land. This is particularly important if you are planning a change in land use.

You may also wish to mark undesignated archaeological sites on your plans.

There are a number of sources that can help you to identify both designated and undesignated sites of archaeological and historical interest on your land:

- [you can consult Pastmap](#), which is a free online resource. It will provide the location and full extent of a scheduled monument and the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscape, and a central point for a listed building and its curtilage. It will also provide an approximate or central point for recorded unscheduled sites. The written descriptions of unscheduled sites in the National Monuments Record and Scottish Sites and Monuments Record data will help you to define on the ground the minimum extent of visible remains
- your local authority historic environment officer may be able to provide advice on the management and protection of unscheduled archaeological sites. However, not all local authority areas offer advisory services in relation to the Scottish Rural Development Programme. If you had an archaeological audit of your land for a previous agri-environment scheme, you can refer to this



[Scotland Rural Development Programme - Management of Scheduled Monuments: Management options and capital items - 2021 version \(PDF, Size: 832.1 kB\)](#)

doc_external_url: <https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/SRDP-AECS--and-Scheduled-Monuments---guidance----updated-version-from-HES-25-8-21--A3536122-.pdf> Management of scheduled monuments

Recent changes

Section	Change
Whole page	Updates for 2021

Previous versions

[Previous versions of this page](#)

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