



HISTORIC  
ENVIRONMENT  
SCOTLAND

ÀRAINNEACHD  
EACHDRAIDHEIL  
ALBA

# Historic Environment Scotland

## Operating Plan 2025 to 2028



## Easy Read



## What is the Operating Plan?



This is an Easy Read document.

It tells you about the work in our Operating Plan.



The plan sets out the work that we will do from 2025 to 2028 on the **outcomes** in our 'Heritage for All' plan.



An **outcome** is what we want to see happen in the future.

**Our purpose** – what we want to do  
**and vision** – what we want to see happen



Our **purpose** is: to look after Scotland's historic environment so it can be understood, shared and enjoyed by everyone.

Our **vision** is: **heritage** for all.



**Heritage** means things like:

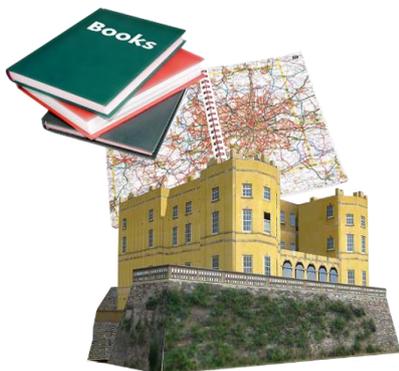
- traditions like the language people use, the clothes they wear or the songs they sing
- buildings from the past that are important to history

## What does Historic Environment Scotland do?



Historic Environment Scotland (HES) is a charity and **public body** that looks after Scotland's **historic environment** and tells people about it.

A **public body** is an organisation that works for the Government and provides a service we can all use.



The **historic environment** is:

- places and things that show us what happened in the past, like a castle or garden, or things like books or maps



- **cultural heritage** like stories, crafts and **traditions** – thinking or behaviour that has happened for a long time

## Scotland's Heritage



### Outcome 1

**We have more money for the heritage our organisation looks after**



**What we will do from 2025 to 2028:**

- **Estate Management**

We will do the work in our Estate Plan to look after the properties and things we own and take care of.



- **Edinburgh Castle**

We will **publish** a plan by 31 March 2026 for Edinburgh Castle to deliver **sustainable benefits** for HES and Scotland.



**Published** means shared for everyone to read, usually by putting it online.

**Sustainable benefits** means the good things that the Castle brings to people and the economy will last for a long time.



- **PIC (Properties in our Care) and Collections Strategy**

A **strategy** is a big plan.



We will publish a long-term plan by 31 March 2028 for the properties and collections in our care to show:

- what work should be done first
- **investment** – how we will use our money



- **Archive Service**

We will move our archives to a new storage space by 1 October 2029.

**Archives** are historical records like drawings, maps and photographs.

## Outcome 2



### We will give visitors experiences:

- that they will remember
- that make them feel positive



### What we will do from 2025 to 2028:

- **Visitor Experience**

We will do the work in our Visitor Experience Strategy by 31 March 2028.

This will make visitor experience better at our main sites.



## Outcome 3

### Good decisions will be made about Scotland's protected areas



### What we will do from 2025 to 2028:

- **Historic Environment Policy**

We will update the Historic Environment Policy for Scotland by 31 March 2027.





- **Research** - getting facts, figures and information about something

We will develop and deliver our Research Strategy 2026 to 2029 by 31 March 2029.

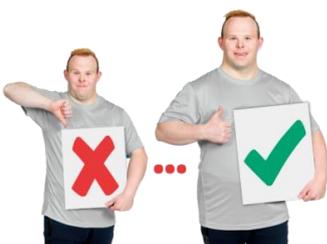
This will give us the **evidence** we need.

**Evidence** is information that proves something is true.



- **Planning Authority Training**

We will develop and give training to support planners in local councils to deal with historic environment cases by 31 March 2028.



- **trove.scot**

We will make the website trove.scot better by 31 March 2028.



This will make sure that more people can get the records and information we have about Scotland's historic environment.

- **Data** – facts, figures and information



We will do the work in our Information Management and Data Strategy by 31 March 2028.



This will make sure we have good information and data that we trust, to support us to make decisions.

## Skills and Learning

### Outcome 4



**We will have encouraged new learners through our skills and outreach programmes**



**What we will do from 2025 to 2028:**

- **Skills**

We will work with our partner organisations on the Skills Investment Plan 2024 to 2029.





This will:

- increase the availability of skills we need to look after the historic environment, like stonemasonry
- attract people to work in the historic environment
- improve access to jobs in the historic environment
- encourage new and different ways of working



- **Outreach and Learning**

**Outreach** means working in communities.

We will work on our outreach and learning **framework** Making Sense of Scotland each year.



A **framework** is a work plan that sets out what needs to happen and who will do it.

# People and Places



## Outcome 5

**We will have increased the benefits to Scotland's economy and to its communities**

Our **economy** is how the country produces and uses goods, services and money.



## What we will do from 2025 to 2028:

- **Our Past, Our Future** – the national plan for the historic environment

We will work with heritage organisations to do the work and report on the outcomes of the plan.



- **Economic Impact**

We will develop and tell people about our **economic framework and action plan** by 31 March 2028.

This plan will show how our goods and services benefit Scotland's economy.



- **Communities**

We will deliver our **Communities Framework** each year.

This helps communities understand, promote, and develop the benefits of their heritage.



- **Equalities**

We will work with communities and partners each year to do the work in our Equality Outcomes Action Plan 2025 to 2029.



- **User-Centred Services**

We will keep changing the way we work to make sure our services give communities what they need by 31 March 2028.

- **Intangible Cultural Heritage**

This means things like:



- language, stories, and songs
- performing arts
- events when people gather to celebrate something
- traditional crafts



We will work with national partners each year to do the work in our Intangible Cultural Heritage Action Plan by 31 March 2028.

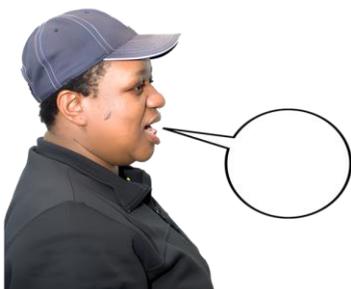


- **Gaelic**

We will do the work in our Gaelic Language Plan to support Gaelic language and culture.

- **Branding and Profile**

We will launch our new brand to help us tell everyone about our values and the value of the historic environment by 31 December 2025.





- **International**

In 2025 to 2026 we will decide what international work will be done.

### **Outcome 6**

**We will make sure that the money we give out to others working in the historic environment will be kept at the same level**



**What we will do from 2025 to 2028:**

- **Grants and Funding**

We will use our grant programmes each year to help people and organisations protect and promote Scotland's historic environment.



## **Climate Action**



### **Outcome 7**

**Our work will show other organisations how to have less effect on the climate**



## What we will do from 2025 to 2028:

- **Emissions** – gas that goes into the air

We will do the work in our Carbon Management Plan.

We will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 31 March 2028.



- **Climate Change Adaptation**

We will have checked work we do as a public body and do the work in our new Climate Action Strategy by 31 March 2028.

## Outcome 8

**We will have put Scotland's heritage at the centre of how Scotland moves to net zero**

**Net Zero** means finding ways to put less carbon dioxide or greenhouse gas into the air.





### What we will do from 2025 to 2028:

- **Retrofit** – making changes to old buildings so they are better for the environment



We will open a new centre for innovation, education and training by 31 March 2027 in:

- the retrofit of traditional buildings
- the use of low carbon materials

## Our Organisation



### Outcome 9

**We have more income and have invested it in Scotland’s heritage**

**Income** is the money we get as payment for our work, services or products.



### What we will do from 2025 to 2028:

- **Have More Income**

We will have 6.5 per cent more income every year and get our income from different places.





- **Efficiency** – doing work well

We will spend 3 per cent less every year on the cost of running Historic Environment Scotland.



- **HES Property Portfolio** – the buildings we look after

We will do a review of HES property by 31 March 2027 to help us to:



- decide what work needs to be done in the future
- make a Property Plan



- **HES Enterprises Business Plan**

We will update and deliver work on our HES Enterprises Business Plan to bring more money into our organisation by 31 March 2028



## Outcome 10

**We have a safe, secure, and inclusive environment that supports the people who work with us to develop and work well**



**Inclusive** means that everyone can take part.



**What we will do from 2025 to 2028:**



- **Health And Safety**

We will have an online way of checking and managing the risks about health and wellbeing, fire and safety by 31 March 2027.



- **People Strategy**

We will do the work in our People Strategy 2025 to 2030 by 31 March 2030.

## Measuring our success



Our Corporate Plan has Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) with targets for each year.



We use these targets and our progress with the actions in this Operating Plan to check if we are achieving our outcomes.



Our reports for each year are part of our Annual Report and Financial Statements.

## Our resources – money, materials and staff



We will achieve value for money with our resources.

We will be open and honest about the financial and carbon cost of doing our work.



## Our Carbon Budget for 2025 to 2028

We publish our **carbon budget** – this shows that we measure how much things cost in greenhouse gas emissions.



We report our emissions at the end of each year in our Sustainability Report.



We also do environmental checks on our plans, programmes and strategies to make sure our work does not cause harm to the environment.

## Supporting Government priorities



We support the Scottish Government's **priorities** – the most important things that our time and money should be spent on.

We work to achieve the National Outcomes in the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework.