

# Heritage for All

Corporate Plan 2025-28



HISTORIC  
ENVIRONMENT  
SCOTLAND

ÀRAINNEACHD  
EACHDRAIDHEIL  
ALBA



Edinburgh Castle

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# Foreword

At Historic Environment Scotland (HES), our purpose is to investigate, care for, and promote Scotland's historic environment. We want the historic environment to make a real difference to people's lives – to our health, to our economy, to our culture, to our environment.

[Heritage for All](#) sets out our ambitions and priorities for the next three years. At a time of significant global and local challenges, we recognise the need to be agile, to innovate, and to focus our efforts to ensure we deliver the greatest impact. [Heritage for All](#) defines how we will promote, celebrate, and enhance Scotland's diverse historic environment.

People are at the heart of our work. Our own people are central to everything we do as an organisation. Across Scotland, people give their time, expertise, and enthusiasm to care for the heritage that matters to them. We recognise the importance of working in partnership – with individuals, communities, trusts, and others across the public, private, and third sectors to protect and prioritise heritage in our towns, cities, and villages. The challenges and opportunities that we face in the years ahead will make this collective effort and ethos even more crucial.

As an organisation, we are responsible for a wide range of duties and functions. The next few years will be pivotal as we continue to create the foundations to ensure our long-term financial and operational sustainability. We are pleased to have agreed a new business model with the Scottish Government. This will give us more flexibility in how we operate and enable us to take a more strategic approach to how we manage the assets in our care.

More than ever, we must embrace opportunities and ensure we deliver in areas that make the greatest impact. This means prioritising and allocating resources efficiently. It also means embracing new ways of doing things. Innovation, research, and making use of the latest tools and technology will be vital to our work at all levels: whether that be the conservation of the sites in our care; our work in the planning system; or in delivering skills and learning activities. Innovation means leading the way not only in building conservation or archaeological investigation, but in finding new ways that communities can use buildings, sites, and landscapes to ensure they have a positive future.



Scotland's historic environment is a huge national asset. It provides us with connections to our past, to each other today, and to future generations to come. It shapes our identity and inspires everyone who lives in or visits Scotland. [Heritage for All](#) contributes to many areas of life in Scotland. By welcoming millions of visitors from around the world, we generate £1 billion annually for Scotland's economy; combined, the historic environment sector across Scotland contributes over £6 billion every year. The historic environment is also essential to achieving Scotland's goals on environmental sustainability. We know that climate change is already having a profound impact on Scotland's historic environment.

Work to decarbonise our sector will sit alongside activity to adapt our heritage assets to withstand the impacts of the changing climate. Importantly, we will continue to play a fundamental role in building the heritage skills our country needs to care for our assets, and to flourish and thrive in a changing world.

There is much to be done over the next three years. [Heritage for All](#) underlines our commitment to being an ambitious and inclusive organisation that represents and inspires everyone. We look forward to you joining us on our journey.



**Dr Hugh Hall**

Chair, Historic Environment Scotland

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H Hall'.



**Katerina Brown**

CEO of Historic Environment Scotland

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Katerina Brown'.







# Our plan at a glance

## Our purpose is ..... Our vision is

to investigate, care for, and promote Scotland's historic environment, for the benefit of people and communities everywhere

heritage for all

## Our Priorities and Outcomes for 2025-28



### Scotland's heritage

#### By 2028, we will have:

1. increased investment in the heritage assets in our care
2. provided inspiring and memorable visitor experiences
3. enabled good decision-making for Scotland's protected places



### Skills and learning

#### By 2028, we will have:

4. inspired a new generation of learners through our skills and outreach programmes



## People and places

### By 2028, we will have:

- 5.** increased the economic and community benefits from Scotland's historic environment
- 6.** sustained our grant funding to ensure the historic environment delivers against national priorities



## Climate action

### By 2028, we will have:

- 7.** led the way in reducing our climate impacts
- 8.** made Scotland's heritage central to the just transition to net zero



## Our organisation

### By 2028, we will have:

- 9.** increased our income and invested it in Scotland's heritage
- 10.** provided a safe, secure, and inclusive environment in which our colleagues can thrive

# Our purpose and vision

Our purpose is: to **investigate, care for, and promote** Scotland's historic environment, for the benefit of people and communities everywhere.

Our vision is: **Heritage for All.**



Castle of Light  
event, Edinburgh



# About HES

We are a public body and charity, with statutory functions to investigate, care for, and promote Scotland's historic environment. We lead development and co-ordinate delivery of Scotland's national strategy for the historic environment. Our functions are set out in the Historic Environment Scotland Act 2014.



Geophysical survey at Catharine's Hill,  
Dumfries and Galloway

## The work we do is as rich and varied as Scotland's history itself. We are:

- the **steward** of over 300 sites of national importance, over 43,000 collections objects, and over five million physical and digital archival holdings
- the **regulator** for Scotland's historic environment, enabling change while protecting its cultural significance through designations and consents
- a **funder** of heritage activity in communities across Scotland
- an **advisor** to government, local authorities, and property owners and managers
- **researchers** into Scotland's past, and into how we can care for and promote the historic environment
- an **educator**, supporting skills development and learning initiatives across the country
- a **champion** for Scotland's historic environment and the benefits it creates

# Our principles

Our work in this plan will be guided by the following principles. These will inform what we do, and the way in which we do it.

## Heritage is for everyone

‘Heritage for All’ is more than just a slogan. We will foster and deliver an inclusive vision of heritage that ensures all individuals have opportunities to be inspired by it and can have a voice in the decisions that matter to them. Our work is about creating benefits for people now and into the future. We will focus our work on outcomes, so that we can understand and champion the positive difference we make to people’s lives.

## We will work with others

Everyone has a stake in the historic environment, which spans many different sectors. To realise our vision, we need to support – and receive support from – organisations and individuals across the country. We recognise this, and will work in partnership locally, nationally, and internationally to achieve our goals.

## We will focus our work on the areas where we can make the most impact

With finite resources and facing challenging economic times, we cannot deliver on all fronts at all times. We recognise this and will be transparent in our decision-making.

## We will find new ways of doing things

We will find ways to improve the efficiency of our operations and grow and diversify our funding sources. Innovation will be vital to our work over the life of this plan. We will seek out and adopt new technologies and ways of working, find new customers and audiences, and explore new ways to generate investment for Scotland’s historic environment.

## Data and information are vital to everything we do

The decisions we and others make about the historic environment impacts the very assets in question, along with businesses and communities. It’s essential that those decisions are informed by a robust evidence base. Through our research and advocacy we’ll develop our evidence base and make it accessible and available.



Scanning Stirling Head from Stirling Castle



# Our priorities

Over the next three years, our work will focus on the following priority areas:

- **Scotland's heritage**
- **Skills and learning**
- **People and places**
- **Climate action**
- **Our organisation**

These priorities have been identified through engagement, consultation, and horizon scanning. They represent our response to the immediate operating environment we find ourselves in and represent areas where our work can best support national and sector priorities, to help to drive delivery of **Our Past, Our Future: the strategy for Scotland's historic environment**.

We will channel our resources into our priorities which will shape the way we approach our work as an organisation. All that work is united under our commitment to heritage for all and delivered through our principles and behaviours.



Robotic photography equipment at the National Collection of Aerial Photography



## Our outcomes: Scotland's heritage

Scotland's historic environment is a unique resource. Only by caring for it can we ensure its benefits are felt by as many people as possible. We need to ensure that our sites are open and accessible so that people can visit, enjoy, and benefit from them; that empty buildings have the opportunity to find new uses; and that our assets can be passed down to future generations.

It's vital that we have the right approach to managing the assets in our care, the right approach to welcoming visitors, and the right approach to protecting the historic environment through our role as regulator in the planning system. This means understanding what people value about the historic environment, and making sure that everyone involved in decision making has the confidence and skills to make effective and inclusive decisions.



Inspection  
survey at  
Glasgow  
Cathedral



## Outcome 1

We will have increased investment in the heritage assets in our care.

**Key Performance Indicator:**

By March 2028, we have increased direct expenditure on conservation and maintenance of the properties, collections, and archives in our care by 15%, from £43 million to £50 million

## Outcome 2

We will have provided inspiring and memorable visitor experiences.

**Key Performance Indicator:**

By March 2028, we have maintained or improved high survey scores for visitor experience.

## Outcome 3

We will have enabled good decision-making for Scotland's protected places.

**Key Performance Indicator:**

By March 2028, we have updated the Historic Environment Policy for Scotland.



Celebration of the Centuries event, Fort George



Visitors to the HES archive













## Our outcomes: Skills and learning

The historic environment is a source of inspiration and reflection for people of all ages and backgrounds. Our work supports people to learn new skills, find new careers, and to build connections, no matter where they live or where they are in life. We aim to ensure that everyone has opportunities to learn about, and learn from, the historic environment.

It takes a special and varied set of skills to care for our unique heritage assets.

These skills can be passed down and evolved over generations, or emerge from cutting-edge use of data or innovative technologies. They include the skills that support the conservation of our cherished assets, and the skills that help us to engage audiences or welcome visitors to sites. We'll therefore embed skills development across our work, and work with sector partners and other stakeholders to improve skills pipelines across Scotland.



HES Blacksmithing  
Craft Fellow at the  
Ratho Byres Forge



## Outcome 4

We will have inspired a new generation of learners through our skills and outreach programmes.

### Key Performance Indicator:

By March 2028, we have increased the number of people we've trained by 10%, and increased the number of people we've engaged through our learning programmes by 15% to 65,000.



Masons at work on the Lindsay Institute, Lanark, early 20th Century. © The Royal Burgh of Lanark Museum Trust



Apprentice stonemason



## Our outcomes: **People and places**

The historic environment sits at the heart of Scotland's communities. It provides homes, schools, and hospitals, and visitor attractions, places of worship, and sites of industry. It brings millions of visitors to our shores each year, creating jobs and earning income to businesses and communities across the country.

It's also essential for recreation and people's wellbeing, and to our sense of identity, place, and belonging. We aim to maintain and enhance all these benefits, and to support the resilience of the people and organisations who make the historic environment such an asset for Scotland. This requires working in partnership locally, nationally, and internationally with communities and groups to support the heritage that matters to them.



Livingston  
Skatepark



## Outcome 5

We will have increased the economic and community benefits from Scotland's historic environment.

**Key Performance Indicator:**

By March 2028, we have increased our contribution to Scotland's GDP by 10%, from £1 billion to £1.1 billion.

## Outcome 6

We will have sustained our grant funding to ensure the historic environment delivers against national priorities.

**Key Performance Indicator:**

By March 2028, we have invested at least £40 million in local communities across Scotland through our grants schemes.



Albert Terrace, Aberdeen



A family at Dumbarton Castle













## Our outcomes: **Climate action**

The changing climate continues to have a negative impact on Scotland's built and historic environment. The historic environment can, and must, be central to Scotland's route to net zero. We will support the just transition to net zero, both through meeting our own legal requirements to cut our emissions, and through helping others to understand, mitigate, and adapt to climate change and its impacts.

This means championing investment in the traditionally constructed buildings that make up our nation's homes, offices, and infrastructure, and understanding and promoting the retrofit solutions they require. It also means working with partners across and beyond the historic environment sector, and supporting and advising Scottish Government, local authorities, and asset owners. Being successful means not only meeting our climate targets, but helping people across Scotland to live in homes that are warmer, safer, and more efficient to heat.



Solar panels  
being installed at  
Edinburgh Castle



## Outcome 7

We will have led the way in reducing our climate impacts.

### **Key Performance Indicator:**

By March 2028, we have reduced our baseline greenhouse gas emissions to 3,573 tonnes.

## Outcome 8

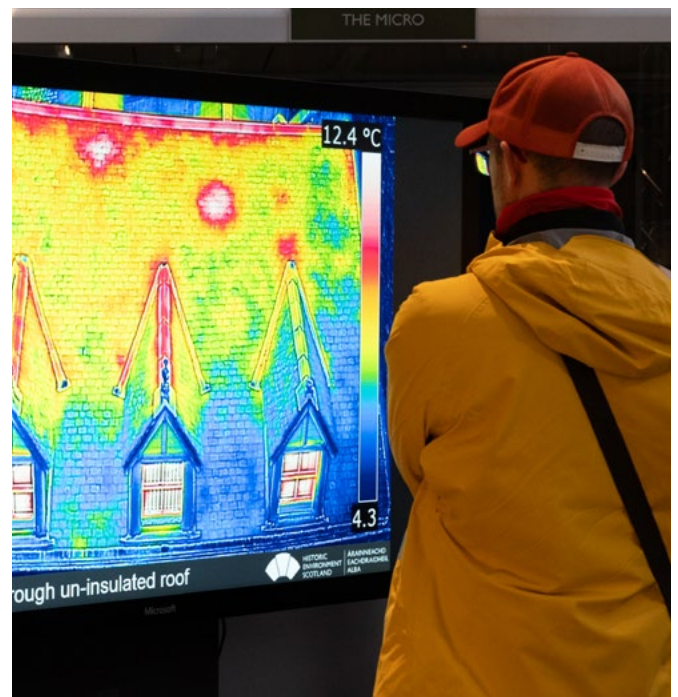
We will have made Scotland's heritage central to the just transition to net zero.

### **Key Performance Indicator:**

By March 2028, we have increased the number of climate adaptation grants we give out by 15%.



Threave Castle



Thermal imaging display at the Engine Shed, Stirling





## Our outcomes: Our organisation

To realise our ambitions and provide leadership to our sector, our organisation needs to be fit for purpose and fit for the future. We need to ensure that we are prioritising activity that delivers the strongest impacts.

This means having the right people with the right skills to tackle the challenges ahead and creating a safe working environment in which everyone can flourish. It also means breaking down barriers to our work and services, so that more people – no matter their background – can access and benefit from them.



Young Gaelic  
volunteers at  
Arnol Blackhouse



## Outcome 9

We have increased our income and invested it in Scotland's heritage.

**Key Performance Indicator:**

By March 2028, we have generated additional funding from non-government sources of at least 20%, from £73.5 million to £88.2 million.

## Outcome 10

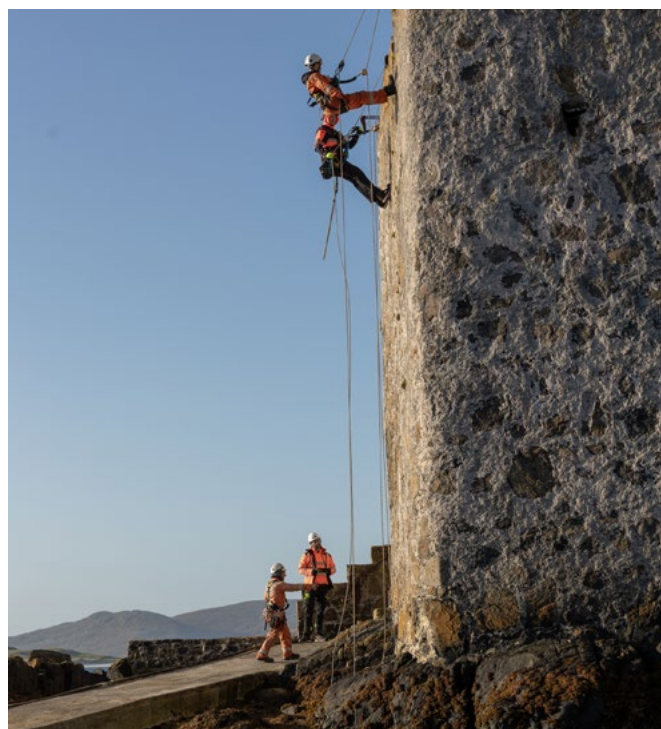
We will have provided a safe, secure, and inclusive environment in which our colleagues can thrive.

**Key Performance Indicator:**

By March 2028, we have maintained or improved colleague engagement survey scores for each of the four pillars within our People Strategy.



HES staff working



Conservation work at Kisimul Castle

# Delivering our plan

This plan will be supported by a published Operating Plan, that will set out the actions that we will be undertaking to deliver our outcomes. We will also review and amend our other organisational strategies and plans, to ensure they align with and help to deliver our corporate priorities.

Read our Operating Plan for 2025-28 at [www.hes.scot/operating-plan](https://www.hes.scot/operating-plan).



## Measuring success

Each of our outcomes is matched with a key performance indicator (KPI). These indicators are the headlines that we'll be judging our performance on, and what we'll report against in our Annual Reports.

Each outcome will also have a set of actions associated with it, which we will track in our Operating Plan. Tracking these KPIs will allow us to adjust delivery of this Corporate Plan, and help to guide our resourcing decisions. Through this approach we'll ensure successful delivery and keep sight of the wider impacts of our work.



# Supporting government outcomes and policies

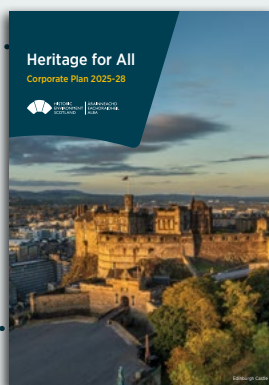
## How it all fits together



**The National Performance Framework** sets a vision for Scotland's collective wellbeing.



**Our Past, Our Future** sets out a national mission – to sustain and enhance the benefits of our historic environment, for people and communities now and into the future.



This document, **our Corporate Plan**, sets out our vision and priorities to 2028.



**Our Operating Plan** details what we'll work to achieve over the next three years, with defined, measurable outcomes.

### All these shape...

- Strategies and plans for key themes like work on our estate, growing skills, investing in our people, communities work, meeting our climate change targets and our research activity
- Annual Directorate plans
- Goals and performance targets for all our employees



The Big Linlithgow Palace LEGO Build, Linlithgow Museum



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Historic Environment Scotland is the lead public body established to investigate, care for and promote Scotland's historic environment.

We are committed to ensuring this publication is accessible to everyone. If you need it supplied in a different format or language including Gaelic, please get in touch.

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