

Draft
Heritage for
All: HES
Corporate
Plan 2025-
28

Our Plan at a Glance

Our vision is: heritage for all

Our Priorities and Outcomes for 2025-2028

Scotland's heritage

By 2028, we will:

- have built strong foundations for the long-term future of the properties, collections, records, and archives in our care
- have the right evidence to inform policy and decision making
- have developed advice and guidance to support people seeking to reuse existing buildings

Skills and Learning

By 2028, we will:

- have improved pathways across Scotland for key historic environment skills
- be a sector leader for delivering heritage skills
- have made Scotland's historic environment a valued national resource for lifelong learning

People and Places

By 2028, we will:

- have increased and broadened our contribution to a growing Scottish economy
- have used our grants and influence to build a more resilient historic environment sector
- have developed authentic and memorable visitor experiences at the properties in care

Climate action

By 2028, we will:

- have reduced carbon emissions from historic environment assets across Scotland
- have supported Scotland's historic environment to adapt to meet the changing climate

Inclusion and resilience

By 2028, we will:

- have generated the financial resources to deliver our priorities
- have cultivated the environment for a safe and welcoming workplace
- have made our work and services accessible to everyone in Scotland

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Our Purpose and Vision

Our Purpose is: to investigate, care for, and promote Scotland's historic environment for the benefit of people and communities across the country.

Our vision is: heritage for all

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.

The historic environment is part of Scotland's story, and that story is never finished. So, at HES we're always working to ensure that our rich heritage is conserved and passed on to future generations, and seeking ways to help everyone celebrate and share the heritage that matters to them.

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

- act as a regulator through designations and consents, and an advisor in the planning system, enabling change to Scotland's historic environment while protecting its cultural significance
- look after and promote access to over 300 sites of national importance, and over 43,000 collections objects associated with them

- enable others to care for their historic environment, by developing and promoting knowledge, skills, policies, advice, and materials
- award millions of pounds of grant funding each year to local communities to repair, revitalise and reuse their historic environment
- investigate, research, record, and innovate around Scotland's historic environment, to understand and share what's valuable about it and how it can be protected

Our Principles

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

Heritage should be for everyone

‘Heritage for all’ needs to be more than just a slogan. We will foster and promote an inclusive vision of heritage that ensures all individuals have opportunities to benefit from it, and can have a voice in the decisions that matter to them.

People sit at the heart of heritage

The historic environment is all about people, and our work is about creating real benefits for people now and into the future. We will embed an outcomes focus across our work, so that we can understand and champion the positive difference we make to people’s lives.

We need to work with others

Everyone has a stake in the historic environment, and the historic environment spans many different sectors. We won’t realise our vision on our own,

and need to support – and receive support from – organisations and individuals across the country. We will recognise this, and work in partnership locally, nationally, and internationally to achieve our goals.

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

We have finite resources and find ourselves in a difficult financial climate. We can't be everything to everyone, and there are many things we'd like to do but can't. We will recognise this and be transparent in our decision-making.

We must find new ways of doing things

We must 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.

Our Priorities

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

- Scotland's heritage
- Skills and learning
- People and places
- Climate action
- Inclusion and resilience

These priorities have been identified through horizon scanning, engagement, and consultation. 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, and help to drive delivery of *Our Past, Our Future: the strategy for Scotland's historic environment*.

Our priorities are the things we'll channel our resources into, and what we'll measure our performance against. They'll shape the way we approach all our work as an organisation. All that work is united under our commitment to heritage for all and shaped by our principles and behaviours.

[Please note that the actions outlined below are *indicative only*, and included to help show how we might deliver against the stated outcomes.]

Our Outcomes

Scotland's Heritage

Scotland's heritage is a unique national resource, and we need to care for it properly if we want to ensure its benefits are felt by as many people as possible. This means protecting and enhancing the range of properties, collections, and records we care for at HES. And it means shaping and influencing how others look after the historic assets in their charge. This requires us to have the best evidence we can to support policy and decision making, and to ensure that communities sit at the heart of our decision making.

Outcome 1 – we will have built strong foundations for the long-term future of the properties, collections, records, and archives in our care

Actions

- a) develop and begin implementing a new strategy for the properties and associated collections in our care
- b) find a sustainable solution to the care and preservation of our archive collections
- c) continuously improve and respond to user feedback for our Trove.Scot project, ensuring more people can access the records and information we hold about Scotland's historic environment

Outcome 2 – we will have the right evidence to inform policy and decision making

Actions

- a) deliver our Research Strategy to address our priority evidence needs
- b) carry out a major engagement campaign to inform what we record and designate, and how we manage change in the planning system
- c) build on and grow existing data and evidence to establish a baseline to support delivery of the Skills Investment Plan for Scotland's historic environment, and to help us advocate for sector skills

- d) advance our digital systems, processes and skills to collect, analyse, and share the data required to sustainably manage our historic assets

Outcome 3 – we will have developed advice and guidance to support people seeking to reuse existing buildings

Actions

- a) continue to review our approach to designation and heritage management policy, to ensure it supports the delivery of national outcomes
- b) Develop a sector-leading training course for planning authorities to support their handling of historic environment cases
- c) Develop a hub on our website which champions accessible and affordable solutions to the retrofit of Scotland's buildings

Skills and Learning

The historic environment is a unique resource for education and learning, and a source of inspiration and reflection that's found in every community. It can support people to learn new skills, and needs people with the right skills to sustain and enhance the benefits it creates. Heritage skills can be old ones passed down and evolved over generations, or new ones that make 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 engage audiences or welcome visitors to sites. We will embed skills development across our work, and work with sector partners and other stakeholders to improve skills pipelines across Scotland.

Outcome 4 – we will have improved pathways across Scotland for key historic environment skills

Actions

- a) work with partners to deliver the Skills Investment Plan for Scotland's historic environment
- b) co-ordinate national efforts to address shortages of priority traditional skills

- c) work with national partners to develop support for intangible cultural heritage in Scotland, so that we can better recognise and safeguard the skills and knowledge associated with the historic environment

Outcome 5 – we will be a sector leader for delivering heritage skills

- a) Develop a centre of excellence to support traditional skills training across Scotland
- b) deliver our UKRI-funded Retrolab project, to support innovation and training around the retrofit of traditional buildings

Outcome 6 – we will have made Scotland's historic environment a valued national resource for lifelong learning

- a) deliver our Making Sense of Scotland learning framework
- b) pilot new Learning Hubs at key Properties in Care, to develop, enhance, and widen our learning offer
- c) deliver our Gaelic Language Plan, focused on supporting key Gaelic communities

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 creates jobs and brings money to businesses and communities across the country, and is vital for recreation and people's wellbeing. We want to maintain and enhance those benefits, and to support the resilience of the organisations who make the historic environment such an asset for Scotland. This means working in partnership at local and national level, and supporting fair and green economic growth.

Outcome 7 – we will have increased and broadened our contribution to a growing Scottish economy

Actions

- a) deliver a new community wealth building framework, to enhance the local economic impacts of our operations
- b) attract visitors to our sites across the country to benefit local tourism economies, balancing social, economic, and environmental factors

- c) collaborate with organisations leading economic development activities to grow public investment in the historic environment
- d) catalyse area regeneration using our grants programmes, role in the planning system, and technical research to encourage private investment in the use and re-use of traditional stock
- e) target our procurement to support Scottish businesses

Outcome 8 – we will have used our grants and influence to build a more resilient historic environment sector

Actions

- a) drive the advancement of the outcomes in *Our Past, Our Future* through facilitating sector action, collaboration, and reporting
- b) develop a sector strategic development framework to improve and target HES role in lead and support for the sector
- c) implement the Historic Environment Grants Programme, to ensure we're responding to the needs of the sector and the assets they care for

Outcome 9 – we will have developed authentic and memorable visitor experiences at the properties in care

Actions

- a) develop our masterplan for Edinburgh Castle, to offer a world-class visitor experience while managing visitor pressures on the site
- b) develop and deliver our Visitor Experience Strategy to sustain and enhance our visitor offer at key sites

Climate Action

We live in a climate emergency, and the changing climate is already having a negative impact on Scotland's historic environment. We need to understand these impacts and what they mean for the way that buildings, sites, and landscapes across the country are managed now and into the future. We also need to support Scotland's just transition to net zero. With so many of our nation's homes, offices, and public buildings built in a traditional style, we cannot reach net zero unless we understand these buildings and the retrofit solutions they require. Meeting this challenge means working with partners across and beyond the historic environment sector, and supporting and advising Scottish Government, local authorities, and asset owners.

Outcome 10 – we will have reduced carbon emissions from historic environment assets across Scotland

Actions

- a) deliver our Carbon Management Plan
- b) use our technical research findings to develop the knowledge and skills required to

- implement energy efficiency measures in traditionally constructed buildings
- c) lead production of a Historic Environment Route Map for Net Zero, to drive advancement of the net zero outcomes in *Our Past, Our Future*
- d) through our advice and policy making, champion the role the historic environment can play in reaching net zero and the sustainable development of communities and places
- e) produce new guidance to support retrofit solutions, to support the long-term, sustainable use of Scotland's traditional buildings

Outcome 11 – we will have supported Scotland's historic environment to adapt to the changing climate

Actions

- a) deliver our Climate Action Plan
- b) use our grant funding to support and develop climate resilience across Scotland's historic environment

Inclusion and resilience

We'll never realise our ambitions or provide leadership to our sector if our organisation isn't fit for purpose, or fit for the future. We need to ensure that we're delivering the right work in the right places, and prioritising work 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 at HES can flourish. We also need to ensure that we're financially sustainable moving forward, and resilient in the face of an uncertain economic future. And in all of this, we will work to embed our vision of 'heritage for all' and ensure that everyone can access and benefit from our services.

Outcome 12 – we will have generated the financial resources to deliver our priorities

Actions

- a) deliver our Financial Strategy, to manage our costs and grow our income
- b) deliver our Commercial Strategy, to increase and diversify our commercial income

- c) deliver our Fundraising Strategy, building on existing activity and exploring new opportunities and income sources

Outcome 13 – we will have cultivated the environment for a safe and welcoming workplace

Actions

- a) deliver our People Strategy, to ensure we have the right skills to deliver our priorities
- b) create and maintain safe and inclusive working environments
- c) deliver our Digital Transformation Plan, driving and embedding digital innovation across our work

Outcome 14 – have made our work and services accessible to everyone in Scotland

Actions

- a) deliver the ‘Equity in Access’ strand of our Equality Outcomes, to ensure everyone can access our sites and services
- b) implement the commitments of our Grants Funding Report, to broaden the range of organisations seeking and accessing our funding

c) through our Communities Framework,
embed community engagement and
empowerment principles and approaches
across our work

Delivering Our Plan

This plan will be supported by a published operating plan, that will set out the activities we'll be undertaking to deliver our outcomes, and how we'll prioritise our resources. We'll also review our other organisational strategies and plans, to ensure they align and help to deliver against our corporate priorities.

Measuring Success

To track our progress in delivering this plan we'll develop a performance framework. This framework will balance headline, primary measures with supporting data that adds context and depth to our reporting. Through this approach we'll be able to balance the things we want to measure with the things that it's feasible to measure, and not lose sight of the wider impacts we want our work to have.