



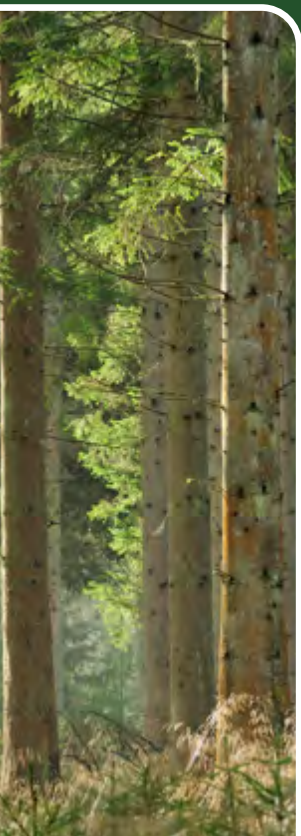
NatureScot
NàdarAlba

Scotland's Nature Agency
Buidheann Nàdair na h-Alba



Nature thrives, people flourish

NatureScot Business Plan 2026/27





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Introduction

This Business Plan is our action plan for Year 1 of our new Corporate Plan 2026-2030. The Corporate Plan targets halting biodiversity loss by 2030. Our passion and our expertise will be at the heart of what we do to achieve this. We will concentrate on what matters most by targeting action where people benefit the greatest.

We need to act rapidly and at large scale to do this. We will work with communities, partners and businesses across land, freshwaters, the sea, our coasts, towns and cities so that nature thrives and people flourish.

Our new Corporate Plan sets out five Priority Outcomes with supporting Strategic Actions that will make a difference to tackling the nature and climate emergencies:

- **Priority Outcome 1.** Restoring Healthy Nature
- **Priority Outcome 2.** Reconnecting People with Nature
- **Priority Outcome 3.** Working with Nature
- **Priority Outcome 4.** Growing Nature Investment
- **Priority Outcome 5.** Resilient Places



Introduction

Our organisation culture is key to success. With that in mind, the new Plan sets four guiding principles:

- **Urgency and scale**
- **People focused**
- **Embrace innovation**
- **Evidence led**

These Outcomes and Principles signal change at NatureScot. In support of this change, we have defined our “Conditions for Success” to ensure that how we work, how we use technology and how we embrace the rich skills and enthusiasm of our people are fully focused on tackling the nature and climate emergencies.

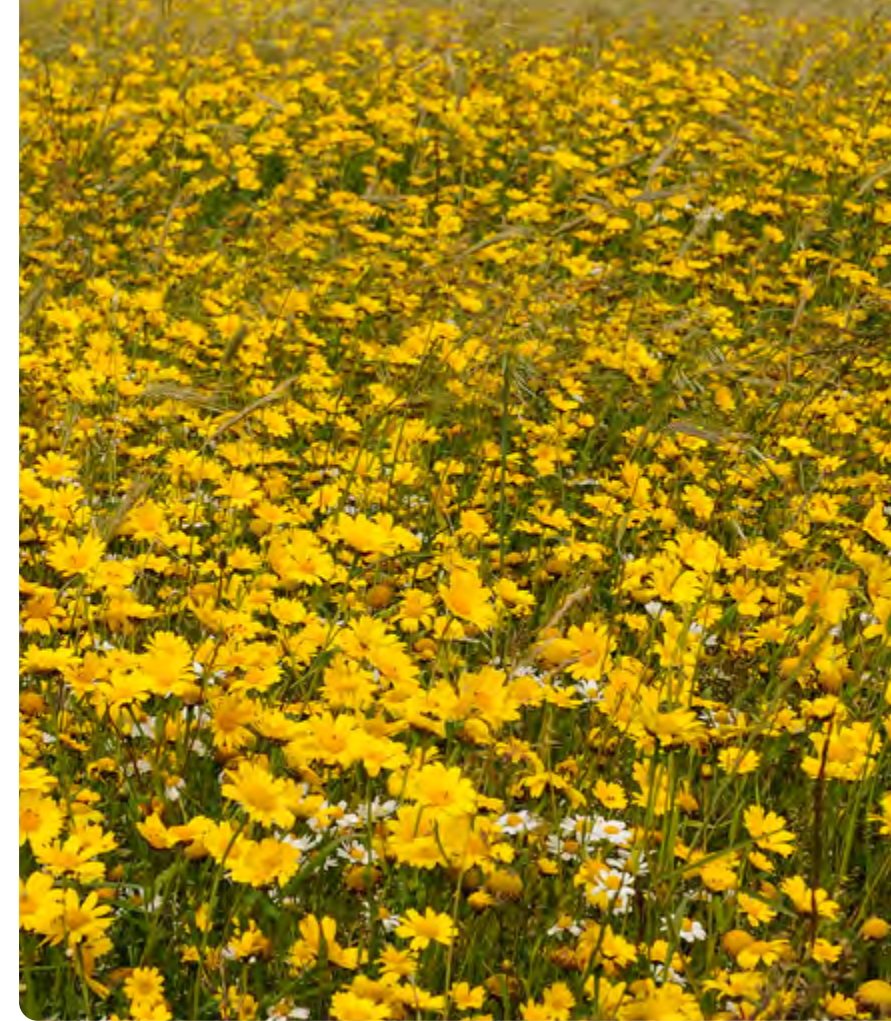
We will enhance our leadership in tackling the biodiversity and nature crisis and build on our reputation for scientific expertise and objective insight both in Scotland and globally. Being evidence-based is a fundamental part of who we are and what drives our passion for change. Improving our evidence base, and how we interpret and share our scientific knowledge, is a fundamental theme that underpins our five Priority Outcomes, building on the work we undertake ourselves and with partners. We will develop an evaluation framework this year. This will identify how we will measure



Introduction

the achievement of our Outcomes and the milestones we need to reach to make sufficient progress in each year of the Corporate Plan.

This plan also details the deliverables against each of our Strategic Actions that have been developed to support our five Priority Outcomes. The identification of these deliverables has required us to make hard choices about what we believe will make the biggest difference to tackling the nature and climate emergencies so that we make the best use of the financial and people resources that we have.





Our context in 2026/27

The Scottish Government's Scottish Biodiversity Strategy (SBS) is a bold long-term vision to restore nature in Scotland by 2045 and to halt biodiversity loss by 2030. This is a substantial commitment, and we lead on, or provide support to, the majority of the actions in the plan.

Other strategies will play their part in nature restoration including a renewed Climate Change Plan, the Scottish National Adaptation Plan, the Agricultural Reform Programme, the National Marine Plan and new environmental legislation. New energy projects, onshore and offshore, will drive a low carbon economy and attract significant investment in addressing the nature and climate emergencies. We will collaborate with regulators, developers and communities through our advice and support to ensure that we strike the right balance between development and the preservation and enhancement of our precious natural resources.

The new Scottish Parliament, following elections in May 2026, coincides with the first year of the Corporate Plan and we will take the opportunity to talk about what we do with returning and new MSPs. It is an important part of our strategy to gain national consensus on the nature-climate crisis, that all MSPs understand our work and value our wider contribution to public health and sustainable economic growth, involving a just transition to a net zero economy.

The drive towards achieving greater value for money across public services continues. We are responding by prioritising our work and progressing opportunities for innovation and efficiency through the Scottish Government's Public Service Reform programme, alongside our own change programmes.

International efforts to strengthen action on biodiversity loss are scheduled for October 2026 in Armenia and on climate in Turkey in November 2026. We look forward to the further strengthening of international relationships and renewed commitments to tackle the global threat of climate change and the wider instability that it brings to communities across the world.

Our principles

We are guided by four Principles which shape what we do by emphasising our priorities and directing our work with partners. They reflect the need to work at scale and at pace, to focus on people, to use technology, think innovatively, and deploy evidence from many sources.

We will embed these four Principles in our decision making and culture, with senior leaders driving this work. Our Extended Leadership Team (ELT) has a clear leadership role to enable this shift to occur through the delivery of Priority Outcomes, Strategic Actions and Conditions for Success. Specific programmes of work are being developed looking at our data strategy and evidence base and how we use technology, including the growing importance of, and opportunities provided by, Artificial Intelligence. Acting urgently and at large scale will be essential as we deliver plans in support of Priority Outcomes and Strategic Actions. Finally, we know that success depends on forging and deepening national consensus about the importance of protecting and restoring nature, so we understand the vital importance of inspiring people to value nature in their home, work and leisure environments.



Urgency and scale

Move with urgency and at scale to achieve Scotland's biodiversity objectives, as we respond to the intergenerational demand to tackle the biodiversity and climate emergencies.



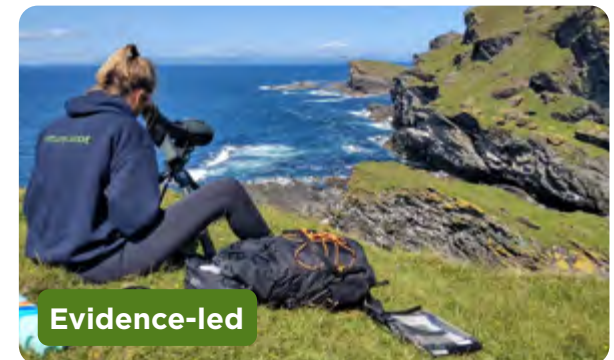
People-focused

Action that supports a just transition to ensure the benefits derived from nature are distributed fairly and the risks from climate impacts are dealt with equitably.



Embrace innovation

Through the competent and skilled deployment of agile, adaptable, collaborative and digital ways of working we will deliver place-based actions that maximise benefits from nature.



Evidence-led

Target intervention and investment where evidence and forecasting show nature and people need it most, to strengthen resilience, especially in relation to the impacts from the climate emergency.

Outcomes

Guided by our four Principles we have prioritised five Outcomes which will drive Scotland towards being nature positive by 2030. Together they recognise the importance to people of our natural environment and

the value of working in partnership. There are also strong connections between the Priority Outcomes, reflecting the international recognition that climate, biodiversity, food, water and human health are intertwined.



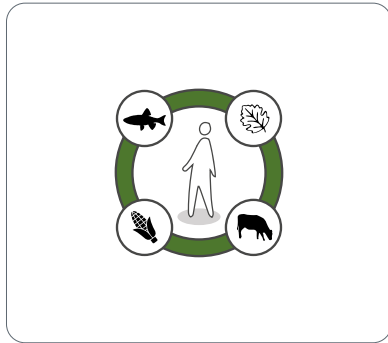
Priority outcome 1
Restoring healthy nature

Lead species recovery, connect habitats and safeguard at least 30% of land, rivers and seas by 2030 on the way to good ecological health.



Priority outcome 2
Reconnecting people with nature

Increased support for nature-positive action through strengthened public connection, understanding and access to nature.



Priority outcome 3
Working with nature

Embed nature-positive practice across agriculture and other land and marine uses.



Priority outcome 4
Growing nature investment

Achieve increased levels of public and private sector high integrity nature investment.



Priority outcome 5
Resilient places

Strengthened climate, economic and social resilience in all our communities through nature recovery.

Key Business Plan Actions



These are our key actions this year to deliver our five Priority Outcomes and successfully reach our 2030 ambitions. This includes the delivery of our Corporate Plan Strategic Actions and our statutory service functions. Our actions align to the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy (SBS) and its delivery plan, and we will provide separate reports on how well we are achieving our SBS outcomes. Each action has quarterly milestones identified where there is a substantial delivery element to be achieved. Where no quarterly milestone is identified underlying work will still be progressing.

Priority outcome 1

Restoring healthy nature



We will promote ecological health by leading and working at scale to build resilient interconnected nature networks, support species recovery, deliver resilient catchment scale restoration and safeguard at least 30% of land and seas for nature by 2030.

Priority outcome 1

Restoring healthy nature



Corporate Plan Strategic Action

1.1 Safeguard at least 30% of land and seas as high-quality nature sites linked through nature networks by 2030.

2026/27 Goals

- Identification of new sites and development of policy, approaches and required incentives, to mainstream work to deliver up to 200,000 ha of new safeguarded areas this year, with support from Scottish government and partners.
- Develop the action plan for monitoring and management of 30x30 sites and support of Nature Networks through the Nature Networks Toolbox.

Delivery	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1.1 (a) Delivering 30x30 and Nature Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Establish ways of working and pace to identify and approve the first tranche of new Nature30 sites, including developing and agreeing incentive mechanisms with Scottish Government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Promote Nature30 and increase stakeholder engagement to increase pace towards identification of further new sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Increase pace towards delivery of up to 200,000 ha of new sites per annum – Continue to support Scottish Government to put Marine Protected Areas (MPA) management measures in place – Finalise Action Plan for monitoring and managing to deliver healthy ecosystems across 30x30 sites – Develop and agree with SG a monitoring and evaluation framework for Nature Networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reach and maintain delivery target of 200,000 ha per annum of new sites, which is required to deliver 30% of land protected by 2030 – Complete underpinning reviews to support development of MPA adaptive management framework and climate change resilience assessment

Priority outcome 1

Restoring healthy nature



Corporate Plan Strategic Action

1.2 Drive action on species and habitat recovery where evidence identifies the benefits for action.

2026/27 Goals

- Deliver final year of Species on the Edge Programme and agree legacy with partners.
- Develop Natural Environment (Scotland) Act Statutory Targets.
- Implement the Scottish Plan for Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) prevention, surveillance and control.
- Lead the delivery and development of the multi-annual Nature Restoration Fund supporting development and delivery projects targeting nature restoration.
- Work with partners to deliver SBS actions including coastal and marine strategies and developing a fundable and deliverable plan to remove mink from the Outer Hebrides and continue to support the Orkney Native Wildlife Project with the aim to be in mop-up phase across the islands.

Delivery	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1.2 (a) Work with partners to deliver SBS actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Agree new Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with Scottish Environment Link (SE LINK) that supports collaboration between SE LINK and SBS governance structures, Agencies and eNGOs – Work with Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) subgroup to peer review Natural Environment (Scotland) Act statutory target topics and provide confirmation to SG of their suitability – Award funding for new round of Nature Restoration Fund projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Organise the third Scottish Biodiversity Forum with SG – Convene Terrestrial and Marine Operational Boards with SG – Work with SG statutory targets group to confirm the detail of what will be monitored – Undertake an evaluation of the Nature Restoration Fund – Develop the case for further funding for the Nature Restoration Fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Present Annual progress report to Governance Boards – Develop a protocol with Environmental Standards Scotland around monitoring and reporting against statutory nature targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Work with SG on second year assessment of progress for the SBS Portfolio Board – Complete Species on the Edge Programme – Undertake trial monitoring of the statutory target topics

Priority outcome 1

Restoring healthy nature



Delivery	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1.2 (b) INNS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Publish the Scottish INNS lists for prevention, eradication and management of priority species — Adopt and publish generic INNS contingency plans for terrestrial plants and vertebrates — Promote the Scottish INNS Action Plan during invasive species week in June 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Agree future “Saving Nature - Outer Hebrides” (SN-OH) Operational Plan — Publish updated list of non-native and invasive species established in Scotland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Publish a list of priority sites for INNS control — Publish an initial assessment of the rate of INNS establishment in Scotland — Publish a Scottish priority INNS list for eradications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Publish an investment plan for the pipeline of strategic INNS projects — Implement the later phases of eradication Orkney Native Wildlife Project during mop-up phase — Complete report on horizon scanning and pathways analysis for islands and regions
1.2 (c) Work with partners to implement coastal and marine strategies and key terrestrial projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Procure contractor for Ancient Woodland Register creation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Agree next steps for implementing the UK Cetacean Strategy — Create a Community of Practice with Community Land Scotland, Fisheries Management Scotland and Scottish Land Commission to share learning from exemplar landscape restoration projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Agree funding for Scottish Seabird Conservation Action Plan implementation 2027-2030 — Hold 4th International Conservation Translocation Conference in Edinburgh — Host a European wildcat conference in Scotland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Complete first phase of work with partners to agree elasmobranch management actions — Collect Ancient Woodland Register data from landowners and plan for database build and testing

Priority outcome 1

Restoring healthy nature



Corporate Plan Strategic Action

1.3 Lead the acceleration of peatland restoration in Scotland.

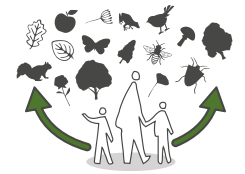
2026/27 Goals

- Deliver the agreed Peatland Action Restoration hectares for the year.
- Provide technical expertise and training to support development of the peatland restoration sector and help us balance peat with wider land use interests.

Delivery	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1.3 (a) Contribute to the Climate Change Plan (CCP) ambition to restore 400,000 ha of degraded peatlands by 2040	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Issue grant offers to deliver over 6,000 ha of restoration – Publish Peat and Development guidance – Consult on the Peatland Standard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Issue Peatland design support scheme awards – Close application window for Peatland Action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Publish the Peatland Standard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Prepare peatland contracts for delivery in 2027/28

Priority outcome 2

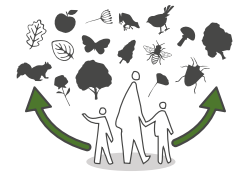
Reconnecting people with nature



We aim to strengthen people's connection with nature by demonstrating the many benefits it provides in an inspiring and compelling way so that we gain support and build confident advocacy for nature to be restored.

Priority outcome 2

Reconnecting people with nature



Corporate Plan Strategic Action

2.1 Celebrate and champion the benefits to people of being connected to nature.

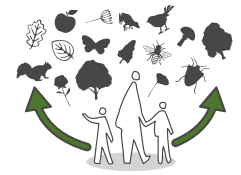
2026/27 Goals

- Deliver inspiring campaigns and explore new ways to reach different audiences.
- “Enjoying the Outdoors ” action plan launched and Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC) behaviour change, communication and engagement strategy refreshed.

Delivery	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2.1 (a) Engage more people in nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Deliver Spring Nature Heroes and Make Space for Nature Campaign – Deliver green health week with Public Health Scotland – Establish SBS Working Group on Mainstreaming and Public Engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Deliver Summer Nature Heroes and Make Space for Nature Campaign 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Deliver Autumn Nature Heroes and Make Space for Nature Campaign – Pilot NatureScot conversations engagement portal – Analyse NatureScot Omnibus Survey – Initiate public facing campaign focusing on capturing ‘hearts and minds’ of young people and families through re-engagement with nature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Deliver Winter Nature Heroes and Make Space for Nature Campaign – Publish NatureScot Omnibus Survey findings
2.1 (b) SOAC and Enjoying the Outdoors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Deliver Spring SOAC Campaign – Develop new “Enjoying the Outdoors” action plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Deliver Summer SOAC Campaign – Rebuild outdoor access Scotland website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Deliver Autumn SOAC Campaign – Complete review of the policy and funding framework for local and national paths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Deliver Winter SOAC Campaign – Publish SOAC awareness research findings

Priority outcome 2

Reconnecting people with nature



Corporate Plan Strategic Action

2.2 Promote and support nature experience opportunities particularly for young people, including on our nature reserves.

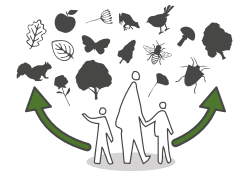
2026/27 Goals

- Delivery of the Scottish Government’s Learning for Sustainability Action Plan.

Delivery	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2.2 (a) Grow nature connection and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Launch the Future Roots Fund for growing nature connection in Young People – Publish and promote key findings on the current state of nature on the school estate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Launch a new Outdoor learning in Nature programme to transform teaching capacity and confidence in taking learning outdoors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Develop Education and Outreach strategies for NNRs – Refresh NatureScot resources for teachers and schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Engage 300 schools and 15 Local Authorities in Nature Discovery Map Scotland – Support over 400 Junior Rangers in Scotland, including groups on our NNRs

Priority outcome 2

Reconnecting people with nature



Corporate Plan Strategic Action

2.3 Develop nature-based activities, workforce and skills including volunteering and citizen science.

2026/27 Goals

- Implement the SBS volunteering and citizen science framework and develop our provision of skills and training for nature recovery.

Delivery	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<p>2.3 (a) Lead the implementation of the SBS volunteering and citizen science framework and develop our provision of skills and training for nature recovery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Launch SBS volunteering and citizen science framework with endorsement from key organisations – Launch next round of the Working with Rivers training scheme with Fisheries Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Scope land and nature apprenticeship scheme with partners, including new NatureScot apprenticeships on NNRs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Develop proposals for an online and NNR Nature Recovery Skills academy – Launch “Plant selection for blue-green Infrastructure” online learning package – Develop strategy for growing regular volunteering on NNRs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Deliver rolling programme of STEM and Nature-based careers events to 4,000+ young people – Agree scope of collaborative monitoring with fishing industry, citizen scientists and Government 2027-2030

Working with nature



We aim to embed nature-based management to support businesses by working with farmers, foresters, land and wildlife managers, fishers and developers to harness the benefits nature provides, live alongside wildlife and reduce climate risks and impacts.

Priority outcome 3

Working with nature



Corporate Plan Strategic Action

3.1 Enable species, wildlife and nature positive management in partnership with foresters, food producers and managers on land and seas.

2026/27 Goals

- Deliver the 2026 Agri Environment Climate Scheme (AECS). We anticipate receiving around 100 applications which could equate to approximately £4m in value covering 40,000 ha.
- Enable the conservation and successful management of beaver, gulls, geese and white-tailed eagles and develop a communications approach to explaining our role to key stakeholders.
- Pilot biodiversity audit and tool and develop nature friendly farming approach.
- Support Marine Directorate on marine fisheries management.

Delivery	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
3.1 (a) AECS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Assess eligible applications – Support work on amendments for the 2027 AECS round 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Complete assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Complete quality assurance and countersigning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Complete budget confirmation – Issue and conclude contracts – Open 2027 application round
3.1 (b) Living with wildlife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Launch species management and mitigation schemes – Initiate work with stakeholders to refresh approach to Goose support and Sea Eagle Management Scheme (SEMS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Open applications for 2027/28 schemes (subject to funding) – Conclude options appraisal on SEMS and Goose support provision – Publish Beaver Management report for 2025/26 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Complete final SEMS payments – Engage with stakeholders and agree scheme provisions for 2027/28 with SG – Review gull breeding season and develop future gull management measures and support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Complete final Goose Scheme payments – Launch 2027/28 schemes

Priority outcome 3

Working with nature



Delivery	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
3.1 (c) Transforming Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Promote the use of FarmBioScot tool to farmers and crofters — Launch user testing of FarmBioScot tool — Launch statement on food and nature at Royal Highland Show 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Complete development of FarmBioScot Map 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Complete user testing of FarmBioScot tool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Finalise delivery of a first version of FarmBioScot tool — Report on food and nature approach
3.1 (d) Support sustainable marine fisheries management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Influence the development of the Inshore Fisheries Management Initiative to ensure this delivers benefits for nature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Support further work on Fisheries Management Plans, including assessments to support consultation 	-	-

Priority outcome 3

Working with nature



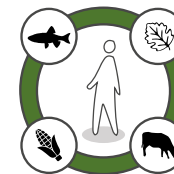
Corporate Plan Strategic Action

3.2 Rapidly accelerate sustainable deer management across all of Scotland.

2026/27 Goals

- Implementation of new Natural Environment Act provisions.
- Delivery of work programme applying regulatory and incentive mechanisms to effect reduction in deer populations and impacts - aligning with SBS spatial priorities.
- Develop the data and evidence base to monitor deer populations, impacts and culls locally, regionally and across Scotland.

Delivery	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
3.2 (a) Deer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Set out delivery plan for Natural Environment Act provisions (Deer code, National Deer Plan, competence and occupier rights) – Set out operational action plan which aligns with delivering SBS spatial priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Set clear in year outcomes for deer management priority areas – Agree 2026/27 incentive schemes – Develop Just Transition route map for deer managers with Finding the Common Ground group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Progress and monitor delivery in priority deer management focus areas and assess regulatory pipeline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Progress and monitor delivery in priority deer management focus areas and assess regulatory pipeline – Review and report on delivery – Publish operational action plan for 2027/28



Priority outcome 3

Working with nature

Corporate Plan Strategic Action

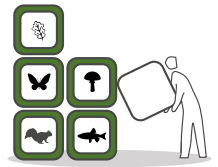
3.3 Provide clear steer and support to developers to maximise opportunities for nature recovery.

2026/27 Goals

- Develop and promote a biodiversity metric for Scotland to enhance biodiversity in planning.
- Introduce cost recovery mechanism, provide advice on development proposals and in accordance with adopted Sectoral Marine Plan, National Marine Plan and new HRA policy.

Delivery	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
3.3 (a) Developing a Biodiversity Metric for the Scottish planning system	-	– Finalise consultation tool and draft guidance	– Carry out consultation on draft Scottish planning biodiversity metric	– Analyse consultation responses
3.3 (b) Marine energy and planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Introduce cost recovery mechanism for offshore wind advice – Finalise guidance to support Strategic Compensation under amended Habitats Regulations for Offshore Wind – Agree seabird measures for Portfolio of Strategic Compensation Measures – Collaborate with Marine Directorate to draft consultation materials for implementation of Protected Marine Features (PMF) policy under National Marine Plan 2 (NMP2) 	– Input to development of Marine Nature Positive policy for NMP2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Introduce top-up package for Offshore Wind cost recovery approach – Collaborate with Marine Directorate to finalise guidance and supporting materials for implementation of a revised PMF Policy under NMP2 	-

Growing nature investment

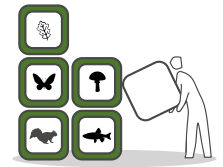


We aim for increased levels of high integrity public, private and philanthropic investment for nature restoration and resilience through blended finance solutions across land management, marine and coastal, community and public sectors.



Priority outcome 4

Growing nature investment



Corporate Plan Strategic Action

4.1 Stimulate nature investment through a series of investable projects and models for private sector and philanthropic funders.

2026/27 Goals

- Deliver investment vehicles and plans including Ecosystem Restoration Code (ERC), Scottish Marine Environmental Enhancement Fund (SMEEF) and Scottish Rivers Fund (SRF).
- Deliver the Facility for Investment Ready Nature in Scotland (FIRNS) grant scheme to support development and delivery of investment ready nature restoration projects.

Delivery	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
4.1 (a) Investment vehicles and plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Publish ERC Competent Model and select pilots – Launch SRF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Conduct stakeholder test of draft ERC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Complete Stakeholder test of draft ERC – Report on finance and impact for SMEEF and SRF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Publish ERC – Report on Competent model – Report on finance and impact for SMEEF and SRF
4.1 (b) FIRNS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Award funding for new cohort 	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Conduct mid-term programme review and KPI update – Seek ministerial support for further budget and rounds of FIRNS funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Publish Final project report – Design future FIRNS programme

Priority outcome 4

Growing nature investment



Corporate Plan Strategic Action

4.2 Activate high integrity nature investments through implementation of guidance, standards, advice, and digital tools.

2026/27 Goals

- Guide investors to the highest priority nature restoration projects across Scotland.
- Support stakeholders to integrate a natural capital approach to decision-making processes.

Delivery	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
4.2 (a) Investment Prospectus and Natural Capital Tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Launch Minimum Viable Product (MVP) Investment Prospectus – Pilot new Natural Capital Tool functionality and farm/croft clusters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Implement an investment development plan – Initiate user testing on Natural Capital Tool farm/croft clusters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Host stakeholder engagement events – Implement a knowledge hub for the Prospectus and Natural Capital Tool – Complete user testing of Natural Capital Tool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Publish report on Investment Prospectus – Complete Natural Capital Tool MVP

Priority outcome 5

Resilient places



By accelerating nature recovery, we will support communities to adapt to climate risks while helping to improve the health and job benefits for people and businesses.



Priority outcome 5

Resilient places



Corporate Plan Strategic Action

5.1 Support community-led nature recovery locally.

2026/27 Goals

- Enhanced local green and blue spaces by managing Nature Networks and tackling INNS in at least 100 communities

Delivery	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
5.1 (a) Actions to enhance local green and blue spaces	– Complete review of our policy and approach to community engagement	– Scope and develop a national framework for Scotland’s locally led landscape observatories	– Develop new tool kit to support communities to lead nature recovery locally	– Complete first phase of review of opportunities for increasing community participation in safeguarding marine biodiversity

Corporate Plan Strategic Action

5.2 Lead and expand actions to deliver health and nature benefits close to where people need it most.

2026/27 Goals

- Champion the framework for advancing Green Health with Public Health Scotland.

Delivery	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
5.2 (a) Co-lead implementation of the Green Health Framework with Public Health Scotland	– Promote framework for advancing green health with SG, local authorities and Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs)	– Map and make the case for investment in nature-rich greenspaces within and close to communities which have the poorest provision and greatest needs	– Publish new guidance on the planning, management and investment in the NHS outdoor estate	-

Priority outcome 5

Resilient places



Corporate Plan Strategic Action

5.3 Demonstrate the value of coastal and catchment scale nature recovery to critical infrastructure at risk from climate impacts.

2026/27 Goals

- To enable effective influencing of nature-based approaches to coastal adaptation and delivery of coastal SBS and Scottish National Adaptation Plan (SNAP) 3 actions.
- Help to deliver the SG Marine and Coastal Restoration plan.
- Improved planning and provision of green infrastructure within Scotland’s towns and cities.
- Deliver nine SBS exemplar projects including two pioneer catchments in the Dee and South Esk.
- Pilot “Source to Sea” in the Dee, South Esk, Tweed and SW Scotland.

Delivery	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
5.3 (a) Marine and coastal enhancement	– Agree next steps for implementing the Marine and Coastal Restoration Plan	– Progress next stage of SBS action on identifying coastal habitat accommodation space	-	– Secure funding for implementing the Marine and Coastal Restoration Plan 2027-2030
5.3 (b) Improve the planning and provision of green infrastructure	– Establish Nature Towns and Cities Accreditation for Scotland in partnership with National Lottery Heritage Fund	-	– Refresh case for investment in blue-green Infrastructure – Produce new Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for Scotland to help guide more climate sensitive development	– Accredit Scotland’s first ‘Nature Towns and Cities’ – Publish guidance for greenspace
5.3 (c) Priority Locations for Landscape Scale Investment	– Complete project plans for nine SBS landscape scale exemplar projects, including the Dee and S Esk pioneer catchment projects	– Complete project plans for pioneer catchments	– Launch Nature Restoration dashboard – Establish landscape scale community of practice	– Report on learning from nine exemplar projects – Support delivery of pioneer catchment work programme



Statutory and public facing services

We will maintain focus on our day-to-day statutory functions to ensure we provide an excellent service to the public and to business sectors. Successful delivery of these activities will contribute to the delivery of our five Priority Outcomes and ensures that our regulatory functions and planning advice are both delivered to a high standard.

Statutory and public facing services



Service	Delivery	Measurement
<p>Licensing Deliver an effective licensing service within service standards, including the development of new licensing functions.</p>	<p>Licensing is one of the key levers we use to regulate the management of wildlife. We will enhance our service by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Delivering Species Licensing Review recommendations — Launching Muirburn Licensing — Conducting a public consultation on General Licence Review — Developing our approach to cost recovery of our licence service 	<p>We will measure demand (applications), decisions (applications granted and refusals) and turnaround time to meet service standards.</p>
<p>Statutory Planning Consultations Fulfil our statutory duty as a consultee with regulators, in particular Planning and Electricity Act cases.</p>	<p>We will deliver our advice in line with our Development Management service guidance, including our service statement “Planning for Great Places, as well as supporting delivery on nature through compensation, mitigation or nature enhancement measures.</p> <p>Our case management system (InformedDECISION) will enable us to respond to priority cases, providing developers and regulators the guidance they need and helping them to provide the information we require first time.</p>	<p>We will monitor in-quarter and full year totals of “holding”, “conditioned” and “outright” objections and pre consented derogation cases which give an early indication of the effectiveness of our advice.</p> <p>We will monitor and report on our compliance with our published timescales for responding to consultations.</p> <p>We will track determination and delivery of derogation cases and advise on the effectiveness of compensation measures.</p>
<p>Freedom of Information (FOI) Environmental Information (EIR) and Complaints Fulfil our responsibilities to provide open and transparent responses to formal correspondence in a timely fashion.</p>	<p>We will comply with the statutory timescales and guidance of the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman and Scottish Information Commissioner and measure the volume of formal correspondence to assess the demand on us in meeting those requirements.</p>	<p>We will record FOI, EIR and complaints processed on time, in line with required response standards, and the average time taken.</p>

Statutory and public facing services

The ongoing management of our organisation is underpinned by the ambition to provide an excellent and transparent public service that demonstrates value for money (“Best Value”) and has strong corporate governance. Operational scorecards are in place that provide quarterly updates to senior leaders and the Board on:



Employee engagement



Financial performance



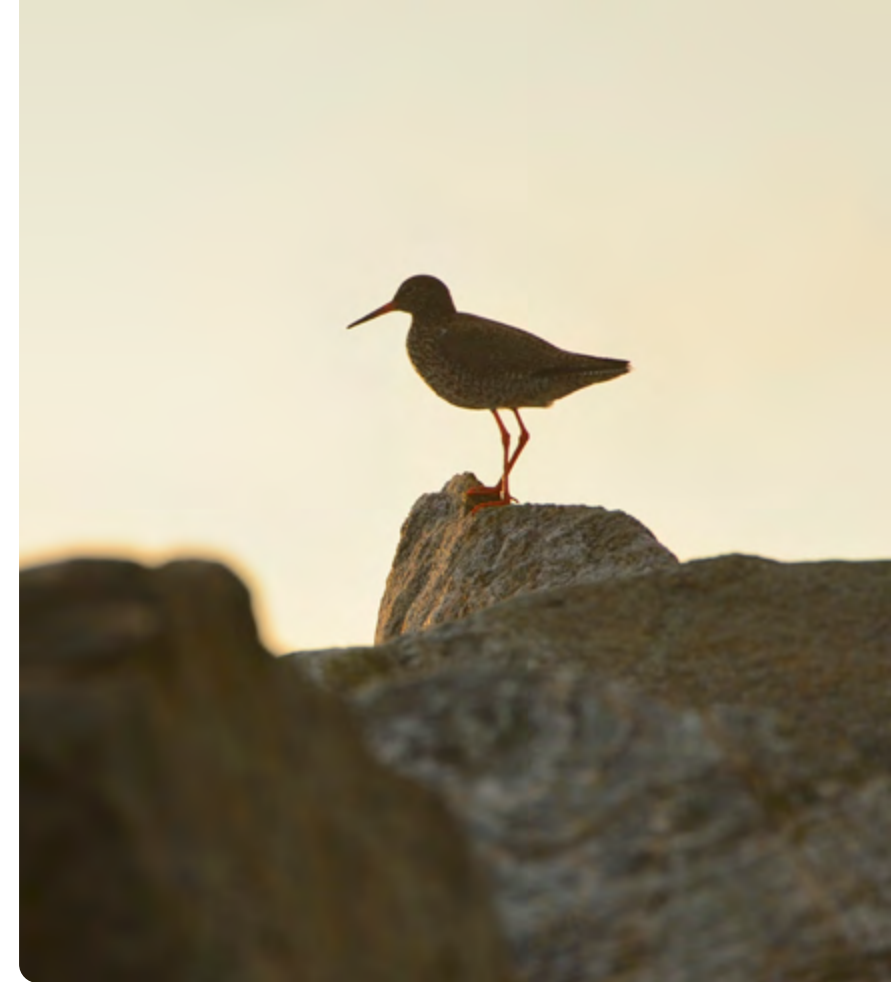
Health and Safety



Risk and audit



Progress to Net Zero



Tracking the delivery of our Corporate Plan

We are developing an evaluation framework to provide evidence of our achievement in tackling the nature-climate crisis so that we can demonstrate positive links between our Strategic Actions and our purpose to halt biodiversity loss by 2030 and to restore and regenerate biodiversity across our land, freshwater and seas by 2045. The Evaluation Framework will be completed by the end of the summer 2026.

Our Corporate Plan sets out how we will measure progress to 2030. In each of the four years of the Corporate Plan we will set out the activities we will undertake to establish robust measurement against each of the indicators to ensure that we are on track. Activities will vary between measurable actions, opinion surveys and data and evidence gathering about the state of Scotland's nature.

In this first year we will be rigorous in establishing and then testing our approach to ensure that we have a robust framework, drawing on best evidence and reliable data sources that can be used in the following three years and compared over time. The table below sets out the indicators we have identified. These will define progress against each Priority Outcome and the action we will be taking this year to develop the indicators and establish our evidence base. We will ensure that we work with partners, including the Scottish Government, particularly in regard to people and places. This will ensure we are making the best use of available data sources from across the wider public sector and other publicly available sources.



Tracking the delivery of our Corporate Plan

Priority Outcome 1 Restoring Healthy Nature

Indicator	2026/27 Activity
The extent of land and sea safeguarded by 2030.	We will track the area of land and sea designated as a protected area or Nature30 site to ensure we are making steady progress towards achieving our 2030 goal.
Cumulative total of hectares of peatland restoration.	We will track the area of peatland area restored to meet our 2035 peatland restoration commitment.
Ecosystem health of protected sites.	We will build on existing monitoring of areas in favourable condition on protected sites to include area restored using the Nature Restoration Fund.



Tracking the delivery of our Corporate Plan

Priority Outcome 2 Reconnecting People with Nature

Indicator	2026/27 Activity
People's connection with nature.	We will establish a methodology to determine the numbers of people visiting our National Nature Reserves, and a metric for assessing people's connectedness with nature.
Public understanding of biodiversity loss and climate change impacts.	We will assess the understanding of biodiversity loss and climate change impacts among the population and their motivations for action or inaction. This will be through a composite approach drawing together evidence from direct surveys as well as social media and other on-line engagement.

Tracking the delivery of our Corporate Plan

Priority Outcome 3 Working with Nature

Indicator	2026/27 Activity
The extent of farms and crofts advised by us and farming with nature.	We will enhance our existing knowledge by using supplementary data about the use of the Natural Capital tool that we are currently piloting.
The spatial reduction and maintenance of low deer populations at scale.	We will build on our existing approaches to understand the numbers of deer culled and population changes on a spatial basis. This will further our understanding of the pace of change required to support our aims of eliminating biodiversity loss through herbivore activity.
The number of marine plans with nature positive policies.	We will ensure that marine plans have nature positive policies by monitoring plans and driving up awareness of the importance of positive policies.

Tracking the delivery of our Corporate Plan

Priority Outcome 4 Growing Nature Investment

Indicator	2026/27 Activity
The percentage growth in private funding for nature from 2025/26 baseline.	We will grow the amount of finance attracted into nature at scale and will track the total value of investment secured and monitor increases over time.
Hectares of projects available for funding supporting high integrity frameworks.	We will increase the number of investment ready projects that are suitable for private finance investment by tracking the total number of projects and the area of land that is suitable for high integrity investment.

Tracking the delivery of our Corporate Plan

Priority Outcome 5 Resilient Places

Indicator	2026/27 Activity
The proportion of citizens who live within a 5-minute walk of their nearest greenspace.	We will develop a baseline metric and a means of monitoring progress towards ensuring more people have swift access to greenspace.
Public sector resource savings from nature investment.	We will develop an approach to monitor the longer-term benefit to the wider public sector that will accrue through the development of nature-rich environments that support for example, public health, carbon reduction and the mitigation of the extreme impacts of climate change.
The growing value of critical infrastructure protected by green infrastructure.	We will develop a measure that tracks an improved understanding of the importance of natural solutions which will encourage developers and planners to work alongside us to make better use of our green infrastructure.





Conditions for success

To deliver the Corporate Plan we will continue to evolve how we work so that we operate in ways that ensure our success. We will prioritise leadership, empower our people and maximise our impact to deliver the full ambition of this plan. Our transformational change programmes will:

- unlock the full potential of our people,
- deliver the organisational capabilities necessary to support the flexible, efficient and responsive organisation we need to be,
- be influential in leveraging the power of our partners, stakeholders and the wider public to accomplish the vital mission of tackling biodiversity loss and climate change.



Conditions for success

To succeed we need:

Inspiring Leadership from everyone

- All colleagues lead with clarity, courage and purpose, effectively navigating complexity and uncertainty.
- We influence by earning trust, convening spaces, fostering engagement and managing differences respectfully, creating the conditions for effective dialogue.

Empowered People

- We work in partnership, creating the conditions where people collaborate effectively, feel engaged and take ownership to create impact.
- People are empowered, confident, skilled and trusted to use their judgement to make a difference.

Impactful Ways of Working

- We make impactful decisions that are timely, transparent and embrace managed risks and innovation.
- We have highly effective and efficient ways of working supported by technology and mindsets that enable everyone to be agile, innovative and solution focused.

To develop the “Conditions for Success” requires excellence in support services and a clear focus on the needs of our internal and external customers. The key change programmes that we will be taking forward are as follows.



Conditions for success

Action	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
6.1 Execute a strategic plan to ensure that we develop a workforce fit for the future aligned with strategic goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Rollout operational level workforce planning to enable better allocation of resources and future strategic level workforce planning — Design leadership development programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Commence Strategic Workforce Planning programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Integrate new workforce planning approach into business planning processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Assess impact of leadership development programme to inform 2027/28 requirements
6.2 Implement robust processes and structures to support our people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Embed the learning hub and focusing support on collaboration, working in partnership and people skills — Complete the base case for a revised business planning and resource monitoring model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Deliver Business Planning project phase as part of our change programme “Project Cornerstone” to enable resource planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Identify solution to resource time recording 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Roll out resource time recording solution ready for 2027/28
6.3 Roll out action to support decision making, productivity, income generation, cost recovery, efficiency and hitting net zero carbon emissions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Establish the base case for using AI based Microsoft technologies and roll out Teams Premium — Assess our digital tools and technologies and implement decommissioning priorities — Agree Net Zero Action Plan — Develop our income generation strategy including charging models and cost recovery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Rollout Co-pilot Chat — Finalise our income generation strategy including charging models and cost recovery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Rollout Co-pilot Premium trial — Implement income generation priority actions — Implement Net Zero actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Agree vision for offices — Prioritise future sites

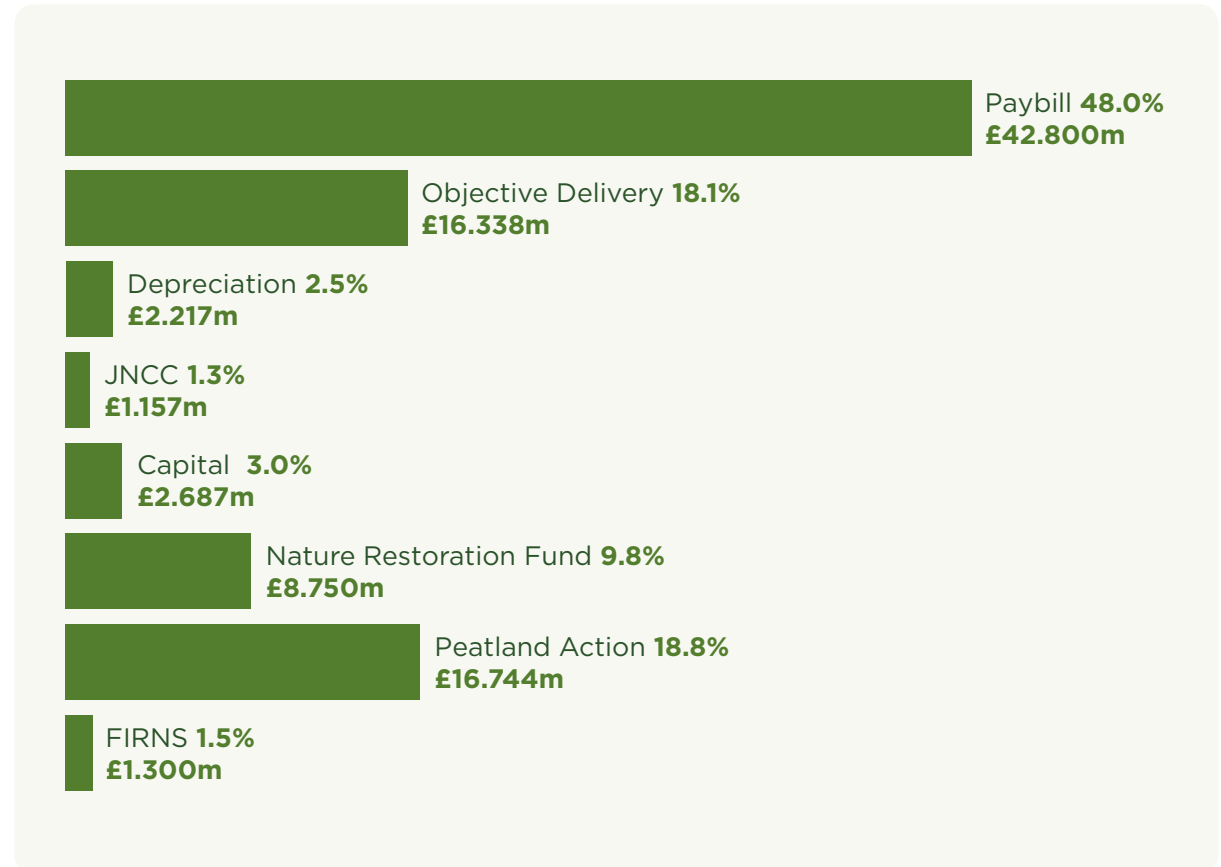
Our Resources

Our total Grant-in-Aid from Scottish Government for 2026/27 is £64.469m plus £26.794m for Programme funding (PA, NRF and FIRNS) and £0.73m for additional marine projects at Autumn Budget Revision (ABR). This is included in Objective Delivery.

Our Grant-in-Aid of £64.469m includes depreciation. As with previous years, our funding is augmented with additional in year budget revisions which support our five Corporate Plan priorities.

Programme funding of £26.794m directly supports Peatland Action (PA), Nature Restoration Fund (NRF) and the Facility for Investment Ready Nature in Scotland (FIRNS).

Our budget

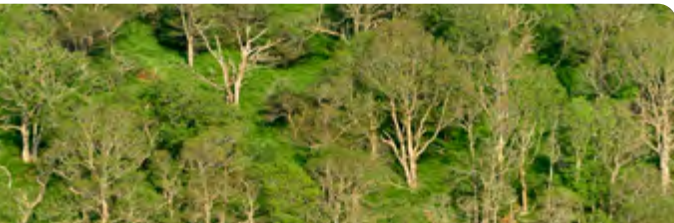


Resourcing our plan

The table shows the total allocation of financial and staff resources to deliver the full programme of projects for this year. We operate flexibly throughout the year and redeploy funds that become available through our efficiency programme and re-prioritisation exercises as part of our 90-day business planning process. This allows us sufficient flexibility to deliver on our five Priority Outcomes within our resource allocation.

Activity	Budget allocation £m	FTE Allocation
Marine Ecosystems and Sustainable Coasts	1.474	96
Protected Areas	0.756	46
Supporting Good Development	0.617	71
Wildlife Management	2.853	108
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	1.095	76
Natural Resource Management	0.402	97
People and Places	2.543	71
Workplaces Team	2.513	21
People and Organisational Development	0.921	29
Finance, Planning and Performance	0.159	26
Information and Cyber Security	0.844	25
Technology and Digital Services	1.646	35
External Funding*	0	21
Communications	0.383	26
Executive Governance	0.132	9
Total	16.338	757

* External Funding allocates grants not included in G-in-A and its small operational budget is included in Finance, Planning and Performance



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