



2026/27

Business Plan

Vibrant canals for
people, heritage and
nature



**Scottish
Canals**



Introduction

John Paterson Chief Executive and Accountable Officer

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Welcome to our 2026/27 Business Plan, and to the fourth year of delivering towards our 2023–28 Corporate Plan – Better lives by water.

It is a privilege to write this introduction once again, and now at a turning point for Scottish Canals as we mature as a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) and trusted custodians of Scotland's fabulous canals. Each year I'm reminded of how many people, partners and communities help bring Scotland's canals to life, and how much pride there is across our organisation in what we deliver together.

Over the last year, I've seen first-hand the difference our work continues to make. The impact of long-term partnership investment is evident everywhere across the network—from the success story of The Kelpies more than a decade on, to the much-loved active travel routes across the network. These projects are a daily reminder of what can be achieved when vision, collaboration and community benefit sit at the heart of what we do.

This year, I'm particularly excited about the progress we're making at the former Irn Bru factory at Lock 16 in Falkirk, where we're working with key partners and funders to repurpose the building and create Scotland's Centre for Excellence for Canals & Traditional Skills. For me, this Public Service Reform joint project (with Historic Environment Scotland) captures exactly what Scottish Canals stands for: valuing our heritage, investing in people, and planning responsibly for the future. The skills needed to care for our historic waterways are specialised and increasingly scarce, and this centre will help ensure we never lose the knowledge required to protect these assets for generations to come. This new shared hub not only preserves and celebrates our heritage, but it also fosters vocational training in traditional crafts, ensuring that skills central to the maintenance and future of our waterways are passed on to a new generation of makers and custodians. It will also serve as a focal point for the development and enactment of our volunteering strategy, to attract volunteers to support the future of Scotland's canals.

Over the past year, we have continued to strengthen our position as a dynamic steward of Scotland's historic waterways, investing in infrastructure, inspiring active participation, and expanding opportunities for learning and leisure. We have made a strong case to government to increase the support for the future of Scotland's canals assets, with an improved financial settlement now in place. This business plan sets out how we will build on recent achievements, respond to national priorities, steadily improve the condition and safety of our assets, and deliver services and experiences that benefit the people of Scotland and those who visit from across the world.

Our budget has always prioritised meeting our statutory obligations, ensuring compliance with standards, and safeguarding all our staff, customers and communities along the canals. This increase in our Capital and Revenue Budgets from Scottish Government will now allow us to more steadily address the risks associated with our ageing assets along the canal network, as we continue to ensure they remain a valuable resource for biodiversity, active living and tourism for the people of Scotland.

Workforce planning remains central to delivering the long-term objectives of Scottish Canals and meeting our Business Plan commitments to ensuring the right people, skills and capacity are in place for the future. Scottish Canals must balance our heritage responsibilities with ensuring engineering capability, climate resilience, commercial development and stakeholder engagement. All this is possible through maximising digital systems, and ensuring meaningful data is at the heart of all our decision-making. To support this, our workforce planning approach integrates succession planning for critical engineering roles, targeted recruitment in areas of skills scarcity, structured apprenticeship and early career pathways, and ongoing leadership development to strengthen organisational resilience.

An ongoing priority remains the replacement of the lock gates on the Forth & Clyde Canal. Reopened through the highly successful Millennium Link project, these assets have now deteriorated through natural ageing, and so the difficult but right decision was taken last year to suspend navigation on the Falkirk Flight, to support the long-term health of the network. Thanks to additional Scottish Government support, the teams are making strong progress with the replacement programme. It has been almost 25 years since the Millennium Link brought these canals back to life; we now carry the responsibility of making sure they continue to serve Scotland well into the next century.

As we enter our 259th year the canals remain strong, and it's always a pleasure to see families, cyclists, boaters and tourists enjoying our destinations. The Falkirk Wheel, The Kelpies, our canal centres and our holiday fleet all play a vital role in our financial sustainability. Every ticket bought and every coffee enjoyed by our visitors genuinely helps us maintain the canals people love.

In the pages that follow, we set out strategic objectives, operational priorities, and the financial planning that will enable us to deliver impactful outcomes in 2026/27. With the continued support from the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland, partners, funders, and the communities who cherish these waterways, Scottish Canals will ensure that Scotland's canal network remains a source of pride, opportunity, and inspiration for all.

Thank you for your support, your passion and your belief in what Scotland's canals can offer. I look forward to another year of working together to protect and celebrate these inspiring places.





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Our vision, mission and values

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Scotland's canals are special places, shaped by our industrial heritage, connecting people and communities. We are focused on enhancing the impact and relevance of canals to realise our vision.

We are committed to building a distinctive, inclusive, and supportive culture and a progressive, sustainable, safe, and healthy working environment.

Our vision

Vibrant canals for people, heritage and nature

Our mission

Investing in Scotland's canals to generate lasting benefit for people and communities

Our values

We care – ensuring our canals thrive, benefiting people and communities

We create – innovating and finding solutions to conserve and enhance our canals

We collaborate – working together, valuing contributions and experiences

To find out more about our vision, mission and values and longer terms plans please see our Corporate Plan 2023-2028 which is published on our [website](#).

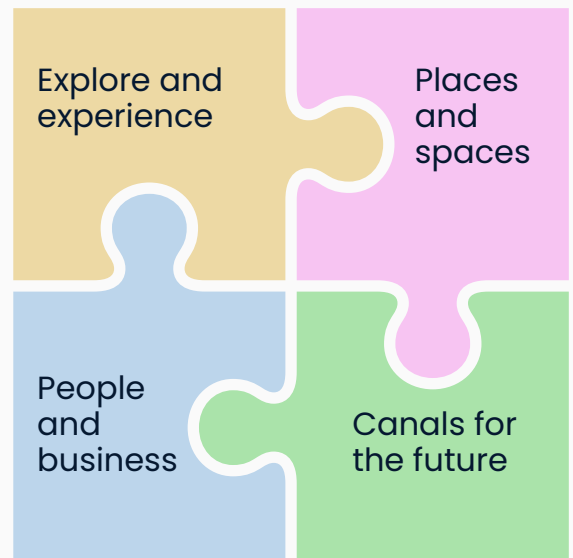
Our corporate plan themes

We are focused on ensuring that our canals are for **people, heritage, and nature**. Our core purpose is to maintain navigation of Scotland's canals. This requires hours of regular inspections, maintenance and projects carried out by our dedicated team and the support of specialist contractors and volunteers.

These foundations provide the basis for our canals to flourish, keeping our waterways in good condition for visitors to enjoy. This plan focuses on delivering our core purpose whilst maximising the vibrancy and potential impact of these unique waterways. The corporate plan identifies four strategic priorities that are reflected in this plan.

This business plan combined with Scottish Canals investment strategy aims to deliver longer-term solutions for increased financial sustainability by building opportunities for increasing self generated income. Simultaneously in reviewing operational efficiencies to build an evidence based model for the delivery of an 'Optimum Operating Model' Scottish Canals can assure best value to the public.

Continuous improvement of our organisational resilience, particularly in managing risk, business continuity and crucially the safety of visitors and our team are reflected in our values and policies, processes and systems.



A year in review

2025/26

In 2025/26, Scottish Canals continued to invest in Scotland's vibrant waterways, delivering a year of progress, community connections and infrastructure work.

The Falkirk Wheel and The Kelpies remain two of Scotland's largest attractions, bringing in over 1m visitors, including a special impromptu visit from the Prince and Princess of Wales. The Kelpies Experience which was launched last year has seen incredible success raising £400K for charities so far – well on our way to a target of £1m in the first two years. With the experience now open to the public, we are confident that this experience will grow strength to strength in the coming years. Our destinations offer such incredible experiences, so much so that we launched a new online shop ahead of Christmas. Not only did our landmarks see a lot of international visitors, but our waterways also welcomed boaters far and wide, from Japan to Brazil.

Our waterways have also continued to amplify Scotland's profile on the national and international stage. The Sea2Sea Caledonian Canal Swim attracted spectators from across the globe, showcasing the unique appeal of Scotland's natural corridors, as our organisation played a huge part in creating a world first. As a former rugby player swam the entire length of the Caledonian Canal, from the Atlantic, at Corpach, Fort William to the North Sea at Clachnaharry, Inverness, whilst raising more than £87K for charity.

Closer to home, our local communities are still at the heart of what we do. Over this year, we have hosted yet another success Revolution Festival, partnered with Scottish Opera bringing some songs to the canals.

In 2025/26, a total capital programme of over £13m was spread across more than 70 individual projects which have been undertaken by our engineering and project teams. A key project has been the Falkirk Flight Gate Replacement Programme, where we will replace a total of 10 lock gates.



A year in review

2025/26

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This year coming we celebrate 25 years of the Millennium Link Project, which means the oak gates originally installed have been subject to immense pressure from water, weather and erosion as well as wear and tear from regular use over the last quarter of a century. We have now replaced six gates as part of the multi-million-pound project, and works are due to be complete on a further four by August 2026.

Works across the Crinan Canal amounting to more than £1m of our Capital's budget and resource was spent on emergency works on two major embankment failures. These interventions ensure the Crinan remains a vital, historic and well-loved part of Scotland's heritage. Our ageing assets have been hit by environmental challenges from droughts to floods, we must preserve them for the future. We are now completing works on the masonry, dredging, improving landscaping and access to be as accessible and navigable as possible for the busy boating season ahead.

This year has demonstrated the resilience, creativity and dedication of our teams, partners and communities. As we look ahead, our focus remains on protecting, enhancing and celebrating Scotland's canals, ensuring they continue to deliver environmental, social and economic value well into the future.

While this has been a productive and inspiring year, it has also been affected by unavoidable challenges, particularly those driven by climate change. Ensuring that our canals remain navigable, resilient and sustainable has been central to our efforts.

Our journey to Net Zero is well underway, and many of the works carried out this year make us one step closer to becoming net zero in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.

We achieved over **30%** reduction in scope 1 emissions by 2026 – two years ahead of target – and have now decreased heating scope 1 emissions by **44.5%**, as well as recording a further **3%** reduction in vehicle emissions compared to 2023/24. This brings us within **1%** of our **40%** reduction by 2026. Sustainability also continues to be at the heart of the visitor experience. The Falkirk Wheel was awarded the prestigious Gold Green Tourism Award, recognising our ongoing commitment to environmental stewardship.

From the electrification of the Antonine trip boat to developing further low carbon improvements for our visitor centre, our work this year shows what is possible when sustainability guides every decision.



Our operating context

2026/27

2026/27 marks an important moment for Scottish Canals with increased investment providing a valuable opportunity to strengthen the canal network and the services it supports. This comes at a time when the organisation has been balancing rising costs, ageing infrastructure, and growing expectations from the communities and people it serves.

Scotland's canals are unique national assets. They play a vital role in supporting local economies, creating attractive places to live and visit, improving health and wellbeing, and contributing to environmental sustainability. Many parts of the network are historic and require ongoing care and investment to ensure they remain safe, reliable, and accessible for everyone.

During 2026/27, there will be a strong focus on improving the condition of these assets with a broader winter works programme. Investment will be targeted where it is needed most, guided by detailed inspections and a clear understanding of risk and priority. This evidence and data-led approach ensures that resources are used effectively and deliver the greatest benefit.

Our multi-year capital investment programme allows projects to be coordinated efficiently and delivered in a way that reduces disruption to our waterways, whilst maximising value for money. This longer-term approach will help ensure steady and sustainable progress in maintaining and improving the canal network.

Alongside caring for its assets, Scottish Canals will continue to generate income through its destinations, property, and services such as moorings and boat licences. This income is reinvested back into the canals, helping to support their long-term future. The organisation will also continue to explore new opportunities to grow income and attract investment, ensuring the canals remain vibrant and financially sustainable.

At the same time, work will continue to improve how services are delivered. By modernising processes, making better use of technology, and focusing on efficiency, Scottish Canals aims to provide high-quality services while making the best possible use of its resources.



We are committed to achieving best value and delivering the greatest possible impact from our resources. Our budget, approved by the Board of Scottish Canals is aligned to the delivery of our Corporate Plan, this Business Plan, and our statutory obligations. This year Scottish Canals received a £5.4m uplift in our revenue budget, and a £5.8m uplift in our capital budget, with the figures for the year reflecting an overall £11.2m (44%) uplift on the 2025/26 year.

This enhanced investment reflects the critical importance of our assets and provides a renewed opportunity to focus on the condition, resilience, and regulatory compliance of the canal network. It enables us to accelerate essential works to address the challenges of ageing infrastructure, mitigate risk, and ensure continued safe and reliable operations.

Our approach remains firmly evidence and data-led. Capital investment decisions are guided by our Asset Management Strategy 2018–30 and supporting Asset Management Plans, underpinned by a comprehensive programme of inspection, risk assessment, and prioritisation. This ensures that funding is directed to where it will have the greatest impact in maintaining asset integrity, meeting compliance requirements, and safeguarding public value.

The following shows the breakdown of Scottish Canals' Grant-in-Aid for 2026/27 compared to prior years:

Income and expenditure	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Revenue Grant in Aid	£11.845m	£12.845m	£18.255m
Revenue - Commercial income	£11.456m	£11.055m	£12.000m
Total revenue funding	£24.301m	£23.900m	£30.255m
Capital Grant in Aid	£14.230m	£12.600m	£18.395m
Total capital funding	£14.230m	£12.600m	£18.395m
Total resources	£38.531m	£36.500m	£49.19m

Our resources

Income and expenditure

In support of our Corporate Plan, we continue to deliver a multi-year Capital Investment Programme, enabling more effective long-term planning and coordination of works. This approach allows us to align interventions, reduce whole-life costs, and maximise efficiency, while maintaining steady progress against our strategic asset management priorities.

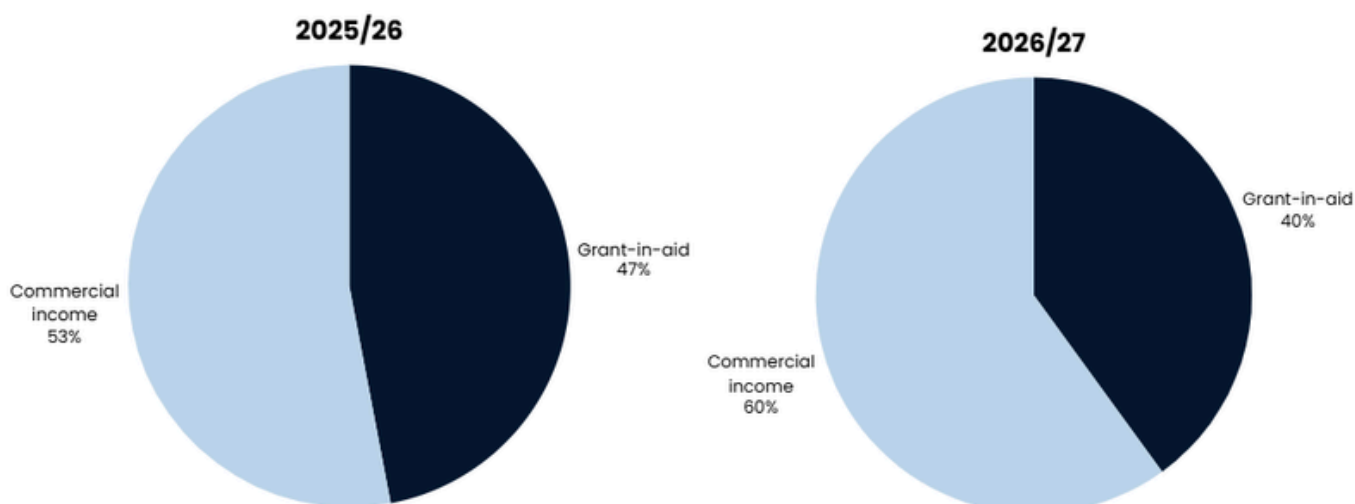
Capital income: In addition to £18.255m capital Grant-in-Aid, we regularly receive funds through grants from other bodies to project manage and deliver real investment in communities around our canals.

Investment strategy: Scottish Canals Investment Strategy supports the organisation towards becoming financially sustainable. Taking a long-range focus, opportunities are subject to in-depth modelling and sound business planning before being taken forward into delivery.

Our **transformation programme** launched in 2024 to support the organisation in taking forward projects which will improve operational efficiencies. With a clear focus on ensuring best value for public spending the programme is home to a range of projects including digital system improvements, workforce planning and fleet and utilities review. Scottish Canals revenue Grant-in-Aid is supplemented by earned income from Scottish Canals trading activities such as property lets, boating and mooring licences and retail, food and beverage sales at Scottish Canals flagship destinations.

In 2026/27 we estimate £12m will be self-generated. The profit within this turnover is vital to supporting the delivery of services across Scotland's canal network, helping us support communities, welcome local and international visitors and undertake essential safety, environmental and maintenance work to ensure Scotland's canals continue to thrive for everyone to enjoy.

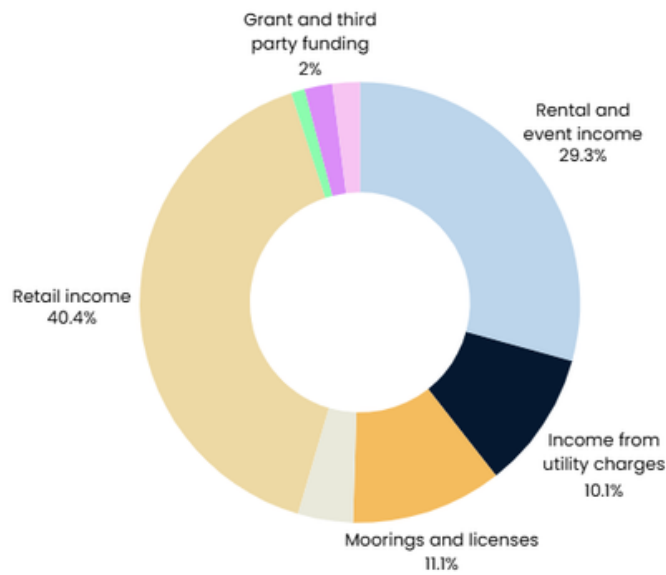
Growing our self-generated income will continue to be a key focus in 2026/27 as we look to invest now to grow future returns. With the increased investment in Grant-in-Aid for 2026/27, Scottish Canals will move from relying on 47% of it some from commercial activities to 40%, with reliance on government funding moving from 53% to 60% as detailed below:



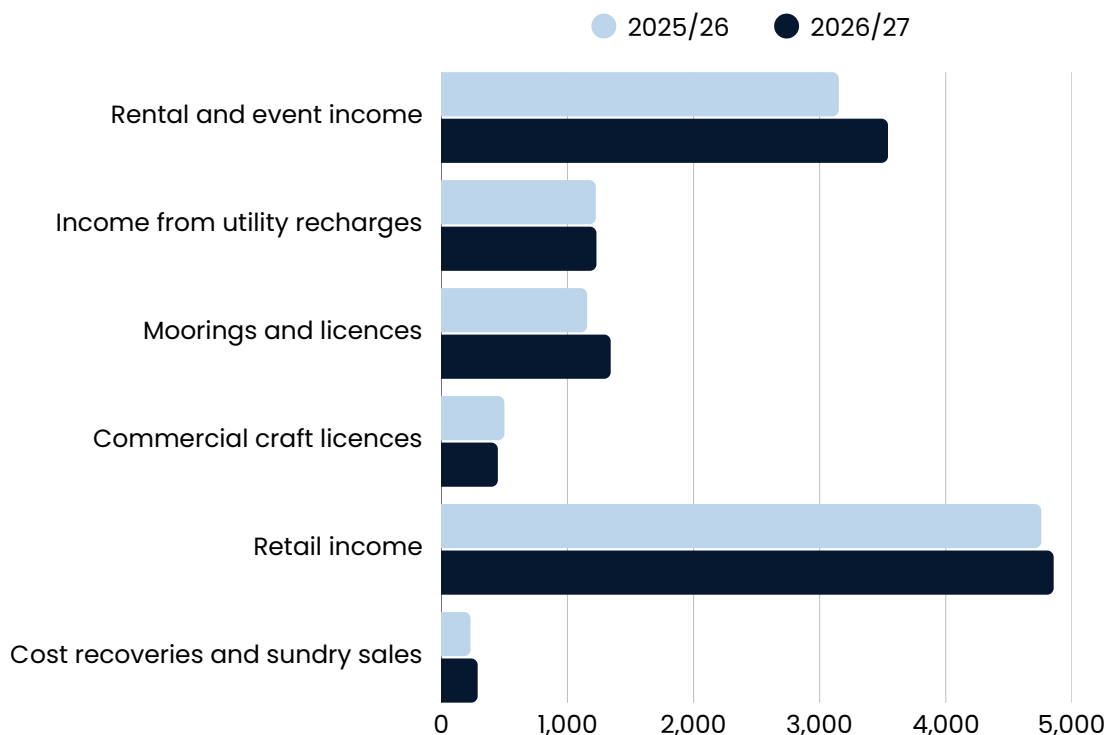
Our resources

Income and expenditure (cont)

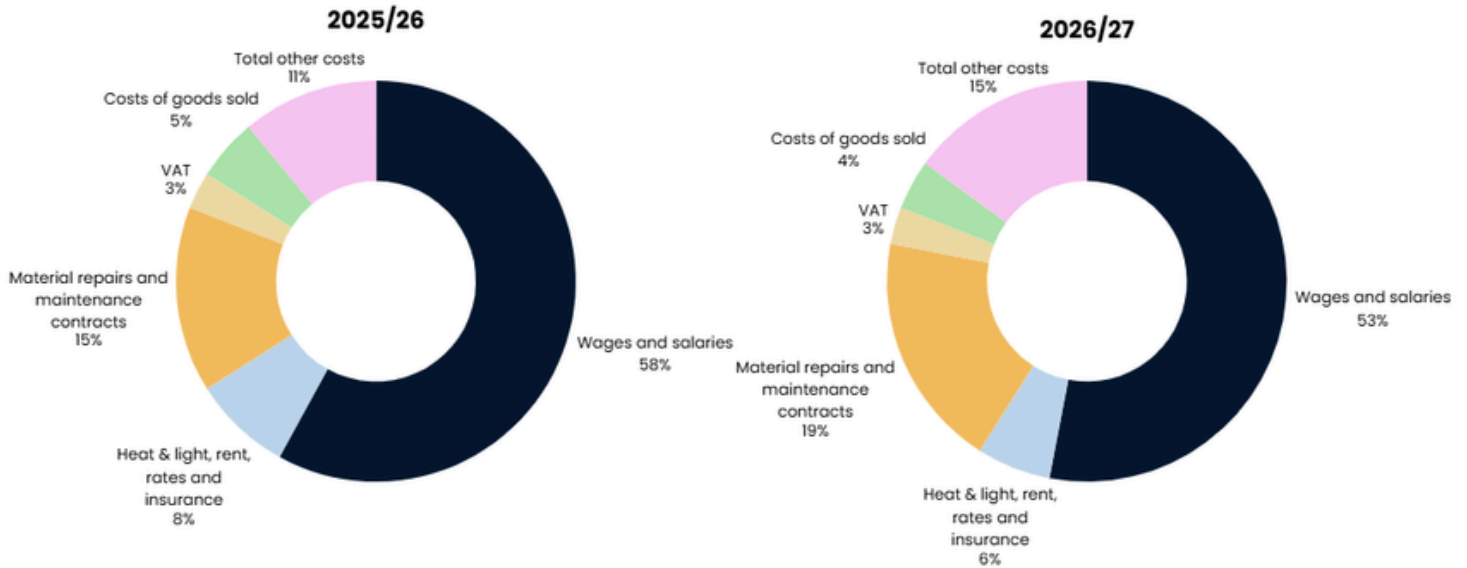
The importance of our retail and rental income can be clearly seen here, with 40% of income coming from The Falkirk Wheel and Caledonian Canal Centre, and 30% of income from our commercial and residential properties:



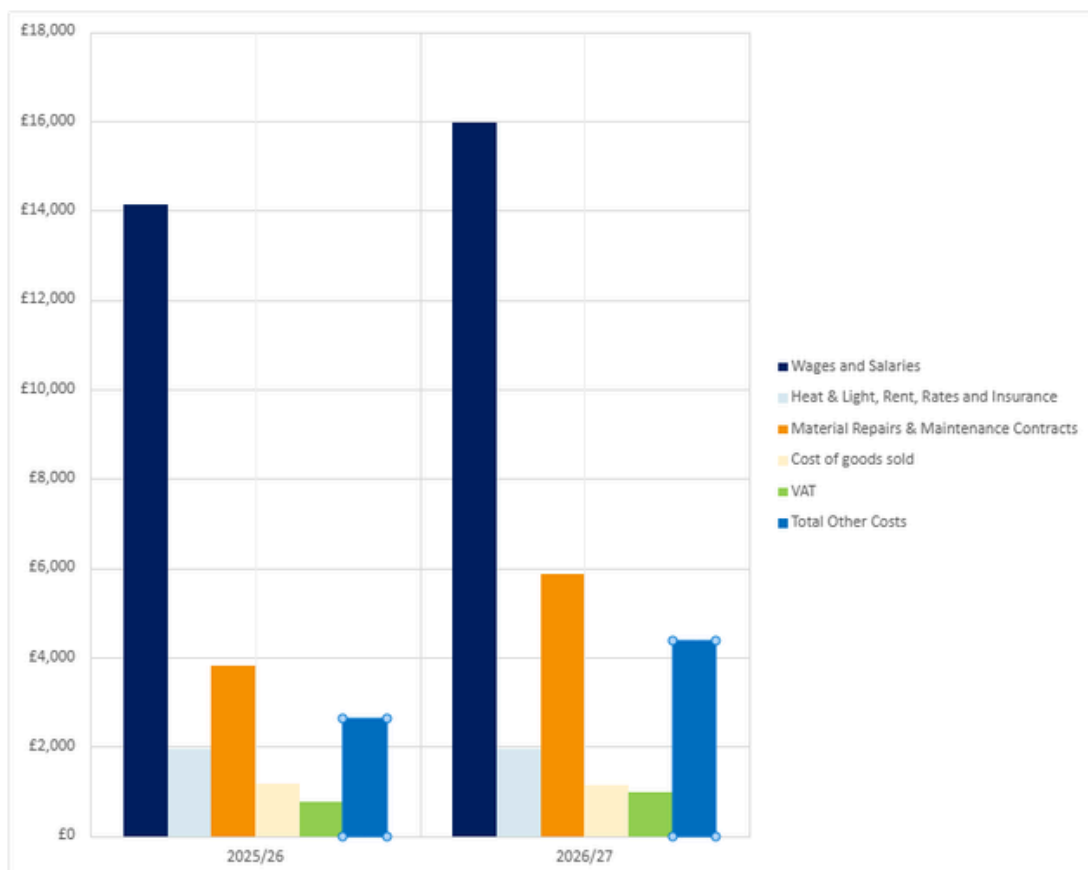
Forecast 2026/27 Income (£'000s) compared to 2025/26



Similar to previous years, the majority of Scottish Canals' expenditure is attributed to the wages and salaries of our employees across the organisation who share in being our canal custodians, as well as our dedicated seasonal teams – some of whom return to our canals to enrich our visitor experience over the summer months year after year.



With the increase in Grant-in-Aid for 2026/27, there will be a marked increase in the amount of expenditure on repairs and maintenance from £3.8m to £5.9m, and other costs and contracts associated with maintaining the canal infrastructure from £1.3m to £2.7m. This will be prioritised in accordance with our Asset Management Strategy 2018-2030 and aligned to reduce our significant long-term backlog.



Our annual business plan

2026/27

This business plan translates year four of the 2023/28 Corporate Plan and presents our core activities to maintain the network for navigation plus a range of projects and initiatives aligned to our strategic priorities.

During the year, we measure progress against our activities and supporting indicators. This includes evidence generated through surveys, contextual data and qualitative assessment drawn from case studies and feedback.

Ensuring we achieve desired progress; we have established robust internal governance and reporting mechanisms to monitor and evaluate our impact over time. We share this with our team, Board and externally by publishing results online and in our Annual Report and Financial Statements.



Canals for the future

Our core purpose is to safeguard navigation. We embrace new research, technology, and innovation to improve water stewardship, support renewable energy production, and respond to climate change and impacts on biodiversity.

Activity	By March 2027 we will have...	Performance measures
Improving asset health and resilience	<p>Increased capacity to deliver our Planned Preventative Maintenance (PPM) programme and developed and implemented a focused Improvement Action Plan to reduce our backlog of Principal Inspections (PI) and increase defect resolution time. Undertaken significant repairs to the Almond Feeder Aqueduct and Kelvin Aqueduct.</p> <p>A five-year focussed dredging programme across the canal network to maintain safe navigation and structural integrity.</p> <p>A fully integrated compliance and reporting framework to provide increased assurance that assets are being maintained and developed in accordance with relevant standards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital and revenue spend (£). • Progress on compliance assurance.
Network-wide climate change resilience assessment	<p>A detailed methodology in place to assess and drive climate adaptation of our high-risk heritable scheduled monuments assets. Enhanced our capacity and capabilities for hydrological monitoring to support analysis of future climate change scenarios and developed resilience with our response to severe weather events. Progressed with scoping and developing proposals for a second Smart Canal to manage flood water drainage across the built environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress against the development of future approaches to resilience and water stewardship.
Net Zero carbon	<p>Built upon our successes from year 2 of the Net Zero RouteMap with additional focus on climate leadership and energy efficiency improvements across our estate. Developed a strong business case and stakeholder partnerships to support pump hydro-related freight projects at strategic locations across the canal network.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress against action plans. • Carbon emission reduction (%). • Progress on electric vehicle network roll-out.
Devise and implement canal-specific strategies	Statutory harbours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with statutory Harbour standards.
	The Caledonian Canal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % Replacement of navigation cairns and floating markers (Caledonian Canal)
	The Crinan Canal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work completed at the Dummy Lock at Crinan.
	The Union Canal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management, maintenance, and Inspection regime developed and implemented.
	The Forth & Clyde Canal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of boat transits in Lowlands by assisted movement
	The Monklands Canal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintained Monklands as a feeder supply for Lowland Canals and explored environmental and sustainable opportunities.

Activity	By March 2027 we will have...	Performance measures
Reservoir upgrades	Continued to demonstrate stewardship with maintaining the integrity and compliance obligations of managing our 19 reservoirs through proactive and timely inspections. Completed year one of a two-year programme to rebuild Townhead Reservoir spillway. Completed year one of a multi-year programme of improvements including embankment repairs at Gleann Reservoir, spillway repair at Cobbinshaw Reservoir and drainage upgrade at Birkenburn Reservoir.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % compliance with reservoir inspection programme. • Capital Investment (£).
Implement lock gate and infrastructure automation programme	Completed lock gate replacement of the Forth and Clyde Canal lock gates 3-16. Completed mechanised upgrades to lock gates at Laggan, Dochgarroch and Clachnaharry on The Caledonian Canal. Completed bridge upgrades at Bonnybridge lift bridge, Gairloch bridge, Tomnahurich bridge and Muirtown bridge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Investment (£).
Biodiversity gain	Launched a new Scottish Canals Environment Strategy (2026-2030). Continued to deliver on the Hazardous Trees Action Plan to ensure that the tree stock across our estate is managed well and in a safe condition. Finalised an agreed approach to managing fish migration across the canal network with regulators.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment Strategy launched. • % progress with Hazardous Trees Action Plan. • Agreed approach to managing fish migration.



Explore and experience

We continue to focus on visitor safety so more people can enjoy our waterways, towpaths, and destinations. We engage with customers, communities and volunteers to care for our canals; promote sustainable tourism, active travel, and the great benefits of living waterways.

Activity	By March 2027 we will have...	Performance measures
Maintain visitor safety management	Reflected on the success of year one of the Visitor and Water Safety Risk Management Framework and continued with the implementation of phase two. Delivery of year two priorities of the Health and Safety Strategy (2023-2028). Completed the installation of specialist replacement ropes to Public Rescue Equipment (PRE) in support of the Christopher Speir's Saving Lives Campaign across the Lowland Canals and wider upgrades to PRE across the canal network. A new updated safety signage catalogue will be developed to support employees, customers and visitors to access and enjoy open spaces safely.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zero-harm approach to notifiable incidents. Visitor and Water Safety Plans updated for 120 locations across the canal network. • 100% replacement of PRE ropes across the Lowland Canals. • Updated safety signage catalogue produced for implementation in 2027/2028.
Develop and promote destination experiences	Developed a robust business case for a new immersive experience at The Kelpies alongside an options appraisal for investment in holiday home accommodation at Fort Augustus. Invested in expanding our holiday boat fleet offerings and partnerships to increase capacity and streamline customer experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor numbers and income generated (£).
Quality services for customers	A Fully designed, implemented, and embedded customer first service standard across all operations and functions to ensure that all customer and stakeholder enquires, and statutory requests are responded to on time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % enquires responded to on time. • % Freedom of Information Requests responded to on time.
Active Travel Strategy and infrastructure upgrades	Approved and Implemented the Active Travel Strategy to improve towpaths and connections, and promote walking, cycling, and wheeling across the canal network.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline identified for measuring improvements in active travel. • Capital investment in towpath and connections (£). • % Improved condition (grade) of towpaths and connections
Grow volunteering capacity	Successfully completed the second of our three-year employability programme with The Conservation Volunteers. Developed a new approach to corporate volunteering to drive unique opportunities. Confirm financial viability and impact of volunteering across the canal network.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteering Strategy Published • Number of volunteering hours • Number of defects resolved through volunteer activity. • Planned Preventative Maintenance (PPE) hours recorded through volunteering activity.
Navigation, transits, and moorings provision	Implementation of new five-year moorings strategy to increase moorings capacity and services across the canal network. A fully operational digital moorings platform to drive the key ambitions within the Moorings Strategy and enhanced customer satisfaction and experiences. Continue to implement Scottish Canals evasion policy to minimise the number of abandoned vessels on the waterways and reclaim disposal and administration costs. Carried out routine spot dredging and weed control to maintain navigation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of abandoned boats successfully removed. • Reclaimed costs for boat removal and disposal (£).

Places and spaces

Scotland's canals provide thriving corridors for people to live, work, visit and play. We work with partners and communities to create opportunities, repurposing land, and buildings, so our canals have a lasting and positive impact.

Activity	By March 2027 we will have...	Performance measures
Customer facilities improvements	Developed a condition grade and assessment methodology for Customer Facilities. Continued to deliver on a multi-year programme of improvements to customer facilities across the canal network. Completed a programme identifying key customer and welfare locations to invest additional resources and to dispose of redundant facilities based.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Facilities Condition Grade implemented. • Customer Facilities Investment plan produced. • Capital investment in facilities and services (£).
Maximising the impact of land and estate holdings	Continued to review our operational estate and explore further opportunities to develop or dispose of vacant properties and under-utilised land. Delivered a programme of statutory compliance, including Energy Performance Certification standards, planned maintenance and reactive repairs across our properties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feasibility and Investment Plans created. • % Compliance with statutory obligations. • % proactive repairs to residential properties undertaken as planned.
The Falkirk Wheel masterplan	Started construction work on the redevelopment of The Falkirk Wheel Visitor Centre to upgrade the entrance and visitor facilities alongside supporting infrastructure including power supplies and thermal performance improvements. Built a new base for our holiday hire accommodation to improve customer experiences and deliver efficiencies in boat servicing. Progressed to the final design stages and planning application for the new visitor experience ready for submission for local authority approval in April 2027.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Investment (£) in line with plan. • Investment Strategy investment (£).
Scotland's Centre of Excellence for Canals and Traditional Skills - Lock 16, Falkirk	Progressed with the redevelopment of Lock 16 in line with the Construction Phase and Project Plan for occupation in Q1 2027/28. Established new and strengthened current relationships to support the delivery of traditional skills, volunteering, and shared space for operational delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress against Construction Phase and Project Plan.
North Glasgow regeneration	Progressed the next phase of development at Dundashill with partners. Completed a significant refurbishment project at Borron Street Business Park and developed a five year programme of investment in the asset. Identified opportunities for the land and buildings at Applecross Street via the C40 Reinventing Cities competition, supporting the wider regeneration of the local area and building on the success of the Claypits and recent investments in moorings and connections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action plan developed. • Income generated and capital receipts (£).
Heritage strategy	A refreshed Heritage Strategy focussed on creating the next generation of Scottish Canals history whilst maintaining stewardship and efficient management of our heritable assets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refreshed Heritage Strategy published • % Section 17 consents approved and conditions implemented

People and business

Our values shape how we work; as a team, with partners, how we welcome our visitors or encourage volunteers to join us in caring for Scotland's canals.

Activity	By March 2027 we will have...	Performance measures
Compliance with statutory, corporate, and operational standards and requirements	Defined our compliance landscape and developed and implemented a compliance framework with clear monitoring pathways across all business functions and operations.	Compliance framework in place.
Financial stewardship and sustainability	Fully embedded the principles of the approved Medium Term Financial Strategy (2025) and the "Make More, Save More, Get More" model alongside projected income and efficiency savings. A fully costed and balanced spending plan to demonstrate efficient use of resources in line with strategic and statutory obligations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % additional income of target (£) • Improved return on investment tracking (£) • % efficiency savings of target (£) • Spending plan delivery (£) • Audit preparedness timetable shortened for 2025/26 financial year.
Transformation Programme	Continued to deliver on our programme of transformation focussed on efficiency and service improvements for our customers and stakeholders. Reshaped and enhanced our socio-economic measurement framework to demonstrate value, impact, and scale alongside a refreshed suite of robust KPIs that assures our stakeholders of our progress and successes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress against transformation targets. • Socio-economic impact report published. • Suit of KPIs developed and implemented.
Workforce planning and development	Developed and implemented a Workforce Development Plan to support the development of our people and aligned to our target operating models and optimum structure. Robust development and succession plan in place to mitigate against known corporate risk issues. Developed additional capacity to support an increase in apprenticeships across business functions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Development Plan in place. • Organisational learning and development plan and succession plan in place. • Increase in apprenticeships. • Number of volunteering hours and income (£).
Ongoing investment in employee wellbeing, health, and safety	Delivery of our commitments outlined in year 2 of our Health and Safety Strategy. Phase 2 of our Integrated Water and Visitor Safety Risk Management Framework complete. Occupational health surveillance refreshed for employees exposed to health hazards for all known activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Safety Strategy implementation activities.
Information management, digital systems, cyber security, and safety	Introduced new software, upgraded systems and associated hardware to support and transform customer service, asset management, and business services. Completed phase 1 of introducing full Office365 capabilities including SharePoint across the organisation. Delivered on a programme of digitalisation or records and prepared archived and retained documents for storage in new location at Lock 16. Continued to build resilience around cyber security and data management infringements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance performance. • Progress against action plans. • Lost time in response to cyber • Incidents. • Development of business case for optimising financial systems.

Appendix 1

National Performance Framework contribution



We are healthy and active

Canals provide unique green and blue networks to explore, commute and play. The distinctive routes of our canals contribute to Scotland's active travel network. Visitor and water safety plans focus on all our visitors to enjoy our canals.



We value, enjoy, protect, and enhance our environment

A well-maintained and adaptive network is more resilient to climate change. The circular economy means we can reduce consumption of natural resources. Our canals are home to internationally, nationally, and locally important wildlife and habitats. 13 million visits are made to our canals annually.



We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe

Flourishing canalside places and spaces are shaped by local communities and stakeholders. Over one million people live within 3km of a canal.



We have thriving and innovative businesses, with quality jobs and fair work for everyone

The economic impact of canals is estimated at £1.53bn over an 18-year period. Our Investment Strategy will provide diverse opportunities for Scottish Canals and others to develop thriving canalside businesses. In striving to be an employer of choice we focus on quality jobs and fair work for everyone.



We have a globally competitive, entrepreneurial, inclusive, and sustainable economy

Our Net Zero Routemap is intended to realise our ambition to act on scopes one and two by 2030. Working collaboratively, we are focused on adaptive technology to support community residence. We promote sustainable tourism and wise use of our canals to protect heritage and nature.



We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society

Our Youth Forum will engage young people to guide our future plans. Volunteering and apprenticeship programmes will offer new opportunities for more people to be part of a diverse team caring for canals. We are committed to learning and development, so our team is equipped to deliver.



We are open, connected and make a positive contribution internationally

Our destinations attract Scottish, UK and international visitors.

Appendix 2

Key performance indicators summary

Canals for the future

Defect resolution

Capital Investment
Programme delivery

Asset and buildings
statutory compliance

Net Zero carbon
implementation

Explore and experience

Reporting of Injuries,
Diseases and
Dangerous
Occurrences
Regulations

Towpath usage

TFW customer
satisfaction
TFW visitor numbers

Social media reach

Transits and boat
movements

Places and spaces

Managing investment priorities
Crinan Canal wharfage

Customer facilities upgrades
All moorings usage

Proportion of moorings occupied

People and business

Transformation
progress

Revenue and capital
drawdown
Expenditure against
profile

Compliance

Digital change and
security

Headcount



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