



2025/26

# 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 2025/26 Business Plan and the third year of delivering towards our 2023/28 Corporate Plan – Better lives by water.**

I am privileged to be writing to you once again looking back at our achievements, celebrating our people and partners, and setting out our goals and challenges for the year ahead to continually strive to deliver vibrant canals for people, heritage and nature.

Last year was another milestone year as we celebrated 10 years of the world-renowned Kelpies. A bold vision delivered with third party funding transformed a derelict site into what is now one of Scotland's biggest attractions. Generating £81m in economic value since launching The Kelpies and Helix Park have welcomed more than seven million visitors to the area. That successful model of partnership working and third-party funding continues to enable us to deliver unique projects, for the benefit of people and communities.

Other recent third-party projects within the realm of active travel have included the Bowline at Bowling Harbour and Stockingfield Bridge in Glasgow which connect communities and provide safe and accessible outdoor spaces. Our focus on active travel continues as we develop our first Active Travel Strategy informed by partners, canal users, communities and the public. This will help guide where resources best serve communities. Third-party funding in 2025/26, combined with an appetite for public service reform, will also see us deliver a first for canals in Scotland. Working with key funders the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Falkirk Growth Deal Fund, and in partnership with Historic Environment Scotland we will aim to repurpose a disused canal-side property in Falkirk, known locally as the former AG Barr factory into Scotland's Centre for Excellence for Canals & Traditional Skills – Lock 16.

Public service reform remains high on our agenda as we continue to design our services for customers and develop an optimum operating model. Our new canal centre will focus on training the workforce of the future on the skills needed to care for Scotland's historic infrastructure and buildings complemented by attracting partners to grow volunteering and more people caring for our distinctive industrial heritage. This work compliments other projects already underway as part of our new transformation agenda and the pipeline of digital and 'invest to save' initiatives to improve service design, delivery and secure efficiencies.

Thanks to £0.5m additional funding from Scottish Government in 2024/25 we took the difficult but necessary decision to suspend navigation on the Forth & Clyde Canal for a prolonged period to accelerate our Lock Gate Replacement and Refurbishment Programme. Almost 25 years on from the Millennium Link Project which saw £83.4m invested in re-opening the Lowland canal network, eight pairs of lock gates are now at their end of life. The additional monies will help ensure a full replacement of all gates on the Forth & Clyde Canal in the near future with these sets of gates being replaced this year.

The challenge of managing ageing infrastructure and to address public safety risks are of upmost importance in our planning and we take an evidence-led approach to prioritising limited resources. Addressing defects and maintenance across the network currently outstrips our available resources, requiring tough decisions and necessary closures to prioritise the safety of our people, volunteers, contractors and visitors first. As CEO I want to assure you that we will be open in our decision making and will engage groups, boaters, canal users, and other stakeholders on changes which impact them.

At the time of writing this we are just a few weeks on from Storm Eowyn, the worst storm Scotland and parts of the UK has seen in over a decade. The response and action taken from our teams to this weather emergency was vital for us to protect our canals. Whilst we seen over 150 incidents logged on our Asset Management System this would have been far higher and far more costly if it wasn't for the methodical planning work. Responding to live incidents is something we prepare for, and I am thankful to everyone for how they handled the challenge. The impact of climate change is undoubtedly being felt across our estate in a variety of ways where we see wind damage causing fallen trees blocking navigation and our pathways, and with periods of both drought and flood we also manage water to keep our canals operating safely. This business plan sees us focus on sustainability and the continued delivery of our Net Zero Routemap to ensure that we are playing our part in adapting to climate change in halting biodiversity loss.

The visitor numbers to our network and destinations continues to be buoyant and we remain proactive in providing quality experiences for people to enjoy all that canals offer. Trading at our destinations remain fundamental to our financial position. Last year we welcomed over 100,000 people to enjoy a boat trip on The Falkirk Wheel and room bookings at The Caledonian Canal Centre, Fort Augustus remains to exceed industry standards.

In 2024/25 we successfully secured an audit free from opinion and resolved historic VAT issues which is welcomed and important to demonstrate that we are well run as a non-departmental public body. These issues however add new additional cost pressures each year on top of increasing costs to operate. A combination of imposed and rising costs means we start the year with with an unbalanced budget and a clear directive to reduce this gap by the end of the financial year. In order to achieve this we are taking a twin track approach; securing savings and investing to generate income. In securing savings we will be required to make tough decisions on the services we offer, pricing and the frequency of delivery however by taking a twin approach and focusing efforts in driving our earned income we will not only reduce our 2025/26 deficit but we will build towards a more financially resilient future long-term. This year will be challenging for our teams as we seek to work with our customers to identify the optimum operating model which will ensure our canals can remain vibrant into the future whilst being financially sustainable.

Finally, our 141 miles of canal network is a wonderful asset for every person in Scotland to enjoy and benefit from. I would encourage everyone to get out onto the network, whether its changing your commute to leave the car at home, going a weekend cycle with friends or family, taking on The Kelpies Experience as a challenge or going on a walk to take in the local wildlife; our canals are full of canal magic – please go enjoy it and if you are nearby a canal centre, stop in for a some delicious food or even hire a boat for your next holiday as all the money you spend is reinvested back into caring for Scotland's wonderful 200 year old canals.







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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

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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 inspection, 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.

As the public body for Scotland's canals, we are committed to demonstrating open and transparent governance ensuring we are responsible and well-run in how we use public money. 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 delivery 'Optimum Operating Model' Scottish Canals can assure best value to the public.

Enhancing 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

2024/25

In 2024/25 our vision for 'Vibrant Canals for People, Heritage and Nature' guided us as we worked with our people, partners, contractors, customers, volunteers, and boaters to deliver another year of canal magic whilst tackling some of the challenges that face us and the wider public sector.

2024/25 was another milestone year in our more than 200-year-old history, as we celebrated a decade of The Kelpies. In just 10 years these icons have become symbols for Scotland generating more than £81m for the Scottish economy and attracting millions of visitors since we opened. The occasion was marked with the first ever concert at The Kelpies, showcasing the site as an incredible event space with thousands of people showing up throughout the day and for the night-time concert in support of these now treasured artworks. As part of the Kelpie 10 celebrations, we also took the opportunity to launch a new, one of a kind, climbing experience inside The Kelpies. The Kelpies Experience is an aerial assault course which offers the brave and the adventurous a chance to see the structures from mid-air before climbing to the top and seeing out the horse's mouth. This new high-quality experience complements the Behind The Wheel tours which also launched this year allowing engineering and canal enthusiasts an inside look at the world's only rotating boat lift. Both new experiences complimented our existing destinations offerings helping to ensure that we had a successful year of welcoming visitors from home and across the globe whilst generating much needed income for reinvestment back into caring for the network.

In November we celebrated our first year of delivering against our Net Zero Route map as we continue our journey to becoming net zero in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. Two years ahead of our 2026 deadline we delivered a greater than 30% reduction in heating scope 1 emissions as well as recording an 18% decrease in vehicle emissions compared to 2022/23 (186t CO2e from 227t). At The Falkirk Wheel the recently installed solar panels generated 100% of the electricity required to operate the visitor centre air source heat pumps, effectively providing free renewable locally produced heat for the visitor centre for the year.





# A year in review

2024/25

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A total capital programme of £14m, covering over 40 significant projects was undertaken by our engineering and project teams as they tackled some of our major infrastructure concerns whilst also delivering a wealth of safety, community, and economic benefits for Scotland. The Forth & Clyde Lock gate Replacement Programme took a big step forward as the difficult decision was taken to suspend navigation across the Falkirk flight (Locks 3-16) of the Forth & Clyde Canal for a prolonged period to allow essential works to be undertaken.

Thanks to additional funding from Transport Scotland and Scottish Government the project, sees us replace five sets of lock gates and undertake further improvements including cill replacement, quoin repair and over-planking at one time removing the need for multiple closures year on year. These works once complete will allow us to manage our water resources more diligently and will ensure that the canal can continue to operate safely for the next 20 plus years. A programme of c. £2m of works across our reservoirs was also undertaken, these projects were prioritised based on safety and were essential to ensuring that we meet our statutory obligations under the Reservoir Scotland Act. A larger rolling programme of investment in our reservoirs is underway helping to safeguard our water resources and protect the rich wildlife and ecosystems of our canals.



Finally in recognition of the ongoing financial challenges across the public sector and our drive to be a fully evidence-led organisation two new internal initiatives were established. The new Transformation Programme aims to drive out digital and organisational efficiencies whilst also birthing new projects to improve service design and delivery.

Guided by our internal audit recommendations a new Project Management Office (PMO) was also established. The PMO will ensure consistency of project delivery and recording, keeping projects on track and ensure benefits realisation. In addition, they will lead on the co-ordination and sharing of management information including performance reporting and business insights to guide decision making and hold Scottish Canals accountable in delivering against the targets within this business plan.

# Our operating context

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2025/26

**Optimism, even in times of unprecedented budgetary constraints, was the opening message from First Minister John Swinney in the programme for Government.**

Resource constraints forces greater focus on priorities to ensure we continue to work together to improve lives and make the biggest difference possible.

The programme for Government focuses efforts and resources on our four key priorities:

- **eradicating child poverty,**
- **growing the economy**
- **tackling the climate emergency**
- **ensuring high quality and sustainable public services**

In addition to the priorities set out a 10 year period to drive public service reform continues into 2025/26 with the overarching aim of the creation of person-centred, outcome-focussed public services, which address key priorities and delivers on the National Performance Framework.

It is against this backdrop of resource constraints and appetite for change that Scottish Canals 2025/26 Business Plan is set. Given cost pressures affecting the wider public sector, we are committed to a Transformation Programme seeking to redesign and reshape services. Additionally our investment strategy and ability to income generate receives sharp focus as we seek to generate income for reinvestment into public assets and services and to become financially sustainable. Our focus remains on delivering impact against the National Outcomes and being well-run as a public body.

Addressing our financial pressures to build organisational resilience requires greater momentum and we are accelerating plans to implement efficiencies in service design, cost control measures and leverage business development opportunities.

We continue to work closely with Transport Scotland regarding areas of risk and contributing to wider public service reform initiatives particularly in collaborating on potential solutions or in readiness for shared services.





# Our resources

Deploying our limited resources to best achieve *vibrant canals for people, heritage and nature* whilst building towards a more financially resilient future will require fine balancing of saving initiatives and 'invest to grow' opportunities. Our budget is accepted by Scottish Canals Board on the basis that all efforts are made to end the year with a balanced budget. The budget is approved on the basis that a failsafe option has been identified to achieve this.

This year Scottish Canals received a £1m (8.4%) uplift in our revenue budget, and a £400k (3.3%) uplift in our capital budget, with the figures for the year reflecting an overall £1.4m (5.82%) uplift on the 2024/25 year. Whilst this was welcome news in the current public sector climate the increase itself is not transformational in terms of our financial resilience due to the compounding affect of multiple years allocations being below inflation uplifts. Added to this are more than £1.25m of new in-year cost pressures associated with a rise in employers national insurance contributions, changes in VAT and government pay policy. 2025/26 will remain a challenging year financially for us.

An evidence-led approach to identifying the full costs of caring for Scotland's 200-year-old canal network continues to take shape with the now complete fixed asset register supporting the informing of a rolling five year capital investment programme linked to Scottish Canals Asset Management Strategy. This allows us to plan more effectively deploying our resources more efficiently and tracking our asset risk profile closely. Taking a national approach to planning and delivering projects, allows us to ensure that resources are distributed to where the greatest need is, whilst a local approach to service delivery and maintenance ensures that teams are empowered to serve their local, boaters, communities and customers.

Our Grant-in-Aid is supplemented by earned income from Scottish Canals trading activities such as properties lets, boating and mooring licences and retail, food and beverage sales at Scottish Canals flagship destinations.

In 2025/26 we estimate £10.797m will be self-generated, this income 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 2025/26 as we look to invest now to grow future returns.



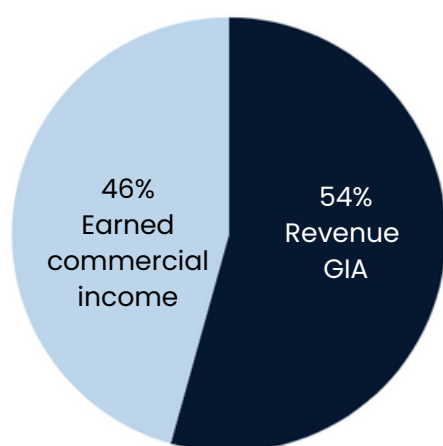


# Our resources

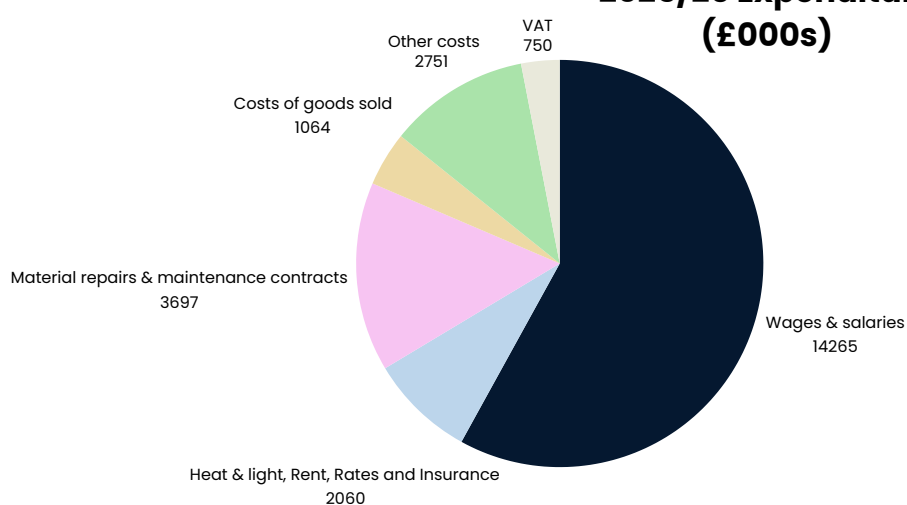
## Income and expenditure

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### 2025/26 Revenue Income



### 2025/26 Expenditure (£000s)



Income and expenditure	2025/26 (£'000)	2024/25 (£'000)	2023/24 (£'000)
Revenue – GIA	12,845	11,845	11,300
Revenue – commercial	11,055	10,298	9,735
Total income	23,900	22,143	21,035
Total expenditure	24,587	22,302	21,070
Revenue (surplus)/deficit	687	159	35
Capital GIA	12,600	12,200	12,200
Capital – exceptional items*		2,030	
<b>Total resources</b>	<b>36,500</b>	<b>36,373</b>	<b>33,325</b>

\* The additional capital monies for 2022/23 relates to historic VAT.

# Our resources

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## Income and expenditure

**Our revenue Grant-in-Aid of £12.845m is supplemented by our earned income from retail and commercial activities to fulfil our core purpose. In 2025/26 we anticipate generating more than £11m of revenue taking our total (revenue) income to £23.9m.**

Due to escalating costs and additional financial pressures our current projection is £687K overspent by year-end 2026. This is based on absorbing additional cost pressures of over £1.25m in-year. In preparing for the new financial year, considerable planning and cost modelling activity has been undertaken.

The 2025/26 budget ensures we can meet our pay remit obligations (aligned with Scottish Government pay policy), undertake prioritised repair work, cover fuel, utilities, and insurance costs. Key areas of expenditure will be managed carefully to reduce the overspend where possible.

**Capital income:** In addition to £12.6m capital Grant-in-Aid (2024/25: £12.2m), we 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 to become financially sustainable. Taking a long range focus, opportunities are subject to indepth modelling and sound business planning before being taken forward into delivery. Projects currently in scope include; investment in our residential accommodation to support an increase in rental income, holiday accommodation and campervan site scoping to unlock new income opportunities, customer experience improvements at The Falkirk Wheel to maximise onsite spending and the development of additional moorings.

**Transformation programme:** 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.



# Our annual business plan

2025/26

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**This business plan translates year three 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.**

Asset health, fulfilling our compliance obligations, visitor safety and experience feature strongly throughout this plan. This follows two targeted programmes which commenced in 2024/25, first, overhauling our compliance framework, for canal and estate assets to enhance evidence and assurance and secondly, initiating a range of projects focused on service re-design and delivery for our customers under our Transformation Programme linked to the Scottish Government public service reform agenda. The Scottish Government's Public Service Reform agenda aims to ensure public services are inclusive, sustainable, and effective in improving national outcomes, an agenda we are wholly aligned with. This Business Plan will see us take a leap forward in delivering a new exemplar for public service reform, in partnership with Historic Environment Scotland, and majority funded by third parties, work will be on transforming a derelict canal-side building into a new centre of excellence for canals and traditional skills. This new centre based in Falkirk will radically transform a neglected area of the Forth & Clyde Canal into a thriving waterside centre focussed on community (volunteering), heritage skills training and local employment.

In addition to new initiatives we will continue to invest in our heritage assets, building greater resilience in the face of climate change and ageing infrastructure as well as delivering bio-diversity gain, protecting our flora and fauna and managing invasive species.

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

As per previous business plans, the day-to-day activities of fulfilling our legal obligations and being a well run organisation forms the foundations of who we are and how we operate and therefore are not specifically set out in this document.





# Explore and experience

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## 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 2026 we will have...	Performance measures
<b>Maintain visitor safety management</b>	Implemented phase 1 of Visitor and Water Safety Risk Assessment Framework. Implemented year one of the Health & Safety Strategy (2025–2028). Published an updated towpath code of conduct to support visitor safety. Continued support for Christopher's Campaign and ongoing upgrading of Public Rescue Equipment.	Zero-harm approach to notifiable accidents. Visitor safety plans updated for 30% of locations.
<b>Develop and promote destination experiences</b>	Upgraded The Falkirk Wheel tour boats to electric and hybrid engines enhancing the experience, minimising downtime for repairs and reducing emissions. Identified and opened two additional locations for campervan areas along the network. Supported Glasgow celebrating 850 years since the city gained Burgh status with activity on the Glasgow branch.	Visitor numbers for new experiences and income generated (£). VisitScotland quality assurance grading.
<b>Quality services for customers</b>	Fully implemented self-service diesel pumps at Corpach, Fort William and Seaport, Inverness as part of a wider roll out of services and facility upgrades for boating customers. Continued embedding customer service culture reflecting our values, ensuring compliance with the Consumer Duty provisions and carrying out effective sentiment measurement and reporting.	Customer sentiment reported and initiate benchmarking.
<b>Active Travel Strategy and infrastructure upgrades</b>	Completed strategy development and have a rolling capital co-investment programme in place.	Active Travel Strategy developed.
<b>Grow volunteering capacity</b>	Supported the volunteering and training partnership with Scottish Waterways for All enhancing activity along network between Edinburgh and Falkirk. Developed a Volunteering Strategy to nurture partnerships with community and third sector organisations working with volunteers along the canal network. Grown corporate volunteering opportunities.	Volunteering Strategy developed. Impact report produced.
<b>Navigation, transits, and moorings provision</b>	Produced a new five-year moorings strategy seeking to create new settings for residential living on water homes and improve access for transiting craft. Proactively worked with customers of unlicensed or 'at risk' craft to reduce abandoned boats and associated impacts for navigation and environmental harm. Carried out routine spot dredging and weed control to maintain navigation.	Moorings Strategy developed. Occupancy rates maintained at 85% across the network. Unplanned closures for navigation.

# Places and spaces

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## 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 2026 we will have...	Performance measures
<b>Customer facilities improvements</b>	Implemented year two priorities, focused improvements to the facilities, automating services for utilities, fuel and pump outs to improve the customer experience.	Action plans developed. Capital investment in facilities and services (£).
<b>Maximising the impact of land and estate holdings</b>	Progressed our review of operational estate to identify opportunities for vacant properties and under-utilised land. Delivered a programme of statutory compliance, including Energy Performance Certificate standards, planned maintenance and reactive repairs across our properties.	Specific feasibility and investment plans developed. Compliance performance and assurance.
<b>Falkirk Wheel masterplan</b>	Concluded design of new entrance and visitor toilets. Funding secured and construction contract tendered, with a programme in place for construction delivery. Wider site developments progressed including digital visitor experience, holiday hire accommodation and play areas alongside supporting infrastructure to upgrade power supplies and thermal improvements to the visitor centre.	Capital improvement programme investment (£).
<b>Canal Centre/Lock 16, Falkirk</b>	Subject to approvals and all funding in place, we will have progressed the construction contract in readiness for launch during 2026/27. Partnerships developed to identify opportunities for traditional skills, volunteering and shared space for operational delivery.	Progress against project plan.
<b>North Glasgow regeneration</b>	Concluded phase two of C40 competition for options for the land and buildings at Applecross Street, Glasgow. Progressed opportunities for wider regeneration of the local area building on the success of the Claypits and recent investments in moorings and connections. Next phase of development at Dundashill progressed with partners. Borron Street units refurbished and let and wider investment identified.	Action plan developed. Income generated and capital receipts (£)

# Canals for the future

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## 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 2026 we will have...	Performance measures
<b>Improving asset health and resilience</b>	Delivered on priority repairs including planned preventative maintenance to extend the lifespan of assets alongside responding to defects. Significantly progressed actions arising from the audit of mechanical and electrical compliance and associated investment in our asset management system. Carried out dredging to meet navigation standards.	Capital and revenue spend (£). Progress on compliance assurance.
<b>Network-wide climate change resilience assessment</b>	Initiated a climate resilience assessment of our heritage scheduled monuments to support future asset management planning. Scoped the parameters for hydrological modelling to support analysis of future climate change scenarios to understand likelihood and severity of resilience events on supply. Progressed partnership working in place to support flood mitigation developments including early scoping of a second Smart Canal.	Progress against the development of future approaches to resilience and water stewardship.
<b>Net Zero carbon</b>	Progressed our net zero action plan with a focus on electrical vehicle charging across the network, and solar and wind energy generation at The Falkirk Wheel. Introduction of hybrid electric engines to the trip boats will reduce carbon emissions and improve occupational safety for the boat crews. Significantly advanced activity on pump hydro-related freight projects.	Progress against action plans. Carbon emission reduction (%). Progress on electric vehicle network roll-out.
<b>Devise and implement canal-specific strategies</b>	Concluded replacement of service bollards at the Crinan Canal. Progressed partnership initiatives aligned to the Union Canal Strategy delivered in partnership with City of Edinburgh Council and working closely with local community and third sector partners. Continued to fulfil statutory harbour compliance requirements for Corpach and Adrishag.	Union Canal projects identified. Harbour compliance standards maintained.
<b>Reservoir upgrades</b>	Implemented measures including inspections and repairs to be taken in the interests of safety to Scottish Canals reservoirs. Completed year one of a two-year programme to rebuild Townhead Reservoir spillway.	Capital investment (£).
<b>Implement lock gate and infrastructure automation programme</b>	Significantly progressed replacement of the Forth & Clyde lock gates 3-16 on the west flight seeking to minimise the period of closure to navigation. Mechanised bridges upgrade programme Bridge developed and delivery at Hillhead & Erskine, Gairloch, Cairnbaan, Adrishag, Muirton and Tomnahurich. Completed upgrades to operational moorings to support ongoing asset management.	Capital investment (£).
<b>Biodiversity gain</b>	Undertaken works to address hazardous trees, including those impacted by Ash Dieback. Completed further assessment of wild salmon and potential solutions to manage fish migration. Reported on research into approaches to control non-native New Zealand pygmy weed and future management of floating water fern on the Monklands Canal. Maintained engagement with boat owners to ensure all vessels on the canal comply with the requirements of the Boat Safety Scheme.	Identified potential control measures to support biodiversity gain and compliance with statutory obligations. Training implemented.



# People and business

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## 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 2026 we will have...	Performance measures
<b>Transformation Programme implementation</b>	Implemented year two of our transformation programme focused service design and delivery and resetting our operating model. Progressed 'invest to save' initiatives and reflected in plans for 2026 onwards including engagement with employees, stakeholders and partners. Published a socio-economic impact report and refreshed our KPI framework and evidence and environmental impact evaluation framework.	Annual and multi-year project portfolio in place (capital and revenue £). Progress against transformation targets/milestones. Progress against internal audit recommendations and overall level of assurance.
<b>Workforce planning and development</b>	Published our Workforce Plan and progressed activity to support assessment of people resource requirements aligned to our future service delivery model. Invested in capturing corporate knowledge and preparing for succession planning to address known corporate risk issues.	Workforce Plan implementation progress. Apprenticeship scheme roll out. Percentage of turnover invested in learning. Number of people trained.
<b>Community engagement and employability programmes</b>	Launched our contribution to the partnership programme to create trainee opportunities along the John Muir Way. Contributed to year one of the Green Skills John Muir Way project, led by The Conservation Volunteers and funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund to create trainee opportunities. Hosted the third year of Youth Engagement Forums through our YoungScot partnership, helping to shape plans which promote the voice of young people in the future of our canals.	Organisations engaged and volunteers numbers. Progress against plans. Number of young people engaged.
<b>Ongoing investment in employee wellbeing, health, and safety</b>	Published a three-year Health & Safety Strategy for public safety and occupational health and wellbeing with a focus on safety culture. Assessed the impact on employee wellbeing and service delivery following the introduction of a shorter working week. Implemented year two priorities following the welfare review, adopting a risk-based approach to improvements. Occupational health surveillance refreshed for employees exposed to health hazards for all known activities.	Health & Safety strategy implementation activity. Progress on welfare upgrade plans. Shorter working week review completed.
<b>Information management, digital systems, cyber security, and safety</b>	Introduced new software, upgraded systems and associated hardware to support customer service and asset management functions. Commenced investment in electronic records management plans to deliver key information compliance and audit activity. Increased maturity around cyber security resilience in response to wider global risks.	Compliance performance. Progress against action plans. Lost time in response to cyber incidents.

# 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

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### 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

### Canals for the future

Defect resolution

Capital Investment  
Programme delivery

Asset and buildings  
statutory compliance

Net Zero carbon  
implementation

### People and business

Transformation  
progress

Revenue and capital  
drawdown  
Expenditure against  
profile

Compliance

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E: [enquiries@scottishcanals.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@scottishcanals.co.uk) T: @ScottishCanals W: [scottishcanals.co.uk](http://scottishcanals.co.uk)