

26 October 2023

Press Release

Environmental Standards Scotland publishes Annual Report

Environmental Standards Scotland (ESS) has today (Thursday 26 October) published its [Annual Report](#) which details its activities and performance in its first 18 months of operation.

ESS was established in October 2021 to assess the effectiveness of environmental law in Scotland, and to ensure that public sector organisations are complying with it. ESS is independent from the Scottish Government and replaces the environmental oversight and scrutiny function that was delivered by the European Commission prior to Brexit.

The Annual Report covers the organisation's activity from 1 October 2021 to 31 March 2023 as well as summarising its future plans. It highlights activity including the publication of ESS' three-year Strategic Plan, the development of its investigations processes and procedures, and the building of its team and organisational culture.

It also includes a summary of ESS' investigative work, including responses to representations and enquiries.

The report demonstrates ESS' commitment to engaging with its wide range of stakeholders through a community and stakeholder engagement programme. To help assess progress in this area, plans have been put in place to gather ongoing stakeholder feedback on ESS' effectiveness, and monitor perceptions of its role.

Commenting on the Annual Report, ESS Chief Executive Mark Roberts said:

“Since launching on 1 October 2021, ESS has established itself as an important element of environmental governance in Scotland.

“Our Annual Report sets out how we are governed and what we have achieved in our first 18 months. As an independent, non-ministerial office, our accountability to the Scottish Parliament is critical and a key step in our development was securing the Parliament's agreement to our Strategic Plan for the period 2022-25. We also

provide updates to the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee on our work every six months.

“Another important event was the publication of our first Improvement Report in September 2022, which focused on strengthening the system of air quality management in Scotland.

“Across a range of environmental topics including air quality, biodiversity, climate change, water quality and waste management, we aim to help ensure environmental law works to meet Scotland’s environmental and climate change ambitions, and that people benefit from a high-quality environment and are protected from harm.”

Ends

About Environmental Standards Scotland

Environmental Standards Scotland (ESS) is a public sector body, set up as a non-ministerial office, independent of Scottish Government, and accountable to the Scottish Parliament.

ESS has been set up to ensure environmental laws and standards are adhered to in Scotland, replacing the European Union's scrutiny and enforcement role after Brexit. Environmental Standards Scotland (ESS) was established in law by the UK Withdrawal from the European Union (Continuity) (Scotland) Act 2021.

ESS' role is to scrutinise, investigate and secure improvements in public authorities' compliance with environmental law, the effectiveness of environmental law, and the way it is being implemented and applied in Scotland.

All public authorities are covered, including the Scottish Government and its agencies, as well as organisations carrying out functions on behalf of public authorities.

A broad range of environmental law is covered, including all aspects of environmental protection and harm, particularly in relation human beings and their enjoyment of the environment.

Our Board operates under Standing Orders and we have a Framework agreement with the Scottish Government.

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For more information:

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