

Business Plan

2025/26

April 2025

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1. Introduction

1.1 Environmental Standards Scotland (ESS) formally became a corporate body on 1 October 2021, as a new Non-Ministerial Office under the UK Withdrawal from the European Union (Continuity) (Scotland) Act 2021 (the Continuity Act). This is the date that ESS vested and became a statutory body, able to exercise its full functions and powers.

1.2 ESS has been established to help Scotland achieve the highest environmental standards. Our role is to scrutinise and deliver improvements to public authorities' compliance with environmental law, alongside the effectiveness of environmental law and the way it is being implemented and applied.

1.3 To deliver on these responsibilities ESS has a [Strategic Plan 2022-25](#) setting out our overarching approach. This, our fourth Business Plan published since our launch, sets out our ongoing work and key priorities for the organisation through to March 2026.

2. Strategic Plan

2.1 Our current Strategic Plan sets out how we will work as an organisation to deliver a series of strategic outcomes which, together, will help us progress towards achieving our Vision. The Plan details how we will approach each aspect of our role and how we will measure our performance and contribution to environmental protection and improvement.

2.2 We monitor progress against the Strategic Plan and report publicly through these Business Plans, and through our [Annual Report and Accounts](#) each year. We update Parliament directly on our progress with [videos](#), Committee appearances and written [correspondence](#), all of which we publish on the [ESS website](#).

2.3 As set out in the 'our work' section below, a review of the Strategic Plan has begun in 2024/25, with a view to publishing our next Strategy in 2025/26.

3. Governance arrangements

3.1 [Our Board](#) meets regularly and the [minutes](#) of its meetings are available on our [Publications](#) page, as are the [minutes](#) of the Audit and Risk Committee.

3.2 ESS is accountable to the Scottish Parliament and has a legal duty to report on its activities each year. As a body corporate, ESS operates in line with the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000 and has a duty to produce annual accounts in line with the Government Financial Reporting Manual. The first set of [accounts](#) was published in October 2023, for the 18-month period October 2021 to March 2023, followed by the [accounts](#) for the 12-month period ended 31 March 2024.

3.3 The ESS Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mark Roberts, is the Accountable Officer for ESS. The CEO is responsible to the Scottish Parliament for: the propriety and regularity of ESS' finances; the economical, efficient and effective use of the resources placed at its disposal; and for signing ESS' accounts.

3.4 Deloitte LLP provides the external audit function for ESS on behalf of Audit Scotland. Scottish Government Internal Audit provides an audit advisory service to the Accountable Officer and the Audit and Risk Committee.

4. Our work in 2024/25

4.1 ESS' [Business Plan](#) for the period from April 2024 to March 2025 was published in March 2024. Set out below are the key pieces of work which were identified for the financial year 2024/25. A progress update is included alongside each item.

	Key piece of work set out in the 2024/25 Business Plan	Progress on key pieces of work
Ensuring compliance and effectiveness	Pursue identified failures to comply with environmental law with the relevant public authorities.	ESS has identified areas of non-compliance with environmental law. We have worked with the public bodies concerned to ensure that the improvements required are implemented in full and on schedule. Full details of the cases where we have identified non-compliance, and the action taken to ensure improvements have been implemented, are published on the investigations reports webpage.
	Continue to resolve matters by agreement with the relevant public authorities where possible, within a reasonable timescale.	ESS has actively engaged with public bodies and reached informal resolution on a range of issues relating to compliance with, and implementation of, environmental law. Full details of the cases where we have reached informal resolution are published on the investigations reports webpage.
	Use ESS' statutory powers to secure changes and remedial actions to address poor compliance and address environmental risks.	No compliance failures requiring formal enforcement action have been identified to date.
	Where our investigations identify systemic patterns of compliance failure, or areas where	No issues identified requiring formal enforcement action have been identified to date.

	Key piece of work set out in the 2024/25 Business Plan	Progress on key pieces of work
	<p>the law is ineffective in protecting the environment or public health, pursue this directly with the relevant parts of the Scottish Government.</p>	
	<p>Seek to resolve matters and secure the necessary improvements by agreement with the Scottish Government, and where this is not possible within a reasonable timescale, use ESS' statutory powers to prepare and issue improvement reports to the Scottish Parliament.</p>	<p>ESS has actively engaged with the Scottish Government and reached informal resolution on a range of issues relating to the implementation of environmental law. Full details of the cases where we have reached informal resolution are published on the investigations reports webpage.</p>
<p>Investigating environmental concerns</p>	<p>Carefully review and assess all representations to identify candidates for investigation and advise on alternative routes for cases not suitable for investigation.</p>	<p>The outcome of all representations we receive are published on the representations received webpage.</p>

	Key piece of work set out in the 2024/25 Business Plan	Progress on key pieces of work
	Regularly review and publish our forward work programme so that we are investigating the most important environmental concerns.	Details of all our ongoing casework are published on the investigations reports webpage.
	Regularly update our publicly available register of investigations and carry out these investigations.	Details of all our ongoing and completed investigations are published on the investigations reports webpage.
	Continue to actively support parties submitting representations, particularly where they are unfamiliar with ESS processes, to ensure their concerns are accurately captured.	In accordance with ESS' service standards, a senior investigator is appointed to deal with each environmental concern that is raised with the organisation. This ensures that dedicated and ongoing support, including regular updates, is available to everyone who submits a representation to us. These standards are published on the service standards webpage.
	Keep those who have made representations informed about our consideration and investigation of their matter of concern.	Those submitting representations are kept updated on the representations they bring to ESS and the outcome is published as set out above.

	Key piece of work set out in the 2024/25 Business Plan	Progress on key pieces of work
	<p>Publish reports about the issues we have investigated and the actions that have been taken.</p>	<p>Reports on all our completed investigation work are published on the investigations reports webpage.</p>
	<p>Continue to assess our systems and processes to ensure the effectiveness of our investigations.</p>	<p>Our systems and processes continue to be assessed on an annual basis.</p>
<p>Monitoring and evaluating environmental performance and change in Scotland</p>	<p>Deliver a programme of analytical work on priority issues identified in ESS' approved Strategic Plan, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sewage discharge into the aquatic environment • soil health • threats to the marine environment • invasive non-native species (INNS) • water quality and progress against river basin management plan objectives 	<p>Reports on sewage discharge into the aquatic environment, risks to Scotland's soils and marine litter have been published on the monitoring and analytical work webpage.</p> <p>A call for evidence on the control and impact of invasive non-native species was held, and summary of responses published, on the call for evidence webpage.</p> <p>Responses from the Scottish Government and Scottish Environment Protection Agency to recommendations made in the Air Quality (particulate matter) report, alongside the ESS statement on next steps, have been published on the monitoring and analytical work webpage.</p>

	Key piece of work set out in the 2024/25 Business Plan	Progress on key pieces of work
		Responses from Scottish Government, SEPA and Scottish Water to recommendations made in the Sewage Discharge report, alongside the ESS statement on next steps, have been published on the monitoring and analytical work webpage.
	<p>Respond to relevant consultations and will contribute to parliamentary scrutiny of proposed changes to environmental law, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Scottish Government’s response to the consultation on their review of the effectiveness of environmental governance arrangements following EU withdrawal • the Circular Economy Bill • the Human Rights Bill • the Natural Environment Bill 	Responses to eight consultations by the Scottish Government (or other public authorities), alongside four calls for views by the Scottish Parliament, have been published on the consultations webpage.
	Monitor relevant developments in European and international law and regulation to support our	Monitoring progress has been made on a number of pieces of European Union (EU) legislation and recommendations regarding alignment with

	Key piece of work set out in the 2024/25 Business Plan	Progress on key pieces of work
	assessment of whether Scotland is maintaining alignment with the European Union on environmental law.	<p>relevant EU law (included in reports on sewage discharge, soils and marine litter). These reports have been published on the monitoring and analytical work webpage.</p> <p>The response to the Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee call for views on Scottish Government policy to align with EU law has been published on the ESS website.</p>
	<p>Further develop and maintain effective systems for monitoring data and evidence on environmental performance, including Scotland's comparative performance.</p> <p>Undertake a regular review of ESS' analytical priorities to identify emerging issues of concern.</p>	<p>A review of the Strategy and Analysis operational guidance was conducted during 2024 and published on the ESS website.</p> <p>A review of analytical priorities was undertaken and reported to the ESS Board in July and December 2024. Minutes of these meetings can be found on the ESS website.</p>
	Develop and maintain effective working relationships with a range of organisations involved in collating, analysing and publishing data and evidence on environmental performance in Scotland.	Regular liaison meetings are held with a variety of organisations, including: the Office of Environmental Protection; Interim Environmental Protection Assessor for Wales; Scottish Parliament Information Centre; Scottish Government; Scottish Environment Protection Agency; NatureScot; Joint Nature Conservation Committee; Centre for Ecology and Hydrology; Marine Alliance for Science and Technology for Scotland;

	Key piece of work set out in the 2024/25 Business Plan	Progress on key pieces of work
		Natural Environment Research Council; UK Research and Innovation; Scottish Environment, Food and Agriculture Research Institutions Gateway; James Hutton Institute; Royal Society of Edinburgh; Scottish Environment Link; and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds Scotland.
Engaging and communicating effectively about our role and how to raise concerns	Continue to proactively promote an understanding of our role and how people can raise matters of environmental concern with us.	ESS is proactively continuing to publish its procedures. The Investigation Operational Guidance can be found on the ESS website.
	Continue to develop and deliver the ESS community and stakeholder engagement programme.	18 engagement have been held (including presentations, market stalls and panels). Further information on the Community Engagement programme is published on the ESS website.
	Consult externally on our communication systems and processes to ensure the effectiveness and accessibility of our approach.	Feedback is gathered through representation surveys every six months.

	Key piece of work set out in the 2024/25 Business Plan	Progress on key pieces of work
	Utilise the convening power of ESS to bring together stakeholders to raise the profile of the organisation within the environmental governance sector.	A programme of workshops and one-to-one interviews with stakeholders has been delivered to inform the development of ESS' Strategy 2026-2031.
	Proactively engage with the Scottish Parliament Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee, including six-monthly updates on our work in February and August each year.	ESS continues to proactively engage with Scottish Parliament and its Committees through Committee appearances, consultation responses, updates through correspondence and through vlogs. This information is published on the ESS website.
	<p>Build on our programme of digital communication work identified in the Communication and Engagement Strategy.</p> <p>Continue to improve our approach through commissioning new videos, graphics and animations.</p>	<p>New videos and animations have been developed to share the work of ESS in an accessible format.</p> <p>A video overview of ESS' work and Easy Read versions of key documents have been published on the ESS website.</p>
	Act on a programme of external and internal consultation to continue improving access to	Following a period of consultation with internal and external stakeholders through surveys and facilitated workshops, alongside using public

	Key piece of work set out in the 2024/25 Business Plan	Progress on key pieces of work
	information on the ESS website and ensuring full compliance with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018.	feedback gathered through a website survey, the ESS website was redesigned to increase accessibility. As well as ensuring compliance with accessibility guidelines, this has also improved user-friendliness of the website, making navigation easier for the public.
	Continue our programme of organisation-wide accessibility and engagement training, following the latest accessibility guidelines and standards.	The ESS style guide has been updated to include scientific writing guidance.
	Continue to develop and improve our internal communications approach through delivery of the People Strategy Action Plan.	The People Strategy Action Plan has been published and a review of the Communications and Engagement Plan is now underway. The People Strategy is published on the ESS website.
An effective and efficient organisation	Support the Minister and Parliamentary process to appoint a new ESS Chair to lead the organisation through the next stage of its strategic development.	The Acting Chair Richard Dixon has been appointed by Scottish Ministers as the new official Chair for ESS. Dr Dixon's biography is published on the ESS website.

	Key piece of work set out in the 2024/25 Business Plan	Progress on key pieces of work
	Build on the experience of ESS' 2024/25 internal and external audit reviews and deliver resulting recommendations to provide independent assurance that public funding is spent properly, efficiently and effectively.	<p>Recommendations set out in ESS' external audit ISA 260 for 2023/24 have been delivered and work is ongoing to meet the agreed recommendations for 2024/25.</p> <p>ESS' Annual Report and Accounts including the external audit opinion are published on the ESS website.</p>
	Complete a programme of: internal audit reviews on performance management indicators and risk; ESS' external audit; and publishing ESS' second Annual Report and Accounts.	Two assurance reviews were undertaken by internal audit to support ESS' review of its performance management indicators and its approach to risk. Review recommendations have been incorporated into this work as part of the review of ESS' Strategy 2026-2031.
	Complete the ESS office's retrofit in Thistle House, Edinburgh, co-locate with Consumer Scotland, and further assess opportunities for Public Services Reform efficiencies and collaborations.	<p>This work is now complete, the office has been fully redesigned and both organisations now utilise the space together.</p> <p>A Memorandum of Understanding has been developed to support this work which is published on both the ESS and Consumer Scotland websites. On collaboration, a key area of work is the joining up of each organisations approach to having sustainability, equalities and cyber</p>

	Key piece of work set out in the 2024/25 Business Plan	Progress on key pieces of work
		champions. Through collaboration of this type, information sharing and tangible actions can be delivered.
	On-board the new Oracle Cloud finance system.	The new Oracle finance system has been on-boarded. Some elements of the programme are still in development and will be on-boarded in the financial year 2025/26.
	Complete a deep dive into our third-party service support and assess opportunities for Public Services Reform efficiencies and collaborations.	This deep dive has been carried out. Three revised relets related to legal support, payroll and HR advice have been completed. Operational changes to finance support have also taken place.
	Finalise the People Strategy action plan and deliver the Equalities Policy action plan recommendations set against 2024/25.	The People Strategy has been published and the equalities mainstreaming report summarises all actions taken over the last two years. Both these reports are available on the ESS website.

	Key piece of work set out in the 2024/25 Business Plan	Progress on key pieces of work
	Develop an enhanced mandatory equalities training programme for both staff and Board members as part of our Equalities Policy Action Plan.	<p>As recommended in the Equalities Policy action plan, and drawn over to the People Strategy Action Plan, training on Equality Impact Assessment planning has been delivered to the full ESS team.</p> <p>The Equalities Champions group has been established, with an ongoing programme of work.</p>
	Implement the processes and policies for monitoring and minimising ESS' impact on the environment as set out in our Sustainability Plan.	Phase two of ESS' Sustainability Plan will be published on the ESS website in April 2025 following completion of Phase One in March 2025.
	Build on our data management, governance and legal processes across the organisation, including fulfilling our first archiving requirements and reviewing our Scottish Government framework agreement.	<p>An updated Framework Agreement has been agreed with Scottish Government and published on the ESS website.</p> <p>The ESS Cyber Champions group has been established, with an ongoing programme of work. A data-related working group has also been established to look at specific cross-team areas of work.</p>

	Key piece of work set out in the 2024/25 Business Plan	Progress on key pieces of work
	Build on our current governance arrangements by consolidating all our delegations of authority into one document and reviewing any gaps.	A Specific Scheme of Delegation has been developed.
	Strive to ensure decision-making is delegated to the point they are made most efficiently and effectively, with staff feeling empowered to make them at an appropriate level.	A training programme setting out the context of the Specific Scheme of Delegation has been delivered to the ESS team.
	Develop a central database of the principal pieces of primary, secondary and EU legislation that fall within our remit, together with: the corresponding obligations; the responsible public body; and anything that might have a bearing on their interpretation, scope or other implications.	This database has been created and developed as a live resource which is regularly updated.

5. Our work in 2025/26

5.1 The sections below set out the key priorities and outputs that will be delivered from April 2025 to March 2026. These will be reviewed quarterly and updated as required.

5.2 During 2024/25 we began a review of our Strategic Plan. We will engage with stakeholders as part of this review and will consult on a draft revised Strategy in the summer of 2025. This revised Strategy will then be presented to the Scottish Parliament for consideration and approval by December 2025. If approved, the revised Strategy will direct ESS' work for the period from 2026-2031.

5.3 All related policies and procedures will be reviewed and revised alongside this programme of work. For example, the approach to business planning, key performance indicators and communication and engagement.

Ensuring compliance and effectiveness

5.4 In the current ESS Strategic Plan, the strategic outcome set against ensuring compliance and effectiveness is: 'we have taken effective action to ensure public authorities' compliance with environmental law and to improve the effectiveness of the law'.

5.5 In the Plan we set out our intention to:

- seek to work constructively with public authorities where possible to reach informal resolution
- use our statutory powers to prevent further harm to, or reduce the risks to, the environment or public health
- issue a compliance notice where we consider that: there has been a failure by a public authority to comply with environmental law; harm to the environment has been caused, is continuing to be caused, or is at risk of being caused as a result
- prepare an improvement report where we consider that: there is a failure by one or more public authorities to comply with the law, or where a systemic change is required by the public authority(s) concerned to improve compliance with, and/or the effectiveness of, environmental law

- consider the use of our power to make an application for judicial review, or intervene in civil proceedings taken by another party

Key pieces of work for 2025/26

5.6 We will:

- pursue identified failures to comply with environmental law with the relevant public authorities
- continue to resolve matters by agreement with the relevant public authorities where possible, within a reasonable timescale
- use ESS' statutory powers to secure changes and remedial actions to address poor compliance and address environmental risks
- where our investigations identify systemic patterns of compliance failure, or areas where the law is ineffective in protecting the environment or public health, pursue this directly with the relevant parts of the Scottish Government
- seek to resolve matters and secure the necessary improvements by agreement with the Scottish Government, and where this is not possible within a reasonable timescale, use ESS' statutory powers to prepare and issue improvement reports to the Scottish Parliament

Investigate environmental concerns

5.7 The strategic outcome set against investigating environmental concerns in the ESS Strategic Plan is: 'we have prioritised and investigated the most important matters of concern and identified the action needed to rectify problems and improve compliance and effectiveness.

5.8 In the Plan we set out our intention to:

- assess whether representations made to us may trigger an immediate investigation due to importance, neglect or added value
- take into account importance, scope and nature, neglect and added value when prioritising our work
- notify the public authority(s) and relevant parties of our decision where we decide to investigate a matter of concern

- gather information from the public authority(s) concerned through the issuing of Information Notices
- work quickly and efficiently throughout our investigations, providing relevant parties with updates and an estimate of the completion date of each investigation in line with service standards

Key pieces of work for 2025/26

5.9 We will:

April to June

- assess the outcome of the Scottish Government's work on 'Ramsar' site protection
- publish the outcome of our investigation into the classification of Special Protection Areas

July to September

- publish the outcome of our investigation into the sustainable management of fisheries
- commence assessment of how Scottish public authorities implement their legal obligations in respect of public registers
- commence assessment of the contaminated land regime in Scotland

Ongoing work

- carefully review and assess all representations to identify candidates for investigation and advise on alternative routes for cases not suitable for investigation
- regularly review and publish our forward work programme so that we are investigating the most important environmental concerns
- regularly update our publicly available register of investigations and carry out these investigations
- continue to monitor the response of public authorities to ESS' recommendations

- continue to actively support parties submitting representations, particularly where they are unfamiliar with ESS processes, to ensure their concerns are accurately captured
- keep those who have made representations informed about our consideration and investigation of their matter of concern
- publish reports about the issues we have investigated and the actions that have been taken
- continue to assess our systems and processes to ensure the effectiveness of our investigations

Monitoring and analysis

5.10 The strategic outcome set against monitoring and analysis in the ESS Strategic Plan is: ‘we have built knowledge on environmental performance, are well informed about developments in EU and international standards and practice, and have formed effective partnerships with bodies collecting, collating and scrutinising environmental data’.

5.11 In the Plan we set out our intention to:

- collate, synthesise and assess the evidence about potential matters of concern (including matters of public concern) against a range of criteria, including: impact; nature and scope; neglect; and added value
- cast our net widely, identifying and interrogating data, reports, submissions and intelligence from partners and stakeholders that can help us identify instances of non-compliance or ineffective implementation of the law
- quality assure the evidence we use to ensure it is robust, reliable and objective
- progress our monitoring and analysis work through a series of stages, from horizon scanning to identify high-level areas of concern, through a deepening analysis and understanding of how things are changing in that area, the causes of this, and how policy and regulatory decisions affect this
- continue to monitor environmental performance more widely to assess whether any other matters of concern should be prioritised. We will also undertake horizon scanning to identify emerging matters of concern and relevant improvements in environmental law elsewhere

Key pieces of work for 2025/26

5.12 We will:

April to June

- contribute to Stage 1 Parliamentary scrutiny of the Natural Environment Bill (including proposals to designate ESS as the Independent Review Body responsible for scrutinising progress towards targets for nature recovery)

July to December

- contribute to Parliamentary scrutiny of the Scottish Government's Climate Change Plan
- contribute to Stage 2 and 3 Parliamentary scrutiny of the Natural Environment Bill

January to March

- publish the outcome of our analytical work on threats to the marine environment (focused on seafloor integrity)

Ongoing work

- deliver a programme of analytical work on priority issues identified in ESS' approved Strategic Plan, including:
 - water quality and progress against river basin management plan objectives, with an initial focus on diffuse pollution
 - invasive non-native species (INNS)
- monitor the response of public authorities to recommendations made in analytical reports published in 2023/24 and 2024/25, including:
 - air quality (particulate matter)
 - sewage discharge into the aquatic environment (storm overflows)
 - soil health
 - marine litter
- respond to relevant consultations and contribute to scrutiny of proposed changes to environmental law, including:
 - proposals for legislation on water, wastewater and drainage
 - the implementation of the Integrated Authorisation Framework

- monitor developments in European and international law and regulation and commission an assessment of the extent to which there is alignment between environmental standards, laws and regulations in Scotland and the European Union or other international best practice
- further develop and maintain effective systems for monitoring data and evidence on environmental performance, including Scotland's comparative performance
- further develop and maintain effective working relationships with a range of organisations involved in collating, analysing and publishing data and evidence on environmental performance in Scotland

Engaging and communicating effectively

5.13 The strategic outcome set against engaging and communicating effectively in the ESS Strategic Plan is: 'our role is widely understood and individuals, groups and organisations are confident raising concerns with us. We are regularly engaged in work to improve compliance, the effectiveness of environmental law and how it is applied'.

5.14 In the Plan we set out our intention to:

- be accountable through reporting annually to the Scottish Parliament on our activities and liaise with relevant committees to provide updates on our work and avoid unintentional overlap in work programmes
- liaise with other oversight and scrutiny bodies to ensure that we add value and avoid unnecessary overlap in our functions
- be open to anyone raising a concern with us about compliance with, or the effectiveness of, environmental law in Scotland
- regularly publish information on our website of our live investigations, pre-investigation casework and frequently asked questions
- continue to develop our communication with stakeholders in the public, private and voluntary sectors, and review our Communications and Engagement Plan alongside our Strategy to broaden our reach, in particular to marginalised or disadvantaged communities and groups to increase awareness of our role and how to raise concerns

Key pieces of work for 2025/26

5.15 We will:

April to October

- review and publish a new Communication and Engagement Plan, linking to the development of the new Strategy, to set out ESS' approach to:
 - explaining our work and culture, with clear accessible messaging, to demonstrate our impact, independence and authority on environmental law in Scotland
 - stakeholder engagement, and the continued delivery of the community engagement programme, utilising the convening power of ESS
 - systematically identifying specific audiences for ESS' work and how we will use innovative communication tools, including digital and social media, to engage with them

Ongoing

- proactively increase the understanding of our role and how people can raise matters of environmental concern with us, through building on external feedback and piloting new approaches
- proactively engage with the Scottish Parliament and relevant committees to increase awareness and understanding of our work
- continue to provide and publish six-monthly updates to the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee in August and February each year

Developing a high-performing organisation

5.16 The strategic outcome set against developing a high performing organisation in the ESS Strategic Plan is: 'we are an effective and efficient organisation'.

5.17 In the Plan we set out our intention to:

- ensure our plans and operational activity are regularly reviewed and accountable

- continue to maintain a clear approach to how we allocate and prioritise our spending to ensure best value
- regularly assess ESS' necessary staffing complement to ensure we can perform our functions effectively
- prioritise the development of our team by implementing our learning and development programme, pulse surveys and events to build our organisational culture, with a particular focus on equalities and wellbeing
- establish our core internal communications policy and continue to create an inclusive culture where team members are consulted and involved in the development of key policy areas

Key pieces of work for 2025/26

5.18 We will:

April to June

- review our existing governance and operational approach to work, linking to the development of the new Strategy, demonstrating our impact through performance management indicators and a theory of change approach
- build on the implementation of the new Oracle finance system to enhance efficiency and financial planning opportunities
- implement the processes and policies for monitoring and minimising ESS' impact on the environment, through developing phase two of the Sustainability Plan

July to September

- support the Minister and Parliamentary process to appoint an additional Board member

Ongoing

- deliver the People Strategy action plan and equalities related initiatives
- assess opportunities for longer-term financial flexibility and sustainability meeting public service reform principles

6. Performance monitoring

6.1 Our general performance and progress towards our strategic outcomes are currently monitored through a suite of performance and management indicators as set out below. These existing indicators are reported against in the ESS Annual Report to Scottish Parliament each year.

6.2 Performance indicators:

Actions	Outputs	Intermediate Outputs	Long-term Outcome
Number of investigations completed	Number of investigations resulting in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance Notice; • Improvement Report; • Judicial Review 	Percentage of compliance notices implemented in full, on schedule	ESS' assessment of Scotland's progress against environmental indicators
Number of analysis projects completed		Percentage of recommendations implemented from improvement reports	
Number of representations considered	Number and proportion of issues resolved informally	Percentage of recommendations/actions implemented in full, on schedule from informal resolution	

6.3 Management indicators:

Engaging and communicating effectively about our role and how to raise concerns	An efficient and effective organisation
Number attending public/stakeholder engagement sessions	Service standards met
Percentage of feedback positive from public/stakeholder engagement sessions	Percentage of corporate reporting requirements delivered to schedule

Engaging and communicating effectively about our role and how to raise concerns	An efficient and effective organisation
Number of citations in parliamentary reports or meetings	Number of complaints received
Number of social media followers	Board and staff diversity information
Number of new and returning visits to ESS website	Staff engagement
Stakeholder perception of ESS role	Organisational carbon emissions (tonnes of CO2 equivalent)

6.4 As set out at 1.14, as part of the review of the current Strategic Plan, the approach to key performance indicators will be reviewed and set out in the new Strategy 2026-2031.

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