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sportscotland Business Plan 2026/27

Sport for life

sportscotland
the national agency for sport

spòrsalba
am prìomh bhuidheann
nàiseanta airson spòrs

INTRODUCTION

Our business plan describes how we will deliver on our corporate strategy, Sport for Life¹, in 2026-27. It confirms the commitments we have made for the year ahead towards an active Scotland where everyone benefits from sport and the people of Scotland get the most from the sporting system.

Through Sport for Life we want to see an increase in the number and diversity of people **participating, progressing** and **achieving** in sport.

This plan contains the 2026-27 goals, the ambitions we want to achieve, the changes we want to make and the future state we want to see; externally and internally. The shift in language is intentional, towards an outcome-focussed approach to planning and evaluation of impact.

We will track and measure success through internal quarterly reporting on goal milestones and quarterly and annual evaluation of impact of the goals. In our approach to monitoring and evaluation we will critically examine equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) indicators to ensure that inclusion does truly underpin everything we do.

Our Annual Report will capture the impact of our work at a corporate strategy level, showing progress towards delivering our Sport for Life outcomes.

¹ [Sport for Life \(sportscotland website\)](#)

FOREWORD

I'd like to think every year is an exciting one for sport in Scotland - but it's difficult not to conclude that 2026 is particularly special.

We have a home Commonwealth Games to look forward to, with some of the world's best athletes coming to Glasgow to compete for a coveted place on the medal podium.

And, of course, for the first time in 28 years, Scotland's national men's football team will be competing at the World Cup on the other side of the Atlantic, following that extraordinary night at Hampden in November when Scotland qualified and a nation was energised. Adding to the remarkable Summer of Sport ahead, Scotland's women's cricket team have qualified for the ICC Women's T20 World Cup - a milestone moment for the women's game in Scotland.

One of the great benefits of these wonderful sporting events is the way they help to inspire so many people across the country to go out and get active themselves - helping enhance their wellbeing and strengthen communities. That inspiration is brought to life every day in our clubs, community organisations and local facilities, where volunteers play an essential role in creating welcoming, inclusive environments for people of all ages and abilities. Their dedication is so important to Scottish sport, and we are committed to supporting them and the partners they work alongside.

At the start of this momentous sporting year, we welcomed the additional £40 million announced by the Scottish Government to provide investment into the Scottish sporting system.

An £18 million investment around the Summer of Sport initiative, designed to capitalise on the excitement of the Commonwealth Games and the World Cup, has allowed us to work with local authorities, leisure trusts and others to help organise hundreds of free events in the coming months. This collaborative approach reflects our belief that partnership working is fundamental to delivering meaningful, lasting impact.

We know the 2026-27 year provides us with a unique time bound opportunity and that is why we have made a strategic commitment to maximise the impact of investing this additional funding. Our business plan centres around how we will deliver on our corporate strategy, Sport for Life, helping ensure everyone in Scotland can benefit from sport and physical activity. This includes strengthening the vital role that sport plays in our clubs and communities and supporting partners who share our ambition to widen access and participation.

There was, of course, another major event in Scotland's calendar this year in the form of the Holyrood election and, as political parties discuss their plans for public sector reform, it

is crucial that the next Scottish Government continues to support the need for efficient, integrated services where everyone and every community has the opportunity to thrive.

Our continued commitment to inclusion and tackling racism and racial inequality in sport is embedded in our Sport for Life strategy, with our plans to critically examine equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) indicators helping ensure they underpin everything we do.

We are also committed to strengthening our long term digital and data capability, helping us develop and deploy tools that will not only support effective investment decisions but also enable us to demonstrate their impact.

As we continue to enjoy this most exciting year of sport in Scotland, sportscotland's business plan aims to ensure its benefits will stay with us for many years to come - supported by strong partnerships, inspiring volunteers and a shared belief in the benefits of sport.

Forbes Dunlop
CEO, sportscotland

Key external goals

The 2026-27 year provides us with unique time-bound opportunities to:

- 1.** Maximise the impact of investing an additional £18m of Scottish Government funding into local and national partners in the sporting system, underpinned by a robust governance, monitoring and evaluation.
- 2.** Maximise the unique opportunity that 2026 presents through the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games and the FIFA World Cup 2026 to unite the nation through sport, and celebrate the impact of sport within local communities through a summer of sport programme campaign in partnership with Scottish Government and local and national partners.
- 3.** Secure the commitment of all local authorities to new four-year partnership agreements that ensure the future delivery of local and national priorities for sport and physical activity is protected and maintained.
- 4.** Increase our investment in Scottish Governing Bodies to help them become stronger and more resilient organisations, and drive more investment and support into club and community sport and athlete development pathways, aligned to our organisational priorities.
- 5.** Undertake a comprehensive system wide review of coaching in Scotland to inform and guide the design of an inclusive coaching system that enables people to participate, progress and achieve in sport.

Key supporting goals

To support the delivery of our key external goals and our long-term strategic ambitions we have also committed to the following ambitions:

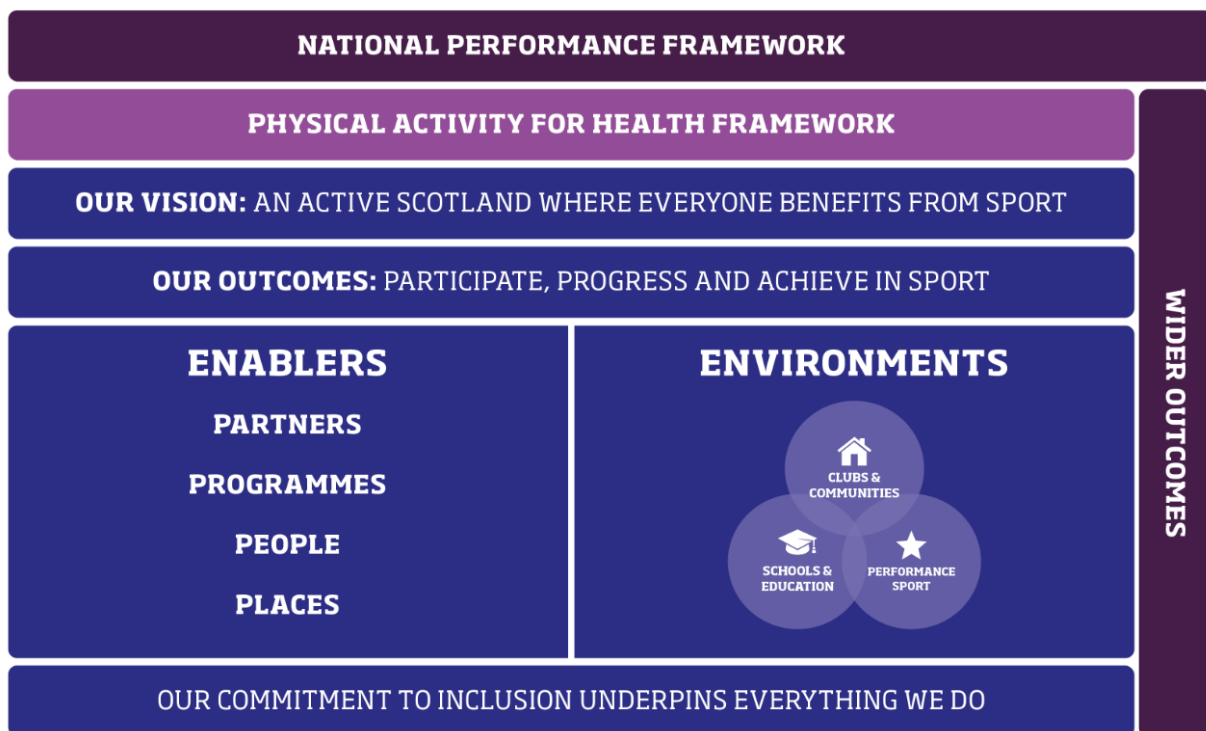
- 1.** The implementation of a new investment system provides a streamlining of processes, with increased automation and reduced bureaucracy for partners.
- 2.** The implementation of our anti-racism framework and embedding of principles and practice provides demonstratable leadership to tackling racism in the sporting sector.
- 3.** Enable confident, data-led investment and decision-making across the sporting system, through strengthened cyber and business continuity, modernised digital and data capabilities and effective programme and project delivery.
- 4.** A refresh to the monitoring and evaluation framework and update to the Performance Measurement Framework will evidence the impact of increased investments and provides sharable and scalable insights and learning.
- 5.** Climate and sustainability priorities are embedded into and across **sportscotland** strategically and operationally.
- 6.** Staff motivation, engagement and wellbeing is strengthened through the implementation of a performance management and appraisal process that recognises achievements and supports ongoing individual development. This provides a consistent framework that supports clear expectations, regular feedback and development.
- 7.** The implementation of a robust communications and engagement approach will raise awareness of the value and benefits of sport.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Sport for Life is our main strategic driver. This shows how we contribute to the Physical Activity for Health Framework² (PAHF). This Framework ultimately contributes to Scotland’s National Performance Framework³. Our Minister’s strategic guidance⁴ informs our delivery.

The Sporting System

The sporting system diagram shows how all the components work together to help people take part in sport and physical activity in three environments:



In Sport for Life, enablers provide the system capability, capacity and leadership required to create high-quality, inclusive environments where people can participate, progress and thrive in sport throughout their lives.

Partners

The sport sector relies on partners sharing their time, expertise and investment. By working together, we can all plan better, be more efficient and speak with a common voice. We need strong connections and integration across environments. We will focus our time

² [Physical activity for health: framework - gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot/publications/physical-activity-for-health-framework/pages/2-introduction.aspx)
³ [National Performance Framework - gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-performance-framework/pages/2-introduction.aspx)
⁴ [Strategic Guidance Letter 2023-26 \(update expected in 2026\)](#)

on adding value to partners. Our support is based on partner needs, and a shared commitment to inclusion and environmental sustainability.

Partners include:

- **Local partners** (e.g. local authorities, leisure trusts, schools, colleges and universities)
- **Scottish Governing Bodies** (SGBs)
- **National partners** (e.g. Enable, Scottish Disability Sport (SDS), Scottish Action for Mental Health (SAMH), UK Sport)

Programmes

We want people to have safe, inclusive and quality opportunities to participate, progress and achieve in sport and physical activity. We support and invest in the environments to deliver this.

People

Sport depends on great people in paid and voluntary roles. We want to see numbers grow and greater diversity, from coaches and employees to leaders and administrators. We want skilled and confident coaches and officials to meet the needs of a diverse range of participants. We want to see leadership at all levels of sport and more women and girls in decision making positions.

Young people make such a valuable contribution within society, and we want to play our role in ensuring young people have a voice in decisions, are encouraged to be leaders and are inspired to join the sporting workforce.

We know that sport is dependent on large numbers of volunteers. We want to reduce the barriers to volunteering and grow the number of volunteers involved in sport in Scotland.

Places

Scotland has great places and spaces for people to participate in sport and physical activity at the level they choose.

Our focus in this plan is Scotland's local, regional, and national sports facilities. This estate is ageing and needs significant investment to ensure it meets the needs of people and enables them to participate, progress and achieve in sport and physical activity.

Owners and operators face significant resource challenges. Costs to maintain, upgrade, and develop infrastructure are increasing. Net zero carbon targets and efforts to tackle climate change add to this pressure.

ORGANISING AND DELIVERING OUR 2026-27 WORK

Our business plan and planning process has been configured to support how we engage with stakeholders, the nature of our work, cross-organisational activity and the internal-facing activity that supports our delivery ambitions. In doing so we have developed and framed our work on seven planning areas derived from three environments, one enabler, two national centres and four corporate services departments into a single 'strong organisation':

- ▶ Clubs & Communities
- ▶ Schools & Education
- ▶ Performance Sport
- ▶ Places
- ▶ Glenmore Lodge & Scottish Avalanche Information Service
- ▶ National Centre Inverclyde
- ▶ A Strong Organisation

The context for how each planning area supports the delivery of Sport for Life and the 2026-27 annual goals are outlined for each. The annual goals below are supported by routine activity and deliverables that form our regular business activities.

Clubs & Communities

We will lead and strengthen club and community sport by placing it at the heart of local communities, creating inclusive environments that enable people to participate, progress and achieve. Through collaborative investment with Scottish Governing Bodies (SGBs) and partners, we will strengthen pathways across the system and build the capacity, quality and diversity of the workforce and volunteers that underpin a strong sporting system.

Annual goals

1. Workstreams from the club and community review are codesigned and implemented with local and national partners.
2. SGBs with local and national partners are empowered and supported to develop strong, sustainable, safe, and inclusive clubs and Community Sport Hubs.
3. Professional officers, coaches, officials, and volunteers are enabled and supported to deliver high quality experiences for individuals within club and community sport.
4. SGBs are empowered to enable people to participate, progress and achieve through a co-designed investment approach.

5. SGBs are empowered and supported to be strong, sustainable, safe, and inclusive organisations with effective governance and administration.
6. SGBs are empowered and supported to grow and develop a thriving sport to enable people to participate, progress and achieve.
7. The geographical approach is established, enabling Local Authorities, SGBs, local, and national partners to be better connected and supported to work together to deliver sport locally.
8. **sportscotland** staff and local and national partners are empowered, enabled and supported to embed equality, diversity and inclusion within their key work areas / programmes.

Schools & Education

We will work collaboratively with local, national and education partners to plan and invest in opportunities that enable people in local communities to participate and progress in sport. By providing positive sporting experiences across schools, colleges and universities, we will build competence and confidence and create clear pathways from education settings into club and community sport.

Annual goals

1. Our programmes in schools and education lead to an increased number and diversity of children and young people participating and progressing in sport.
2. Active Schools has clear outcomes, a refreshed funding model, and contributes positively to the whole school approach to sport.
3. Colleges and Universities play a significant role in contributing to the sporting system, adding expertise and providing a platform for students to engage in leading and delivering sport.
4. Girls are supported to lead and participate in sport and physical activity, leading to increased participation.
5. SGBs and wider partners are clear on their role and contribution to the school sport agenda and support the number of children and young people participating and progressing in sport.
6. Local partner planning and investment is aligned to local and national priorities leading to systemic improvements and an increase of people accessing quality local sport and physical activity.
7. Leaders, staff, young people and deliverers are supported to influence, develop and deliver quality sporting experiences for children and young people.

Performance Sport

We will lead the Scottish sporting system and contribute to a thriving UK performance system by investing in and supporting performance sport in Scotland. Working with partners, we will enable accessible, inclusive and sustainable performance development environments that underpin progression and achievement, while helping people find meaning and purpose through the pursuit of success on the world stage in ways that contribute to personal and collective wellbeing and inspire the nation.

Annual goals

1. Team Scotland is in the optimal position to succeed at Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games.
2. Progression and achievement outcomes are supported across eligible sports through a new investment approach (SGB investment and in-kind support).
3. Enhance the system of support for coaches and coaching with SGBs to optimise athlete development environments.
4. A system of support is established with SGBs to enable highly effective professional practice in pathways and performance staff.
5. Expertise and resources from targeted collaborations are aligned to support the pathways and performance needs of the sporting system.
6. Our staff are supported to develop their capabilities and deployed to meet current and emerging partner needs.

Places

We will enable participation in sport and physical activity by ensuring people have access to the right places and spaces to support an active Scotland. Through strategic investment and leadership, we will work with local and national partners to plan, develop and sustain an accessible, inclusive and sustainable sports estate, using expert advice and guidance to influence effective decision-making.

Annual goals

1. Partners are engaged on the key findings from our national review of the sports facilities estate, and the case continues to be made for long term additional investment in the estate.
2. Local and national partners commit to taking a more strategic and integrated approach to planning for places for sport.
3. Spatial policy and development proposals continue to protect and promote places for sport.

4. Owners, operators, and designers of sport facilities are supported with advice, guidance and support to ensure facilities are fit for purpose and meet the needs of sport.
5. More, and more diverse people are supported to participate, progress and achieve in sport by increased investment into capital projects that focus on projects from club and community organisations.

National Centres

We will enable participation, progression and achievement across Scotland's sporting system by providing safe, inclusive and accessible environments that support performance sport, education, clubs, communities and outdoor participation. As national assets, our centres will bring partners together to plan, develop and deliver sport, sharing specialist expertise, knowledge and leadership while maximising public value and long-term impact through sustainable, well-managed facilities.

Glenmore Lodge (including Scottish Avalanche Information Service)

Annual goals

1. SGB partners are engaged in a review of National Centre support and contribution to increase support for EDI agendas, Clubs and Communities, within outdoor and adventure sport.
2. Successful recruitment of new instructors provides a sustainable training workforce with long-term resilience to provide safe, inclusive environments, and sector expertise.
3. The review of SAIS workforce and service delivery model leads to a cost effective, sustainable, and resilient service, creating new strategies for long-term development to meet winter participant needs.
4. Enhanced digital business systems support digital marketing needs and the growth needs of the business.
5. Financial resilience and in-year delivery is supported by system alignment for capital allocation, annual planned maintenance and robust operational planning.

National Centre Inverclyde

Annual goals

1. Informed decisions on capital funding from LTA and **sportscotland** are enabled by the development of a detailed business case for indoor tennis at National Centre Inverclyde.
2. Long-term financial resilience is underpinned by a prioritised capital and sustainability plan that improves asset condition and reduces risk.
3. The Centre is a safe place for staff, contractors and visitors, with embedded systems, clear accountability, and robust assurance.
4. Customer experience, reporting capability and operational efficiency is enhanced by a fully embedded leisure management system.
5. Centre visibility and in turn, usage, is increased across core segments, supported through a clear marketing, communications and engagement approach.

Supporting delivery: a strong organisation

We are committed towards building a high performing, inclusive, data-enabled and financially sustainable sporting system that develops people, strengthens partners, empowers young leaders and modernises how we work. This will ensure **sportscotland** is best positioned to maximise impact and deliver our commitments to the sporting system.

In each internal planning area below, we have committed to the following goals, in addition to the regular functions of each department.

Communications & Policy

Annual goals

1. We will increase awareness of a pivotal summer of sport by delivering a PR and marketing campaign that promotes the summer of sport and increased investment, capitalising on the FIFA World Cup 2026 and Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games.
2. A culture of stronger team connections, improved collaboration and better relationships and culture is developed through a robust internal communications strategy including an all-staff event.
3. Grow the recognition of **sportscotland** and raise the profile of sport across the political landscape to ensure consistency and coordination in messaging from the sport sector to government and politicians.
4. The contribution and impact of **sportscotland** to the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games (athletes, clubs and communities and facilities) and contributing pathways is widely recognised.

Culture, Talent & Operations

Annual goals

1. **sportscotland** policies and practices are modern, consistent, and create a fair, compliant, and high-quality employee experience.
2. A strong, consistent management capability across the organisation ensures effective leadership, high performance and delivery of organisational priorities.
3. Workforce is aligned to strategy and equipped for future needs through a review that seeks to understand and modernise our people, roles and skills.
4. A flexible, future ready workplace enhances employee experience, optimises our physical work environment, and embeds sustainability into all aspects of how we work.

Data & Digital

Annual goals

1. Continue to strengthen **sportscotland**'s organisational resilience through ongoing improvements to cyber resilience and business continuity arrangements.
2. Deliver digital transformation through a business systems replacement programme, introducing enhanced capabilities across efficiency, data, compliance and organisational resilience.
3. Strengthen **sportscotland**'s long term digital and data capability by embedding the skills, processes, platforms and tools (including AI) needed to support reliable governance, analysis and confident data-led decision-making.
4. Support the sporting system by developing and deploying tools that enable effective investment decision making and demonstrate the impact of that investment through data.
5. Ensure compliance with organisational statutory responsibilities by strengthening data protection, Freedom of Information and complaints governance, while improving resilience through process review and optimisation to reduce risk and increase efficiency.
6. Strengthen programme and project planning, governance and delivery through the consistent implementation of a Project Management Office (PMO).

Finance & Business Planning

Annual goals

1. The additional £18m core funding is fully integrated into organisational budgets, governance and reporting, enabling clear accountability, timely monitoring and effective assurance throughout the year.
2. New investment system and processes successfully implemented and embedded in ways of working for Integrated Investment Team and across organisation, for process efficiency (internal and external) and useability of management information.
3. A sustainable resourcing model implemented and revised finance processes that improve efficiency, reduce errors and provide consistent, high-quality reporting and control.
4. The scope, timeline and governance required to deliver a smooth implementation of the new finance system agreed, enabling a controlled transition and minimizing disruption.
5. A standardised business planning and reporting process implemented and embedded across the organisation, that improves strategic alignment, supports performance management, monitors progress and eliminates/minimises non value-add report creation.
6. A research, monitoring and evaluation strategy provides a balanced and consistent approach that will support new investment streams and ongoing organisational need.

HOW WE MANAGE AND REPORT ON THIS PLAN

This diagram shows how our work plans connect to our business plan, corporate strategy, and strategic context, and how we report our progress.

NATIONAL PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK			
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR HEALTH FRAMEWORK More people. More Active, More Often			
Active Systems	Active Places of Learning	Active Travel	Active Places and Space
Active Health & Social Care	Active Sport and Recreation	Active Communication	Active Workplaces
<p>CORPORATE STRATEGY (Sport for Life) Our vision for an active Scotland where everyone benefits from sport</p>	<p>MISSION: Help the people of Scotland get the most from the sporting system</p> <p>PRINCIPLES: Inclusive, Accountable, Responsive, Person-centred, Collaborative, World Class</p> <p>OUTCOMES: Participate, Progress and Achieve</p> <p>INCLUSION: Our commitment to inclusion underpins everything we do</p>		<p>Annual Report</p>
<p>ANNUAL GOAL PLANNING The annual ambitions and key activities we will undertake</p>	<p>The goals we have set out to achieve in the year ahead for Clubs & Communities, Schools & Education, Performance Sport, Places, Glenmore Lodge, National Centre Inverclyde and a Strong Organisation</p> <p>Activity planning and milestone reporting for each annual goal</p>		<p>Quarterly Reporting</p>
<p>ANNUAL WORK PLANS What individuals do and the difference they will make</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team workplans • Individual objectives • Personal learning objectives • Evidence of principles of behavioural outcomes 		<p>Team-level reporting</p> <p>Performance Development Reviews</p>

TRACKING OUR LONG-TERM PROGRESS

The **sport**scotland Performance Measurement Framework is used to measure our progress towards our strategic outcomes. To promote consistency of reporting and monitor trends across over multiple cycles our established strategic measures remains broadly stable from one year to the next.

Outcome	Indicator
Participate How many people are we reaching?	% of people taking part in sport in Scotland
	Total participants in our programmes
	Active Schools participants
	Active Colleges participants
	SGB Playing Club Members
	National Centre Participation
Progress How many people are at each stage of the pathway?	Athletes on SGB performance pathways
	SIS supported athletes
Achieve How are we performing on the world stage?	Athletes on UK performance programmes
	Medals
Inclusion Inclusion underpins everything we do	Diversity of our participants

In parallel with the **sport**scotland approach to data-led investment and decision-making, we will further develop our monitoring and evaluation activity to strengthen our approach to evidencing impact. As captured within our supporting goals, we shall utilise the unique opportunity that 2026/27 affords us to review and refresh our strategic Performance Measurement Framework to ensure it remains optimal given the significant additional investment funding flowing through **sport**scotland from 2026/27 onwards.

Annual goals are tracked and monitored through quarterly reporting of milestones. The success of goals is measured through a suite of indicators that will allow us to examine the success and impact of each annual goal.