

**BUSINESS PLAN**

**PLANA GNOTHACH**

**2026/27**



**CROFTING COMMISSION  
COIMISEAN NA CROITEARACHD**

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## FOREWORD

Over the past year we have continued to implement our 2023-28 Corporate Plan. During this time the Commission has enjoyed a period of excellent staff retention, which has allowed all recently recruited staff to be fully trained across all regulatory case types. This has led to historically low median processing times, with outstanding casework numbers reaching the lowest levels achievable under the current regulations. The Commission has also successfully reduced its outstanding casework numbers exceeding 52 weeks old to approximately 30 cases (down from 49 in May 2025 when measuring of this metric began).

In 2026/27 we will continue to target this level of performance, alongside maintaining our excellent customer satisfaction scores (4.3 out of 5 average achieved in the previous year), while focussing on implementing various legislative changes being introduced in the Crofting and Scottish Land Court Bill (pending Royal Assent in June / July 2026). These changes will bring considerable improvements to crofting legislation for crofters, and efficiencies for the Commission.

Duties remain a key area of focus for the Commission through 2026/27, with improvements to processes supported by additional on the ground verification visits following the Annual Notice. This work is key to the Commission Board's strategy of ensuring the highest levels of utilisation of croft land, including common grazings, while also ensuring regulatory compliance.

The Commission will build on its IT system improvements, which in the past year included the successful launch of a completely new website and a sign-up notification system for crofters, with the development and deployment of a new case handling system. This new system will provide both enhanced reliability by moving to more robust underlying software and pave the way for the Commission to implement greater automation going forward. These changes should, over time, provide further efficiencies and allow the Commission to deliver the best service possible to crofters.

The Commission's newly formed Policy team will continue work already underway with the Board to review the Commission's current policy plan. Where deemed necessary this includes the creation of a series of interim policy statements with the overarching purpose of providing clearer guidance to applicants and reducing the number of applications which are rejected or refused. This key work will lead into the development of a new Policy Plan in 2027.

**Gary Campbell– Chief Executive**

March 2026

## PURPOSE OF THE BUSINESS PLAN

Each year, our Business Plan presents the Commission’s key objectives for the coming year. These are set out in the tables below, which describe our key intentions and aims. During the year, the Business Plan becomes a tool for monitoring our progress and to assist in managing our staff, finances and other resources, to achieve the desired outcomes.

Progress against this Plan will be reviewed regularly by the Executive and Senior Management Teams and reported to the Board through our quarterly performance management reports. Regular reporting helps to ensure that we remain focused on our priorities and have the appropriate resources in the right place at the right time.

The Corporate Outcomes in our Corporate Plan for 2023-2028 are as follows:

<b>Outcome One</b>	<b>Crofting is regulated in a fair, efficient and effective way</b>
<b>Outcome Two</b>	<b>Crofting continues to thrive and to evolve</b>
<b>Outcome Three</b>	<b>Crofts are occupied and used</b>
<b>Outcome Four</b>	<b>Our workforce is skilled and motivated, and our governance processes are best practice</b>

### **OUTCOME ONE – CROFTING IS REGULATED IN A FAIR, EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE WAY**

We are committed to providing a quality and professional service to all our customers. We are committed to fairness in all our decision-making, and we monitor all turnaround times.

We also seek continuous improvement of our internal processes, to deliver consistent and fair decision making that is compliant with legislation and delivers value for the public purse. By refining how we deliver our services to customers, we can provide a faster, more consistent and more informative service, thereby increasing customer satisfaction and confidence while simultaneously improving value for money.

## **OUTCOME TWO – CROFTING CONTINUES TO THRIVE AND TO EVOLVE**

The Commission has a responsibility to promote the interests of crofting, and to advise the Scottish Government about crofting issues. Our Policy Team and Grazings Team are in place to support crofters, grazings committees and those interested in crofting. Along with other agencies we will endeavour to ensure that crofting communities continue to be resilient.

## **OUTCOME THREE – CROFTS ARE OCCUPIED AND USED**

By ensuring crofters are compliant with their Duties and by working with crofting communities and stakeholders, we can maintain the number of crofts that are occupied and well managed.

## **OUTCOME FOUR – OUR WORKFORCE IS SKILLED AND MOTIVATED, AND OUR GOVERNANCE PROCESSES ARE BEST PRACTICE**

Through continued investment in appropriate resources and ensuring that our staff and Board Members have appropriate training, we can develop a high-performing workforce. We will also ensure that our organisation fulfils its legal requirements and contributes to the Scottish Government's broader objectives for Scotland, including the reduction of carbon emissions.

## **NATIONAL OUTCOMES**

The outcomes of our Corporate Plan are aligned with those of others in the public sector to bring about delivery of the Scottish Government's National Outcomes contained in the National Performance Framework. We believe that we contribute to four of the National Outcomes:

- We value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment.
- We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe.
- We have a globally competitive, entrepreneurial, inclusive and sustainable economy.
- We respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination.

A summary of how we have contributed to each National Outcome is included in our Annual Report each year.

## MEASURING SUCCESS

In our Corporate Plan for 2023-2028 we identified a range of high-level performance indicators which are reflected in this Business Plan, which span all functions of the Commission. These are listed below and are in addition to a range of milestones for each function.

High Level Indicator	Responsible function	2026/27 Business Plan KPI reference
95% of all customer contacts which require escalation to another team are responded to within the Commission standards of service timeframe	Commission ET	1.1
Achieve customer satisfaction rates of at least 4.25 out of 5 (satisfied or better)	Commission ET	1.2
Maintain median turn around performance of key application types	Regulatory / registration	2.1
Carry out at least 10 quality checks each month of closed Regulatory cases	Regulatory / registration	2.2
Conduct six policy discussion 'scoping' meetings with the board	Policy	3.1
All grazings committees going out of office have contact from the Commission 1 month prior to this	Grazings	4.1
Address remaining 9 common grazings with committees in place, but no regulations. Seek to establish regulations.	Grazings	4.2
8 grazings workshops delivered through the year	Grazings	4.3
Deliver at least 150 resolutions to breaches of duties, unresolved successions or vacant crofts	Residency and land use	5.1 – 5.4
Completed notifications of action	Residency and land use	5.5
Achieve average GIS case turnaround of 2 weeks	GIS	6.1
Reduce manual input of data on a case	Information Services	6.2
Ensure the CIS Replacement project is mobilised and governed effectively	Information Services	6.3
Progress delivery of the CIS Replacement in a controlled and phased manner	Information Services	6.4
Achieve carbon emissions below 60 tCO <sub>2</sub> e and embed carbon management plan	Corporate and customer service	7.1
Achieve efficiency savings of at least 3%	Corporate and customer service	7.2
Scan and digitally index a minimum of 15 croft files per week (750 per year based on 50 working weeks on average)	Corporate and customer service	7.3

## COMMISSION WIDE MILESTONES AND KPIS

The Board, Executive and Senior Management teams will work through 2026/27 to ensure a key focus is maintained on enhancing the enforcement of duties across the crofting counties. The Commission will consolidate its resources on a targeted approach to ensure the highest levels of compliance with crofting duties, working closely with RPID to carry out an increased number of physical visits. New legislation will grant greater powers to the Commission to ensure the highest level of Annual Notice completion, something the Board considers critical to ensuring croft land is being used effectively.

In its regulatory team, the Commission will continue to focus on delivering the highest levels of service for the public, focusing on keeping median turnaround times as low as possible and increasing the efficiency of its internal processes.

The Commission will also make a substantial investment in its internal IT systems, modernising its casework system to align it with current technologies, and opening the door to more possibilities through automation. These changes will bring greater efficiencies across the Commission and deliver better value for money than ever before.

### Key Milestones

Number	Date	Milestone
1a	Mar 27	Ensure the highest level of customer service in line with our service of standards pledge by bringing all areas of the Commission into a single process to enable effective measuring
1b	Dec 26	Deliver first build of the new case handling system.

### Key Performance Measures

Number	Aim	Baseline	Target/Indicator	Measure
1.1	All customer contacts that require follow up cleared within the agreed standards of service timescale.	95.1% on 29 February 2024	95%	Administrative records show % responded to in time.
1.2	Customer satisfaction rates	4.08 for 2023/24 reporting year	4.25 average score for 2025/26 reporting year (only known at end of year)	% of respondents answering satisfied or very satisfied to the satisfaction survey issued alongside the annual notice, collected one year retrospectively.

## REGULATORY AND REGISTRATION FUNCTION

Through the 2026/27 reporting year the Regulatory function will continue to focus on delivering an excellent level of service and driving forward efficiencies in the decision-making process to ensure value for money and quick decision turnaround times. The development of a new case handling system is a major milestone for the Commission, and the Regulatory team will offer support as required during both the planning and testing phases of this development to ensure a smooth deployment.

The regulatory function will also work to support the integration of the new Crofting Bill (if passed), which will include expanding the staffing within the function, supporting the development of new processes, and the implementation of new policy and procedures to accommodate the changes.

### Key Milestones

Number	Date	Milestone
2a	Mar 27	Maintain median turnaround times for key application types (tier 1 approvals).
2b	Mar 27	Ensure the highest quality of decision making by continuing to carry out monthly quality checks on closed cases.

### Key Performance Measures

Number	Aim	Baseline	Target/Indicator	Measure
2.1	Maintain median turn around performance of key application types (tier 1 approvals, receipt date to decision date)	Figures for 2025/26 full reporting year <sup>1</sup> : Assignment – 9.57 weeks Decrofting CHSGG – 10.21 weeks Decrofting Part Croft – 14.86 weeks	Assignment – 14 weeks Decrofting CHSGG – 16 weeks Decrofting Part Croft – 22 weeks	Time taken from receipt to date decision complete (intimated to applicant).
2.2	Quality of Regulatory decision making through post decision quality checking. Check at least 10 cases per month.	Minimum of ten cases checked monthly through 2025/26– achieved pass rate for the year of 94%	Minimum of 10 regulatory cases checked each month for quality. Issues identified fed back to prevent recurrence.	At least 10 cases at B1 or higher outcome need to be checked. Cases are considered to pass if no material issue identified (defined as something which would be negatively highlighted by the land court should the case go to appeal).

<sup>1</sup> Note, figures were updated post end of reporting year, and targets were based on Q3 actuals prior to this.

## POLICY FUNCTION

In 2025/26 the Crofting Commission has embarked on a comprehensive review of Commission policy. This has involved developing a systematic process to enable the board to develop a strategic approach to a specific area of Commission policy. This is then considered by officials to ensure it will be effective and then published as an interim policy statement.

Awareness of the options for croft succession has made considerable strides via the issuing of croft succession information packs to all crofters, which was completed in 2025. This was supported for islands crofts by the National Islands Plan. The Commission has worked closely with Scottish Government officials on the Crofting Reform Bill. Discussing and providing insight and data regarding technical points of the bill to ensure that the legislation will work effectively and as intended.

Further development and refinement of Commission policy is an integral part of the Commission strategy for the coming year. It will be a key focus for the board and for staff to ensure that the Commission is using its powers to achieve the Commission’s aims for the future of crofting. There will also be considerable focus on the crofting bill, which is anticipated to become an Act during the year. This will need considerable input of resource and be a high priority area for the Commission.

### Key Milestones

Number	Date	Milestone
3a	May 2026	Complete post succession work to determine success and active outcomes from it
3b	May 2026	Revisions to Commission website complete and interim policy statements public
3c	Aug 2026	Oversee implementation of new Crofting Bill, planning commencement dates and coordinating teams through implementation

### Key Performance Measures

Number	Aim	Baseline	Target/Indicator	Measure
3.1	Conduct six policy discussion ‘scoping’ meetings with the board as precursors to follow up papers at the subsequent Board meetings	Four during 2025-2026	Six scoping discussion meetings and subsequent Board papers delivered	Record of meetings and Board papers.

## GRAZINGS FUNCTION

During 2026/27, given that a relatively consistent level of grazings committees has now been achieved, we will focus our attention on supporting and empowering those existing grazings committees and any shareholders who are proactively wishing to form a new committee, to manage and maintain their common grazings asset. This will include reaching out to unregulated common grazings with a view to introducing regulations.

Given that there are many committee regulations which are now quite dated with many aspects included within them that are obsolete, another of our ambitions is to update existing regulations, initially dealing with any draft regulations already submitted. Thereafter we will proactively begin to address any unregulated common grazings through the establishment of newly formed grazings committees. This regulating of currently unregulated common grazings will provide a recognised structure to manage the grazings effectively and to also establish an accurate list of those who have an interest in these grazings.

Through the above common grazings work, along with addressing individual shareholding queries that arise, the result will be improved accuracy and completeness of common grazings information held on the Register of Crofts.

### Key Milestones

Number	Date	Milestone
4a	Mar 27	Continue work with the Farm Advisory Service to deliver Common grazings related training throughout the crofting counties.
4b	Mar 27	Address remaining nine common grazings with committees in place, but no regulations. Seek to establish regulations.

### Key Performance Measures

Number	Aim	Baseline	Target/Indicator	Measure
4.1	Issue reminders to all grazings committees whose term of office expires, within 1 month of the out of office date with standard follow up procedures.	n/a	No committees have gone out of office without contact by the Grazings team.	Administrative records.
4.2	Contact unregulated grazings committees with a view to becoming regulated.	n/a	Nine known at start of reporting year. All nine to be regulated within the reporting year, unless justifiably not possible.	Administrative records.
4.3	Education through the delivery of both introductory and advanced workshops to support and empower grazings committees	n/a	Eight Workshops delivered (mix of introductory and advanced)	Administrative records.

## RESIDENCY AND LAND USE (DUTIES) FUNCTION

Since 2017, we have been expanding our work to encourage – and where necessary enforce – the requirements for crofters to reside on or near their crofts, and to cultivate and maintain their land.

It has been a consistent call of the Crofting Commission’s Board that action to promote croft residency and active land use should be high on the Commission’s list of priorities. We will therefore continue to investigate reported breaches of duty, work with public and private crofting landlords, engage with croft tenants who report their own non-compliance through the annual notice or whose breach of duties comes to our attention through regulatory casework, and take action to resolve longstanding intestate succession cases where the tenancy has not been transferred within the statutory timescales.

The team places equal focus on owner-occupier crofters and croft tenants, since the intention of the 1993 Act is that both tenants and owner-occupier crofters are subject to crofting duties. In addition, we selectively investigate individuals who have failed to return their annual notice form but whose address details would indicate that they are not ordinarily resident on their crofts. In addition, we contact landlords of vacant crofts (or parts of crofts) who are not resident and/or do not cultivate the croft, with a view to seeking a solution either through the landlord ensuring the croft is occupied and worked, or through the Commission taking action under the vacant croft provisions of the 1993 Act to ensure the croft is occupied by a tenant who will comply with the residence and land use duties.

Our approach is both proactive and supportive: we will help advise tenant and owner occupier crofters on the options open to them to resolve their breaches of duty and likewise, we will work with landlords and help them understand how best to ensure that all crofts are managed in a positive way either through their own actions or by the Commission taking steps to ensure the croft is occupied and worked.

### Key Milestones

Number	Date	Milestone
5a	July 2026	Write to a selection of tenant and owner-occupier crofters who have indicated in their 2025 annual notice returns that they are in breach of their duty to be ordinarily resident, obtaining their plans and intentions for resolving the breach and either issuing a notice section 26C(1) of the 1993 Act or establishing that there is a good reason not to issue a notice.
5b	July 2026	Write to a selection of crofters and owner-occupier crofters who have not responded to the 2025 annual notice and whose address would indicate they are in breach of their residence duty. Should correspondence confirm that they are in breach then the case would be followed up in terms of 5a above.
5c	August 2026	Write to a selection of owners of vacant crofts whose postal address would indicate that they are not resident within 20 miles (32 kilometres) of the croft to determine whether a notice should be issued under section 23(5) of the 1993 Act requiring the owner to submit proposals for letting the croft.

5d	September 2026	Write to a selection of tenant and owner-occupier crofters who have indicated in their 2025 annual notice returns they are in breach of the duty to cultivate the croft, giving information about their options. This will include both a selection of individuals who are also in breach of the residence duty, and those who are complying with their residence duty.
5e	June 2026	Provide a list of cases (both tenant and owner-occupier crofters) for RPID to carry out inspections to report on whether the land use duties are being complied with.

## Key Performance Measures

Number	Aim	Baseline	Target/Indicator	Measure
5.1	Number of formerly vacant crofts let by the landlord or the Commission following the Commission initiating action under the unresolved succession (section 11) or vacant croft (section 23) provisions of the 1993 Act.	April to September 2025 - 6	At least 150 resolutions to breaches of duty, unresolved successions or vacant crofts delivered through Commission action  (numbers will be reported separately for 5.1 -5.2 but the target relates to the total of the four categories of intervention)	Records of administrative action
5.2	Number of RALU breaches resolved by a crofter or an owner-occupier crofter (i) in breach of their residency duty taking up residence on their croft; or (ii) in breach of their duty to cultivate and maintain the croft resuming cultivation and maintenance of the croft.	April to September 2025 - 14		Records of administrative action
5.3	Number of RALU breaches resolved by the assignment, subletting or renunciation of a tenanted croft, by the letting or sale of an owner-occupied croft, or by obtaining Consent to be Absent.	April to September 2025 - 63		Records of administrative action
5.4	Number of RALU breaches concluded by tenancy terminations orders (section 26H), or approval of letting proposals submitted by owner-occupier crofters following a direction to do so (section 26J).	April to September 2025 - 4		Records of administrative action
5.5	Ensuring owners of vacant crofts resolve their failure to reside or cultivate the croft by (i) taking up residence and/or working the croft (ii) letting the croft or (iii) transferring ownership of the croft.	April to September 2025 - 0		Completed notifications of action.

## INFORMATION SERVICES FUNCTION

The Commission Information Services function will primarily focus through 2026/27 on the mobilisation, development and delivery of a replacement internal case management system. This is the most significant IT project the Commission will undertake in terms of scope, cost and risk, and will require the commitment of the majority of IS resources for much of the reporting year. Delivery activity will be phased and subject to funding availability, procurement outcomes and agreed governance.

### Key Milestones

Number	Date	Milestone
6a	Q1 2026/27	CIS Replacement project mobilized, with governance, resourcing and oversight arrangements in place.
6b	Q2 2026/27	CIS Replacement delivery plan baselined and approved through agreed governance arrangements.
6c	Q2-Q3 2026/27	CIS Replacement delivery activity commenced in line with the approved plan.

### Key Performance Measures

Number	Aim	Baseline	Target/Indicator	Measure
6.1	Reduce GIS initial case turnaround time	3-4 weeks in 2024	GIS initial case turnaround time of 2 weeks	Average GIS case turnaround time over the year
6.2	Reduce manual input of data on a case	n/a	At least one high-volume application type configured to support auto-population of data from digital application forms during 2026/27.	Demonstrable reduction in manual data entry steps for the selected application type.
6.3	Ensure the CIS Replacement project is mobilized and governed effectively.		Project governance, oversight and delivery arrangements established and operating in line with approved plans	Oversight Committee established and meeting as scheduled Programme plan baselined following procurement and funding confirmation
6.4	Progress delivery of the CIS Replacement in a controlled and phased manner.		Delivery milestones progressed in line with approved plans, subject to funding availability and procurement outcomes.	Milestone status reports to the Oversight Committee.

## CORPORATE & CUSTOMER SERVICE FUNCTIONS

The Corporate & Customer Service (C&CS) Function supports the Crofting Commission’s objectives by providing the essential frontline service for customers. The team engages with a wide range of customers, from our key stakeholder cohort of crofters to solicitors, agents and landlords. The team’s remit is to assess and respond to all enquiries, and if necessary, direct relevant correspondence to other teams. The team provides operational support to teams across the Commission. The milestones for 2026/27 reflect the team’s commitment to providing greater focus on customer experience.

The C&CS Team is the first point of contact for customers contacting the Commission. The team has broad knowledge of regulatory processes and has increased the number of general enquires handled within the team in 2025/26. This increase is likely to continue in 2026/27, resulting in fewer handovers to other teams. Improvements to the structured call logging system and the enhanced use of the handover process to other teams has ensured greater efficiency for dealing with enquiries, leading to shorter resolution times. These improvements contribute directly to, and support the work of, the regulatory and registration functions. During 2026-27, the team will extend collaboration on the scanning project with the Records Manager which will scan paper-based croft files into a digital format. The move to digital will offer quicker and more effective access to information on croft holdings, which will support the work of teams across the Commission.

Overall, the C&CS team is committed to ensuring that their skills and knowledge is continually updated, so that the team can offer the best support to our customers.

Performance Measures and Key Milestones identified for Outcome Four also relate to work completed by the Commission Finance team, Compliance team and in support of the workforce as a whole.

### Key Milestones

Number	Date	Milestone
7a	April 2026	Finalise action plan following 2025 People Survey
7b	Sept 2026	Implement action plan following 2025 People Survey
7c	Jan 2027	Update MTFP and Workforce Plan in line with budget allocation and resource needs
7d	Mar 2027	File scanning project will continue and move onto scanning the croft files

## Key Performance Measures

Number	Aim	Baseline	Target/Indicator	Measure
7.1	Corporate carbon emissions	18.5 t CO2e in 2023/24	Below 60 tCO2e with a view to embedding a carbon management plan in 2026/27.	Baseline now captures Scope 1, 2 & 3 including emissions relating to remote workers. Note that this is measured a year in arrears.
7.2	Redeploy efficiency savings within £5.18m core budget		3%	Funding redeployed as a result of efficiencies in existing operations
7.3	File scanning project	10 files per week	15 files per week	Administrative records.

## BUDGET INFORMATION

We receive Grant-in-Aid funding from the Scottish Government. Public budget decisions which set our Grant-in-Aid allocation are made on an annual basis.

The Crofting Commission has been allocated grant in aid of £5.675m for 2026/27, which includes £0.496m to assist with the replacement of the Commission's Croft Information System. From the allocation of 5.179m, around 84% of the funding will be directly allocated for staff salaries, and the remainder covers costs associated with Board members and the standard running costs of the organisation.

In terms of the Business Objectives for 2026/27, we can estimate the cost of delivery for each outcome which is indicated in the table below based on the associated salaries, plus any other costs (for instance for our use of Great Glen House).

<b>Corporate Outcome</b>	<b>Approximate Cost</b>
<b>1. Crofting is regulated in a fair, efficient and effective way</b>	<b>£2.823m</b>
<b>2. Crofting continues to thrive and to evolve</b>	<b>£0.844m</b>
<b>3. Crofts are occupied and used</b>	<b>£0.741m</b>
<b>4. Our workforce is skilled and motivated, and our governance processes are best practice</b>	<b>£0.771m</b>

\* Further information can be sourced from the Crofting Commission Medium-Term Financial Plan and Workforce Plan.