



Operating Plan

2026/27



Contents

Foreword	3
Who We Are	4
The South of Scotland - Our Region	5
Our Five Year Plan and Strategic Context	6
Our Key Activities across 2026/27	8
• Accelerating Net Zero and Nature-Positive Solutions	9
• Advocating for Fair Work and Equality	11
• Activating and Empowering Enterprising Communities	13
• Attracting Ambitious Investment	15
• Awakening Entrepreneurial Talent	17
• Advancing Innovation and Improving Productivity	19
• Our Key Enabling Activities Across 2026/27	21
Performance Measurement Framework	24

ANNEXES	25
Appendix A - Our Organisation	26
Appendix B - Our Operating Budget for 2026/27	27



Foreword

As we move into our seventh year of operation, our mission is clear: driving growth, attracting investment and creating opportunity across the whole of the South of Scotland that benefits all of those who live here now and encourages more people to come and join us.

This Operating Plan for 2026/27 sets out how we will do that – both directly and working closely with partners – to deliver real benefits for our region.

It is an exciting time for the South of Scotland and we are actively shaping and bringing forward compelling, sustainable investment opportunities that build on our distinct strengths as a region.

Projects such as Center Parcs Scottish Borders, Kight Powerhub and the Mountain Bike Innovation Centre show how we are turning ambition into investable propositions - unlocking transformational investment, strengthening local supply chains and creating high quality jobs with lasting benefits for communities across the South.

We continue to take real action to unlock and amplify the innovation that we know has always thrived in the South of Scotland.

Through our focus on market making, and projects like the Borderlands Deep Tech Accelerator Hub and the Chapelcross Energy Transition Zone, we are helping to create the right conditions for innovation to flourish – bringing together our partners, assets and expertise to turn ambition into opportunity and economic growth.

The South of Scotland is the right environment for start up, scale up and scale deep businesses - businesses that can put down roots into our region.

Our groundbreaking Pathways pilot programme is supporting entrepreneurs at every stage of their business journey - not just helping enterprises to grow but also building the future success of communities and businesses here in South of Scotland.

Partnership sits at the heart of all we do. We work hand-in-hand with communities and partners in the region and beyond to unlock significant opportunities for our places, strengthening community wealth and tackling the deep rooted challenges that we must address together if the South of Scotland - and Scotland as a whole - is to realise its exciting potential.

We do this against the backdrop of a world that is changing rapidly and often unpredictably.

Challenging economic conditions heighten uncertainty but also sharpen the importance of the role we play and the need for us to be bold.

Bringing people together, supporting ideas, investing and influencing change has never been more important as we work with partners to shape the South of Scotland's economy.

We will act with pace and purpose so the South of Scotland can compete and succeed, working closely with the Scottish Government to support their ambitions for Scotland.

If you have an idea or an opportunity you want to explore, we want to work with you to help make it happen.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Russel Griggs'.

Professor Russel Griggs OBE
Chair, South of Scotland Enterprise



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jane Morrison-Ross'.

Jane Morrison-Ross
Chief Executive, South of Scotland Enterprise

Who We Are

We - South of Scotland Enterprise or SOSE for short - are Scotland's newest economic development agency established by the South of Scotland Enterprise Act (2019). We began operating on 1 April 2020 with a mission to attract investment and drive growth in the South of Scotland.



is to create Success, increase Opportunity, lead a Sustainable and Just Transition to Net Zero and Advance Equality, building on our AIMS, as set out in legislation.

“ We are...
FOR the South,
BY the South and
IN the South. ”

Covering Dumfries and Galloway and the Scottish Borders, we support people, communities and enterprises to thrive, grow and fulfil their potential, and we provide a single point of contact for those who want to invest, locate or do business in the South of Scotland. With our focus on people, planet and place, we drive action to build the rural powerhouse the region can be.

We are here to be **bold and ambitious, to take risks and to do things differently.** Growth, prosperity and community are our focus.

Following the publication of our **Five-Year Plan** in April 2023, we have organised our work around six themes - our **Six As** - shaped by extensive engagement with those who live, work, are based or are active across the South. In 2025/26 we sharpened our focus as an intelligence-led, market-making organisation that advocates for the South of Scotland and creates strategic opportunities for our region.

The Six As help us deliver our vision while contributing to a **Greener, Fairer and Flourishing South of Scotland by 2031**. They maximise our contribution to national ambitions, including the Scottish Government's vision for a **Wellbeing Economy** in which everyone in Scotland benefits from prosperity.

The South of Scotland - Our Region

“

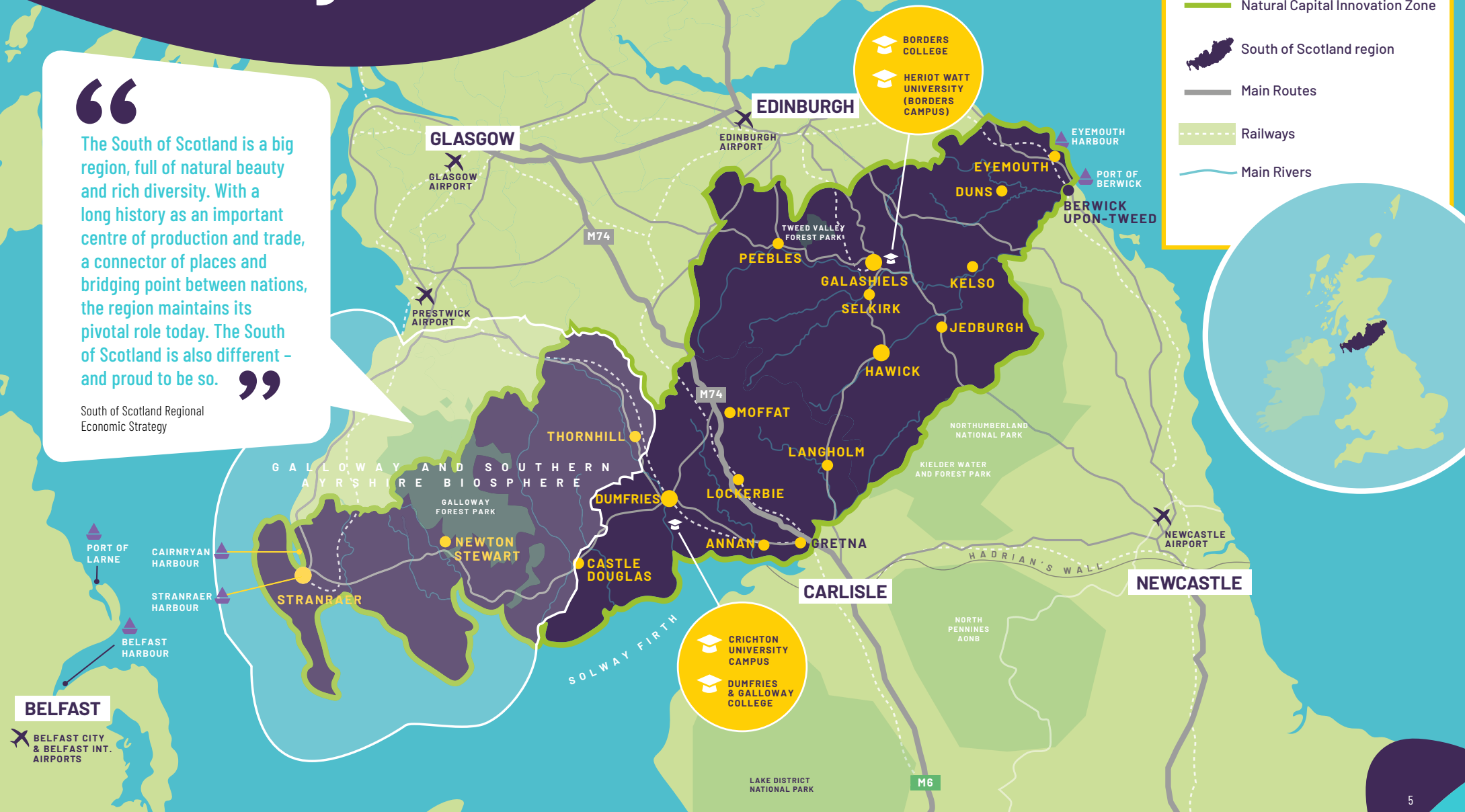
The South of Scotland is a big region, full of natural beauty and rich diversity. With a long history as an important centre of production and trade, a connector of places and bridging point between nations, the region maintains its pivotal role today. The South of Scotland is also different - and proud to be so. ”

South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy



KEY

-  Natural Capital Innovation Zone
-  South of Scotland region
-  Main Routes
-  Railways
-  Main Rivers



BELFAST

 BELFAST CITY & BELFAST INT. AIRPORTS

Our Five-Year Plan and Strategic Context

We launched our first Five-Year Plan in April 2023. It remains our key guiding document, making clear where we will focus our efforts to 2028.

The Plan identifies six areas of strategic focus – our Six As – where we will drive change for our people, places and planet.

It sets out how we will deliver for the South, with our values – **Inclusive, Responsible, Bold and Striving** – at the heart of all we do, and our commitment to 'listen first and do second'.

We will keep bringing people together, listening and working with them to realise the South of Scotland's potential and amplify our distinctive regional voice.

Each year we also publish an Annual Report covering our impacts, performance and audited accounts.

Following the Scottish Parliamentary elections in May 2026, we will align our work with the Scottish Government's ambitions for economic success and begin work on our next five-year plan.

We publish an annual Operating Plan for each year of the Five-Year Plan. This Operating Plan sets out our priority actions for 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027.



Our Five-Year Plan is part of a collective effort to realise the vision for a Green, Fair and Flourishing South of Scotland set out in the Regional Economic Strategy (RES), and to support the creation of a wellbeing economy delivering on the focus in the Programme for Government and the ambition in the National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET).

The RES and NSET were key influences on our Five-Year Plan, with related delivery plans and subsequent strategies – including Scotland’s Green Industrial Strategy, Innovation Strategy and the **Programme for Government** – also shaping our operational focus. **We continue to be directly involved – with partners – in supporting the delivery of many of the actions associated with the RES and national strategies.** We are also alive to opportunities emerging through the UK’s Modern Industrial Strategy, and we will work in the best interests of our region and Scotland to capitalise on these.

At the heart of our regional focus is our work to address the **three main challenges – housing, transport and skills.**

- **Collaborate to create more homes – and more choice of homes** – where they are needed in the South of Scotland
- Investigate opportunities to **enhance transport connectivity and sustainability** in the South of Scotland
- Develop proposals to meet our **regional green skills opportunities and needs**, with a particular focus on construction skills and pathways

These are priorities for the Regional Economic Partnership (REP) because progress against each is key to unlocking wider regional ambitions. There is also a strong focus on land use, a cross-cutting enabler, reflecting the REP’s oversight of the Regional Land Use Framework (Scotland’s first) and Partnership as well as the globally significant designation of the region as Scotland’s Natural Capital Innovation Zone.

As SOSE, we are working collaboratively with partners to advance each of these key areas, providing leadership and capacity to drive progress including the development of detailed action plans to guide collaboration.



Our Key Activities across 2026/27

Our Five-Year Plan guides our activity and resources around our six areas of strategic focus. Our Operating Plan sets out our priority work for the year ahead under each area. Many activities support more than one of our Six As, so it is important they are read as a whole.

We also set out **key enabling activities** that underpin all that we do: working in partnership, leading the way, thinking differently and speaking with and for people across the South of Scotland. We continue to value, support and develop our own people so we bring the best of our expertise and energy to our priorities and our mission.

Following a review and refresh of our focus in 2025/26 - our **'Shaping SOSE for the Future'** programme - we have sharpened our impact as an intelligence-led organisation, market-maker and advocate for the South of Scotland. This has streamlined our structure and accelerated our ability to respond and deliver strategic opportunities for our region.

Place is at the heart of all that we do. We work across the South with our clients and with partners to add value, align with existing activity and deliver more for settlements and localities across the region.

Overview of our key enabling activities that underpin all that we do.



Accelerating Net Zero and Nature-Positive Solutions

- **Leading the Just Transition to Net Zero and a Nature-Positive region**
- **Innovating for a clean energy transition and promoting Nature-Positive solutions**
- **Establishing regenerative and resilient approaches to land and marine assets**
- **Leveraging the natural capital potential of the region**

Our key activity across 2026-27

As SOSE...

- Offer **tailored advice and signposting** to enterprises and communities, accelerating their transition to **Net Zero and a Nature-Positive future** including climate and energy resilience.
- Scale impact from the success of our Net Zero Accelerator Fund and Natural Capital Innovation Fund and **support those accelerating solutions** that deliver a Just Transition to Net Zero and a Nature-Positive future at pace and scale.
- Realise the potential from the designation of the region as Scotland's **Natural Capital Innovation Zone** to **attract transformative investment**, shape a pipeline of projects and convene partners to deliver.
- **Refine and deliver** our **sustainability offer**, including one-to-one advice and one-to-many support, in the context of key policies and strategies including the updated Climate Change Plan and Circular Economy Strategy.
- Develop delivery models flowing from the South of Scotland's first-ever **Heat Network Prospectus**, focused on commercially viable projects and utilising funding secured from the Scottish Government's Heat Network Support Unit.
- Finalise the **Agriculture Transition Plan**, setting priorities and actions for influencing and investment to support a resilient, Net Zero future.
- Deliver the **SoS Space Growth Strategy**, growing the region's specialism in **earth observation data** for natural capital and entrepreneurship.
- Deliver a **national Natural Capital event** in the region, focused on outcomes and opportunities arising from the Business and Biodiversity report from the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.
- Chair and deliver the **Borderlands Regional Investment** and **Natural Capital Hub for Transition (BRICHT)** pilot as it moves into delivery.
- Deliver our **Net Zero Action Plan** to achieve operational Net Zero by 2038, with a focus on Climate Change Risk Assessment and the implications for our property strategy.
- Roll out **Natural Capital** training for staff and share insights on key Natural Capital trends and opportunities.

Our Primary Performance Measures

- **Value of investment in Net Zero opportunities; Value of investment in Natural Capital Opportunities; Estimated Co₂ emissions reductions by clients and projects.**

In Collaboration...

- Collaborate across public sector partners on **Net Zero Plans**, sharing insight to drive climate resilience, decarbonisation and delivery.
- Co-produce and consult on a **whole-system Energy Transition Plan**, setting the South's energy mission and priorities, with a view to publishing a final Plan.
- Provide technical support to develop business cases for the **Borderlands Energy Investment Programme** and other Net Zero Borderlands projects.
- Work with **Borderlands** partners to embed a Natural Capital lens across the full spectrum of Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal projects.
- Drive delivery of key **place-based** Net Zero and Nature-Positive opportunities – **including Chapelcross Green Energy Hub, Eyemouth Port Masterplan and Stranraer** – and identify and realise further place-based cluster opportunities.
- Support the newly established **South of Scotland Onshore Wind Developers Forum** to maximise the benefits of the transition to Net Zero for the region.
- Drive the pioneering work of the South of Scotland **Regional Land Use Partnership** to facilitate effective land use decision making, championing innovative approaches and sharing best practice through the National RLUP group.
- Work with **strategic partners such as the Scottish Wildlife Trust and SRUC** to identify and deliver opportunities for the Natural Capital Innovation Zone.
- Strengthen the impact of our partnership with **Zero Waste Scotland** in embedding circular economy principles across the region and contributing to sustainability and NCIZ objectives.
- Support delivery of the **new Landscape Enterprise Network (LENS)** providing funding opportunities for **regenerative agriculture and landscape resilience** on farms in the Scottish Borders.
- Utilise our regional infrastructure, including Borderlands Deep Tech Accelerator Hub, to support farm businesses with **adoption and development of Agri Tech innovations**.
- Support capability building and support for **farm resilience**, through an **Introducing Regenerative Agriculture** programme.
- Work with the **Scottish Government's Private Investment in Natural Capital programme** and Borderlands to develop the economic case for natural capital interventions.
- Support and collaborate on delivery of the **Solway Coast and Marine Project (SCAMP)**.



CASE STUDY

Kight Powerhub

We played a pivotal role in supporting the development and deployment of the Kight Powerhub - the world's first domestic energy storage system to use a novel battery chemistry and technology never used in homes before.

The revolutionary system is designed to reduce electricity bills by an average of 75%, with potential savings of up to 85%. The system draws on advanced research and Formula One engineering expertise and delivers significant safety and durability advantages, vital for use in domestic settings. It also offers a much longer operational lifespan and the system's AI platform learns from household energy usage and grid signals to optimise savings, eliminating the need for residents to navigate complex tariffs.

The Powerhub is the result of five years of research and development, including our three years of collaboration. We worked alongside five of the South of Scotland's Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to ensure the technology can meet real housing needs, scale quickly and deliver meaningful benefits to tenants affected by rising energy costs. We contributed a grant of £233,000 towards the development costs of the new technology, which has been deployed across an initial 11 RSL properties in the South of Scotland.

Our partnership has led to major new investment in the region, with Kight Powerhub announcing new plans to open one of the UK's most advanced battery assembly plants in Dumfries, creating 700 new high quality, skilled jobs.

Kight founder, Lawrence Fagg, said 'SOSE's support has been invaluable. From the outset SOSE helped Kight understand the market making opportunity and helped bring together the key partners including the RSLs. This support has enabled the Kight PowerHub to be developed significantly faster than would have otherwise happened.'



Advocating for Fair Work and Equality

- **Championing Fair Work and security of work and pay**
- **Advancing opportunity and inclusion**
- **Supporting lifelong learning**
- **Strengthening the resilience and scope of the Third Sector**

Our key activity across 2026-27

As SOSE...

- Drive the uptake of **fair working practices, equality of opportunity and inclusion**, advocating and exerting influence through client interactions and grant funding levers.
- Promote **enhanced client case studies on Fair Work and inclusive working** to inspire others and share learning.
- **Strengthen our efforts to support more women, young people and others from under-represented groups** to kick start and realise their business ideas, building on our successful dedicated coaching and the Pathways Pre-Start pilot.
- Further develop and deliver long-term support to encourage and assist growth of **inclusive and democratic business models, which embrace fair working practices**.
- Further embed our recently expanded **Youth Advisory Forum** as a key influence on decision-making, strengthening the opportunity for young people to play a meaningful role in shaping the South of Scotland's economy.
- Build on the success of investing in our **Youth Advisory Forum** members, through targeted training and mentoring to create a pipeline of **'Board-Ready' young people** to support more inclusive and informed decision making across the region.
- Work towards **Level 3 Disability Confident Accreditation**, and the **Neurodiversity Employers Index Gold standard**, leading by example and changing the narrative around disability and neurodivergence.
- **Actively participate in relevant equality focussed national and regional forums** to shape national strategy and policy that reflects the needs of the South.

Our Primary Performance Measures

- **Number of real Living Wage jobs supported** (created, safeguarded or transitioned).

In Collaboration...

- Deliver and shape shared actions related to **No One Left Behind** –helping people of all ages who face the greatest barriers to progress into and to sustain work – through **active participation in the region's Local Employability Partnerships**.
- **Jointly chair the Scottish Borders Living Wage Action Group** to advocate for widespread adoption and payment of the real Living Wage.
- Actively contribute insights to Scottish Government research evaluating the **impact and effectiveness of the Fair Work First** policy.
- Work with Scottish Government and others to **co-create, co-design and promote their Fair Work Festival** and other employer resources, reframing fair working practices to a smart, strategic business choice.
- Building on research by **Sleeping Giants to reduce barriers to recruitment, retention and progression for neurodivergent adults**, developing a central resource and materials on creating neuro-affirming workplaces.
- Support implementation of local **Child Poverty Action Plans**, maximising opportunities to directly eradicate poverty through economic growth and transformation.
- Aid more locally based social and community enterprises to **diversify and develop**, particularly in response to emerging new market opportunities.
- Shape the design and delivery of new approaches to **regional skills planning**, ensuring they work for the South of Scotland and support wider reform of the national skills system.
- Develop proposals to meet our **regional skills opportunities and needs**, with a particular focus on inward investment opportunities and skills pathways aligned to future needs of the economy.
- Deliver the strategic priorities of the **Crichton Campus Leadership Group**, including facilitating the delivery of student and key worker accommodation, while contributing to development of a long-term strategic vision for the campus in alignment with Dumfries-wide and town centre regeneration.
- Deliver operational support to **Third Sector organisations** to pivot and become more resilient and financially sustainable.
- Support **TSI D&G** in exploring **innovative approaches to community transport** delivery and partnerships.
- Afford partners access to our **Youth Advisory Forum**, enabling young people to shape and influence regional projects and initiatives and act as a youth voice for the Regional Economic Partnership.



CASE STUDY

The Impact of the Youth Advisory Forum

In 2023, we established our Youth Advisory Forum to put young people's lived experience at the heart of the development of our future economy in the South of Scotland. This forum provides a structured way for young people to have a voice on the big things that are happening in the South of Scotland and to influence the future of the region.

In the past year, we extended our Youth Advisory Forum into the Scottish Borders for the first time with five new members. This expanded the Forum's reach, ensuring young people from the Scottish Borders as well as Dumfries & Galloway are working with us.

This year, the Youth Advisory Forum has been instrumental in working with the South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership (REP) to develop and refine its strategic messaging to promote the significant opportunities happening in the South of Scotland and our strengths as a region. The Forum brought a fresh and unique perspective to these messages, honing both the content and the language to focus where they would have most impact including resonating with young people in the region and beyond.

The messages are now being deployed and driving partner messaging including at SOSE's first Scottish Parliament reception in January 2026 where we celebrated exciting talent and opportunities in the region.

The Youth Advisory Forum is part of SOSE's commitment to ensure we are building an economy for all people in the South of Scotland. It has a growing influence and ambition, as a dynamic youth-led group and a voice for and of young people in the region.



Activating & Empowering Enterprising Communities

- Boosting community capacity and confidence
- Supporting place focused community-led regeneration and development
- Embedding Community Wealth Building (CWB) principles
- Encouraging ambition and entrepreneurial thinking

Our key activity across 2026-27

As SOSE...

- **Deliver bespoke, tailored advice, support and signposting** to strengthen social and community enterprises, enable ambitious, sustainable enterprise growth and support key projects.
- Inspire and support **social and community entrepreneurs** as an integral part of our pre-start and founder support offer.
- Aid social and community enterprises **to maximise opportunities from inward investment**, building sustainable enterprises linked to place and sectoral development.
- Raise **enhanced awareness of our support and impact** for social and community enterprises, including facilitating peer to peer learning.
- **Scaling our Community Wealth Building practices to embrace our obligations in the Community Wealth Building Act** and embed Community Wealth Building in our organisation.
- Build an **enduring support and enabling system to sustain and strengthen the region's community-led housing pipeline** as a catalyst for regeneration and wellbeing and a platform to test and scale innovative delivery.

Our Primary Performance Measures

- **Number of new or improved income-generating community assets supported.**

In Collaboration...

- Support the delivery of enterprising activity arising from **Borderlands Place and Town Investment Plans** in Borderlands Priority Places to boost community-led regeneration.
- Support the development of **social and community projects emerging from Local Place Plans**, which support Enterprising Communities to do more in their local areas.
- Support the **investment readiness** of community led, place-based, transformational projects.
- Sustain and enhance a **culture of collaboration and partnership through place-based support structures**.
- Share information and data to ensure a **streamlined customer journey for social and community enterprises** seeking support from a range of partners.
- Champion **innovative methods of maximising the positive economic and social impact of community-controlled benefit from renewables**, publishing a draft Community Wealth Building framework for future community benefit, tackling barriers to shared ownership and advocating for a stronger deal for communities.
- Work with **Community Benefit partners to help to unlock communities' ambitions**.
- Support communities to develop **place-based energy solutions**, access funding for decarbonisation and develop community owned electricity generation assets.
- Facilitate delivery of the **Community Land Scotland national Natural Capital and Communities Partnership** in the South of Scotland.
- Support **Historic Environment Scotland** and partners to deliver a heritage, culture and place pilot that will empower our communities through heritage and cultural investment.
- Deliver a **CWB progressive procurement pilot for energy efficiency retrofit** through a partnership with regional Registered Social Landlords, University of Edinburgh School of Engineering, BE-ST and Changeworks – focussed on local procurement, supply chain development and scalability.
- Play an active role in newly established **Community Wealth Building partnerships** following adoption of the Community Wealth Building Act.



CASE STUDY

Annan Harbour Action Group

We are working with communities and partners across the South of Scotland to help unlock potential in ambitious communities and support place-focused, community-led regeneration and development.

This year we have supported the transformation of a historic harbour in the region.

SOSE's £1.2 million grant is part of an overall £15.65 million redevelopment of Annan Harbour, which will aim to reinvigorate the area for the benefit of local people, and bring thousands more visitors to the Dumfriesshire town.

The ambitious proposals by Annan Harbour Action Group (AHAG) will transform the historic warehouse and surrounding quayside area with a series of exciting community and visitor facilities.

These facilities include maritime heritage centre, event space, leisure lagoon, accessible nature walks, community gathering, training and retail space, visitor hub and café.

The redevelopment is ultimately expected to attract 11,000 extra annual visitors to Annan by its fifth year and help generate socio-economic benefits for the local area of £27 million.

The multi-million-pound project has also been backed by the Scottish Government, the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund and Dumfries and Galloway Council.

AHAG's vision is to reconnect Annan and District with the Harbour and once again revive it as an economic driving force.

In addition, they wish to provide access to Annan's maritime and fishing heritage and provide a gateway to the special environments of the Inner Solway and River Annan for the community and visitors.



Attracting Ambitious Investment

- Raising the regional profile
- Creating opportunity through ambitious and diverse investment
- Advocating for and supporting improvements to infrastructure
- Developing regional supply chains

Our key activity across 2026-27

As SOSE...

- Develop the **Invest in South of Scotland website** to showcase the benefits of doing business in the region and attract more inward investment, including continuing to expand our property portfolio.
- Act as the **main point of contact for potential inward investors**, co-ordinating input from partners, ensuring their requirements are met and encouraging them to set up business in the region.
- Refine and promote our **Inward Investment offer**, including **sharpening our focus and capabilities in delivery and supply chain development**.
- Co-ordinate and lead efforts to **maximise the supply chain development opportunities** associated with major inward investment proposals such as Center Parcs Scottish Borders.
- Manage and develop a proactive **property and land portfolio**, implementing our **property investment strategy** to unlock new sites, support strategic investments, respond to place-based opportunities and meet investment demand.
- Invest in and promote **our Chapelcross Energy Transition Zone**, creating serviced plots to generate jobs and inward investment focussed on green energy production.
- Support **South of Scotland Destination Alliance (SSDA)** to spearhead efforts to raise the profile of the region and **drive a sustainable increase in visitors and spend in the area** – exploring future funding and focus.
- Invest in and **support the visitor economy** through support, advice and mentoring from our business and community advisors.
- Work with **Center Parcs** on development of its first Scottish village, Center Parcs - Scottish Borders, to be constructed near Hawick.
- Build on our innovative mapping of the Creative Industries, to **map the Visitor Economy** in the South, increase our understanding of the needs of the sector, and inform a visitor economy prospectus.
- Work with project developers to bring forward investment in proposed **hydrogen production projects** in the region.

Our Primary Performance Measures

- **Total value of funding leveraged for the South; Value of Inward Investment; Increase in client turnover; Increase in proportion of turnover from Green, Inclusive and Community enterprises.**

In Collaboration...

- Deliver **engaging and creative campaigns** to promote and raise awareness of the South of Scotland nationally and internationally to attract ambitious investment.
- Deliver work funded through the **Addressing Depopulation Action Plan** to ensure there is a compelling proposition to attract investment and talent into the region aligned to the needs of enterprises.
- Proactively engage with **Scottish Development International (SDI) and GlobalScots** to develop, raise awareness of, and better promote the strength of our regional offer.
- Identify opportunities for developing new **large-scale, strategic, mixed-use employment sites**, building on work to unlock the Chapelcross site.
- Drive activity to deliver the **Eyemouth Port Masterplan**, unlocking regeneration opportunities for the town and area from offshore wind investment and the marine economy.
- Develop a strong evidence base, linking into Local Development Plans and upcoming developments, to inform **a pipeline of strategic and allocated employment sites**.
- **Assess the impact of the South of Scotland Housing Action Plan and identify ongoing and future actions** to maximise development, grow the construction sector, and accelerate the delivery of new homes.
- **Engage with and help shape the proposed national housing agency, More Homes Scotland**, to ensure its remit, approach and investment is responsive to and delivers for the South of Scotland.
- Encourage investment and innovation in the deployment of **green data technology and infrastructure** – demonstrating clean heat re-use and supercharging local industries and supply chains.
- Agree **prioritisation of, and deliver actions in, the South of Scotland Responsible Tourism Strategy**, ensuring a focus on delivery.
- Work with SSDA, VisitScotland and other partners to prepare the tourism sector to **capitalise on opportunities** presented by Center Parcs Scottish Borders.
- Support the work of the South of Scotland Cycling Partnership including retaining the **South of Scotland UCI Velo Region** label and maximising its benefit for the region.
- Ensure the region maximises the benefits and delivers a legacy from the **Tour de France Grand Depart** in the South of Scotland in 2027.
- Contribute to **Stranraer's 'One Waterfront' approach**, the Marina project and the delivery of investment and projects that will transform Stranraer's waterfront through creative and community empowered placemaking.
- Progress the Regional Economic Partnership-led **Regional Transformational Opportunity Study** to build a **robust, shared evidence base** on the **most significant long-term economic opportunities** for the region.



CASE STUDY.....

Breathe Life Sciences

We are passionate about advocating for the South of Scotland as a great region to do business, invest in, and live. The region is transforming through continued investment in our people and places including investment by innovative businesses in our growing life sciences sector.

One new investor is creating 36 skilled jobs – potentially rising to 100 – with the arrival of a new medicinal cannabis facility in the Scottish Borders. The plans by Breathe Life Sciences (BLS) to open its first Scottish manufacturing and distribution centre in the Scottish Borders aims to help the region develop as an innovation hub for life sciences. A multi-national company with centres in Australia, Japan, Czechia and England, BLS has received support for their move from South of Scotland Enterprise's £848,250 investment.

BLS plans to use its central Scottish Borders base to manufacture patient-ready cannabis medicines for both domestic and international markets, with global demand anticipated to also grow in coming years.

The number of active cannabis patients in the UK has grown to 80,000 and is expected to surpass 190,000 by 2029. Medicinal cannabis was legalised in the UK in 2018 to allow specialist doctors to initiate prescriptions for cannabis-based medicines when they agree that their patients could benefit from this treatment.

This investment builds on a growing cluster of innovative medicinal cannabis businesses in the South of Scotland including Hilltop Leaf and Meducan.



Awakening Entrepreneurial Talent

- Inspiring and embedding entrepreneurial activity and enterprise ambition
- Promoting a culture of entrepreneurship
- Supporting the establishment of growth clusters
- Unlocking creative and cultural excellence

Our key activity across 2026-27

As SOSE...

- Building on the success of the **Pathways Pilot**, applying the learning to strengthen our support, helping founders scale up, driving innovation through product design with help of the Borderlands Deep Tech Accelerator Hub and securing maximum impact for the South.
- Deliver and expand upon our nationally recognised **ActivatE, AcceleratE and InnovatE programmes** - ensuring comprehensive support from initial entrepreneurial ideas through to scale up and sustainable growth.
- Deliver **Business Gateway Scottish Borders**, integrating with SOSE's wider support offer to boost business start-ups and survival rates.
- Maintain a relentless focus, through **dedicated pre-start coaching**, on seeking to support more women, young people and others from underrepresented groups to establish enterprises.
- Deliver an **annual programme of enterprise sessions** - open and accessible to all - aimed at **empowering enterprises to thrive and grow** and **inspiring and connecting participants**.
- Work with **CodeBase** to support the delivery of and ensure enterprises in the South of Scotland have access to the **Techscaler programme**.
- Explore opportunities to create an eco system of capability and practitioners in the South of Scotland **to maximise the potential of AI and Deep Tech**.
- Support more clients to drive sustained **growth in international exports**, whilst broadening our understanding of the challenges businesses faces in internationalising.
- Refine our **innovative mapping of the creative economy**.

Our Primary Performance Measures

- **Number of people engaged in entrepreneurship; Proportion of people engaged in entrepreneurship who are: women, young people, other underrepresented groups.**

In Collaboration...

- Align and further strengthen strategic partnerships to **enhance the South of Scotland entrepreneurial ecosystem** - building on the region's reputation as leading the way in entrepreneurial support.
- Work with **SRUC to create a virtual entrepreneurial campus** in the region to unlock the potential of the South's intellectual, human and natural capitals.
- Through the 'team Scotland' approach **explore opportunities and interventions to accelerate the potential of AI, Robotics and Automation to drive digital entrepreneurship** across our rural geography.
- Support **delivery of the actions identified in the South of Scotland Screen Strategy**, enhancing the region's growing reputation as a filming location of choice.
- Deliver a further round of the **Rural Leadership Programme**, equipping more of our rural business leaders with the skills to embrace rapid change and future-proof their businesses.
- Explore opportunities with academic partners to **strengthen links between existing and planned research and funding opportunities and entrepreneurial activity**.
- Work with DYW and others to **reach, stimulate and nurture an entrepreneurial mindset in those in secondary education**, showcasing business start-up as a credible and positive post education pathway.
- Work with colleges, councils and DYW to deliver more **Esports activity** - aimed at **igniting a passion to pursue a career and/or business within the Esports or wider creative economy**.
- Support delivery of **Cultural Strategies** in the Scottish Borders and Dumfries and Galloway through active participation in Cultural Partnerships.
- Develop a framework for measuring the **impact of not-for-profit cultural organisations**, integrating social, health and wellbeing indicators to demonstrate, compare and improve their cultural value and community contributions.
- With EIT Digital deliver a **Horizon Europe funded programme to support Agricultural Transition and Innovation**, co-ordinating projects in the South of Scotland to create monitor farms and technology demonstration units.



CASE STUDY

Pathways

In July 2024, the Scottish Government awarded SOSE funding to lead the Pathways Pre Start Pilot for Under Represented Groups.

Pathways provides coaching and micro funding for women and people from other under represented groups who are exploring self employment or requiring early support to progress. It is designed to increase inclusive start up activity and build a pipeline of businesses with growth and scale up potential.

The programme includes one to one coaching, micro grants of up to **£1,000** and flexible support tailored to capability and ambition.

In 2025/26:

- We received **820 enquiries**
- **464 individuals** accessed coaching
- **464 micro grants** were awarded
- **223+ new businesses** were created.

These results demonstrate strong demand and conversion from engagement to business creation.

In response to client demand, Phase Two delivery in 2025/26 introduced specialist **growth and scale up** coaches, extending support beyond start up. **85 individuals** have accessed growth focused support and created a **pipeline of 20 companies with scale up** potential in the region

This progression highlights Pathways as an effective **early intervention model** supporting movement from pre start into growth and scale up.

Tiny Air, based in Gatehouse of Fleet, develops and makes products that mitigate environmentally damaging practices in surgical decontamination. Through Pathways, they worked closely with our Innovation coach to strengthen their commercial strategy and prepare for major international opportunities. Support focused on clarifying their value proposition, refining their commercial narrative, and shaping a strategy for engaging with large international partners. This support was intensive and ongoing, including time on site, in depth strategy sessions and preparation for senior meetings, and development of materials to support global discussions. As a result, TinyAir has entered a new phase of growth with strong traction and confidence in pursuing high value partnerships. Feedback from the founder highlighted the significant impact of this support, describing it as unlike any help they had received before.



Advancing Innovation and Improving Productivity

- Promoting an understanding of and improvements to productivity
- Championing innovative ways of working and creativity
- Creating and enhancing conditions to collaborate and foster innovation
- Enabling digital advances and enterprise digitalisation
- Pioneering circular economic growth

Our key activity across 2026-27

As SOSE...

- Maintain a **proactive and tailored support offering to enable continuous improvement which gives rise to enhanced productivity and profitability** of enterprises within the South.
- Establish the **Borderlands Deep Tech Accelerator Hub** in Hawick, a new innovation hub for and in the South of Scotland, providing deep tech expertise, rapid prototyping, and business support in a single hub that connects national-level capability directly to rural businesses, entrepreneurs, students, and communities.
- Develop a specific **offer for high-growth, innovative enterprises** to enable them to scale up and flourish in the South and maximise their impact.
- Develop a support offering and promotional campaign to **help enterprises to get 'innovation ready'**, empowering them to embrace and drive change and creating a pipeline for future rounds of innovation related funds.
- Build on the success of our grant programmes for **productivity and CreaTech** to improve business productivity, uptake of technology and new ways of working, whilst streamlining our processes for smaller grants.
- Sustain a strong focus on **digital adoption and transformation** across the region, highlighting new technology through **pop-up sessions, 1-2-1 support and capability building**.
- Lead delivery of the Borderlands and nationally significant **Mountain Bike Innovation Centre and Trail Lab** at Innerleithen through construction, whilst engaging partners on design of the innovation service for when the centre goes live.
- Support implementation of the **National Innovation Strategy**, including growth of priority clusters and areas of importance to the regional and rural economy.
- Participate in **Scotland's Innovation Stakeholder Forum**, ensuring alignment of efforts, sharing experiences and raising the profile of innovation opportunities and progress in the South.

Our Primary Performance Measures

- **Number of clients supported to innovate; Value of capital investment by clients; Number of clients that have increased their digital capabilities; Increase in client profitability.**

In Collaboration...

- Run a series of **Best Practice visits in collaboration with SMAS**, facilitating businesses to share experience with a focus on Continuous Improvement.
- **Influence national conversations on innovation and clusters** - providing clarity about innovation priorities and emerging sectors in the South.
- Identify and pursue opportunities to attract large scale **innovation-led funding** working with key partners and funders such as Innovate UK.
- Develop strong links with innovation partners to **stimulate innovation-focused collaborations**, working with Scotland's National Innovation Centres, academic and other partners to encourage greater research and innovation, driven by the new Borderlands Deep Tech Accelerator Hub.
- Work to secure investment to deliver an **Adventure Bike Park** in parallel to the Mountain Bike Innovation Centre, providing support to investors and operators.
- Support the continuous development of the **nationally significant Dairy Nexus** focusing on developing its offering and long-term planning.
- Work with **SRUC** to maximise opportunities through the **Digital Dairy Chain** for local supply chains and continue development of existing projects.
- Support the delivery of the **Borderlands Digital Programme** including the **Borderlands led Innovative 5G Regions Projects** - focusing on supporting tourist operations and the visitor experience at Destination Tweed and Stranraer.
- Raise awareness of the support available to **protect intellectual business assets** within the region including maximising uptake of the refreshed **Intellectual Property Office** offer.
- Design and deliver a series of events focused on supporting businesses to improve their **productivity**.
- Support Scottish Borders Chamber of Commerce in delivering a **trade mission** of Borders businesses to Scandinavia to unlock new international opportunities.
- Work with **Glasgow School of Arts' 'A Golden Thread'**, a UKRI AHRC funded programme of research and innovation to explore opportunities to combine traditional arts and humanities with sciences.



CASE STUDY

AI Roadshow

Artificial Intelligence – or AI – is transforming innovation, productivity and growth across the world. SOSE is working directly with businesses in our region to champion innovative ways of working, create the conditions to collaborate and enable digital advances.

Rural businesses from across the South of Scotland gathered in Gretna in January 2026, for the Rural AI Roadshow, an event delivered in partnership with the Scottish AI Alliance, Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and The Data Lab.

The sold-out event attracted 90 attendees from over 50 businesses across the region, reflecting strong demand from rural organisations keen to better understand how AI can be applied in practical ways.

The Roadshow brought together business owners, partners and policymakers for a day of learning and discussion focussed on demystifying AI and making it accessible to rural enterprises.

The programme included keynote presentations, interactive breakout sessions and hands-on masterclasses covering areas such as content creation, communication and business strategy.

Feedback from participants highlighted the value of the event's practical focus, with many welcoming the opportunity to gain clear, jargon-free guidance and explore tools that could support their everyday business activities.

The Gretna event formed part of our wider work to support businesses and communities across the South of Scotland to innovate and adapt in a rapidly changing economic environment, as part of the Scottish Government's AI Adoption Programme.

Through events, training and tailored advice, we continue to help enterprises build the knowledge and confidence they need to embrace the ever-developing AI landscape.



Our Key Enabling Activities Across 2026/27

Raising our profile - helping people to better understand what we do and how to access our support...

- Refresh our **Marketing and Communications Strategy**, leveraging a more data-driven approach to support SOSE's overarching objectives.
- Collaborate with partners to **extend our reach and amplify the profile of SOSE nationally and internationally, and further develop regional strategic messages through our Team South of Scotland communications approach to ensure we speak confidently with one aligned regional voice.**
- Be **proactive in promoting news stories and case studies** to help others and encourage people to reach out to us.
- **Develop creative approaches to using social media** to further raise our profile and increase engagement.
- Ensure our **publicity policy is being adhered to** by those who have received SOSE funding.
- Maximise the impact of **bespoke activity and existing engagement** opportunities.
- Launch the next phase of our **'We are SOSE'** campaign.

Seeking out and responding to new opportunities - to accelerate our work and advance the South...

- **Clarify and amplify our regional investment prospectus** - providing clarity on and the narrative underpinning the region's potential and key assets and credentials.
- **Enhance and continue our core business, enterprise and community support functions** which will encompass advice and support in line with our areas of strategic focus and established and emerging priorities.
- Work with key partners to ensure **clear messaging** about how our different but aligned roles and offers complement each other.
- Engage with national and international partners and organisations to **create opportunities for purposeful partnerships** that advance the South and raise the profile of SOSE and the South on a wider stage.

Driving the work of the Regional Economic Partnership – championing and enabling a strong regional focus...

- Host the jointly funded **Regional Economic Partnership (REP) Secretariat**, supporting and empowering them to harness the full potential of the diverse range of expertise and interests across the Partnership.
- Deliver effective **REP meetings**, ensuring Members are supported to maximise their contributions.
- Provide leadership and capacity - adding to that of the REP - to **drive progress against the REP Delivery Plan priorities**, including the three main challenges of housing, transport and skills, strengthening collective alignment and confidence across partners and enabling informed decisions on the future role, powers and status of the South of Scotland REP.
- Lead the delivery of the **REP Communications Strategy** working with key partners to showcase the work of the REP and the impact of their work.
- Chair, oversee the secretariat for and support the work of the **South of Scotland Education and Skills Strategic Coordination Group (ESSCG)** as a key subgroup of the REP.
- Shape the future of the **Convention of the South of Scotland** ensuring discussion focuses on agreed key issues, informing agendas, driving actions and supporting delivery via the REP Secretariat.
- Contribute to the work of **Scotland's REP Network**, accessing and sharing learning and raising the profile of the South of Scotland.
 - Engage in the **regional empowerment agenda**, ensuring that we explore the opportunities for our **rural partnership structures**.

Strengthening and expanding our knowledge of the South - so we can enhance and focus our efforts...

- Deliver **independent survey(s)** to the Business Panel, sharing outputs and information, internally, with partners and via our website.
- Further develop data visualisation and explore methods to explain complex data in creative ways to **make evidence accessible** and share wider insights and research with partners and colleagues.
- Use the knowledge and understanding gained from our evidence base - including the REP's Regional Transformational Opportunities Study - to help **support and refine decision-making** and tailor our interventions to the needs of the region.
- Lead work to develop a **Regional Intelligence Hub**, collaborating with partners and Scottish Government in providing a tool for accessible data via a 'one source of truth' for the South of Scotland and sharing learning to support regional intelligence models across Scotland.
 - Develop our approach to **horizon scanning** to identify emerging trends and opportunities and to support informed decision making, ensuring that our focus remains forward looking, relevant and resilient.

Contributing to national policy development - sharing intelligence of the experiences of the South of Scotland...

- Engage with Scottish Government and UK Government to ensure **perspectives of the South of Scotland and our strengths** are better understood.
- Respond to consultations and **participate as members of key national groups** including Industry Leadership Groups.
- Engage with Scottish Government and **collaborate** with SE and HIE to develop and report quarterly on agreed **Common Metrics**.

Continued on next page...

Driving continuous improvement - across all that we do...

- **Embed our programme of change** in line with the newly agreed strategic direction of SOSE, as we become an intelligence led, influencer - overseen by the Board and implemented by the Programme Delivery Team.
- Contribute to the **national public reform agenda**, embracing opportunities to pilot new approaches.
- **Capture lessons learned** and impact **evaluation**, building on our 25/26 Actuals impact pilot to spot check a range of project outcomes against forecasts.
- **Embed our MySOSE Customer Relationship Management system** and implement continuous improvements in line with strategic and operational requirements to provide the best experience for our clients and users.

Tracking our progress and measuring our impact - through our own efforts and our involvement in wider strategic and partnership working...

- Focus on **system and data refinement** to enhance accuracy, reliability, and efficiency in our measurement processes.
- Analyse data from the last three years to devise and propose 26/27 **targets** utilising baseline evidence.
- Capture additional 'supporting measures' aligned with the development of MySOSE to **enhance our data collection and analysis**.
- Explore realistic and sustainable methods of **capturing intangible benefits through SOSE's Expert Impact**, aligned with the development of MySOSE.
- Further develop **pipeline management and reporting** to maximise impact of projects and activities.
- Lead partnership work to explore how a **Regional Intelligence Hub** could underpin a **regional monitoring framework** for the **Regional Economic Strategy**.

Ensuring we deliver maximum value to clients and are an employer of choice through efficient and effective enabling services...

- Be **proactive in adapting our organisation - including our skills and capability** - to meet the transformational opportunities for our region.
- Ensure **robust financial oversight and planning**, including compliance with national requirements, alignment with our Six As and managing multi-year commitments - with allocation driven by evidence, insight and best value.
- Enable our staff to meet the needs of our clients and future opportunities through a forward-looking approach to our own **technological capacity and capability** - including responsible use of AI - while retaining a relentless focus on our cyber security.
 - Manage our **risk and assurance** proactively to ensure optimum delivery and impact.

Ensuring effective, informed and inclusive governance and decision making...

- Ensure **effective SOSE Board and Committee meetings** supported by our Board Secretariat.

Performance Measurement Framework

We launched our PMF in 2023, including new systems and processes allowing us to assess and monitor the effectiveness of our delivery, aligned to each of Our six As.

Since 2023/24, we are able to reflect on our performance by focusing on the **Primary Measures** in our PMF. With our systems and processes continuing to be developed, this enables us to capture and monitor the impact our work has on the South of Scotland.

2023/24 was the key year whereby we were able to set a baseline for data. This has been built upon across preceding years as we strive to grow our data intelligence. 2026/27 will be vital in capturing our fourth year of data to enable us to have gathered sufficient historical data to analyse and monitor trends against our Direct Impact. This stronger knowledge base will aid us to set ambitious yet realistic targets whilst also supporting informed, data-led decision-making.

Measures of our organisational performance and direct impact include:

Primary Measures align to our six areas of strategic focus – Our six As

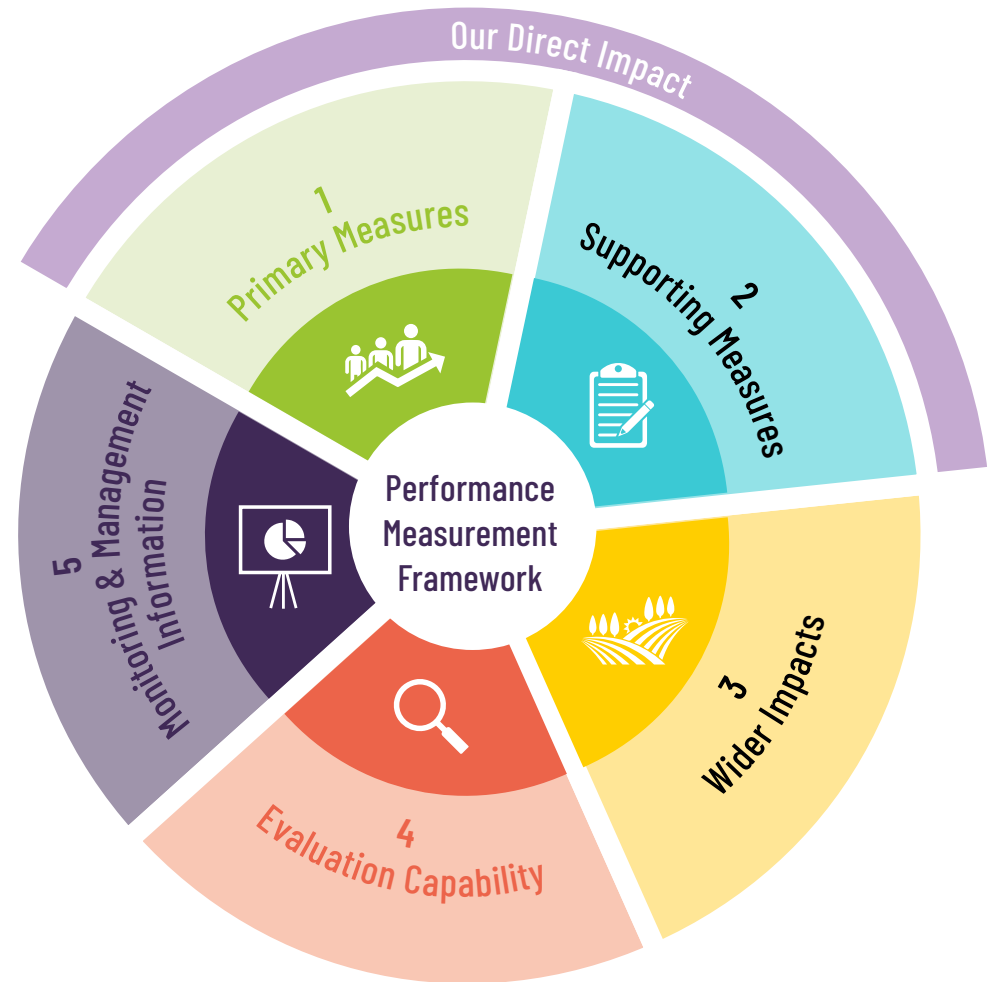
Supporting Measures delve deeper into our six As and/or represent prioritised areas of performance and impact

Tracking **Wider Impacts**; regional-level economic, social, and environmental performance indicators

Evaluation Capability, to enable in-depth evaluations of specific areas of work

Management Information and monitoring processes, to track projects are delivering as planned and ensure we are operating effectively

Each year we publish our Annual Report and Accounts which details our performance alongside our audited accounts.



Annexes

Appendix A - Our Organisation (as at 31st March 2026)	26
Appendix B - Our Operating Budget for 2026/27	27

Appendix A

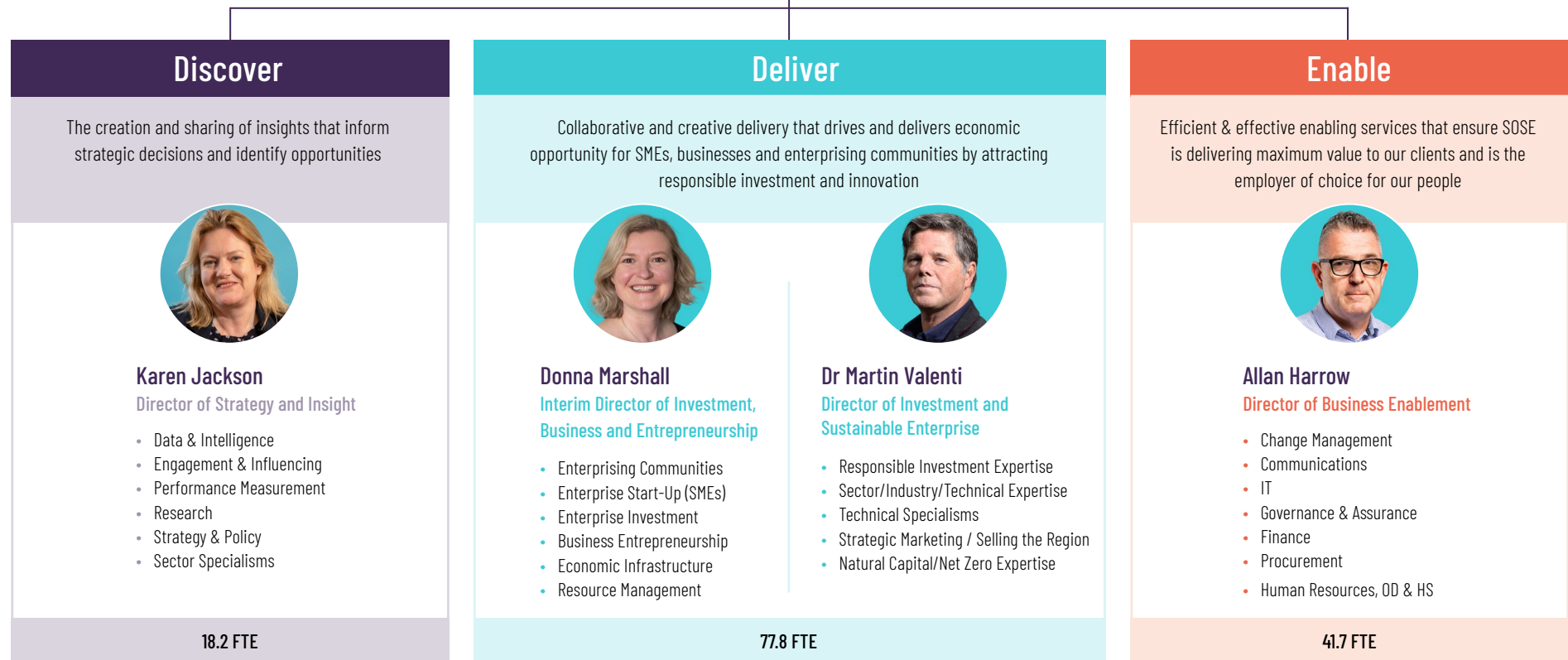
Our Organisation (as at 31st March 2026)

As an organisation we have moved into our new structure around three Directorates – Discover, Deliver and Enable – led by our Chief Executive, Jane Morrison-Ross.

As of 31 March 2026 there are **137.8 FTEs** in SOSE.



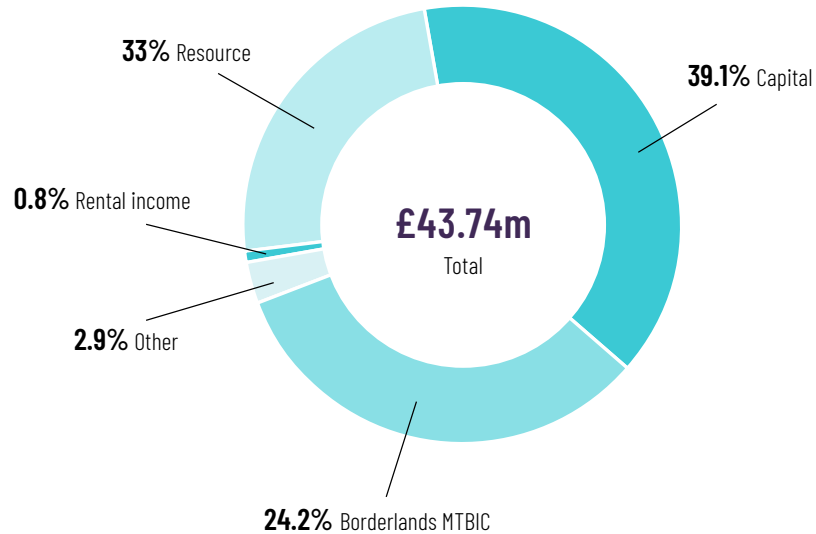
Jane Morrison-Ross
Chief Executive,
South of Scotland Enterprise



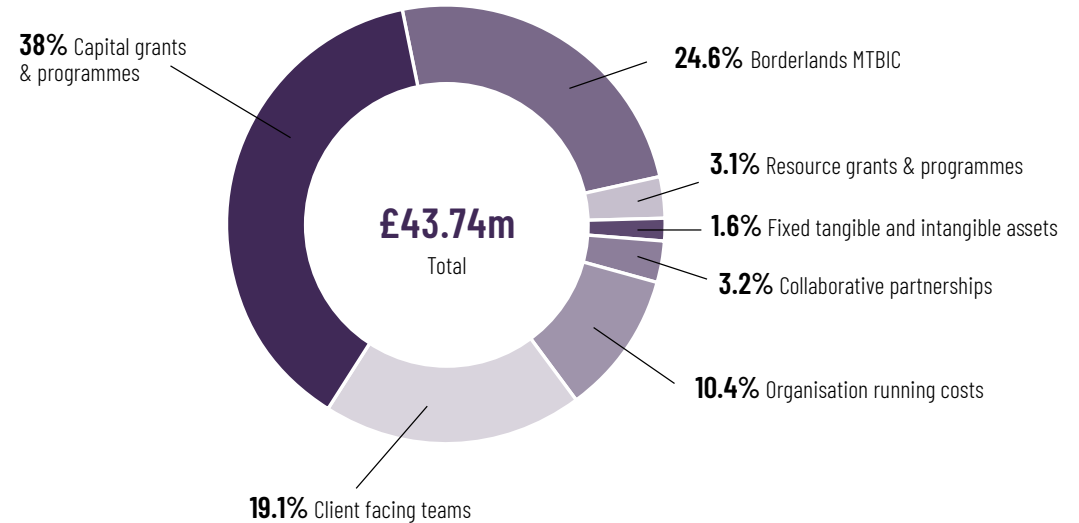
Appendix B

Our Operating Budget for 2026/27

Income



Expenditure



Note:

- The 2026/27 South of Scotland Enterprise budget cash allocation is £31.518m; the total Grant In Aid budget for SOSE is £32.168m which includes other elements relating to non-cash items.
- Budget above is cash only and includes Grant In Aid and income from other sources.
- Fixed tangible and intangible asset numbers include land sales treated in accordance with FReM as negative expenditure.
- Collaborative Partnerships with other strategic bodies include finance, IT and HR support.
- Organisation running costs include all remaining staff costs out with the Client Facing teams, and other business and estates costs.

Contact Us

Find out more at

www.southofscotlandenterprise.com

Or get in touch to find out how we can tailor our support to your individual needs and circumstances

www.southofscotlandenterprise.com/contact-us

0300 304 8888

To request this document in an alternative format, such as large print, different language or on coloured paper please get in touch with us.

Correct as of May 2026

