Scottish Pubs Code Adjudicator

Annual Delivery Plan 2026/27



Over the past year, I have spent time meeting tenants, pub owning businesses and stakeholders across Scotland, listening to their experiences of the Scottish Pubs Code and the realities of operating in today's challenging environment. Those conversations have deepened our understanding of how the Code is working in practice and continue to shape the way we regulate.

In 2026/27, our focus is on strengthening confidence, clarity, and fairness across the sector. We will continue to be visible, accessible, and evidence-led — supporting tenants to exercise their rights, helping pub-owning businesses meet their responsibilities, and intervening proportionately where the Code is not followed. In turn, our work will aim to drive improvement in standards, both in practice and culture, on the part of Pub Owning Businesses in their approach to tied tenancies.

The tied pub sector makes an important contribution to communities across Scotland, supporting local businesses, employment and social connections, and the tied pub model can provide an accessible route into the licensed trade for many people seeking their first venture as a small entrepreneur.

In 2026/27, we will continue to align our work with the wider objectives of Agriculture and Rural Economy, ensuring our regulatory activity supports sustainable communities, responsible business practices, and evidence-based decision making. Through proportionate regulation and constructive engagement, we will help create the conditions for fair and balanced relationships across the sector.

As a levy-funded regulator, we remain committed to delivering value for money and ensuring that our work is proportionate, transparent, and focused where it has the greatest impact.

The year ahead presents an opportunity to build on the foundations established since the Code came into force. Our priorities for 2026/27 are clear:

- deliver effective dispute resolution and enforcement
- improve understanding of rights and responsibilities under the Code
- promote best practice and support a fair, sustainable sector
- maintain strong governance, assurance, and value for money

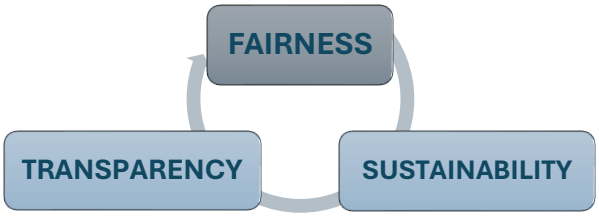
Pubs remain at the heart of many communities across Scotland and they a play a vital role in supporting and promoting Scottish tourism, Scottish food and drink and a thriving hospitality

sector. Fair and constructive relationships between tenants and pub owning businesses are fundamental to their success which in turn supports the wider ecosystem of the Scottish economy.

Through constructive engagement, proportionate regulation and a commitment to continuous improvement, we will continue to build confidence in the Scottish Pubs Code and support a fair, sustainable and thriving tied pub sector.

Our Mission

Our mission is to promote fairness, transparency, and sustainability in Scotland's tied pub sector. We safeguard tenant rights, ensure adherence to the Scottish Pubs Code, and foster a balanced, sustainable, and transparent environment where tenants and pub-owning businesses can operate with confidence and achieve long-term success.



Our Purpose

As set out in our Corporate Plan 2025–2028, our purpose is:
"To ensure fair and lawful dealings between pub-owning businesses and tied pub tenants, and to support a transparent, balanced, and sustainable tied pub sector in Scotland."

Alignment with Agriculture and Rural Economy (ARE)

In 2026/27, our work will contribute to Agriculture and Rural Economy objectives by:

- supporting fair, transparent and sustainable business relationships
- strengthening confidence in Scotland's tied pub sector through effective regulation
- providing evidence and insight to inform policy development and statutory review
- contributing to the sustainability of local businesses and communities
- ensuring regulatory activity remains proportionate, transparent and outcomes focused

Corporate Objectives 2025–2028

Deliver effective dispute resolution and enforcement.	We will ensure disputes arising under the Code are resolved fairly, efficiently, and lawfully, and that breaches are addressed through proportionate enforcement.
Improve understanding of rights and responsibilities under the Code.	We will support early compliance and reduce unnecessary disputes by improving understanding across the sector.
Promote best practice and support a fair, sustainable tied pub sector.	We will work proactively to prevent disputes, raise standards, and support long term fairness and sustainability.
Maintain effective governance, assurance, and value for money.	We will operate efficiently, transparently, and with strong assurance as an independent regulator. Our performance measures are aligned to our Corporate Plan objectives and reported transparently through quarterly monitoring and our Annual Report.

Levy Stewardship & Value for Money

As an independent regulator funded through an industry levy, we are committed to ensuring that all regulatory activity represents value for money for the sector. In 2026/27 we will continue to:

- manage levy income prudently
- operate proportionate governance arrangements
- ensure regulatory activity is targeted where it delivers the greatest benefit
- maintain transparent reporting on levy expenditure
- support statutory reviews with clear evidence
- demonstrate responsible stewardship aligned with Scottish Government expectations and good regulatory practice

Key Measure

- Publish clear levy expenditure reporting as part of the Annual Report
- Maintain levy underspend within agreed tolerance levels
- Demonstrate year-on-year efficiency improvements in case handling or guidance production

Annual Priorities 2026/27

🗣️ 1. Tenant Engagement

Strengthening support for tied pub tenants by providing clear guidance, accessible resources, and effective dispute resolution mechanisms.

In 2026/27 we will:

- publish updated guidance reflecting early regulatory learning
- expand tenant outreach sessions across Scotland
- improve digital access to guidance, case studies, and MRO information
- streamline dispute resolution processes to ensure timely, fair outcomes
- ensure tenant feedback informs SG's statutory review of the Code

Key Measure

Increase tenant engagement activity by 20%, with improved satisfaction scores from outreach events.

⚖️ 2. Regulatory Oversight

Monitoring compliance with statutory requirements, addressing concerns, and ensuring businesses operate within the legal framework.

In 2026/27 we will:

- conduct targeted compliance assessments
- strengthen reporting mechanisms for tenant concerns
- use evidence and insight to identify emerging risks
- refine guidance for pub-owning businesses
- publish enforcement outcomes where appropriate

Key Measure

Increase the proportion of identified compliance issues resolved within six months from 75% in 2025/26 to 90% in 2026/27.

🤝 3. Collaboration & Outreach

Building relationships across the sector to enhance awareness and encourage best practice.

In 2026/27 we will:

- host stakeholder forums and engagement sessions
- facilitate knowledge-sharing on regulatory requirements
- support constructive dialogue between tenants and pub-owning businesses
- contribute to wider discussions on sector sustainability
- Collaborate with Pub Owning Businesses to promote the raising of standards in code compliance and the general principles of fair dealings
- strengthen links with Agriculture and Rural Economy analytical and policy teams

Key Measure

Achieve 85%+ positive feedback from stakeholder engagement activities.

🔄 4. Continuous Improvement

Reviewing and refining processes to ensure efficiency, responsiveness, and transparency.

In 2026/27 we will:

- streamline case management processes
- improve accessibility of adjudication outcomes
- analyse case trends to refine regulatory practice
- strengthen transparency around decision-making
- support SG statutory reviews with evidence and insight

Key Measure

Resolve 90% of adjudication cases within three months, with quarterly published summaries.

How We'll Measure Success

Accessibility and Inclusion - We will ensure that our guidance, engagement activity and dispute resolution services remain accessible and inclusive for tenants, pub owning businesses and stakeholders across Scotland.

- timeliness of decisions
- number of disputes resolved and investigations completed
- compliance monitoring outcomes
- stakeholder feedback
- publication of case summaries (100% unless confidentiality applies)
- levy stewardship and value-for-money reporting

Year at a Glance

Quarter	Key Activities
Q1	Guidance & Engagement
Q2	Compliance Reviews
Q3	Evaluation & Improvement
Q4	Annual Report & Planning

Conclusion

In 2026/27, we will continue to build confidence in the Scottish Pubs Code by being visible, accessible, and evidence-led. Our work will support fairness, transparency, and sustainability across the tied pub sector, while contributing to the wider objectives of Agriculture and Rural Economy by supporting sustainable communities, responsible business practices, and effective regulation. As a levy-funded regulator, we will continue to steward resources responsibly and deliver value for money for the sector we serve.

Sarah Havlin
Scottish Pubs Code Adjudicator