

ERSKINE VETERANS CHARITY STRATEGY 2025–2031

Futures for the Brave

“Our citizens who join the Armed Forces enter into a social contract with their country – encountering adversity, risking their physical and mental wellbeing, and at times their lives, to defend it. In return, the nation owes them, and their families, gratitude, respect, and enduring support.

Most Veterans transition successfully into civilian life, equipped with skills and values that help them thrive. We will undertake to reinforce this, and correct misperceptions to the contrary, in all we do. But there are times - whether soon after service or many years later - when Veterans or their families *might* need additional support, and too often, society cannot, or does not, respond.

When a Veteran needs support, Erskine Veterans Charity exists to help in upholding Scotland’s side of the social contract. Strategy 2025–2031 sets out how we will continue to honour that commitment - through new approaches, in new places - while staying true to our ethos: Futures for the Brave.”

- *Ian Cumming, CEO*

Our Legacy, Our Brand

For over a century, Erskine Veterans Charity (EVC) has stood beside Scotland’s Veterans, supporting them to lead full and independent lives after service. We have come a long way since our founding days delivering surgical and rehabilitative care, followed by reskilling and employment, during the Great War. We evolved quickly to provide a practical and holistic network of support - tailored to the real and changing needs of those who served, and their families – regardless of age or life-stage.

Founded through the generous compassion of Glasgow’s people, our profile remains strongest in the Central Belt - especially in Glasgow and the West.

And we believe that each year, Erskine spends more on Veterans services in Scotland, than the next 8 major UK military charities combined.

Yet, despite our unique scale of delivery of a wide spectrum of hands-on, high-quality Care, Accommodation and Community-support services, charities with lesser offerings often enjoy greater public recognition. This has led to many potential beneficiaries and supporters remaining unaware of what Erskine offers. This requires redress with imagination and determination.

Changing Needs, Evolving Responses

EVC is rightly renowned for excellence in nursing care. Yet in recent years, we’ve observed that Veterans are arriving in our homes much later in life - often too late for us to significantly enhance their quality or length of life, despite increasingly complex and costly care interventions.

Early in the last strategic cycle, rising care costs placed these vital services under existential pressure. Through analysis, collaboration, and strong leadership, we've emerged more financially secure, rigorous and confident than at any point in recent memory. Our agile, capable management team, backed by a proactive Board, has adapted our care service into a sustainable model which meets the needs of a much smaller population of elderly veterans – with far fewer remaining from the once large WW2 and National Service generation.

Veteran Demographics and Needs

As the generation of WW2 Veterans continues to diminish, the proportion of younger Veterans - those from more recent eras and conflicts - is now greater. They are often geographically dispersed across major cities or located near their former military bases.¹ Their current needs and wishes may tend to differ from those of their predecessors.

We know that even beyond 2030, there will be more Veterans in Scotland (1.5-1.6M UK, around 150k-160k in Scotland) than Erskine has yet supported in its 110-year history.²

Our Nursing Care service remains sustainable and tailored to meet projected demand from elderly Veterans. But of those 50,000 elderly Veterans and spouses *currently* living in Scotland, who may need care or support - only around 2,000 live within comfortable reach of our current residential facilities. Meanwhile, both public policy and personal preferences increasingly favour care delivered at home and support embedded within local communities.

Community Support

Here at Erskine, we know that Veterans with meaningful, productive lives, strong community ties, and access to local, integrated support - will live better, happier and longer lives in their homes. These factors improve wellbeing, avert crises, reduce hospital admissions, and delay the need for long-term care. However, across the social care and charity sectors, other organisations are shrinking/withdrawing their physical presence, or replacing them with virtual signposting, or telephone services. This is sub-optimal to say the least.

Recognising this, we have piloted a range of innovative, successful services during previous strategic cycles, including:

- **Transition Support Accommodation (TSA)**
- **Retirement Apartments**
- **Erskine Veterans Activity Centres (EVACs)**
- **Erskine Support at Home**

These services all go a considerable way to addressing the key themes of the Scottish and UK Governments' **Veterans Strategy** (Community & Relationships; Employment Education & Skills;

¹ [Scotland's Census 2022 - UK Armed Forces veterans | Scotland's Census](#)

² [New figures reveal changes to the UK's veteran population - GOV.UK](#)

Finance & Debt; Health & Wellbeing; Making a Home in Civilian Society; and Veterans and the Law). They are also coherent with Scot Gov's "**Health & Social Care Service Renewal Framework**" and the "**Population Health Framework**" which focuses on the social, economic and environmental aspects of long-term health improvement, as a means to enhance preventative measures. We know we are doing it right, and we were doing it early. But there is more we can and must do...

Having guided EVC through the financial uncertainty of the global recession, the Coronavirus Pandemic and a Sustainable Service Review, we have protected our reserves and are now ready to be bold with the services above, which we know have *upstream*, preventative impact. We are therefore drawing our current strategy to an end and recasting it from 2025-2031.

In the landscape of a lamentable reducing physical presence from other military charities, our goal, and our **competitive advantage** is an ability to physically *reach* more Veterans, earlier in life, and help them positively shape their futures. To do this, we aim to be more visible, more present, and more impactful—so that more Veterans and their families across Scotland not only survive but thrive.

Vision and Mission

Our Vision remains unchanged:

“A Scotland in which Veterans and their families thrive.”

We know we cannot achieve this vision alone. But through collaboration, innovation, and targeted investment, we will play our part.

Our Mission continues to guide us:

“To offer Veterans the best possible future - through the best possible Care, Accommodation, and Community Support.”

Concept of Operations

Our Care Homes, and special accommodation, will always remain a vital sanctuary for Veterans as they grow older. However, strategic analysis confirms that the most effective way to expand our reach is to grow our community-based services - tailored to local needs, enhanced by innovation and thoughtful investment.

We believe that by intervening earlier and across a wider geography, we can significantly improve health & wellbeing, resilience, and life outcomes for more Veterans and their families. This is how we deliver better ***Futures for the Brave***.

In Strategic Cycle 2025–2031, we will optimise our management and staffing structures, centrally and regionally, to support impactful, sustainable growth. **Using the Erskine Gateway process**, we'll evaluate, adapt, and replicate successful service models in new locations.

Confirmed Commitments

Continuance:

- **Two quality Care Homes** in the West and East of Scotland
- **Two Erskine Veterans Activity Centres (EVACs)** offering connection and community support in Bishopton and Forres
- **44 Family Cottages** – in the Erskine Veterans Village
- **5 Retirement Apartments** – Abutting the Erskine Home
- **23 Transition Support Service Apartments** – including & Caseworker Assistance and follow-on support.

For Development:

- **More EVACs:** With target regions including Fife (FY26/27), Edinburgh (2027/28), Aberdeenshire, Perth/Stirling, and South-West Scotland all long evident to us, through our analysis of the Scottish Census and supporter networks, as high Veterans density, low support areas,
- **Expansion of Erskine Support at Home:** First in the West, then regionally - a flexible, scalable model adaptable to local need, either with or without fixed infrastructure.
- **Championing the Veterans Friendly Care-Home Framework:** Enhancing the lives of Veterans in care homes beyond Erskine, in partnership with English care delivery peers, and the Scottish Government. We will share our expert insights on what makes a difference to an elderly Veteran's life, and who else within the social care and Veterans charity sectors can assist Veteran residents. This will help other Veterans who do not live in our homes, to nonetheless benefit from our work.³

Opportunities To Be Evaluated During Next Cycle

- **New Retired Living Communities:** Including the conversion of the former Erskine Park Home (2026), as per the extant strategy.

Opportunities to be evaluated under program of Service evolution led by the Chief Executive

- **Veterans Holidays & Carers' Breaks:** Delivered via existing infrastructure or through partnerships (e.g., EVAC North, EEH, or leased caravan sites)
- **Micro Transitional Support Services (TSA)** in underserved regions – using spare capacity of existing infrastructure.

³ [Veteran Friendly Framework - Royal Star & Garter](#)

- **Erskine Benevolent Fund** – To assist beneficiaries, with unexpected costs associated with post-Service life (eg help with funeral fees, or arrangements)
- **Erskine Estate Development:** Potential for new housing, community amenities, Tri-Service sculpture and visitor/donor reception centre and museum
- **Whole Family Transition Support** – To assist families with relocation, community support and resettlement post Service
- **Sector Support, Mergers, and Acquisitions:** Strategic engagement and alignment with like-minded charities under financial strain, or in need of support —preserving services and broadening reach.

Not Being Considered

- New Care Homes, or respite care services in new locations: these are not sustainable at additional scale, with the level of staffing and quality which Erskine would be proud of.
- Extension of eligibility beyond Veterans and their families: this would dilute our brand, whilst forcing our capacity to unsustainable scale.

Strategic aims and key activities

See Appendix 1 for a draft of our objectives for the strategic period and Appendix 2 for a geographical summary of our key activities.

Theory of change

An organisational theory of change sets how and why an organisation expects to achieve its long-term goals, including the core issue we exist to address, and the things we will do towards that mission. We have updated our outline organisational theory of change and included this in Appendix 3.

Strategy statement

A strategy statement (Collis and Rukstad, 2008)⁴ is a concise summary that defines an organisation’s long-term strategic direction. It communicates what the organisation aims to achieve, how it will compete or operate, and what makes it distinct, often in one to three sentences. We have included a draft strategy statement in Appendix 4.

Funding and Sustainability

Erskine’s financial foundations are now stronger. With our income and expenditure now prudently matched, our unrestricted reserves remain sufficient to responsibly seed, support and scale high-impact services. However, in 2025, we currently need £7.1m in net (£10M gross) fundraised income to sustain current operational costs and services. Going forward, we must grow our revenue streams to support our expansion towards more beneficiaries. Our target is at least £10M net (£15M gross).

We believe that the rollout of new, meaningful services—combined with ambitious fundraising and marketing investment, will increase our national visibility and voluntary income. Whilst Erskine is in

⁴“Strategy Statement” adapted from “Can you say what your strategy is”, Collis and Rukstad, 2008, Harvard Business Review

the fortunate position of having free reserves to underpin the delivery of its strategy, as services mature, we expect them to become increasingly self-sustaining. Indeed – EVACs have proven to be much more generously supported by Trust & Foundation grants, than our Care Homes have ever been. This speaks to their positive impact upon local communities and funders' corresponding willingness to support them. However, it is important that we continue to proactively develop our voluntary income to fund our service expansion. If we fail to do this, then a service may be vulnerable to withdrawal, where lack of local or national support, for EVC renders them untenable and outwith our financial capacity.

A long-term financial plan which sets out how we can affordably and sustainably deliver this organisational strategy will be created in the next phase of its development. Management is ready to modify the scale and nature of the proposals in order to ensure that the delivery of the strategic aims is financially sustainable.

Summary

When you have the ability to make a difference in the life of someone who once defended your way of life - that's not a choice. That's a calling.

This strategy is bold by design. Through targeted expansion, innovation, and strategic partnerships, Erskine Veterans Charity is poised to significantly increase its visibility, reach, fundraising and impact across Scotland, when others are withdrawing.

By honouring our proud past, acting confidently in the present, and planning ambitiously for the future, we will shape a new chapter - worthy of those who served.

Appendices

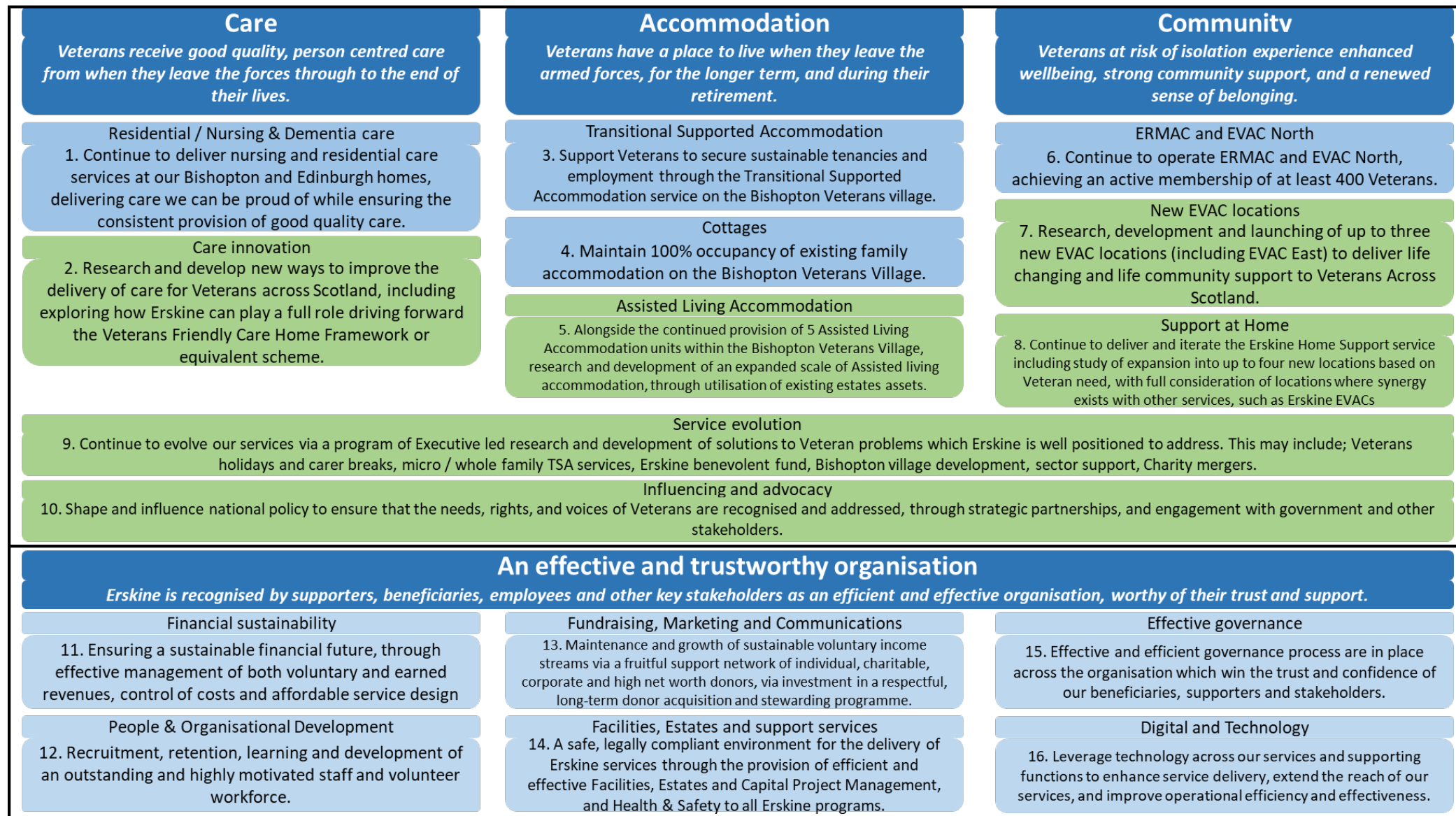
Appendix 1 – Outline strategic aims 2025-2031

Appendix 2 – Outline activities 2025-2031

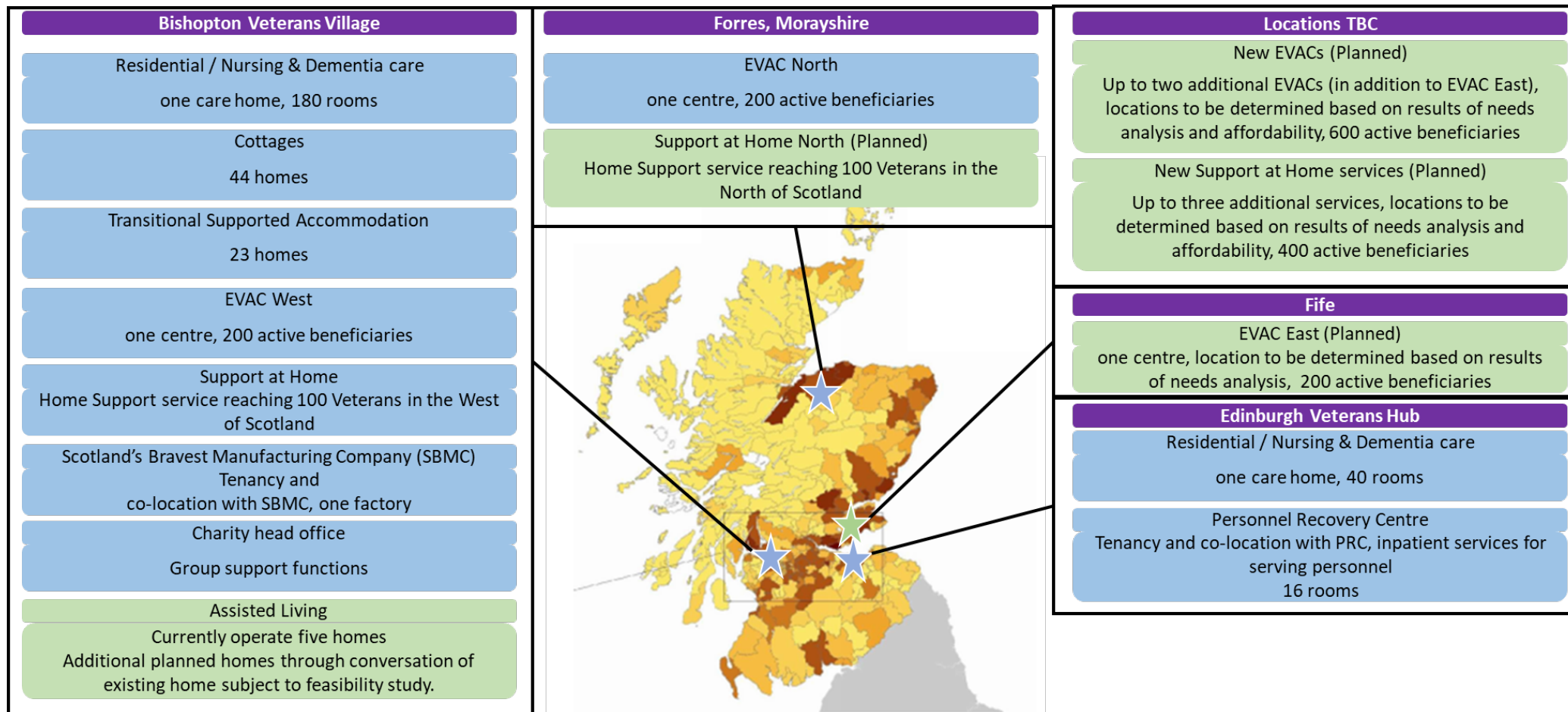
Appendix 3 – Outline theory of change 2025-2031

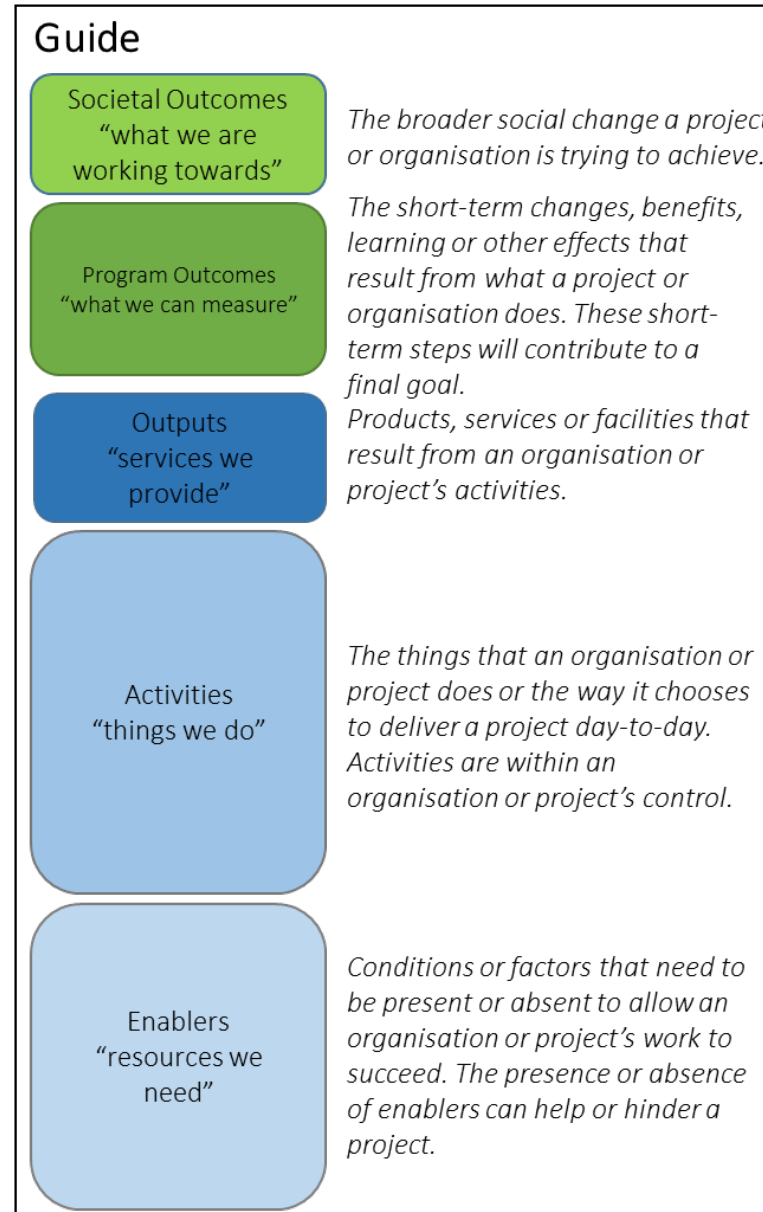
Appendix 4 – Strategy statement 2025-2031

Appendix 1 – Outline strategic aims 2025-2031



Appendix 2 – Outline activities 2025-2031





Appendix 4 – Outline strategy statement

“Over the next five years, Erskine will leverage a century-worth of **deep care and support expertise** and **strong supporter relationships**, to become the most **recognisable** and **highest social impact Veterans charity in Scotland**, through **collaborative development, delivery** and **growth** of **good quality** and **sustainable** care, accommodation and community services, to address the **unmet needs** of Veterans throughout their **post-Service life.**”

Objective: “to become the most **recognisable** and **highest social impact Veterans charity in Scotland**”

We are in a position to make a difference to more Veterans, but we are not as well-known as we think. We will understand and communicate with passion the impact of our services and the problems they are solving to our beneficiaries, donors and stakeholders – bolstering reputation and philanthropic revenues which underpin our work.

Scope: “**collaborative development, delivery** and **growth** of good quality and sustainable care, accommodation and community services”

This encapsulates residential care for elderly Veterans and their spouses, transitional supported accommodation for service leavers returning to civilian life, supported and independent living accommodation alongside activity centres and Home support for Veterans, whose personal circumstances leave them at risk of loneliness and isolation.

Advantage: “a century-worth of **deep care and support expertise** and **strong supporter relationships**”

We are multi-skilled and have been long immersed in supporting a range of needs, caused or compromised, through military service. We have strong relationships with our supporters who energise and fund our work.

Delivery:

Our credibility is based on deeds not words because we have a deep understanding of veteran needs derived from direct delivery of services.

Collaborative development

Sometimes, our strength relative to others aiming to support Veterans, will be fundraising or unique assets such as space or expertise –we are committed to working with others where that means better outcomes for Veterans.

Good quality

We are committed to delivering a significant positive impact on our beneficiaries' experiences and outcomes.

Growth

We will expand the reach of our Community services to ensure support is projected to where and when it is needed most. Our increased presence and relevance to more Veterans underpins growth in fundraised income.

Sustainable

We must set the scale and quality of our services at a financially sustainable level, and those services must be cost effective and efficient.

Unmet needs

Our services do not result in philanthropic funds being used for outcomes which could otherwise have been achieved by the private or public sector alone.

Post service life

Our care and support interventions aim to support Veterans in their moments of need from their first day of post service life to their last.