



ros.gov.uk

By Email Only

Claire Baker, MSP
Convener
Economy and Fair Work
Committee
economyandfairwork.committee@parliament.scot

Reply to: Edinburgh Office
Department: Senior Management
Contact: Jennifer Henderson
Telephone: 0131 357 8199
Email: Jennifer.Henderson@ros.gov.uk
Date: 01 April 2022

Your Ref: N/A
Our Ref: MC-11-2022

Dear Ms Baker

REGISTERS OF SCOTLAND COMMITTEE APPEARANCE FOLLOW UP

Further to my letter dated 04 March 2022, I agreed to follow up on a number of areas following my committee appearance and I am pleased to advise that the further information requested can be found at the annexes included in this letter, as follows:-

Digital Update – Annex A

A fuller update on our digital systems, their complexity, our upcoming digital projects, our use of contractors and further information on our Grow Our Own campaign.

Arrear Update – Annex B

A more detailed breakdown of our backlog of cases, including the latest arrear position, broken down into county.

Land Register Completion Update – Annex C

More detail on our approach to delivering the benefits of a completed land register, including the number of titles registered by local authority area and Voluntary Registration engagement.

Corporate Plan 2022-2027

As you will have seen, I have shared with you, under separate cover, our Corporate Plan 2022-2027 following its publication on 1 April 2022. This document includes the targets we are setting in relation to the clearing of our case backlog.

I understand that the committee would like monthly updates going forward and I propose to send the committee an update on the end year position of Financial Year 2021-2022 towards the end of April and then report monthly on the 2022-2023 Financial Year from May onwards. I hope this is an acceptable approach for the committee. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require anything further in relation to the information provided in this letter.

Yours sincerely

JENNIFER HENDERSON
Keeper of the Registers of Scotland

Annex A – Digital Update

Purpose

1. The purpose of this annex is to provide a high-level overview of our approach to delivering our digital transformation – outlining the RoS digital strategy and the skills we require to deliver this work.

Service Alignment Team - Strategy & Structure

2. RoS digital is comprised of two organisational functions, namely Product Domains and IT Enablement.

3. Product domains represent the enduring digital teams which build, run, and own the operational products which underpin our digital registration and customer facing services.

4. IT Enablement represent the platform and productivity capabilities which provide all digital hosting and digital workplace services.

5. The Service Alignment Team (SAT) was formed in 2018 replacing our digital transformation program.

6. SAT consists of senior leaders from across RoS: Chief Data Officer, Chief Architect, Head of People and Change, Head of Product, Head of Service Delivery, Head of Registration, Head of Service Design & Innovation.

7. Domains are similar in structure to the ‘Spotify Model’¹. Domains are resourced from various communities of practice including Agile, Business Analysis, Software Developers, Service Designers, Product Managers, Testers, Service Designers and User Researchers.

8. SAT is both a leadership and governance group for RoS’s digital product teams inside the following domains:

- Customer Facing
- Data
- Land Registration
- Mapping
- Other Registers
- Supporting

9. SAT has 3 core strategies.

- I. Product Sustainability – the ability to safely manage and maintain all products
- II. Service Acceleration – increasing the efficiency of our core registration services through enhanced tooling and ways of working
- III. Data Certainty – ensuring our data is “machine readable” making it fit for future products and services.

10. Product Sustainability has been achieved by each domain establishing enduring, clearly defined ownership and operation of their products. This includes a

¹ <https://blog.crisp.se/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/SpotifyScaling.pdf>

prioritised roadmap both to achieve strategic objectives and to stabilise / retire legacy products and remove technical debt.

11. Domain teams work to the principles outlined by Government Digital Services² and Scottish Government's Digital Scotland Service Standard³ – new services are subject to assessment from the SG Digital Assurance Office at key milestones in their development and delivery.

12. Progress towards delivering the Product Sustainability strategy is shown in heatmaps. We developed a 'product sustainability' score mechanism to track the progress of our investment and effort. The heatmaps are actively managed by SAT and reviewed quarterly as part of the SAT investment case reporting to the Executive Management Team.

13. Achieving these outcomes would not be possible without the underpinning support of the IT Enablement function. Key examples of this include:-

- a) Leveraging the RoS cloud platform to build our archive as service capability resulting in the migration of Sasines deed archive and an enhanced deed search service.
- b) Creation of cloud register template architecture in the build out of the Register of Judgements replacement which has significantly accelerated the subsequent development of the Register of Inhibitions and the Register of Persons Holding a Controlled Interest in Land.
- c) Empowering core collaboration capabilities during the Covid crisis, through the introduction of the Microsoft365 suite of products.

IT Enablement Strategy & Structure

14. IT Enablement can be viewed as a collection of foundational services by which all Digital operations are delivered. This includes Digital Hosting and Security and Digital Workplace Services.

15. Digital Hosting and Security provides On-Premises and Cloud Platform hosting and software tooling for digital product development. Furthermore, the team provides IT security and assurance services, moulded around the core pillars of Protect, Detect & Respond and Validate.

16. Digital Workplace Services include Communication, Collaboration and End-User Computing services, including Service Desk support, Business to digital self-service and cross-digital change, problem, request, and incident management services.

17. Our vision is to "Become a digital registration and information business, trusted for its integrity". The continued business drive towards customer self-service, data restructuring, new registers and automation of registration processes necessitates the need to empower and accelerate our digital development capabilities in a manner that is secure and resilient.

18. Furthermore, our Corporate Plan also aims to build a Smarter Workplace within a Hybrid working model. The Smarter Workplace aims to build a digital workplace that is smart, collaborative, and agile.

² <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/government-design-principles>

³ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/digital-scotland-service-standard/>

19. IT Enablement supports these aims by delivering technology and process improvements that enrich flexible and collaborative digital working, improving the support interactions and efficiency of IT support services, and working towards a modern engagement model which can sustainably support business driven and continuously improved digital workplace services.

20. IT Enablement have coalesced its missions around delivering simple, zero-friction, self-service access to on-premises and public cloud hosting services, enabling our product domains to develop at speed with agility, security, and resilience. In addition, we are creating a digital working environment which securely enables, empowers, and supports colleague productivity needs and promotes a positive working environment experience.

IT Enablement Structure & Costs

21. Following on from the inception of the SAT team in 2018 and re-setting of our project orientated development teams into enduring Product-owning Domains, the traditional IT Services department embarked on a similar model.

22. IT Enablement re-structured its resource from technically orientated, discipline silos, to multi-disciplinary, service focussed enablement teams.

IT Workforce

23. The SAT and IT Enablement strategies are delivered by a blend of permanent employees and contractors. The use of contractors allows the workforce to rapidly expand and contract to meet emergent demand.

24. Whilst not rigid rules, the following principles guide the resourcing approach to the IT workforce:

- a) Enduring ownership
- b) Team sustainability
- c) Product sustainability
- d) Prefer permanent employees over contractors for enduring roles
- e) Prefer contractors over permanent employees for non-enduring roles
- f) Prefer contractors over professional services
- g) Prefer in-house over outsourcing
- h) Grow our own capability wherever and whenever possible

25. Not all enduring roles are currently filled with permanent staff. There is a distinct lack of specialist IT skills in the current labour market and we are faced with challenges when it comes to offering a competitive salary, especially for the more senior roles. The long-term approach to address this is by improving our on-going recruitment for enduring roles to draw on best practice to shape our attraction strategy and continue our "Grow Our Own" programme which seeks to identify existing employees who wish to develop a career in IT, specifically geared towards digital roles within our Product Domains or IT Enablement teams.

What is Grow Our Own?

26. During the pilot year of the Grow Our Own programme, colleagues from across the organisation were offered the opportunity to apply for a range of roles within Digital

and Data, Service Design and Product. Aligning with the Corporate Plan and strategic workforce planning, Grow Our Own will re-skill and re-train existing colleagues to allow them to develop digital skills through participation in tailored training programmes. By building on existing talent, we can provide colleagues with the skills and capabilities to progress their careers in line with the roles that we'll require in the future.

27. For the first year of the Grow Our Own programme, fourteen new entry level EO opportunities were offered to colleagues within Digital and Data:

- Two roles in data engineering (Data and Quality)
- Ten roles in software development and testing (IT Development)
- Two roles in platform engineering (IT Enablement)

28. All these roles require the same foundational software development skills and started with an immersive external training course or “bootcamp” run by CodeClan. Following the bootcamp, the training continued at RoS with a “kick-start” project during which colleagues practiced their new skills in a supported environment that introduced them to the way RoS development teams work. At the end of the kick-start project, colleagues will then be assigned to specialist roles and join existing product development and platform teams.

Data and Quality

29. The data engineering roles specialise in developing code to manipulate often large and disparate sets of data to answer valuable questions.

IT Development

30. The software development and testing roles specialise in developing and testing code to build and improve our digital products, such as ScotLIS, Plan Creator or the new Register of Persons Holding a Controlled Interest in Land.

IT Enablement

31. The platform engineering roles specialise in writing code to build and support our cloud platforms upon which all our digital and data products will run.

Digital investment plans and activities for 2022/23

32. SAT govern and lead on the creation, prioritisation, and delivery of outcomes to support the organisation’s corporate plan objectives, subject to Executive Management Team approval. In 2021/22 SAT proposed three strategies (product sustainability, service acceleration and data certainty) to focus prioritisation and alignment and these continue to inform the investment plans and activities for 2022/23.

Customer Facing Domain

33. Vision: *Our customers know they are at the heart of RoS changes*

Key Outputs:

- Self-service copy deeds
- API strategy and approach
- Register Land and Property growth including digital deeds
- Permissions based model for RoS online services

Data Domain

34. Vision: *Empowering the business to unlock the full potential of its data assets, maximising value to RoS and the citizens of Scotland*

Key Outputs:

- Consume Finance and HR data to better support corporate data needs
- Land and Property Data Products enhanced and automated end to end through the warehouse
- Business Intelligence and Analytics team engaged and consuming 20% of source data from the warehouse
- Deliver benefits of the warehouse in the public cloud

Land Register Domain

35. Vision: *To support Registration teams and other internal customers in clearing the arrear by removing dependency on legacy systems and processes in order to drive digital improvements*

Key Outputs:

- Case Management System: To streamline the registration process by removing inefficiencies and customisation. In addition, supporting colleagues to improve registration workflows and develop new processes in order to drive operational efficiency.
- Land Register: To build efficient digital registration processes that will lead to higher operational efficiency for RoS colleagues and a sustainable Land Register.
- Sasines: To provide an efficient, intuitive, accessible digital Sasines recording process which benefits both RoS colleagues and the citizen.

Mapping Domain

36. Vision: *To support the public registration of Scotland's land rights to ensure information is transparent, visible, and available for all*

Key Outputs:

- Land Register Maintenance automation
- Unlocking Sasines spatial data proof of concept
- Digital title plans (moving from static information (pdfs) to interrogable spatial data)
- Legacy technology decommissioning

Other Registers Domain

37. Vision: *Reimagining registers with a modern and sustainable framework, removing waste and improving customer experience.*

Key Outputs:

- Register of Inhibitions improvements to workflow and product sustainability
- Register of Deeds – submission of digital deeds
- National Records for Scotland – secure transfer of digital deeds and registers
- Address product sustainability of other registers including SSSI, RCIL AB and CT, ROACBL and Crofting Register by moving to the public cloud (AWS)

Supporting Domain

38. Vision: *Creating innovative document management to support a forward-thinking sustainable business.*

Key Outputs:

- Document Management – address product sustainability: decommissioning RAC; migrating registration data held on fileshare; and migrating LR archive
- Finance – Invoicing service rollout to CAJR; Prepayment Service – address product sustainability and workflow management of upfront payment of fees; BACS payment – address product sustainability by creating new service in AWS
- HR – Create reusable single source of HR data to serve HR/Finance and BIA teams

Conclusion

39. I hope that this information is helpful in understanding our approach to delivering RoS's digital transformation.

Annex B – Arrear Update

Purpose

1. To provide the Committee with additional information in respect of the numbers of applications to transfer a property (dispositions) which are still undergoing registration.

Background

2. As I set out during my appearance, the vast majority of our applications are completed within 20 days, though some of our more complex applications can take much longer. I am not satisfied with that position and since I have been in post it has been my priority to get to a position where **all** applications are completed promptly and in the timescale our customers expect. Prior to the initial lockdown in March 2020 we were making significant progress on that objective and were on track to deliver it. Regrettably the pandemic has set back our progress significantly, though the position has now started to stabilise.

3. RoS has recruited additional staff and further recruitment is ongoing. That, combined with more efficient ways of processing standard casework, will allow me to retrain additional colleagues to deal with our more complex and historic cases more quickly than we have been able to do historically.

4. The data I have included below shows the number of dispositions received, processed and outstanding by year and by Land Register county. It is important to remember that the legal effect of registration backdates to the date when I received the application and that homeowners are not restricted from doing anything with their property whilst the application is outstanding. It is also possible for applicants to request expedite of their application where that is necessary.

Create Year	Applications Received	Status		Percentage	
		Complete	Open	Complete	Open
2017	152,417	149,231	3,186	98%	2%
2018	146,211	134,223	11,988	92%	8%
2019	152,049	137,433	14,616	90%	10%
2020	122,423	106,254	16,169	87%	13%
2021	165,621	142,050	23,571	86%	14%
2022	32,132	21,571	10,561	67%	33%
Grand Total	770,853	690,762	80,091	90%	10%

County / Create Year	Applications Received	Status		Percentage	
		Complete	Open	Complete	Open
Aberdeen (ABN)	53,493	46,673	6,820	87%	13%
2017	10,482	10,186	296	97%	3%
2018	9,862	8,614	1,248	87%	13%
2019	10,448	9,167	1,281	88%	12%
2020	8,231	6,961	1,270	85%	15%
2021	12,110	10,244	1,866	85%	15%
2022	2,360	1,501	859	64%	36%
Angus (ANG)	36,261	32,372	3,889	89%	11%
2017	7,061	6,892	169	98%	2%

2018	6,776	6,159	617	91%	9%
2019	7,122	6,323	799	89%	11%
2020	5,730	5,019	711	88%	12%
2021	8,087	6,993	1,094	86%	14%
2022	1,485	986	499	66%	34%
Argyll (ARG)	12,570	9,649	2,921	77%	23%
2017	2,427	2,339	88	96%	4%
2018	2,356	1,850	506	79%	21%
2019	2,397	1,770	627	74%	26%
2020	1,950	1,316	634	67%	33%
2021	2,889	2,071	818	72%	28%
2022	551	303	248	55%	45%
Ayr (AYR)	49,540	45,281	4,259	91%	9%
2017	9,765	9,603	162	98%	2%
2018	9,402	8,752	650	93%	7%
2019	9,623	8,854	769	92%	8%
2020	8,038	7,083	955	88%	12%
2021	10,589	9,516	1,073	90%	10%
2022	2,123	1,473	650	69%	31%
Berwick (BER)	4,189	3,332	857	80%	20%
2017	890	829	61	93%	7%
2018	794	629	165	79%	21%
2019	748	567	181	76%	24%
2020	640	478	162	75%	25%
2021	965	740	225	77%	23%
2022	152	89	63	59%	41%
Banff (BNF)	6,725	5,604	1,121	83%	17%
2017	1,371	1,311	60	96%	4%
2018	1,206	993	213	82%	18%
2019	1,256	1,009	247	80%	20%
2020	1,081	837	244	77%	23%
2021	1,523	1,268	255	83%	17%
2022	288	186	102	65%	35%
Bute (BUT)	3,316	2,715	601	82%	18%
2017	645	621	24	96%	4%
2018	619	506	113	82%	18%
2019	642	508	134	79%	21%
2020	557	428	129	77%	23%
2021	714	567	147	79%	21%
2022	139	85	54	61%	39%
Clackmannan (CLK)	6,548	6,058	490	93%	7%
2017	1,321	1,287	34	97%	3%
2018	1,332	1,246	86	94%	6%
2019	1,238	1,175	63	95%	5%
2020	1,042	955	87	92%	8%
2021	1,304	1,173	131	90%	10%
2022	311	222	89	71%	29%
Caithness (CTH)	3,839	3,215	624	84%	16%
2017	761	729	32	96%	4%
2018	784	659	125	84%	16%
2019	733	612	121	83%	17%
2020	586	452	134	77%	23%
2021	801	654	147	82%	18%
2022	174	109	65	63%	37%
Dumbarton (DMB)	29,297	27,665	1,632	94%	6%

2017	5,786	5,662	124	98%	2%
2018	5,558	5,299	259	95%	5%
2019	6,191	5,862	329	95%	5%
2020	4,864	4,612	252	95%	5%
2021	5,772	5,394	378	93%	7%
2022	1,126	836	290	74%	26%
Dumfries (DMF)	13,133	10,897	2,236	83%	17%
2017	2,620	2,500	120	95%	5%
2018	2,494	2,165	329	87%	13%
2019	2,646	2,120	526	80%	20%
2020	2,056	1,596	460	78%	22%
2021	2,833	2,207	626	78%	22%
2022	484	309	175	64%	36%
East Lothian (ELN)	12,130	10,631	1,499	88%	12%
2017	2,349	2,301	48	98%	2%
2018	2,375	2,186	189	92%	8%
2019	2,512	2,280	232	91%	9%
2020	2,052	1,744	308	85%	15%
2021	2,403	1,886	517	78%	22%
2022	439	234	205	53%	47%
Fife (FFE)	50,987	46,294	4,693	91%	9%
2017	9,992	9,767	225	98%	2%
2018	9,781	9,071	710	93%	7%
2019	10,123	9,282	841	92%	8%
2020	8,264	7,348	916	89%	11%
2021	10,796	9,403	1,393	87%	13%
2022	2,031	1,423	608	70%	30%
Glasgow (GLA)	83,763	79,648	4,115	95%	5%
2017	16,903	16,676	227	99%	1%
2018	15,953	15,502	451	97%	3%
2019	16,398	15,864	534	97%	3%
2020	12,777	12,218	559	96%	4%
2021	18,401	16,933	1,468	92%	8%
2022	3,331	2,455	876	74%	26%
Inverness (INV)	22,100	17,691	4,409	80%	20%
2017	4,401	4,264	137	97%	3%
2018	4,180	3,507	673	84%	16%
2019	4,367	3,466	901	79%	21%
2020	3,446	2,496	950	72%	28%
2021	4,658	3,402	1,256	73%	27%
2022	1,048	556	492	53%	47%
Kincardine (KNC)	11,276	9,586	1,690	85%	15%
2017	2,160	2,119	41	98%	2%
2018	2,084	1,852	232	89%	11%
2019	2,142	1,791	351	84%	16%
2020	1,733	1,434	299	83%	17%
2021	2,615	2,089	526	80%	20%
2022	542	301	241	56%	44%
Kinross (KNR)	2,491	1,948	543	78%	22%
2017	443	425	18	96%	4%
2018	500	430	70	86%	14%
2019	551	415	136	75%	25%
2020	397	284	113	72%	28%
2021	515	350	165	68%	32%

2022	85	44	41	52%	48%
Kirkcudbright (KRK)	5,629	4,332	1,297	77%	23%
2017	999	951	48	95%	5%
2018	1,037	809	228	78%	22%
2019	1,070	803	267	75%	25%
2020	936	647	289	69%	31%
2021	1,310	963	347	74%	26%
2022	277	159	118	57%	43%
Lanark (LAN)	80,910	74,978	5,932	93%	7%
2017	15,553	15,169	384	98%	2%
2018	15,596	14,869	727	95%	5%
2019	16,509	15,587	922	94%	6%
2020	13,133	12,014	1,119	91%	9%
2021	16,730	14,922	1,808	89%	11%
2022	3,389	2,417	972	71%	29%
Midlothian (MID)	100,486	92,395	8,091	92%	8%
2017	20,213	20,059	154	99%	1%
2018	18,789	18,034	755	96%	4%
2019	19,852	18,704	1,148	94%	6%
2020	15,521	13,656	1,865	88%	12%
2021	21,971	19,051	2,920	87%	13%
2022	4,140	2,891	1,249	70%	30%
Moray (MOR)	9,809	8,312	1,497	85%	15%
2017	2,008	1,977	31	98%	2%
2018	1,814	1,565	249	86%	14%
2019	1,890	1,610	280	85%	15%
2020	1,561	1,249	312	80%	20%
2021	2,117	1,657	460	78%	22%
2022	419	254	165	61%	39%
Nairn (NRN)	1,981	1,709	272	86%	14%
2017	435	424	11	97%	3%
2018	406	374	32	92%	8%
2019	343	306	37	89%	11%
2020	324	251	73	77%	23%
2021	422	319	103	76%	24%
2022	51	35	16	69%	31%
Orkney & Zetland (OAZ)	7,864	5,799	2,065	74%	26%
2017	1,632	1,599	33	98%	2%
2018	1,579	1,095	484	69%	31%
2019	1,535	1,067	468	70%	30%
2020	1,263	776	487	61%	39%
2021	1,530	1,076	454	70%	30%
2022	325	186	139	57%	43%
Peebles (PBL)	3,454	2,877	577	83%	17%
2017	695	657	38	95%	5%
2018	711	578	133	81%	19%
2019	591	496	95	84%	16%
2020	586	473	113	81%	19%
2021	729	588	141	81%	19%
2022	142	85	57	60%	40%
Perth (PTH)	26,845	22,098	4,747	82%	18%
2017	5,100	4,934	166	97%	3%
2018	5,027	4,263	764	85%	15%
2019	5,213	4,232	981	81%	19%

2020	4,321	3,328	993	77%	23%
2021	6,038	4,677	1,361	77%	23%
2022	1,146	664	482	58%	42%
Renfrew (REN)	49,084	46,013	3,071	94%	6%
2017	9,428	9,337	91	99%	1%
2018	9,244	8,986	258	97%	3%
2019	9,744	9,303	441	95%	5%
2020	8,003	7,396	607	92%	8%
2021	10,546	9,493	1,053	90%	10%
2022	2,119	1,498	621	71%	29%
Ross & Cromarty (ROS)	12,219	9,517	2,702	78%	22%
2017	2,395	2,328	67	97%	3%
2018	2,331	1,787	544	77%	23%
2019	2,295	1,770	525	77%	23%
2020	1,944	1,335	609	69%	31%
2021	2,705	1,988	717	73%	27%
2022	549	309	240	56%	44%
Roxburgh (ROX)	7,934	6,635	1,299	84%	16%
2017	1,622	1,568	54	97%	3%
2018	1,523	1,266	257	83%	17%
2019	1,524	1,245	279	82%	18%
2020	1,277	1,041	236	82%	18%
2021	1,651	1,299	352	79%	21%
2022	337	216	121	64%	36%
Seabed (SEA)	18	8	10	44%	56%
2017	1	1		100%	0%
2018	2	1	1	50%	50%
2019	9	5	4	56%	44%
2020	2		2	0%	100%
2021	4	1	3	25%	75%
Selkirk (SEL)	3,119	2,690	429	86%	14%
2017	612	599	13	98%	2%
2018	588	504	84	86%	14%
2019	562	465	97	83%	17%
2020	529	456	73	86%	14%
2021	698	587	111	84%	16%
2022	130	79	51	61%	39%
Stirling (STG)	31,438	28,754	2,684	91%	9%
2017	6,459	6,349	110	98%	2%
2018	6,153	5,758	395	94%	6%
2019	6,163	5,726	437	93%	7%
2020	5,037	4,486	551	89%	11%
2021	6,354	5,580	774	88%	12%
2022	1,272	855	417	67%	33%
Sutherland (STH)	2,856	2,126	730	74%	26%
2017	516	486	30	94%	6%
2018	531	386	145	73%	27%
2019	623	452	171	73%	27%
2020	452	305	147	67%	33%
2021	577	415	162	72%	28%
2022	157	82	75	52%	48%
Wigtown (WGN)	4,019	3,345	674	83%	17%
2017	772	743	29	96%	4%

2018	733	604	129	82%	18%
2019	786	654	132	83%	17%
2020	615	463	152	75%	25%
2021	928	757	171	82%	18%
2022	185	124	61	67%	33%
West Lothian (WLN)	21,530	19,915	1,615	92%	8%
2017	4,600	4,539	61	99%	1%
2018	4,091	3,924	167	96%	4%
2019	4,203	3,943	260	94%	6%
2020	3,475	3,117	358	90%	10%
2021	4,336	3,787	549	87%	13%
2022	825	605	220	73%	27%
Grand Total	770,853	690,762	80,091	90%	10%

Conclusion

5. I hope this information is helpful. If any committee members have particular queries in relation to their constituency area, I would be happy to discuss these with them individually.

Annex C – Land Register Completion Update

Purpose

1. The purpose of this annex is to provide an overview of the RoS approach to delivering the benefits of a completed land register.

Background

2. Land Registration commenced in Scotland in 1981. In 2014, following the introduction of the Land Registration etc. (Scotland) Act 2012, Scottish Ministers invited the public sector to accelerate completion of the land register with a target date of 2024 to support the land reform agenda.

3. The intention behind a completed land register is to deliver two key benefits:

- I. Quick and efficient land and property transactions
- II. Data and insight to improve transparency and better answer the question of 'who owns Scotland?'

4. Although RoS has made good progress, the ability to complete the land register relies on many factors, including submissions from customers, and the scale of the challenge remains significant. Since 2014 we have:

- added close to 22% of Scotland's land mass taking the total land mass on the land register to just over 48%
- engaged in a proactive programme of voluntary registration stakeholder engagement, which contributed to over 29,000 voluntary registrations being received
- completed Keeper Induced Registration (KIR) on over 124,000 addresses, including 89,439 local authority properties

5. To achieve this progress, we relied on a number of factors. This included, property market churn, our ability to encourage proactive registration (known as voluntary registration or VRs) and our ability, in some limited circumstances, to actively move properties from Sasines to the land register using powers granted to the Keeper (Keeper Induced Registration - KIR).

6. However, we know from our analysis that market churn will not bring in the registrations that are needed as there is much land and property that is unlikely to transact in the timeframe and that KIR is only suitable in certain instances (mostly in urban areas), is cost ineffective and not viable at the scale required.

7. Voluntary registrations have provided a large volume of registrations to date. However, we know from our engagement with stakeholders that completing the process to submit a registration is a very expensive process for the applicant. Despite the 25% discount offered by RoS, VR is often not a choice made by the landowner. After a period of intensive engagement with stakeholders and landowners in the early years of the VR programme we are now seeing fewer and fewer applications. This will not be in the volume required to see every property registered by 2024.

8. It is worth noting that the public sector continues, on the whole, to engage with us on voluntary registration. However, this will only add a small percentage to the overall total when completed.

Realising the benefits of a completed land register

9. As mentioned previously, the two key benefits of a completed land register are:

- I. Quick and efficient land and property transactions
- II. Data and insight to improve transparency and better answer the question of 'who owns Scotland?'

10. While the longer-term goal will continue to be 100% land register completion our evolved approach to completing Scotland's land register, will mean that we can continue to meet customer needs now. While the register will not be at 100% by 2024, I expect this to have little to no impact on our customers and stakeholders thanks to the three complementary approaches we are taking (outlined below).

11. I believe that our new approach offers a pragmatic solution which provides better value to the public purse and a more efficient use of RoS resources. Our reframed objective is also intended to provide customers with the confidence that that we are committed to delivering tangible, real-world benefits for our service users.

12. Three key activities lead to realising the benefits.

A. Functional completion

A functionally complete land register is one that provides the maximum benefit to the citizen. It will be 'functionally complete' when the majority of land and property that transacts regularly is on the land register, providing citizens with the benefits that this registered status brings i.e.

- the ability to transact more quickly and cost effectively on your land and property;
- a digital map-based record of land ownership, with boundaries that identify what you own and,
- provision of a state-backed warranty.

We currently estimate that there are circa 2.5million addresses in Scotland that are likely to transact. This is our functional completion target. In terms of our progress, we are about 87% of the way there.

B. Improving turnaround time and visibility of work in progress

Our aim is to stabilise then reduce the volume of stock through despatching the majority of new applications within a reliable and consistent timeframe, this is currently set at 35 days to match our Advance Notice period. By December 2024 we will be close to a functionally complete land register and thereafter, when first registrations are submitted customers will have the certainty in the transaction either from the standard turn around times, or through discussion with the customer a proposed timescale, relevant to complexity.

We will continue to complete registration of older cases as quickly as possible, prioritising those cases where customers request that they be expedited.

All the latest information can be found on the [RoS website](#).

Annex B of this letter provides you with more information on the backlog in this area.

C. Unlocking Sasines

This year we have made significant progress in our approach to making data held within the General Register of Sasines more accessible and, as a result, speeding up the process for us to be able to provide (at a high level) answers to the question of *'Who owns Scotland?'*.

We use spatial data to “unlock” the historic information in the sasine register. This means that we can link sasine property search sheets to a map for the first time, making it visually more helpful and accessible. This is a way of showing indicative ownership extents of sasines titles which will help fill in any information gaps in the land register. To date we have surfaced just over 23% of Scotland’s land mass through this approach.

It will mean that the Register of Sasines will continue longer than anticipated. However, it will go some way to resolve some of the complexity and difficulty which can make this historic register challenging to work with. Indeed, this work can be a very helpful first step in establishing ownership which is not yet shown on the land register.

RoS will also continue to offer a comprehensive search service for any piece of land or property.

Stakeholder engagement

13. Throughout the evolution of this objective we have worked hard to keep stakeholders informed of our plans and to canvas their feedback. We have engaged with a range of key stakeholders on the revised approach and I am pleased to say that they are supportive of our plans.

Conclusion

14. I hope that this information is helpful in understanding the journey we have taken in terms of land register completion and our decision making to date.