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## By Email

Claire Baker, MSP  
Convener  
Economy and Fair Work Committee  
[economyandfairwork.committee@parliament.scot](mailto:economyandfairwork.committee@parliament.scot)

Your Ref: N/A  
Our Ref: MC-73-2023

Reply to: Edinburgh Office  
Department: Senior Management  
Contact: Jennifer Henderson  
Telephone: 0131 357 8199  
Email: [rossecretariat@ros.gov.uk](mailto:rossecretariat@ros.gov.uk)  
Date: 17 August 2023

Dear Ms Baker

## REGISTERS OF SCOTLAND – EFW QUARTERLY PROGRESS UPDATE

I am writing to provide the Economy and Fair Work Committee with a quarterly update on the work of Registers of Scotland (RoS) as part of the agreed reporting. For ease of reading, I have outlined the latest updates against relevant headers below.

### Performance

Our Key Performance Indicator (KPI) progress is updated quarterly on our external website and the [end of June position](#) is now available.

Our KPI for dealing with new applications within 35 days is slightly behind the interim target. This is a result of focussing more capacity on older applications and the training and movement of staff which allows for that. The position is offset by the older applications KPI which is above the top end of the target for Q1. We expect the new applications KPI to return to target later in the year and to be at target by year end.

The property market (volumes) has been at the lower end of our projections for the majority of Q1, though has returned to the midpoint projection at the end of the quarter. It is too early to say whether it will remain at the midpoint for the year, or if we will see further slowdown.

Our complaint handling performance shows a decrease in complaints compared to the previous quarter. Of the 20 complaints made, eight were about the speed of completing registration applications. The information gained from customer complaints is used to identify areas where we can improve our performance.

### Legislation

My officials continue to work with SG officials on the regulations required to give effect to the scheme of registration under the Moveable Transactions (Scotland) Act 2023, with good progress being made.

## **Transparency of Land Ownership**

We continue to make good progress in delivering the benefits of a complete land register. Our estimations are that around 87% of addresses that regularly transact are now on the land register, and our total land mass coverage (taking into account land register, work in progress, and unlocking Sasines) is around 92.5% at the end of July.

At the end of July, the Unlocking Sasines data coverage was 34.5% land mass in Scotland. We [published a blog](#) in May inviting professional customers to access the dataset. The response has been very positive with over 50 enquiries for the data, not just from legal firms, but across other sectors such as energy, education, religious bodies, and local government. We are also hosting office-based sessions to support those professional customers who do not currently have the necessary mapping software to make use of the dataset remotely.

The next phases of activity are to investigate how we can provide the data on a platform accessible to all customers, including members of the public. We also took the opportunity to promote cross government collaboration [in a blog](#) highlighting how the work has enabled joint working between RoS and the Rural Payments and Inspections Division (RPID) at Scottish Government.

## **Digital Services**

### Proof of Concept - Embedded Title Sheet for Transfers of Part

We are due to start user research with customers to gain feedback on a proposal to change what we show on the title sheet for Transfers of Part. These applications can be some of the more time-consuming to process and require specialist skills from the staff involved. Initial discussions with the Law Society for Scotland have been positive as they can see potential benefits for solicitors. If this change is introduced, it will contribute to accelerating the clearance of our long-standing open casework.

## **People**

### We Invest in People (WIIP)

We achieved the Gold award for WIIP in 2021. A recent interim assessment marks the end of the 2nd year of the three-year assessment period. The full assessment for WIIP will be held in May 2024. We continue to meet the requirements for the Gold level accreditation. As with every WIIP report, the assessor made recommendations which are designed to progress us to where we want to be - potential for the Platinum award in 2024.

### We Invest in Young People (IIYP)

In April 2023 our assessor interviewed 30 colleagues as part of the IIYP assessment which forms part of a 3-year cycle ending in April 2026. We were assessed as achieving Silver accreditation and recommendations provided on additional activities that may support young people.

## EDI Mainstreaming

We published our [Equality and diversity mainstreaming report 2023](#) on 16 May 2023 and are currently refreshing our EDI Strategy and action plan to support us to achieve our mainstreaming outcomes. Our intention is to regularly communicate our EDI activity and any new developments, support, and resources available. An evaluation of the project to develop and publish the mainstreaming report is also underway to support the development of the next report, due in April 2025.

## Rethinking Recruitment

Our approach to recruitment is modernising to improve our recruitment processes and reduce the administrative burden, proactively targeting talent, reducing our reliance on contingent workers, and building our presence in the job market. Campaigns are being trialled currently for Executive Management Team roles and Finance, Digital, and User Experience vacancies.

## Grow Our Own (GOO)

New Grow Our Own programmes in Registration and Legal have had high levels of interest. We have appointed a number of colleagues in our Registration and Legal business areas who will start their journey of accelerated development in August. The GOO programme is a critical element of developing future expertise to support RoS work in digital, product, data, registration, and legal areas to enable us to either reduce our reliance on contingent workers in some of these areas or mitigate the risk of an aging workforce demographic and the imminent retirement of some of our most experienced colleagues.

## Pay 2023–24

Pay talks with PCS are underway and we hope to make a formal pay very shortly. We are in regular contact with SG officials to ensure that our proposals are in line with public sector pay policy.

## Strategic Workforce Planning

The Strategic Workforce Plan project has modelled the workforce over the lifetime of the corporate plan and identified potential changes and interventions required to ensure the workforce can achieve the strategic objectives. Given the priority to eradicate the longer-standing open casework, the initial focus has been on registration and digital areas of the business, however in due course the plan will include all business areas.

The plan has considered predictable changes that will impact the size and shape of the business such as the age of the workforce and attrition as well as interventions that would change the skills required including the introduction of new technology, principally automation and changes to products and services provided by RoS.

To clear open casework the modelling shows a need in the short term for more capacity and capability to tackle the more complex work, then a reduction in overall workforce, as the process of dealing with future casework becomes more straightforward. Some of this

can be achieved through automation resulting in the need for fewer lower grade staff who will be reskilled to work on open casework.

As the open casework declines over the next three years fewer overall caseworkers will be required and consequently fewer corporate resources to support the business.

The work of building more capacity and capability into the business has started through the initiatives mentioned above such as 'Grow our Own', rethinking recruitment and reward, accelerating training pathways, and identifying high performing individuals who can work at the higher grades.

## **Stakeholder Engagement**

RoS hosted a visit with the Minister for Community Wealth and Public Finance, Tom Arthur MSP, on Tuesday 15 August 2023 at our Saint Vincent Plaza, Glasgow offices. We provided the Minister with an update on our digitisation progress, new registers, and our support to public sector reform.

I attended my formal six-monthly meeting with the Law Society of Scotland Property Law Committee in June. This meeting is an opportunity for me to update a key stakeholder representative group with progress on the delivery of our strategic objectives, listen to their feedback on RoS services and answer their questions. Following feedback from the LSS PLC we have now added some additional information to our external performance pages that they felt would add value to their members. Other regular LSS PLC engagement has happened throughout the quarter to discuss other operational matters, and our regular programme of webinars and other mechanisms for communicating improvements and changes to our services has continued.

## **Finances**

Accounts for FY 22/23 remain subject to final audit and formal sign off at our September Board, though we anticipate returning some funds to the Scottish Consolidated Fund for FY 22/23. We remain on track to be broadly self-financing in this financial year with income from fees matching the cost to serve customers. Though, as noted above, we continue to monitor the housing market closely.

## **Estate**

A space sharing agreement is now in place with NatureScot. This is a flexible agreement with them occupying space on the 5th floor at Meadowbank House (MBH). Discussions have begun on some shared ventures to promote sustainability across both of our offices. This brings the total number of tenants in MBH up to 3 with a further 2 in the pipeline.

Work continues to develop an Estates Strategy to deliver effective and efficient workplaces for the future. A stakeholder engagement exercise has recently been completed with a wider staff survey planned. A key part of this strategy is to collaborate with the Scottish Government on their plans for the wider estate. We are now meeting regularly with the SG Property Division and have volunteered to participate in the upcoming Single Scottish Public Sector Estate project. A meeting has been arranged with the SG project manager to discuss our involvement.

## **Public Service Reform**

At the request of the Public Bodies Unit in SG, I provided a presentation to the Four Nations Public Service reform group of officials, providing a summary of how RoS is contributing to the public service reform agenda in Scotland. This type of engagement forms part of our work to share our experience of reforming our public service over the last few years, to support others in shaping the approach to PSR.

## **Other matters**

Further to the Ministers approval, our Tri-ennial Framework Document refresh has now been completed, and the revised document published externally on our website.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require anything further in relation to the information provided in this update, or if there are other aspects of RoS work that you would like to receive further updates on.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jennifer Henderson', written in a cursive style.

**JENNIFER HENDERSON**  
**Keeper of the Registers of Scotland**