

By Email

Daniel Johnson, MSP
Convenor Economy and Fair
Work Committee
economyandfairwork.committee@parliament.scot

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Our Ref: MC-079-2025

Reply to: Edinburgh Office
Department: Senior Management
Contact: Jennifer Henderson
Telephone: 0131 357 8199
Email: rossecretariat@ros.gov.uk
Date: 17 October 2025

Dear Mr Johnson

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 our agreed reporting. For ease of reading, I have outlined the latest updates against relevant headers below.

Performance

Key Performance Indicator (KPI) progress is updated quarterly on our external website, and the end of September position is [now available](#). The clearance rate of open casework is slightly slower than forecast, though it is continuing to reduce. We are also keeping pace with new applications despite intakes being above our mid scenario forecast and are continuing to deal promptly with expedite requests. The operational performance KPI is stable compared to the previous quarter.

Transparency of Land Ownership

At the end of September 2025, 96% of land mass coverage in Scotland was held in our Land Register (58.6%), casework in progress (4.9%), and Indicative Sasines data (32.4%).

Finance

We continue to anticipate a breakeven position this financial year, although will be closely monitoring the property market and related income.

Customers

Registers of Scotland continues to achieve high customer satisfaction, with Spring 2025 scores of 83.4 for professional customers and 80.5 for citizen customers, both well above the UK all-sector benchmark of 76.1. These results reflect our commitment to service excellence. We are currently completing our autumn fieldwork with the Institute of Customer Service, with updated scores expected later this month.

Over the past quarter, we have strengthened our customer proposition through the launch of our Customer Experience Strategy and are on track to implement a new Customer Charter to increase transparency. We have also developed a Channel Strategy that will modernise our customer interfaces, promote digital channels and customer self-service. As part of this work, we have recently updated our [website](#) to reflect changing customer needs and behaviours such as mobile phone usage. The ability to self-serve more information from our website has resulted in a significant reduction in emails to our customer services function, thereby delivering efficiency benefits for RoS as well as an improved customer experience.

Legislation

We gave Stage 1 evidence to the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee on the Crofting and Scottish Land Court Bill in October. The Bill makes several technical changes to Crofting law which impact on the Crofting Register under my management and control.

Commercial Services

RoS operates a number of commercial market-facing services in addition to its core statutory services. Phase one of our commercial fee review was implemented in August and is on track to meet the forecast level of required revenue this year. A new paid-for data product is scheduled to be launched in Q4 (Scottish National Polygon Service) that will bring Scotland into line with England and Wales and open up consequential geospatial data sales opportunities.

Stakeholder engagement

As noted in previous correspondence, Claire Baker MSP sponsored a Parliament Exhibition Stand on 24-26 June for RoS. We were able to speak to approximately 40 MSPs and their advisors about our services and how we can support them. Following this event, Ariane Burgess MSP visited our Edinburgh offices in September for a general overview and an update on key information we hold.

Digital Services

In September, we further developed automation services to support cases composed of more than one deed type (known as 'combos') taking automation of standard dealings to c45%. This follows the automation in Q1 of deeds transferring ownership of land and property and deeds that secure the loan for the purchase of land and property. The automation of registration of combos is a significant milestone in our automation journey that started c18 months ago. Over the next 6 months we will expand automation into partial automation of dealings, in which dealings requiring manual intervention can still be partially automated and taking total automation to c60%, releasing more colleagues to focus on completing more complex, outstanding casework.

In September, RoS met with the Digital Director at the Scottish Government, as part of the Once for Scotland series. This session addressed current and future outcomes across public services with a focus on supporting citizen access to services, cloud, and artificial intelligence. A number of opportunities were identified for future collaboration, including AI & Data, and Cyber Security & Operational Resilience where we have follow-on meetings scheduled with the SG digital team to explore how we leverage our

combined experience.

RoS has recently developed and secured Board approval for a comprehensive Cyber Resilience Strategy, designed to protect our systems, data, and services against current and emerging cyber threats. The strategy sets a clear roadmap for strengthening our defences, ensuring compliance with government standards, and embedding best practice across all areas of digital delivery. As noted above this is an area that we already work closely with the SG Digital team and as we continue to develop our collective capability we will continue to do so.

People

RoS have now made a full and final two-year pay offer for 2025-27. We are awaiting the results of the PCS ballot to determine next steps. Part of the pay offer included an agreement to develop a joint statement on organisational reform; work is already underway with our PCS colleagues to agree the wording for this statement.

In April 2025 we introduced a new pay framework to attract DDAT professionals and reduce our reliance on contingent workers. Six months later, offers of permanent employment have been accepted for 20 of the 29 roles targeted for contingent worker conversion this financial year. This initiative is on track to deliver the expected financial savings and improve the sustainability of our digital workforce.

We have a live, 12-point strategic workforce plan at enterprise level based on our workforce planning methodology and analysis. We also have plans at directorate level to address people risks and opportunities in each of our directorates. We have shared projections for workforce reductions for each year to 2029/30 with the SG, based on our strategic workforce planning assumptions.

As part of the AI governance framework, we now have a People & Communications AI working group in place. This group is scoping how we inform and equip colleagues to use available AI tools safely and effectively.

Our Q2 People Pulse Survey showed a 1% increase across all three of our measures: performance, engagement, and wellbeing (via the PERMA index). In addition, we participated in We Invest in People and Investors in Young People reviews. Both frameworks operate on a three-year accreditation cycle, and while the latest reviews were interim (with no change to our award status), they offered valuable insights to support continuous organisational development.

We have continued to progress actions aligned to our Diversity Mainstreaming outcomes. Recent examples include delivery of our Diversity & Inclusion communications plan, delivery of learning on neurodiversity, and completion of a number of key equality impact assessments. Having made amendments to the provision of facilities on our estate to meet the requirements of the Supreme Court ruling of 16 April regarding the definition of “sex” within the Equality Act, we have continued to review these changes alongside EHRC guidance, and practice examples from other public bodies, via our D&I Steering Group.

Estates

As part of our estate strategy, RoS is working closely with the SG Chief Surveyor's team to ensure full occupancy of the RoS Glasgow offices in St Vincent Plaza for the remainder of our current lease. RoS already hosts a number of other public bodies in this space, and we are currently engaged in detailed discussions with a potential future tenant. The SG Chief Surveyor will ensure that we are seeking Ministerial approval for any aspects of our proposed way forward, as required.

Public Service Reform

I attended the SG Executive Team meeting in August to present a paper on how RoS had reformed our services, and to share our lessons learned that could apply to the wider reform agenda. More detailed follow up discussions with relevant SG colleagues are now taking place.

Development of the next RoS corporate plan (2027-2032)

Work is underway to develop the next 5-year Corporate Plan for RoS (covering the period 2027-2032). By March 2027, we expect to have delivered the strategic objectives in our current 2022-2027 corporate plan, achieving our long-standing goal of meeting customer expectations for our speed of service. This gives us an opportunity to set a new overarching strategic priority for the next corporate plan, and to identify the activities that will support it. Our approach is evidence-based. We're drawing on customer and stakeholder feedback, colleague engagement surveys, external benchmarking, and our own internal strategies. We're also considering government policy, the wider legislative landscape, and technological developments across our sector. We are aiming to define our proposed strategic objectives for the next corporate plan by the end of this financial year. This will give us time to develop a detailed delivery plan and prepare the formal corporate plan for publication and launch in April 2027.

Further updates

Geovation Scotland

Cohort 7 of the Geovation Scotland accelerator have completed the first stage of the programme ('Validation') and have moved on to the 'Exploration' phase. The companies, who are working to address challenges in agritech, healthtech, proptech and biotech, have received support to validate and test their propositions, as well as practical advice on marketing, pitching, investment readiness, and data integration.

In the last quarter, external investment and funding raised by Geovation Scotland startups has increased by £3.5m to £8.8m. This additional funding has been received by Geovation alumni companies, including Map Mortar, EOLAS Insights Ltd and Rethink Carbon. In the same 3-month period, an additional 3 jobs have been created, bringing the total number of jobs created by Geovation Scotland startups to 113 FTE.

I do hope you find this helpful, and please do not hesitate to contact me if you require anything further in relation to the information provided in this update.

Yours sincerely

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

JENNIFER HENDERSON
Keeper of the Registers of Scotland