

By Email

Claire Baker, MSP
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Economy and Fair Work
Committee
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Reply to: Edinburgh Office
Department: Senior Management
Contact: Jennifer Henderson
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Date: 22 July 2024

Your Ref: N/A
Our Ref: MC-048-2024

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 our 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](#).

Operational performance continues to show improvements as new technology enhancements are introduced around automation of our more straightforward applications. Our KPI position remains similar to the previous quarter with our largest by volume land register product, Dealing with Whole (DW), ahead of the indicator and expected to remain so.

New applications to be processed for both First Registrations (FR) and Transfers of Part (TP) within 35 days is slightly behind the interim target. We expect FRs to remain behind indicator for the next few months, whereas TP is expected to recover and meet its indicator. However, the volume of open casework continues to reduce. We ended Q1 substantially ahead of our quarterly target for this metric and we expect this KPI to meet, or be ahead of its aim, for the remainder of the year.

The property market (volumes) have been close to the midpoint projections for Q1. It is too early to say whether they will remain at the midpoint for the remainder of the year.

Transparency of Land Ownership

At the end of June 2024, 95.4% of land mass coverage in Scotland was held in our Land Register (54.2%), casework in progress (6.5%), and Unlocking Sasines data (34.7%). In June we delivered an updated release of the Unlocking Sasines data to the

38 organisations currently piloting the dataset. Work is scheduled later in 2024/5 to investigate how to make the information more widely accessible.

Volumes of submissions to the Register of Persons holding a Controlled Interest in Land (RCI) continue to rise, including new submissions and as part of the ongoing duty to update the Register when an event occurs that affects the information held. We continue to support RCI enquiries via our online guidance materials.

Finance

The first few months of FY 2024-25 have performed well and our assumption that inflation and higher interest rates would continue to impact the volumes of new applications in 2024-25 was correct. However, our focus on clearing open cases more quickly has meant that our end of Q1 financial position was ahead of forecast. We remain on track to deliver a breakeven position again this year, with our fees fully covering our operational expenditure.

Digital Services

Automation of applications is an enabler for RoS to deliver our services more efficiently. At the end of March 2024, we launched automation for the discharge of standard security applications, and we are now exceeding the target monthly volume of automated applications. The next phase of automation will commence this month and is focussed on the automation of standard securities.

A number of organisations, representing a range of sectors, have begun working with RoS in readiness to use our new Application Programming Interfaces (APIs). The APIs provide considerable time savings for organisations that regularly seek property information from RoS, and firms submitting high volume casework, such as residential transactions.

People

Our We Invest in People accreditation assessment has taken place and we have maintained our Gold level award. We have also made positive progress across the framework, with 6 new themes now being assessed at Platinum level meaning that 21 of the 27 themes are now performing at the highest level.

We hosted a masterclass for Career Ready in our Edinburgh office, with 68 school pupils attending, and our Career Ready summer internship is now underway.

The pay and grading review of roles in our digital, data and technology (DDAT) function continues. We are underway with a job evaluation process, and making use of robust salary benchmarking data to develop a more attractive pay framework for DDAT staff. This will enable us to attract and retain permanent DDAT staff, thereby reducing our reliance on contractors to support the delivery of our digital services.

Recruitment has concluded to appoint new members to the RoS Board and RoS Audit and Risk Committee (ARC), including an ARC chair (designate), as current members reach their maximum terms of office. Further information on appointed members will be published in due course following pre-employment checks.

Public Service Reform

RoS continues to make good progress on delivering on our reform activities, aligned to the Public Service Reform (PSR) agenda. Should the committee wish to receive further information on our specific contribution to the PSR agenda we would be happy to provide a separate update on this aspect.

Other matters

Good progress continues to be made on the build of the two new registers required by the Moveable Transactions (Scotland) Act 2023. We are consulting, on behalf of Ministers, on the fee structure for the new registers. The consultation was published on 08 July 2024 and will run for 10 weeks. We will report the outcome of the Consultation after it closes on 16 September 2024.

RoS are supporting a range of broader policy decisions across SG including the Land Commission and Land Reform.

Our annual Customer Service Excellence (CSE) assessment was conducted in April 2024 in which we maintained our fully compliant accreditation and received an additional 4 “Compliance Plus” markings, reaffirming our strong customer focus.

Recruitment of cohort 6 of Geovation Scotland’s accelerator programme is now complete, with 6 early-stage startups working across transportation, infrastructure, emergency services and the built environment, awarded places for the duration of a year. To date, Geovation Scotland has supported 29 early-stage tech startups innovating in location, land and property technology to raise over £4.2 million of additional funding and investment and create 74 full time jobs.

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



JENNIFER HENDERSON
Keeper of the Registers of Scotland