

By Email

Claire Baker, MSP
Convener

Economy and Fair Work Committee
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Your Ref: N/A
Our Ref: MC-110-2023

Reply to: Edinburgh Office
Department: Senior Management
Contact: Jennifer Henderson
Telephone: 0131 357 8199
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Date: 03 November 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 September position](#) is now available.

Our KPI for dealing with new applications within 35 days remains slightly behind the interim target, though has improved from Q1. This is a result of focussing more capacity on older applications and related training, and movement of staff. The position is offset by the older applications KPI which is significantly above the top end of the target for Q2. We expect the new applications KPI to continue to move towards target as the year progresses and to be at target by year end. The balance of significantly greater progress on older cases is welcomed by customers and stakeholders and is helping to ensure our key objective of clearing long standing open casework by the end of the Corporate Plan period is achieved.

The property market (volumes) has been within expected range to this point in the year, though it has been towards the lower end of the range in most months. We are expecting the remainder of the year to be similar, with volumes in range but subdued.

Legislation

Good progress continues to be made on the build of the new registers required by the Moveable Transactions (Scotland) Act 2023. My officials continue to work with SG officials on the regulations required to give effect to the scheme of registration.

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 94%.

Digital Services

Our autumn satisfaction survey across our business and citizen customers is currently live and is conducted by the Institute of Customer Services. It allows us to benchmark our performance against national and local public sector bodies as well as the private sector. In addition to capturing our KPI for customer satisfaction, this survey also captures our customer effort score. This tells us how easy our customers find it to use our online services. The survey will close on 6 November but already participation is up by 15 per cent. Our current score is 3.2 and this puts us well ahead of the 5.7 score for national public services. We use the insight gained from this survey to improve our digital services.

In May 2022 we launched a new service which allows our business customers to access and download the copy deeds they require from our Sasine Register. This service has increased in uptake consistently over the last 18 months to now account for over 76% of the deeds available to be supplied in this way. Customer feedback is very positive on the convenience and accessibility of this service, and our improvements plans include the development needed to expand the service as well as increasing the percentage of self-serve.

People

Wellbeing

To support a shift towards a more enabled culture with colleagues who are well to perform at their best, we have launched the following initiatives during the last quarter: We re-launched our Wellbeing hub to make it more engaging and easier to use so that colleagues can better leverage the support that is available. We recognised World Mental Health Day through colleague blogs on their personal wellbeing journeys. We've been partnering with the Menopause Café to launch a quarterly menopause group in RoS, kicking off in October in alignment with World Menopause Day. Finally, we are planning for our second We Invest in Wellbeing assessment which will take place in November.

Employee Value Proposition / Employer Brand

We have approved the proposal from our People and Change team to launch an Employee Value Proposition/Employer Brand project, and stage one of this project will kick off in November.

Civil Service People Survey (CSPS)

The CSPS launched 19 September with a closing date of 23 October. We achieved a 77% response rate which is better than our stated KPI of 71% for participation. Results are expected late November / early December at which point we will review the data which will give us insight on the impact of our people strategy and interventions over the past 12 months.

Recruitment

Our approach to recruitment has been modernised to improve our recruitment processes. Campaigns for Executive Management Team (EMT) roles, and Finance, Digital and User Experience vacancies have resulted in excellent hires to EMT, and the Senior Finance team so far. We are about to go out to market for our last EMT vacancy - Director of Operational Services.

Grow Our Own (GOO)

In support of our strategic workforce planning priorities, and to ensure we have the right people with the right skills in the right place, affordably, we have made positive progression with our second GOO cohort. Colleagues started their new GOO roles in Registration and Policy & Legal in August and are performing well.

Pay 2023 –24

A two year pay deal has been agreed with Public Commercial Services Union and is now in place.

Stakeholder Engagement

I attended (virtually) the Registrar of Title Conference (ROTC) which was hosted this year by Victoria, Australia. I presented at the conference on the Register of Persons Holding a Controlled Interest in Land - which was of significant interest to attendees as a number of jurisdictions are considering similar transparency regimes. Other topics of common interest at the conference were the use of automation to support land registration and the ethics of using AI to support decision making. Both are issues which are under active consideration in RoS.

Finances

End year accounts and the annual report were laid in the Parliament in September, with an unqualified opinion from our auditor. We remain on track to be broadly self-financing in this financial year with income from fees matching the cost to serve customers. Though we continue to monitor the housing market closely because of its importance to our income levels.

Estate

RoS attended the first meeting of the Single Scottish Public Sector Property Forum. The purpose of the forum is to bring together estate leads from organisations across

Scotland. The meeting covered various topics such as the role of the forum, Net Zero and the sharing of best practice. Due to our ambitions to share our buildings there are anticipated benefits being part of this group.

Other matters

I am pleased to advise that we have appointed two new Directors to our Executive Management Team; David Blair as Director for Customer and Business Development, and Martin Burns as Director of Digital, Data and Technology. Both David and Martin have experience in strategic leadership roles across the public and private sectors, and their knowledge and experience will help RoS continue to enable our digital transformation, and focus on our strategies for customer service, communications, and external engagement.

During October we will also begin executive level discussions with National Records of Scotland (NRS) to explore shared strategic goals regarding preservation and access to information.

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