



**Registers
of Scotland**
ros.gov.uk

Registers of Scotland

Corporate Plan 2015 - 2018



Contents

	Paragraph
Foreword	
Introduction	1
Background	2
Our vision	3
Our values	4
The period of this plan: 2015-2018	7
Our strategic objectives	11
Our key challenges	12
• our legislation	13
• land register completion	17
• our commercial activities	23
• our digital transformation	28
Our people	33
Our estate	38
Risk and business continuity	40
Ministerial financial targets 2014-15	42
Keeper's service standards	43
Line of sight to strategic objectives:	45
• Directorate objectives and plans	46
• Personal objectives and performance development framework	47
Our transaction volumes	48
Our financial plans	51
Conclusion	57
Appendix	64

Foreword



Sheenagh Adams

Keeper of the Registers of Scotland

The next three years represent a period of potentially significant change. The UK general election will take place in May, followed by the Scottish Parliament election in 2016. By then, we will have major land reform legislation in place, and we also await the legislation based on the recommendations of the Smith Commission, which could have a huge impact on Scotland's constitutional future. As ever, Registers of Scotland (RoS) needs to be ready to adapt to change and to embrace the challenges ahead of us.

After a significant decrease in the volume of property sales during the economic downturn, 2014-15 saw the market return to sustained increases in both volumes and property prices. This looks set to continue for the immediate future, giving us some certainty of the amount of work we'll be undertaking over the next three years.

One of our main priorities for the years ahead will be to make significant progress with the land register completion project. With a target of completing the register by 2024, including registering all public land by 2019, the next three years will be crucial in raising awareness, promoting voluntary registration, and using my new keeper-induced registration (KIR) powers.

After years of preparation, the Land Registration etc. (Scotland) Act 2012 (the 2012 Act) came into force in December last year. A huge amount of work went into preparing our new systems and processes, as well as engaging with stakeholders to ensure they were ready for the change. While we will continually seek to improve our systems and adapt to user feedback, our focus now shifts to embedding these changes into the day to day running of the business, so that they become second nature to our staff and customers.

As well as making changes to registration law and practice, the 2012 Act also gives us commercial powers that will enable us to develop new products and services, both in relation to registration and more widely. Our aim is to offer a greater range of online services, like our new reports service, all of which will be designed with the customer at the forefront.

In March this year, I was delighted to accept the Deputy First Minister John Swinney's, invitation to take the lead in developing a one-stop, digital land and property information system for Scotland. I will be working with a small group that represents the public and private sector interests in this area and stakeholders such as the Law Society of Scotland and the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. This work will sit well with our plans for the digital transformation of RoS' business.

Much of our work – like the new advance notice service – is already digital, and this is a transformation that we will roll-out across our business over the coming three years. As well as protecting the environment, a more-digital organisation will improve our business efficiency, flexibility and responsiveness to customers.

By investing in digital, we will not only create and provide better access to our legally-correct and secure registers, but we will also be able to exceed customers' expectations, realise commercial opportunities and support Scotland's Economic Strategy, to the significant benefit of the people of Scotland.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sheenagh Adams". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sheenagh Adams

Keeper of the Registers of Scotland

Introduction

1. This corporate plan sets out our vision for the future and the strategic objectives we have set to achieve it. The plan also details what we will deliver within the period 2015-18 along with the financial targets set for us by Scottish Ministers, the service standards set by the keeper and our budget for 2015-18.

Background

2. RoS is a key part of the infrastructure that supports the Scottish economy. We are a trading fund, covering our expenditure from the income we receive for the services we provide. We receive no central government funding other than for some specific projects undertaken on behalf of the Scottish Government. We underpin the Scottish property market by maintaining and developing several property and court registers, including the Land Register of Scotland and its precursor, the General Register of Sasines. We provide public access to up-to-date and reliable information from these registers. Information from our registers is an essential component of the operation of the Scottish property market. As expert registrars, we set the standard in the way that information about land and property is captured, held, analysed and made available.

Our vision

3. Our work is informed by our vision, which is:

“to deliver customer-focussed registration and information that creates value for Scotland”.

4. Our vision is supported by our values and our strategic objectives.

Our values

5. At the heart of our business are our values. We are:

- impartial – we act without bias, keeping information secure and presenting it accurately;
- forward thinking – we must always add value for the public of Scotland, finding better ways to deliver what they and the Scottish economy need;
- professional – we recognise that customers need us to be efficient and effective and to work with pace, passion and pride; and
- customer-focussed – we strive to understand what our customers need and why so that we can design our processes and services for them.

6. These values inform the way we approach our work, guide us in the way we deliver services, help us to recognise our contribution to the Scottish economy, and direct the way we interact with each other and with our customers.

The period of this plan: 2015-18

7. This plan sets out our ambitions for the next three years. Within this period, Scotland's constitutional future is likely to be shaped further by legislation following on from the work undertaken by the Smith Commission and RoS will play its part wherever required. The land reform agenda continues apace and a Land Reform (Scotland) Bill will be considered by the Scottish Parliament over the early stages of this plan. Its provisions will have a major impact on land management and ownership. We will identify how we can best contribute our expertise and knowledge to the debate.
8. We will continue to support economic growth and ensure that best use is made of our data to enable wider benefits for society. Whilst meeting our statutory responsibilities, we will continue to improve quality and efficiency across the business, as well as working with public sector partners to progress the government's "joined up" agenda.
9. We operate in a challenging environment, which continues to be subject to levels of uncertainty. The volume of transactions in the property market is the key driver that dictates the amount of work that we undertake. There has been a sustained rise in applications for registration over 2014-15 when compared to the previous year and indications are that this increase will continue for the next few years.
10. We have agreed with the Minister for Business, Energy and Tourism that our fees for statutory products and services will not increase until at least 2017. In addition, we will bring forward in 2015 an amendment to our fee order to provide for a 25 per cent reduction on our fees for voluntary registration. Our next fee review will therefore take place in 2016-17.

11. There are four key challenges for our work over the next three years:

1

to embed the 2012 Act and the changes it brought into our business operations;

2

to use our commercial powers under the 2012 Act to develop new products and services both in relation to matters of registration and more widely;

3

to work more quickly towards completion of the land register; and

4

to complete a digital transformation.

12. The start of this plan period also sees the introduction of land and buildings transaction tax (LBTT) on 1 April 2015, to replace UK stamp duty land tax. RoS has worked closely with Revenue Scotland to ensure that the legal and administrative changes required for registration and recording in the keeper's registers of those deeds affected by the new tax regime come into operation smoothly and best support the needs of both Revenue Scotland and taxpayers. We will continue to liaise closely with Revenue Scotland to embed the changes into the land registration process.

Our strategic objectives

13. Our five strategic objectives, which are aligned to the Scottish Government's Purpose, National Outcomes, Programme for Government and economic and digital strategies, are to:

1 | ensure the integrity of the registers under the keeper's control;

2 | build a commercially and environmentally sustainable business;

3 | improve our services and products by understanding and collaborating with our customers;

4 | promote continuous improvements that focus on providing public value; and

5 | promote a positive culture where staff are flexible, skilled and creative.

14. We will make progress against all of these objectives over the three years of this plan and deliver the associated outcomes. For the financial year 2015-16, we have agreed specific targets, service standards and actions to help us deliver each objective. Progress will be monitored throughout the year and reported to the RoS board quarterly.

Our key challenges

15. Our core business is maintaining and updating the data in the 17 registers we hold and making their content publicly available. The needs of our customers and stakeholders are not static and over the three years of this plan we will make changes in the four key areas set out in paragraph 11 to address these.

Our legislation

16. The 2012 Act, which commenced on 8 December 2014, brought the biggest change in conveyancing practice since the inception of the land register in 1979. The policies and operational processes we set for the 2012 Act are now in use for actual transaction volumes, allowing review and refinement in the new "business as usual" environment. We will, in conjunction with customer feedback, adapt and manage the consequences of the changes and continue to develop the IT systems underpinning registration. The lessons learned will be applied to realising the 2012 Act's benefits and to move us into a fully-2012 Act environment.

17. In the run up to the commencement of the 2012 Act, there was a very large increase in applications being received as solicitors completed their clients' transactions under the familiar terms of the Land Registration (Scotland) Act 1979 (the 1979 Act). A record number of applications to the land register in a single day were received on the last day of 1979 Act operations: 4,250 rather than the more usual 1,200: this substantially increased our stock of work to be completed under the old legislation. RoS intends to complete all remaining 1979 Act applications currently with the keeper by 8 December 2015, and a single business unit with its own business manager and dedicated staff has been created to ensure this target is met.

18. The majority of our staff have now been trained in the new 2012 Act practices and we will continue to train the remaining staff over the first year of this plan as they are released from 1979 Act work. In undertaking registration work, we will continue to monitor our operational structure, as well as appropriate staff numbers and mix of skills to deliver efficient, high quality, value for money outcomes for our customers and stakeholders.

19. *This work contributes directly towards our strategic objective 1.*

Land register completion

20. Last year, the Scottish Ministers invited the keeper to complete the land register in 10 years and, as an expression of their commitment, set a target of five years for registration of all publically-owned land. Property market sales actively contribute to land register completion and a buoyant market helps speed up this process but not enough to achieve completion in an acceptable timescale. To accelerate completion of the land register, the keeper will use her new powers under the 2012 Act to encourage voluntary registration and to register property without an application through the process of KIR. These activities will accelerate the pace of transferring properties remaining in the historic sasine register into the modern, map-based land register.
21. A completed land register will be a national asset for Scotland and will bring a number of economic benefits. It will reduce the cost and increase the speed of transacting in property; it will also provide a single, easily-searchable register that will transparently show who owns land and property in Scotland. In addition, RoS will reduce its own costs by maintaining only one, not two, registers of land and property.
22. RoS consulted publicly in autumn 2014 on our approach to land register completion and the final report was published in February 2015. Stakeholders were broadly in support of our approach to closing the sasine register to standard securities, encouraging voluntary registrations by reducing the registration fee, and running pilots to develop policy on the use of KIR.
23. RoS is running a number of KIR pilot schemes to gauge the practical issues in registering land in the absence of a current conveyancing transaction and will consult on our approach to KIR in summer 2015. The pilots cover a wide and disparate array of properties, rural and urban, from modern houses and flats to heritage assets, small plots to large estates, and land in public, private and third sector ownership. The outcomes of the pilot schemes will inform a further set of firm policy proposals on the next steps towards completion.
24. The RoS board fully supports the aim of finding cost-effective ways of transferring properties into the land register and have agreed that we focus on delivering significant progress in this area over the three years of this plan.
25. *This work contributes directly towards our strategic objectives 1 and 4.*

Our commercial activities

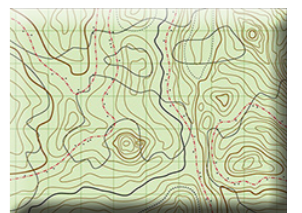
26. The 2012 Act gave RoS powers to expand our existing commercial activities and provide products and services out with our statutory obligations. The first phase of this was the introduction of a digital service providing a new suite of property reports to meet the requirements of the 2012 Act. This has proved successful, with the search and reports service achieving significant increases in volumes and income. Other products and services will follow during 2015 as our online portal is expanded to include pre-registration searches, development plan approval, title investigations and bulk data reports. This is only a small part of what can be achieved as we embark on our digital transformation project over the next three years. Customer input and agile development will ensure that any future services have buy-in from the outset and are fit for purpose.
27. The data held in the registers is one of our most important and valuable assets, both commercially and as a source of information for Scotland. Improved access to data through digitisation will allow commercial partnerships to develop and greater opportunities to share open data. In line with the Scottish government's digital strategy, we will explore how RoS can bring greater value to the information marketplace. Early in 2015, the project looking at data quality will provide a number of action plans to improve the accessibility of RoS' data and a roadmap for potential opportunities. Working closely with key stakeholders, including the Law Society of Scotland and other system providers, we will drive forward digitisation of the conveyancing process to make it easier, faster and more cost-effective for people and businesses transacting with property.
28. The new ros.gov.uk website provides an improved communication and sales channel and will continuously be developed during the life of this corporate plan. More services will be available through both our eServices portal and our website. We recognise that these will continue to evolve and we plan to develop a multi-disciplined team able to respond rapidly to both technological and market changes, and to drive continued improvement.
29. Our aims for 2015-16 start with further active engagement with our customers to determine what their expectations of us are and to feed this information into all aspects of our future changes. Key focus for the account management team is to continue to engage with a wide range of customers to promote the use of voluntary registration in contributing to the completion of the land register.
30. *This work contributes directly towards our strategic objectives 2, 3 and 4.*

Our digital transformation

31. We intend to improve our business efficiency, flexibility and responsiveness to customers and, as an IT-dependent business, we will undertake a digital transformation programme to provide strong foundations for the future. Effectively meeting the challenges of the 2012 Act changes, land register completion and fully utilising our commercial opportunities to meet market needs are all enabled by a better use of technology. Therefore, by December 2017, we will create and provide new services and better access to our legally correct and secure digital registers, exceeding customers' expectations and realising commercial opportunities for the benefit of the people of Scotland.
32. We will deliver this outcome by ensuring that our services will always be delivered digitally as the first option where it is practical and efficient to do so. Our digital services will be designed around the needs of our customers and other stakeholders. We are determined that our digital solutions will be business-led and will deliver real business benefits to RoS and our customers. We are particularly conscious that our digital systems should be built on adaptable, open and robust IT platforms, with an emphasis on interoperability with our customers and stakeholders.
33. Benefits realised will include: an effective system for the eLodgement of applications to our registers as a stepping stone to eRegistration; digital access to our registers in a way that meets the needs of our customers and lays strong foundations for a land and property information system for Scotland; digital tools that support the completion of the land register together with cost savings and efficiency benefits. In short, RoS will be able to be more efficient, effective and undertake new work on this basis.
34. The changes will also unlock public value by supporting economic growth by reducing transactional costs for both customers and RoS, offering integrated access to marketplace information and surpassing expectations of citizens, investors and government of a digitally-enabled Scotland.
35. *This work contributes directly towards our strategic objectives 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.*
36. In addressing these four key challenges we will continue to rely on our people and on our office systems in the widest sense of our physical and virtual environments.

Our people

37. Our people are our main asset and we will continue to invest in their on-going development by delivering the commitments in our learning and organisational development strategy to ensure we have the necessary skills to deliver service of the highest standards to our customers. The changes in our processes under the 2012 Act should allow us to increase the multi-skilling of our staff, giving many colleagues more variety of work and providing RoS with flexibility to meet a diverse range of circumstances.
38. We will continue to run our successful Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) programme, with staff given the opportunity to gain nationally recognised qualifications, including the bespoke professional registration qualification that is aligned to the SCQF.
39. We are also introducing, in 2015, new leadership and management development programmes leading to professional accreditation. The management development programme will be compulsory for new managers and existing managers will be able to refresh their skills and/or upgrade their professional qualifications. We are proud to include in our staff complement young people under the Scottish Government Modern Apprenticeship Scheme and will implement the third tranche of our Modern Apprenticeship Scheme during 2015-16.
40. Our focus on our people will be maintained with a move to e-HR, commencing in April 2015. This will progressively roll out across functions such as performance and development management, recruitment and payroll.
41. *This work contributes directly towards our strategic objectives 4 and 5.*



Our people
are our
main asset

Our estate

42. We will undertake an accommodation review of our future requirements for the near to medium term. The suitability of existing building configurations for modern business operations, including environmental factors such as energy usage and efficiency, and the need for space and power as technology becomes increasingly virtual, will all be considered. We will also ensure that we make our contribution to the Scottish Government's environmental targets.

43. *This work contributes directly towards our strategic objectives 2, 4 and 5.*

Risk and business continuity

44. Like all organisations, we face challenges and risks to the achievement of our strategic objectives. We manage risk as an integral part of our system of internal control through local risk registers and we escalate risks through the corporate governance structure to our board. More specialised risks are assessed by other governance groups responsible for information assurance and departmental security.

45. Our key risk register operates as a live register, updated regularly after review by our executive management team, audit committee and board. We review our risk appetite at least annually and this influences decisions in all key activities. We have a business continuity management structure to ensure that we are ready to deal with both short term and major business disruptions.

Ministerial financial targets for 2015-16

46. Scottish ministers have set the Keeper the following financial targets:

- to deliver 3% efficiency savings; and
- to increase RoS' commercial income by 5%.

Keeper's service standards for 2015-16

47. The keeper has set the following service standards:

1. Record new Land Register applications on the application record.	Within one working day
2. Process automated registration of title to land applications	Within 24 hours
3. Process Chancery and Judicial Registers applications	Within three working days
4. Process Crofting Registers applications	Within three working days
5. Process General Register of Sasines applications	Within 20 working days
6. Register applications for deeds affecting registered land ¹	Within 30 working days
7. Register applications for deeds affecting unregistered land (standard) ²	Within 40 working days
8. Register other applications for deeds affecting unregistered land	Within six months
9. Register applications for deeds affecting part of registered land ³	Within nine months
10. Complete all 1979 Act casework	By 8 December 2015
11. Process all enquiries to our customer service centres	Within two working days
12. Increase our Public Service Quality Index rating	Achieve a score of 74
13. Complete 98.5% or more of registrations, over a 12 month rolling period, without corrective action	

¹ This applies to applications that were called Dealings with Whole under the 1979 Act. The target applies to applications for deeds affecting registered land that are not dependent on prior or same date applications for deeds affecting unregistered land or part of registered land. Where such prior or same day applications exist, the application for the deed affecting registered land will be delivered to the appropriate Service Standard for prior or same day application.

² This applies to applications that were called First Registrations under the 1979 Act. Relevant applications are those upon which no pre-work has been carried out. Those applications affecting unregistered land that are dependent on applications for deeds affecting a part of registered land will be delivered to the latter Service Standard.

³ This applies to applications that were called Transfers of Part under the 1979 Act: they are applications that result in the subdivision of an existing registered plot of land.

48. These service standards relate to the keeper's statutory services. Service standards for commercial services, such as our property reports, are published on our website.

Delivery of our strategic objectives

49. This plan is underpinned by a hierarchy of objectives set for our directors, managers, and all individuals in teams to ensure delivery of our strategic objectives. Chief among these are directorate objectives and plans.

Directorate objectives and plans

50. Each of our directorates has a directorate plan that incorporates objectives at directorate level and identifies the specific activities required to achieve RoS' targets and outcomes, and through these to our strategic objectives. Responsibility for delivery of these directorate plans resides with individual executive directors and progress against specific measures is tracked throughout the year.

Personal objectives and performance development framework

51. Each member of staff is set annual personal objectives that are linked to the directorate objectives and activities and, in turn, the strategic objectives. We provide appropriate personal development training for all staff to ensure that they have the skills and experience to achieve their personal objectives. Progress against personal objectives is assessed at mid-year and end-year as part of our employee appraisal process.

52. Our programme of projects and business change is also aligned to our strategic objectives with senior managers assigned to leadership roles, supported by appropriate reporting and control mechanisms.

Our transaction volumes

53. Our income comes from fees for registration of deeds and other documents in our registers and the provision of information from them. Our property registers handle the largest volumes of both registrations and enquiries. In compiling our projections for the work we expect to undertake over the period of this plan, we both apply our own expertise to our forecasts, and also take account of forecasts undertaken by government, lenders and other institutions with expertise in the property market.

54. Last year saw the market return to sustained increases in both volumes and property prices and this looks set to continue for the immediate future. The 2012 Act also brought in more triggers for first registration on the land register as well as new types of applications, such as advance notices. We consider that the total volume of applications we will receive for our property registers are 534,000, 581,000 and 623,000 in years one, two and three respectively. However, this is only part of the story under the 2012 Act.

55. In addition to the numbers of registrations arising from the property and mortgage markets, we intend to make significant progress with the land register completion project. We are in discussion with a wide range of property owners whose titles are still in the sasine register across the private, public and third sectors. We are encouraged that in responding to our public consultation, stakeholders were broadly in support of our approach to closing the sasine register to standard securities, encouraging voluntary registrations by reducing the registration fee and running pilots to develop policy on the use of KIR. In addition, we will develop this approach further in 2015-16 by moving from piloting KIR to a larger scale programme to bring significant and increasing extra numbers of titles into the land register and our financial plans below include this work.



Our property registers handle the largest volumes of both registrations and enquiries

Our financial plans

56. Our financial plans are set out below.

Income/expenditure	2015-16 £m	2016-7 £m	2017-18 £m
Revenue	75.8	79.7	85.6
Administration costs	71.4	78.0	80.6
Profit/(loss)	4.3	1.6	5.0

Breakdown of revenue	2015-16 £m	2016-7 £m	2017-18 £m
Property registers	65.6	69.4	75.2
Other income	10.2	10.2	10.4
Total	75.8	79.7	85.6

Conclusion

57. The period 2015-18 will be a challenging time for RoS as we embed changes arising from the 2012 Act and LBTT into our processes whilst accelerating the completion of the land register and delivering our digital transformation. It will also be an exciting time as we seize the opportunities and realise the benefits provided by legislative and technological changes, enabling us to improve services to our customers and offer increased value for money. We particularly relish the challenges ahead as the planned outcomes will both be better for our customers and more efficient for RoS.

Scottish Government National Performance Framework

This table shows the links between the RoS Strategic Objectives and the Scottish Government National Performance Framework.

Scottish Government National Outcomes	RoS Strategic Objectives				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe.	X	X	X	X	
2. We realise our full economic potential with more and better more and better employment opportunities for our people.	X	X	X	X	
3. We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research.					X
9. We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger.	X				
12. We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations.	X				
14. We reduce the local and global environment impact of our consumption and production.					X
16. Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.	X	X	X	X	



**Registers
of Scotland**
ros.gov.uk

For further information about
Registers of Scotland, our products and
services contact:

Principal Office

Meadowbank House
153 London Road
Edinburgh EH8 7AU
LP 50 Edinburgh 5
DX 550906 Edinburgh 9
Tel. 0800 169 9391
Email. customer.services@ros.gov.uk
Textphone Users. 0131 528 3836

Glasgow Office

Hanover House
24 Douglas Street
Glasgow G2 7NQ
LP 12 Glasgow 5
DX 501752 Glasgow 9
Tel. 0800 169 9391
Email. customer.services@ros.gov.uk

