



Registers
of Scotland

Registers of Scotland

Corporate Plan

2016 – 2019



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Keeper's foreword

2016-19 will see Registers of Scotland transform from a largely paper-based registration department to an information business – and we will do this with the help and support of our customers, stakeholders and staff. Three years from now, our world will be digital; and how our customers journey through the services we provide and how our staff deliver them will be very different. I expect to see more change at RoS over the next three years than I've seen at any time or any place in my career so far.



RoS has been planning and preparing for transformational change over the last few years. We now have in place the foundations we need: the legislation, the commitment to completing the land register, control over our own IT, the financial benefits of our trading fund status, the leadership and professional skills, and the drive and determination to succeed. But we will continue to provide certainty in this time of substantial change.

The three years ahead promise to be exciting, both for us and for the country as a whole. On the national stage, the elections to the Scottish parliament take place in May 2016 and those to the 32 local authorities a year later. Scotland's constitutional future may be devolved further as Westminster considers the Scotland Bill. And our future in the European Union will be decided in a UK-wide referendum.

Within RoS, our land register completion programme will continue apace. By the end of 2019, we will have completed registration of all public land in Scotland. We will also have added several hundred thousand titles to the land register through keeper-induced registration and a substantial number of voluntary registrations.

Our digitally-delivered business transformation programme will be largely completed over the period of this plan.

At the heart of this lies the use of innovative, customer-centric digital channels and technologies, for example new mapping and case management products, which will enable us to better deliver our registration and information business and so remove much of the paper handling and processing that has been at the core of our workflow for centuries. Our collaboration with the Law Society of Scotland and the Council of Mortgage Lenders will continue, and we look forward to the development of our new electronic mortgage discharge system during the course of this year, a system that will not simply replicate the current paper-based discharge process but streamline and simplify the process for all. And we'll be working with colleagues across local and national government to develop ScotLIS, a new land and property information system for the citizens and businesses of Scotland.

In the midst of these technological advances, old meets new in 2017 when we will celebrate the 400th anniversary of the oldest public land register in the world, the General Register of Sasines. We'll be marking the year with a series of special events, from hosting the international Registrars of Title conference to commissioning a new piece of public art. With the Sasine register a major influencer on other land registration systems around the world, this is a momentous occasion for both RoS and Scotland as a whole, and one that we can all be very proud of.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sheenagh Adams". The signature is fluid and cursive.

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 details what we will deliver within the period 2016-19 along with the financial targets set for us by Scottish ministers and the service standards set by the keeper for 2016-17, and our forecast income and expenditure for 2016-19.
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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. Such information 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.
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Our vision

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

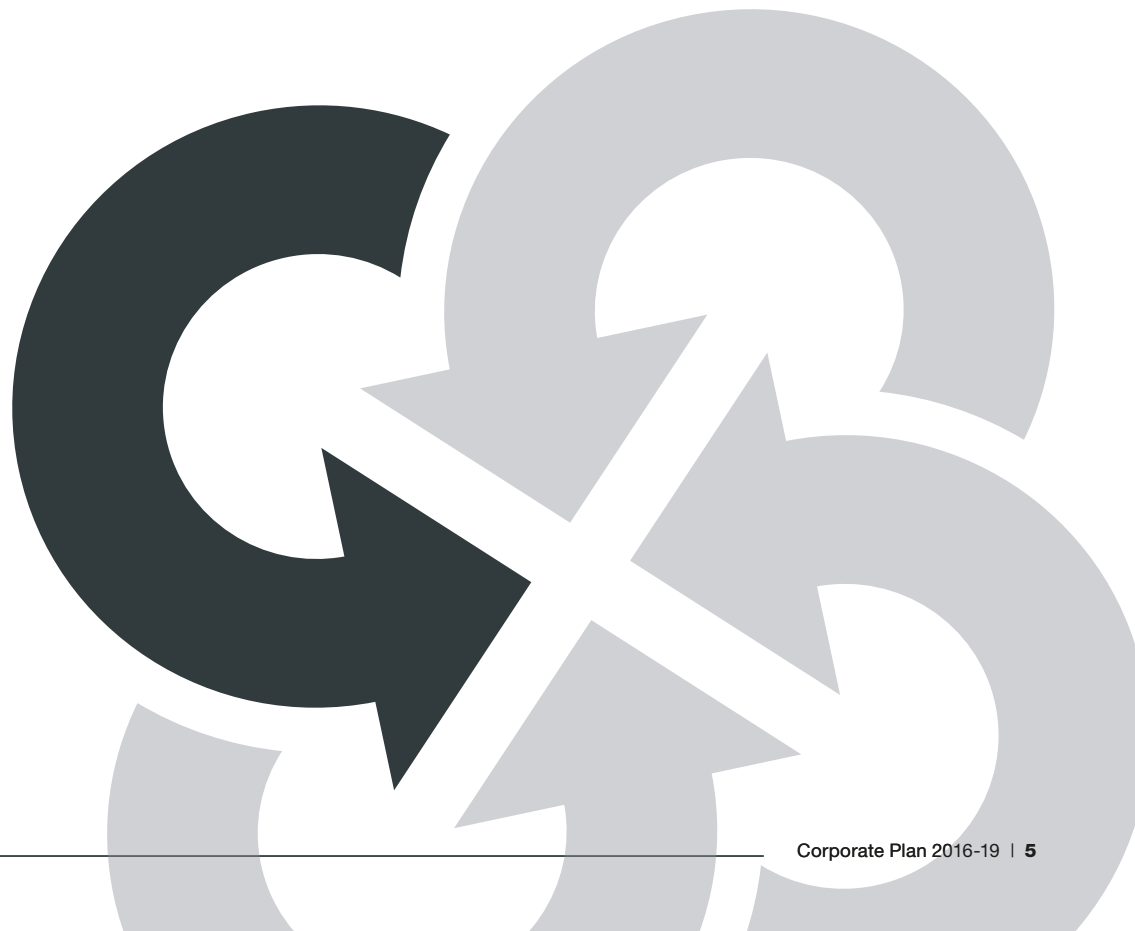
“to deliver customer-focussed registration and information that creates value for Scotland”
- 4.** Our vision is supported by our values and our strategic objectives.

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
- 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: 2016-19

- 7.** This plan sets out our ambitions for the next three years. Scotland's constitutional future is likely to change in this period as the Scotland Bill currently being considered by the UK parliament will, if enacted, extend the devolved competence of the Scottish parliament. At Holyrood, the land reform agenda continues apace with the already enacted Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, as well as the Land Reform (Scotland) Bill, expected to be passed by the Scottish parliament in March 2016. Both the 2015 Act and the Land Reform Bill impose new statutory duties on the keeper. We will continue to work with colleagues in Scottish government to contribute our expertise and knowledge to the development of policy and, of course, we will fulfil whatever additional statutory duties parliament places on the keeper.
- 8.** We will continue to support economic growth and ensure that best use is made of our data to enable wider benefits for society. While 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, especially in transfers of title and mortgaging, is the key driver that dictates the amount of work that we undertake. There has been a sustained rise of over nine per cent in applications for registration over 2015-2016 when compared to the previous year. We will continue to monitor the property market and the overall economic landscape in order to keep our projections on transaction volumes and other assumptions up to date.
- 10.** We have agreed with the minister for business, energy and tourism that our fees for statutory products and services, including the 25 per cent reduction on our fees for voluntary registration, will not change until at least April 2017. Our next fee review will therefore take place in 2016-17.
- 11.** The key challenges for our work over the next three years are to:

1

work towards completion of the land register

2

use our commercial powers to support registration and increase use of our information

3

transform our business through digital change



Our strategic objectives

12. 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

5

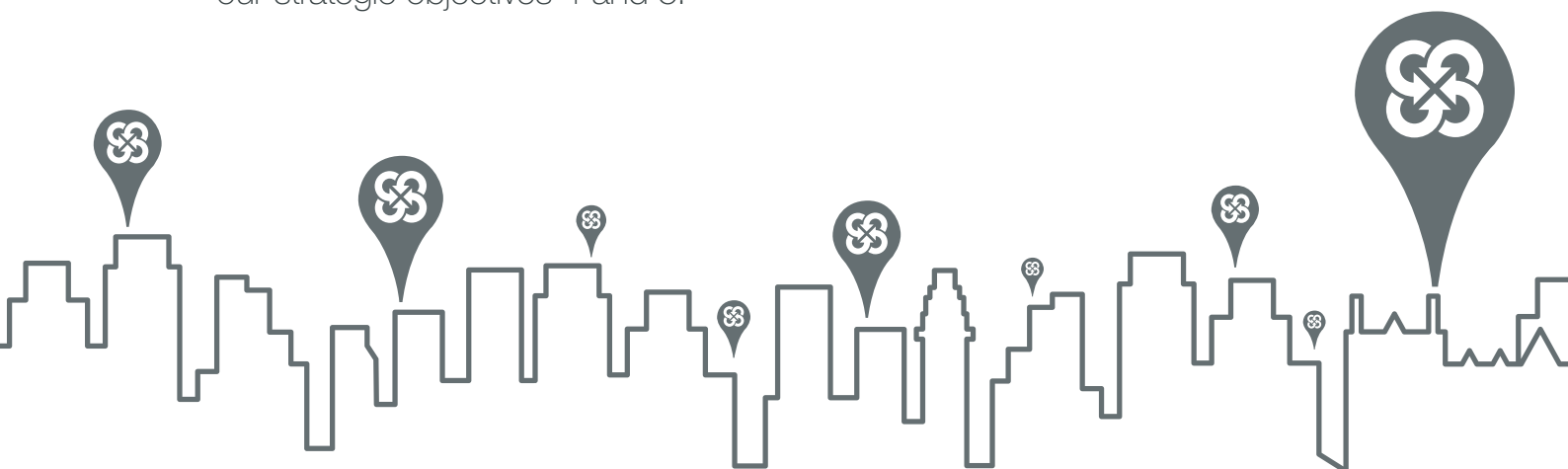
promote a positive culture where staff are flexible, skilled and creative

13. 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 2016-17, 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 people

- 14.** Our people are a vital asset and our commitment to their performance and wellbeing is reflected in our people@ros strategy. To sustain high performance standards and continuous improvement, we will continue to invest in ongoing development by delivering the commitments in our learning and organisational development strategy. This will ensure our people have the necessary knowledge, skills and motivation to deliver services of the highest quality to our customers. Responding to changing customer requirements, our commitment to completing the land register, and our business transformation programme are all key drivers to enhance the knowledge and skills of our people. By giving colleagues more variety of work, RoS will have the flexibility and agility required to meet a diverse range of customer requirements, both now and in the future.
- 15.** During 2016-17, we will grow our leadership capability by continuing to invest significantly in management development programmes, with some 50 managers working towards new or upgraded professional accreditation. Looking ahead, the management development programme will be undertaken by newly appointed or promoted managers, with existing managers also able to access the programme's modules to refresh their skills and/or upgrade their professional accreditation.
- 16.** Across the business, a range of professional, technical and competency-based learning opportunities will be developed or updated in consultation with teams and individuals. These will be designed to ensure that our people are equipped and confident in delivering our current and future strategic objectives, and meeting our customers' needs. We are proud of our modern apprentice programme and this will continue, as we also look at designing and implementing additional vocational and sponsorship programmes to recruit and retain a diverse workforce for the future.
- 17.** Aligned to our business transformation programme, we will see an increase in our organisational development activity during 2016-17 as we seek to expand the knowledge, wellbeing and effectiveness of our people to support successful organisational change and performance.
- 18.** This work contributes directly towards our strategic objectives 4 and 5.



Our estate

- 19.** In 2015, we undertook an accommodation review of our future requirements for the near to medium term, partly promoted by the expiry of our existing Glasgow lease. In considering a move, our key criteria have been the quality of accommodation, flexibility for our changing business, location, and value for money. We looked at a wide range of options for our Glasgow office, which included consolidating in one office in Edinburgh, renewing our lease on all or part of our existing Glasgow office, moving to share part of another public sector building in Glasgow, and a range of private sector buildings in Glasgow.
- 20.** Our selected option is to move during 2016 to new offices in Glasgow. This will deliver major benefits including:
- **supporting our business continuity plans by recruiting and retaining key Glasgow-based staff**
 - **a single floor layout providing flexible accommodation for the future of the business, and easy access to public transport**
 - **halving our current Glasgow space, while retaining the same number of people and more than halving our carbon footprint**
 - **a significant reduction in our accommodation costs, even after taking into account relocation expenses**
- 21.** As we implement our business transformation, we expect to require significantly less office space in Edinburgh within a few years. We will work with the Scottish government and Scottish Futures Trust to consider the future of Meadowbank House, and whether it would be appropriate for us to share the space with other public bodies, or move elsewhere.
- 22.** This work contributes directly towards our strategic objectives 2, 4 and 5.

Our key challenges

- 23.** 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 three key areas set out in paragraph 11 to address these needs.

Land register completion

- 24.** In May 2014, Scottish ministers invited the keeper to complete the land register by 2024 and, as an expression of their commitment, asked for all publicly-owned land to be voluntarily registered by 2019. A completed land register will reduce the cost and increase the speed of transacting in property, allowing us to reduce our own costs by maintaining only one, not two, registers of land and property.
- 25.** There are three routes to registering applications that, combined, will allow us to complete the land register. First, there are the usual triggers for registration of unregistered land and property as it changes ownership. Second, there are voluntary applications onto the land register and we expect that such applications will come primarily from for the public sector and larger private sector land owners. Third, the keeper will use her powers to register property without an application through the process of keeper-induced registration (KIR).
- 26.** RoS consulted publicly in autumn 2015 on our approach to KIR, with the final report published in March 2016. Stakeholders were supportive of our approach of initially confining KIR to residential property areas where the keeper already has extensive knowledge of the information that should be contained within the title sheet. Through our analysis, we believe up to 700,000 properties could be brought onto the land register in this way, a significant proportion of the remaining titles on the Sasine register.
- 27.** We will also continue to work with appropriate heritage bodies to undertake KIR of their land and properties, but we expect this to be on a small scale in comparison to our other work. We intend to use our experience of these approaches to further develop our thinking on when and how to use our KIR powers for other property types, forming the basis of a future public consultation.
- 28.** RoS has set up a team to support both public and private sector organisations in their preparation of voluntary registration applications. This team explains the process and works with colleagues across RoS to make sure that our existing pre-registration products and services, plus those in development, make the process as straightforward and cost-effective as possible. In the last year, we have launched two new pre-registration services, and we expect to launch several more over the lifetime of this programme.
- 29.** The RoS board fully supports the aim of completing the land register and we have committed resources to ensure that RoS can fulfil its commitment for land register completion by 2024.
- 30.** This work contributes directly towards our strategic objectives 1 and 4.

Our business transformation

- 31.** One of the key policy aims of the Land Registration etc. (Scotland) Act 2012 was to provide a legal framework that enables conveyancing and registration to become much more digitally enabled. Our transformation programme, which commenced in 2015-16, will deliver on that opportunity. At the heart of our transformation programme lies the use of new digital channels and IT systems to deliver and support our registration and information provision responsibilities. To ensure we get this right, we have adopted a collaborative and customer-centric approach to change.
- 32.** During the year, we put out a call to our customers, inviting them to volunteer to work with us on transformation. We have been delighted with the response; over 120 individuals from across the conveyancing community have committed to working with us. We have also been actively engaged with the key bodies that represent many of our customers, such as the Law Society of Scotland and the Council of Mortgage Lenders (CML). This customer-focused approach allows us to identify and agree priorities, and to develop and road test solutions.
- 33.** In registration, our aim is to support the development of e-conveyancing. The Law Society is committed to moving conveyancing into the digital world, working in partnership with the Edinburgh Solicitors Property Centre and BDP Estate Agency Software to deliver a one-stop-shop digital platform for property solicitors. This will use digital signatures, which are already being rolled out to the Law Society's members. Working with the Law Society and the CML, we will endeavour to provide digital solutions that go beyond a simple like-for-like alternative to paper, removing many of the inefficient processes that paper-handling requires. Our primary collective focus this year is to enable digital mortgage discharges, enhancing the processing of the 100,000 that are presented to the land register each year.
- 34.** Recognising that mapping lies at the heart of our property registers, we will start to implement some new strategic geographic information system technologies. This will simplify the submission of digital plans to support, among other activities, the registration of new residential and commercial developments, as well as rural lands and estates. We will also focus on providing our colleagues with state-of-the-art mapping and registration tools, including an enhanced case management system. This will transform the way in which we work, removing much of the current paper processing and manual input of data that characterises our current workflow, replacing it with automated data capture and electronic processing and movement of applications. The new architecture will also facilitate the introduction of a number of new registers that the Scottish government has asked us to take on.
- 35.** This work contributes directly towards our strategic objectives 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

Our commercial activities

- 36.** The Scottish public sector holds a wealth of useful land and property information, including who owns land, planning information, environmental data, etc. Last year, we were tasked by the deputy first minister to lead on the development of ScotLIS, a new land and property information system for Scotland. Our land and property registers will form the cornerstone of ScotLIS. To this end, we have restructured our registration data to make it easier to share and interact with other spatial data sets. This year, we will be working with colleagues from across local and national government to explore and refine the first ScotLIS data set, which will launch in late 2017.
- 37.** Since the commencement of the Land Registration etc. (Scotland) Act 2012 in December 2014, demand for our commercial services has increased considerably. Working with customers, we have redeveloped existing products and introduced a number of new ones to help meet their needs. This has had a positive impact on our income in the commercial services area, which rose by over 20 per cent in 2015-16 in comparison to 2014-15.
- 38.** We will continue to look for innovative ways of providing improved services as part of the business transformation programme within the lifetime of this corporate plan.
- 39.** To support our ambition for growth, we have restructured the teams that deliver our commercial services, bringing in specialist resource in areas such as stakeholder engagement and data. Employing experts in these areas will take our products and services to the next level as we tackle our key objectives. We now have four core teams delivering improvement and innovation in products, data, engagement, and customer service. We are confident that our customers will witness real advances in all four of these areas.
- 40.** As mentioned earlier, 2015-16 saw increased demand for our existing registration related services. Our plans and legal reports and title investigation service continue to be popular with ongoing improvements to the supporting systems planned for the near future. We have also launched a number of new services to support customers with more complex transactions, both in terms of new first registrations to the land register, as well as voluntary registration. Working with customers to complete the land register has identified opportunities for new pre-registration support services, which will be rolled out over 2016-17.
- 41.** All our products are being developed with input from customers through user experience sessions and continuous feedback, and we are grateful to all those who have participated. Our aim is to focus on delivering those products and services that will best support the conveyancing community by removing risk and cost, and providing easier access to information for businesses and consumers.
- 42.** One of our key priorities for this year will be to further promote and embed our development plan approval service for new build properties. This service, which is largely free of charge, provides a high level of legal and financial protection for consumers and lending institutions. Currently some 80 developers and house builders are using the service, and we aim to persuade more to commit to it over this year.

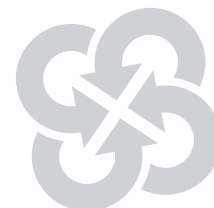
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- 43.** We are mindful that 'business as usual' continues for customers as we introduce change. Our new stakeholder strategy will be to provide certainty in a time of change, and will be supported by our account management team through a range of communication channels including free workshops, webinars, site visits and training sessions.
- 44.** Supporting citizen access to our registers is not solely the preserve of our customer service centres in Edinburgh and Glasgow. Over the past two years, we have jointly funded, along with Scottish Government, a crofting mapping liaison officer whose task is to work with townships to help them prepare community applications to the crofting register. This has been successful, with over 210 communities having taken advantage of this assistance.
- 45.** This work contributes directly towards our strategic objectives 2, 3, 4 and 5.
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Risk and business continuity

- 46.** 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 strategic and operational 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.
- 47.** 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. It informs our programme of internal audit and is also used by our external auditors.
- 48.** We have a business continuity management structure to ensure that we are ready to deal with both short term and major business disruptions. Our management team are committed to continuous improvement in our business continuity strategy and to developing a resilient organisation.
- 49.** Our business continuity management system is reviewed and tested regularly and endorsed by the board at least annually. It identifies our critical business activities, and our approach to ensuring continuity of our business. Early phases of our digital transformation programme have built on this commitment. We have significantly updated and improved our overall business continuity and disaster recovery capability as well as our IT system performance, availability, and resilience.

Information governance, privacy and data protection

- 50.** Information governance is the term given to the policy, procedure, guidance, training, roles, and systems used to ensure the effective and compliant management of information. Good information governance is an enabler to achieving our corporate and strategic aims, ensuring we comply with our statutory and regulatory obligations, and fostering trust in our corporate brand.
- 51.** We take the rights of individuals to privacy and confidentiality seriously, and conduct our management of personal information accordingly. We use policy and procedure to ensure that appropriate safeguards to privacy and confidentiality are in place and operated consistently. These fall within the scope of our wider information risk management arrangements.
- 52.** We have committed to continuous improvement through the delivery of an overarching information governance strategy and plan over a two year period from March 2016. This will bring further consistency and assurance to our policy, practice, governance and capability.



Ministerial financial targets for 2016-17

53. Scottish ministers have set the keeper the following financial targets:

- to deliver a 3 per cent efficiency saving on our unit costs
- to increase RoS' commercial income by 5 per cent

Keeper's service standards for 2016-17

54. The keeper has set the following service standards:

1.	Enter new land register applications on the application record	Within one working day
2.	Register applications in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chancery and Judicial Registers (registration process) • Crofting Register 	Within three working days
3.	Register land register applications for deeds affecting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • registered land ¹ • unregistered land (standard) ² • part of registered land where the keeper has given development plan approval 	Within 20 working days
4.	Process General Register of Sasines applications	Within 20 working days
5.	Register other applications for deeds affecting unregistered land	Within six months
6.	Register other applications for deeds affecting part of registered land ³	Within nine months

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 the 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 pre-work has been carried out. RoS calls such pre-work a research area. 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.

55. 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

56. This plan is underpinned by a hierarchy of objectives at directorate, team and individual level to ensure delivery of our strategic objectives.

Directorate objectives and plans

57. Each of our directorates has a directorate plan that 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

58. Each member of staff agrees annual personal objectives that are linked to the directorate objectives and activities and, in turn, the strategic objectives. Individuals agree personal development plans to ensure that they have the skills and experience to achieve their personal objectives. Progress against personal objectives is formally assessed at mid-year and end-year as part of our employee appraisal process, and informally throughout the year.

59. 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

60. 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.

61. Last year saw a sustained increase in market volumes, and this looks set to continue for the immediate future. We consider that the total volume of applications we will receive for our property registers is 560,000, 600,000 and 610,000 in years one, two and three respectively.

62. In addition to these market volumes, we expect the land register completion programme, in conjunction with our stakeholders, to add several hundred thousand titles to the land register from voluntary registrations by proprietors and a significant expansion of KIR.

Our financial plans

63. Our financial plans are set out below.

Income/expenditure	2016-17 £m	2017-18 £m	2018-19 £m
Revenue	76.2	93.5	104.6
Operational costs	72.3	92.0	99.3
Profit/(loss)	3.9	1.5	5.3

Breakdown of revenue	2016-17 £m	2017-18 £m	2018-19 £m
Property registers	65.9	83.2	94.1
Other income	10.3	10.3	10.5
Total	76.2	93.5	104.6

Conclusion

64. The period 2016-19 will see varied and extensive changes in RoS as we accelerate the completion of the land register and deliver our business transformation. It will also be an exciting time as we seize the opportunities and realise the benefits provided by the technological and process changes, enabling us to improve overall performance and value for money, and offer new products and services to our customers. We look forward to the planned outcomes, which will deliver a better experience for our customers and be more efficient for RoS.



Appendix

Scottish Government national performance framework

This table shows the links between RoS' strategic objectives and Scottish Government's 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 employment opportunities for our people.	X	X	X	X	X
3. We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research.				X	X
4. Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.					X
9. We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger.	X		X		
10. We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need.		X			
11. We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.	X		X		
12. We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations.	X	X	X		
14. We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production.		X			X
15. Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.	X	X	X	X	X



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