



Registers  
of Scotland

Our  
**Corporate  
Business Plan**

2019–2024



**PURPOSE**

To support the Scottish economy for the benefit of the people of Scotland.



**VISION**

**Our vision is:**

To be a digital registration and information business trusted for our integrity.



**VALUES**

**We are:**

Customer focussed, forward thinking, impartial and professional.



# Jennifer Henderson

## Keeper of the Registers of Scotland

I have a range of ambitions for my first corporate plan as Keeper of the Registers of Scotland. It's important to me that I can paint a clear picture of what RoS is going to focus on and deliver over the next few years, and why these are our priorities.

With the significant milestone of achieving Land Register completion by 2024, this corporate business plan is looking ahead five years rather than our normal three, so we keep on track to deliver that result for Scotland.

This plan seeks to achieve a balance between our day to day work, achieving our longer term goals, and ensuring our customers get the very best service possible. We have articulated four strategic objectives and have defined eight key work priorities that will deliver them.

These priorities will improve, support and enable the delivery of our public task and statutory responsibilities – core duties that provide an important service for the people of Scotland. These priorities will also direct us towards ways to improve what we do now, consolidate the benefits from our investment to date, deliver additional value through the creation of new services, new data and information products, and by creating appropriate opportunities for others to innovate through the use of our data.

Achieving the ambitious programme of work in this plan will only be possible with the support and engagement of our colleagues, customers, stakeholders and partners. I'm committed to being transparent about the progress we're making. To support this and the pace of change that RoS and our customers are experiencing, we'll now carry out a rolling corporate planning cycle with a formal update every six months. This will allow us to review delivery against our four strategic objectives, take into account feedback from our colleagues and customers, and take action quickly where we're not meeting expectations.

I hope that this plan provides a key first step in generating the necessary engagement and motivation to work with us to deliver, and to champion, this exciting and important programme of work. I welcome your feedback on our plans and look forward to working with you as we move forward with delivery.

## Strategic objectives

We have four strategic objectives; each driving core business requirements and ambitions for Registers of Scotland over the upcoming five years. These strategic objectives capture the essence of why Registers of Scotland exists. They reflect our public task and help to focus our people, whatever their role, on what we need to do to deliver for our customers, for

each other and for Scotland. As we progress through our five year plan there will be continual opportunities to review the effectiveness of these objectives by measuring progress using a series of key results and key performance indicators. These are outlined later on and supplement our service standards.



Complete Scotland's Land Register by 2024 and provide transparent, accurate and impartial information for all.



Develop and deliver digital improvements that support a forward thinking sustainable business where the needs of our customers are exceeded.



Lead on the innovative provision of land and property data so that it is accessible and used to create value for Scotland's people and economy.



Invest in our people so that they can support a professional flexible business that works at pace to deliver value and fulfils our public task.

## Our values

### Impartial:

We act without bias in our dealings with our customers, stakeholders and each other, 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, whilst developing skills and opportunities for our people.

### Customer focussed:

We strive to understand what our customers need and why, so that we can design our processes and services for them.

### Professional:

We recognise that customers need us to be skilled, efficient, effective and to work with pace, passion and pride.

## Our people

Our people are integral to the success of this corporate business plan. We've done a lot of work to improve our strategic workforce planning so that our skill set and resourcing projections are more accurate and deliverable. The staffing levels are important, but at the core of this new way of planning

is how to develop and grow our own talent, providing more opportunities within RoS, and supporting our people strategy and wellbeing goals. As a measure of progress we now have increasing our people engagement score as a key performance indicator.

## Our eight priorities

To ensure we focus on the right parts of what we do, our main activities for the next 18 months have been identified and grouped under three themes. At the heart of these are our people and our customers – professionals and citizens, and the quality of the services and support we provide and deliver.

### Do

Business as usual  
Clear the arrear  
Land Register completion

### Consolidate

Digital  
Data  
New services

### Create

Future services  
Geovation Scotland

## Do

### Business as usual

The work to support the processing of over 650,000 registration applications annually is our core function and this is reflected across the key performance indicators that sit beneath our strategic objectives. Our registration teams are supported by a range of corporate and professional functions across RoS. It is essential to success that everyone in these teams understands the importance of their role in achieving the work set out in this plan. The majority of previous and planned improvements are about assisting our people to do their jobs more efficiently and effectively. The business transformation initiatives highlighted in our recent corporate plans did

not fulfil all of our expectations but delivered significant improvements to our business and customer facing systems. These included the replacement of out of date servers and scanners, the introduction of modern mapping tools and a case management system, an updated application form to reduce rejection rates, software to replace our manual intake tasks, and a tool to search multiple databases at the same time. We also launched online services such as ScotLIS and a Digital Discharge Service, which allow our customers to self-serve with all the convenience and reduced costs that this provides.

### Clear the arrear

Since the Land Registration etc. (Scotland) Act 2012, took effect in late 2014, we've built up an unacceptable backlog of the more complex registration applications we receive. Completing this work and ensuring that all future registrations meet the timescales promised to customers, has to be our core priority. The Keeper has declared this publicly and progress is [reported on our website](#) in addition to direct contact with affected customers. To clear this arrear a work programme has been developed that has innovation, creativity and the customer at the heart of its solutions.

There are two key goals for this work programme – to remove the arrear and

prevent another one developing. In addition to our experienced team members tackling this complex casework, we've introduced an expedite process so that those few cases, where it is really necessary, can be fast tracked.

To prevent the arrear building up again, we've completely rebuilt our standard process for the main type of registration case. To achieve arrear eradication within our target of 18 months, we need to recruit some additional entry level colleagues. We'll train them on the new simplified process, and as the arrear reduces and their skills increase, they'll be able to help colleagues with the voluntary and keeper induced registrations required for completion of the Land Register by 2024.

## Land Register completion

Completing the Land Register map of who owns what across Scotland has real benefits: from greater access to more complete public data, increased transparency that benefits individuals, business, organisations – public, private and the third sector, as well as our communities.

In response to a recommendation in the 2014 report by the Land Reform Review Group, RoS was invited by Scottish Ministers to complete Scotland's Land Register by 2024. This task included a sub goal for all public bodies to work with RoS to achieve the completion of all publicly owned land and property by 2019. With competing priorities across the public sector this has not been possible in all cases.

Bodies such as the Forestry Commission, are well on track to complete the work required to have all of their properties registered on the map-based Land Register by the end of 2019.

As we move the remaining 33.5% of titles and 66.8% of land mass on to the Land Register over the next five years, we'll see significant reductions in our associated operating costs. Speed, clarity and risk reduction will all be improved, as will the potential for more transactions to happen digitally. It's a significant investment with significant returns. To bring success closer, we've set ourselves a specific target of 50% of Scotland's land mass to be on the Land Register by March 2021.

## Consolidate New services

In our quest to streamline our services by aligning with how our customers operate, the recently formed Buying and Selling teams have totally redesigned their area of the business – from how they process their work, structure the team, through to their physical working environment.

Members of the team have been cross-skilled, which allows them to take their cases from start to finish; owning the process, quality and customer satisfaction for each case they complete.

Although members have individual responsibility, the team works collectively – continuously learning, and sharing knowledge and ideas. This collaborative approach is reflected in the team's engagement survey score, which is higher than the RoS collective score, indicating that there are benefits from this approach that we can use across RoS to improve engagement and support change.

The Buying and Selling team is also tackling how to speed up processing our standard first registration casework. This will be a major element in the prevention of future arrears. This work is well advanced and early testing of the new approach is showing much quicker processing times. Our aim is to scale up these benefits by rolling out these principles into other appropriate parts of the business.

One of our online achievements is Scotland's Land and Information Service (ScotLIS). This is a self-service information hub giving access to our main property registers and is a vital tool for people transacting on property. The success of ScotLIS has allowed us to retire an older system called Registers Direct. ScotLIS has replaced what it did with increased features, functionality and at lower cost to the customer. The ongoing development and expansion of the ScotLIS service occurs on an almost daily basis. During the first stage of this corporate business plan we'll be improving what we offer the citizen significantly. These improvements will allow anyone to access property information online for any title across Scotland – at a reduced rate to the one charged for searches that our colleagues carry out. This is a major customer benefit from a significant IT investment by RoS.

The investments that RoS has made in digital solutions has enabled more customers to benefit from the reduced fees for digital services – such as the Digital Discharge Service (DDS). The 50,000th mortgage discharge went through DDS at the end of January 2019, accounting for over 40 per cent of all discharged deeds. This process takes minutes rather than days and has already saved our customers £500k in fees. Our ambition is to achieve 100 per cent by 2022.



## Digital

A key part of our digital journey is making all our systems more resilient and ensuring they are safe, secure and accessible. This is an ongoing challenge that continues throughout the lifetime of this corporate business plan. We're taking a three pillar approach towards our IT estate – update, retire and improve. This will continue to be done using the main element of our recent successes – building systems and improvements with our customers, for our customers. This includes the systems we use internally to carry out our duties, as well as those we're aligning to the needs of our customers. We'll continue to roll out the benefits of our business

transformation programme to ensure we maximise our efficiency at the same time as improving our services to customers.

We still have two years of planned work ahead to complete the stabilisation of our IT estate and increase the capability for digital casework. The physical move of our IT estate to a three site structure that includes a resilient back-up data centre, has ensured business continuity for our data and support services. This and other stabilisation work means our customers and employees experience far fewer IT system outages, with many improvements requiring no downtime and no business interruption at all.

## Data

As we increase our role as an information provider, we need to ensure the quality of the data we hold is as high as possible to maintain the trust of our customers. To do this we'll continue to improve the information conformity so that it's as structured and accessible as possible. This will allow us to share important data more widely, increase the awareness with citizens of the important

work we do, and provide products and services that meet our customers' needs. We'll continue to look for innovative ways to use our data for the benefit of the people of Scotland and business partners. One of the first projects we will embark on is the creation of a new data warehouse. By structuring the data in a more managed way it will provide a single source of truth for users.



## Create

### Future services

As part of our transformation programme we've developed an Innovation Centre. This future focussed area and team inspire and gather ideas from the business and customers to develop, trial and test improvements. Their mix of work covers day to day process

improvements and more forward thinking change. A recent call for environmental business improvement ideas attracted over 50 submissions that are currently being distilled into prioritised projects.

### Commercial buying and selling

Acting on the insights gathered from customer research, in particular our gateway project, we were able to identify that commercial conveyancing operate in a very different way to residential. Therefore, we are already in the early stages of testing a different approach to buying and selling that works with the commercial registrations we deal with.

Often complex and costly, these transactions come with tight turnaround times, a low appetite for risk and a need for excellent customer service. If the current pilot proves successful, we will adopt the new approach to deliver real benefits and support the Scottish Government goal that Scotland is an attractive place to do business.

### Simplified channels – one channel

ScotLIS, our Digital Discharge Service and our improved website are all supporting more streamlined channels for our customers to interact with us. Over the period of this plan we'll continue to find ways to build on these

improvements, whilst ensuring that future services and products are convenient for customers. We envisage this may lead to a single channel for accessing our services with as much self-service functionality as possible.

### Geovation Scotland

Our desire to be an innovative organisation means looking to the future and how we can contribute to innovation and exploration. In support of open data, we're in a strong position to look further ahead and have made significant progress with Ordnance Survey on a potential partnership project called Geovation Scotland.

The ambition of this project is to promote open innovation, harness the opportunities generated from working alongside tech start-ups and geospatial communities. It is exactly the sort of creative partnership we're seeking to identify and engage with our customers of the future.



# Financial Projections 2019–2024

As part of our remit, we're required to invest in the improvement of the registers we hold to ensure that we fulfil our public task to the best of our abilities. This corporate business plan communicates our priorities and what these main areas of investment will be and what staffing numbers we project will be required to deliver them effectively. Accelerating the natural completion rate of the Land Register, including a 25 per cent fee reduction for voluntary registrations, has a significant investment cost for RoS and this is reflected in our planned expenditure.

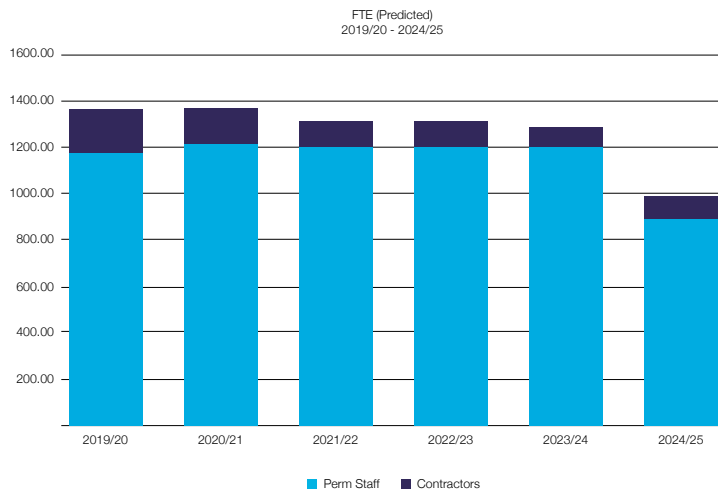
In addition to delivering everything described in this plan, a further benefit of this five year investment will be to reduce significantly our core operating costs from 2025 onwards. This will remove a major financial risk and secure our financial sustainability on an enduring basis.

Below is a table summarising our financial projections on these costs and the supporting income generated from carrying out our work. It's followed by a graph showing the projected staffing levels required to deliver this plan.

**Projected income and expenditure table 2019-2024**

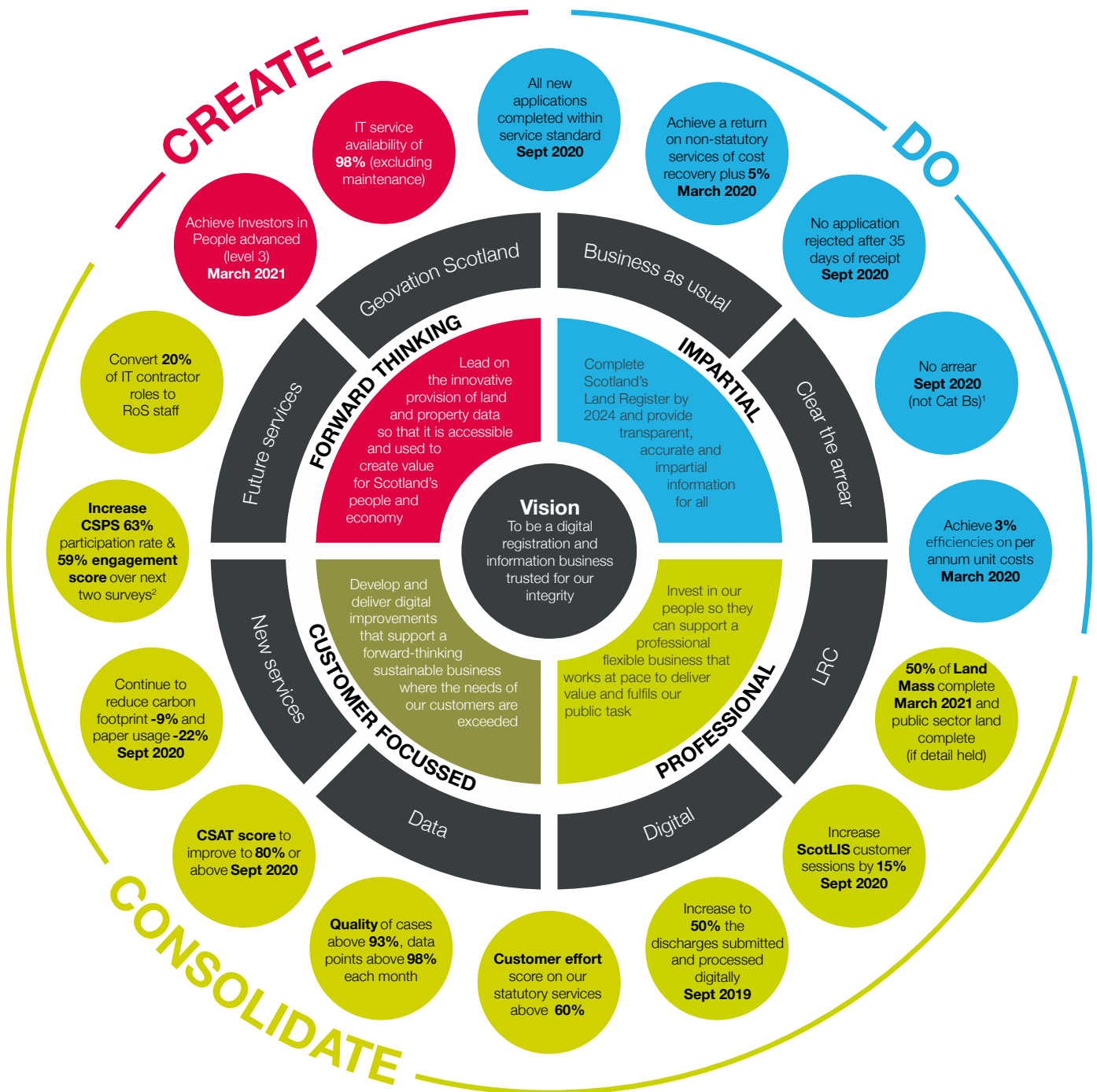
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Income	£81.3m	£82.5m	£79.1m	£80.5m	£79.9m
Expenditure	£95.3m	£96.2m	£82.7m	£83.4m	£84.1m
Surplus or (Deficit)	<b>£14m</b>	<b>£13.7m</b>	<b>£3.6m</b>	<b>£2.9m</b>	<b>£4.2m</b>

**Projected staffing levels and contract type**



# Key results and key performance indicators

Throughout this corporate business plan we have stated that delivery, consolidation, transparency, service and engagement are intrinsically linked with our success. The graphic below summarises these ambitions into stretch targets and measures for the next 12, 18 and 24 months. We'll report regularly on performance against these objectives and indicators – both internally for our teams and externally for our customers and stakeholders.



<sup>1</sup>Cat B - An application to register a deed affecting part of registered title, where the registered title does not form part of a development.

<sup>2</sup>Civil service people survey (CSPS). This employee engagement survey is run annually across the UK civil service.

## Service standards

Performance against our service standards is also reported on [our website](#). These remain the same for this year as we measure improvements against areas where we haven't delivered at the pace we intend.

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

<sup>1</sup> Where an application is reliant on an earlier or same day application the relevant service standard will be the longer one.

<sup>2</sup> Relevant applications are those upon which RoS has carried out pre-work (research areas).



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[ros.gov.uk](https://ros.gov.uk)