

By Email

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Our Ref: MC-075-2024

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Date: 12 November 2024

Dear Ms Baker

REGISTERS OF SCOTLAND – COMMITTEE APPEARANCE FOLLOW UP

EFW Committee Appearance

Thank you for giving Registers of Scotland the opportunity to meet with the Committee members at the evidence session held on 30 October, to answer their questions, and to provide updates on the progress we are making against our strategic objectives. We were sorry to not see you there personally.

During the appearance I undertook to provide some further information. For ease of reading, I have outlined the updates under the relevant headers below.

Contingent Worker Projections

As set out at the evidence session, the progress RoS has made in recent years to replace complex legacy technology and improve our digital offering to customers means that we are now able to begin to adjust the proportion of our digital roles which are filled by permanent colleagues, as opposed to contingent workers. In taking that work forward we will be balancing cost with other factors such as operational risk, and the flexibility which can be provided by contingent workers for certain pieces of work.

Our future projections are impacted by three main variables which sit outwith RoS' control, namely labour market conditions, public sector pay policy, and new work which we may be asked to deliver by Scottish Ministers or the Scottish Parliament. I would propose therefore to include updates on how we are tracking against the projection as part of my regular updates to the Committee.

The current position is that circa 45% of our digital and data (DDaT) team is comprised of contingent workers, from a total DDaT workforce of 307 people. Over the next two years we expect the contingent worker proportion within DDaT to reduce to circa 25%. We anticipate the potential for a further reduction (to around 18% of total) in the following 18 months after that. However, as you will appreciate, there is more uncertainty about that further reduction given the extended timeframes.

RoS AI Strategy

As mentioned in the Committee session, RoS is reviewing how and where Artificial Intelligence could be applied to support our services, and is developing an AI strategy to support our adoption of this emerging technology. This strategy is scheduled to be discussed at our March 2025 Board meeting and, subject to any revisions and updates that arise from the Board discussion, we would expect to finalise and publish an external version of the strategy in Spring 2025. We will share a link to the strategy with you when it is available.

Public Sector Land Ownership

The Committee was interested to know what percentage of public sector owned land is not yet on the land register (and therefore remains in the older Sasine register).

Registers of Scotland does not directly collect information which would enable the identification of land by ownership groups, such as publicly owned land. Therefore, estimates are highly dependent on how public bodies are defined and searched for (by name) using data from three sources. These are the Land Register of Scotland, applications which are in progress of being registered in the Land Register, and the Unlocking Sasines dataset.

As of 05 November 2024, we estimate that, on the Land Register, land owned by public bodies totals an area of approximately 836,066 ha. This represents 19% of the total area of land registered in the Land Register, and 10% of Scotland's total land mass.

Using data from the Unlocking Sasines dataset and applications in progress, we estimate that public sector bodies (including local authorities) hold a combined area of approximately 132,812 ha. which is not yet registered in the Land Register. This represents 4% of the total unregistered land area, and 2% of Scotland's total land mass.

Availability of Unlocking Sasines Data

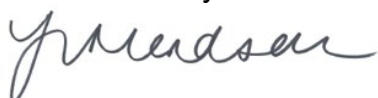
The Committee were interested to receive further details on the planned timescales for making Unlocking Sasines data available for professional and citizen customers.

We intend to provide Unlocking Sasines data in a more accessible way via our ScotLIS platform, releasing access for business users by the end of 2024.

We will then consider how to make the information accessible to the public, taking into consideration the unique nature of the Sasine register, and whether existing public mechanisms for accessing our data need to be enhanced to provide citizen customers with the best experience for accessing this data. We plan to complete this additional work to provide citizen access to the Unlocking Sasines data as part of our year 4 (FY 25/26 delivery plan) and anticipate it will be complete by the end of 2025.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to provide evidence to the committee. We look forward to our next appearance, and if you require anything further in relation to the information provided in this update, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Yours sincerely



JENNIFER HENDERSON
Keeper of the Registers of Scotland