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By email

Graeme Dey MSP
Convener
Environment, Climate
Change and Land Reform
Committee
c/o Clerk to the Committee
Room T3.40
The Scottish Parliament

Reply to Edinburgh office
Department Keeper's Office
Contact Sheenagh Adams
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Dear Graeme

Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee: Land Register Completion

Thank you for your letter of 24 November 2017 asking about the work we are doing to support public bodies in registering their land in light of the challenges that they are facing.

We have established a team of advisors dedicated specifically to supporting the public sector in this task. Colleagues working in that team have met with all public bodies, including the local authorities, to offer support and encourage them to bring forward applications to meet the 2019 target.

As you know, Scottish Ministers introduced a 25% reduction in fees for voluntary registration in June 2015 and this reduction will continue at least into 2019. This should help public bodies with the cost of registration.

Registers of Scotland is also supporting completion work through our new plans assistance service, which prepares a title plan suitable for registration and is available at a reasonable cost. I am glad that local authorities acknowledge this support and that they are aware of the requirement to register their land.

From the table below, you will see that there is a mixed picture: some bodies have completed the task, some are in progress and some have not started. However, all of the bodies recognise the value of a completed land register.

Registration status	Number of public bodies
All titles submitted	33
Submitting applications	50
Not yet started - with fewer than ten titles	
Not yet started - with more than ten titles	83
Total land owning public bodies	166

In your letter, you mention the positive response to our Keeper-induced registration (KIR) programme. We announced in 2016 that we would extend our KIR programme (which aims to transfer titles from the sasine register to the land register in what we call our research areas, i.e. areas, which are largely residential, where we have good previous knowledge of the titles) to include publicly-owned land. In light of this, local authorities are aware that the majority, if not all, remaining local authority housing stock, still within public ownership, will be entered onto the land register by RoS, with no cost or resource implications for local authorities. So far, over 25,000 local authority addresses have been added to the land register via KIR. We expect to add a further 200,000 local authority titles to the land register using KIR by 2019. This will leave around 90,000 titles to be registered by the 32 local authorities.

I can confirm that KIR is operating throughout Scotland and that we have used this process to register public land in five counties so far, those being Midlothian, Lanark, West Lothian, Clackmannan and Stirling.

The response from West Lothian Council highlights a good example of collaboration and the benefits of RoS working with local authorities. We have shared data and held regular meetings to clarify points and this has made the process easier for both parties, with their housing stock being added to the land register efficiently without any registration fees. We are currently in the process of initiating a similar collaborative arrangement with Stirling Council.

I remain confident of meeting the 2024 deadline for all land in Scotland to be on the land register. This will be a national asset and will make buying and selling property easier, fast and cheaper, and will allow anyone to find out who owns what through a simple online search. Registers of Scotland staff continue to be available to provide advice and guidance and the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work recently wrote to local authorities reminding them of the targets and the benefits of a completed land register.

On a separate, but not unrelated matter, we launched ScotLIS (the Scottish Land Information Service) in late October. It is a new and intuitive tool that leverages our extensive experience and 400 years of property data, and facilitates easy access to a wide range of land and property information. It has been developed after months of close collaboration with our customers, including solicitors, conveyancers, local

authorities and citizens. For the first time, it enable citizens and businesses to look at a map of Scotland and access information about ownership. If you are interested, we would be delighted to do a short presentation on ScotLIS to you and the Committee. You can visit ScotLIS yourself at www.scotlis.ros.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely

Sheenagh Adams
Keeper of the Registers of Scotland