

# Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer Service Plan 2023 – 2024



## The principal purpose of the Service is to:

Deliver three key statutory functions of Council Tax Valuation, Non-Domestic Rating and Electoral Registration. The compilation and maintenance of the associated registers, lists and rolls forms the basis of our core service activities.

The Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer Service also works as a shared service through the Scottish Assessors Association which is a voluntary body that draws together all Assessors and Electoral Registration Officers across Scotland. Its core purpose is to share knowledge and encourage partnership working in the fields of valuation for non-domestic rating, council tax and electoral registration.

## The service demonstrates the Council's Principles by:

### Safeguard our future



- Address the climate emergency: By ensuring that the range of activities the service undertakes, including resource allocation, survey and inspection of properties and our partnership working, are increasingly influenced by environmental considerations, we will address the climate emergency and the transition to a carbon neutral region.

### Support our citizens



- Put customers at the heart of services: Ensuring that the Service delivers the highest possible standards in terms of our customers having access to the most relevant and current information for the statutory services we deliver.
- Support the most vulnerable and in need: Providing a service to ensure all our vulnerable residents are aware of the need to have voter identification to vote at reserved elections or facilitating alternative solutions such as absent voting preferences.
- Address inequalities: Raising awareness of electoral registration amongst young people and underrepresented groups or foreign nationals that are resident within our region.
- Offer digital services: We will continue to invest in and develop our digital offering, including through our shared service portal, to increase efficiencies and create an improved experience for our citizens and staff.

## Support our communities



- Empowering communities and individuals: We will support our young people to learn and grow by continuing to develop our workforce strategy by providing opportunities to join the service and obtain a professional qualification.
- Work in partnership: Our shared service through the Scottish Assessors Association will continue to develop to ensure we provide appropriate advice and support to implement legislative change and to deliver our services at a local and national level. We will maintain close working arrangements with both UK and Scottish Governments and a range of local, regional and national partners.
- Invest to enable change: Investing in technology and working in partnership to provide a range of ways for our customers to access our services. This includes the recent rationalisation of our core IT systems and significant work in partnership with the Scottish Assessors Association to develop our Portal to provide more information and greater transparency to our processes.

## Be a responsive Council



- Communicate openly: We will be open and transparent in the way we communicate with citizens and stakeholders to allow effective decision making across the range of services we provide.
- Maintain sustainable finances: The service will endeavour to ensure that our services are delivered within budget and that external funding for new burdens are sustainable in the longer term.
- Be organised to deliver: We will continue to develop our workforce strategy around having a flexible and responsive workforce capable of delivering concurrent demands on our services to meet the needs of our citizens and partners.
- Maintain high standards: Through effective leadership and support the service will deliver services with integrity and within an open and honest environment, being respectful to both colleagues and our customers.
- Make best use of our resources: Through the Scottish Assessors Association we will continue to develop our shared service to maximise efficiencies and to deliver the best outcomes for our customers.

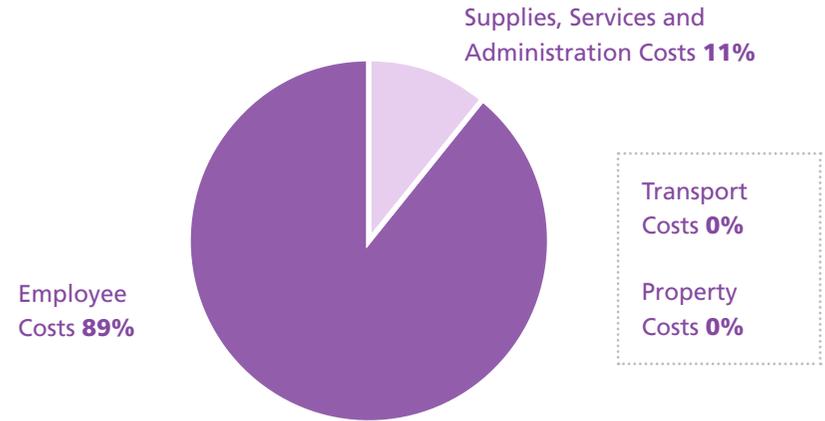
The following resources underpin the delivery of the Service Plan:

## Budget\*

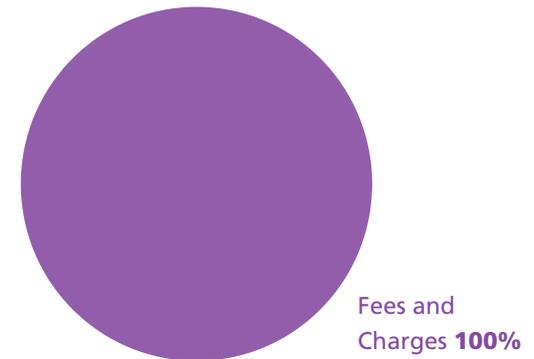
Budget Estimate Summary Service Analysis	Budget Estimates Assessors and ERO £
<b>Expense</b>	
Employee Costs	1,144,901
Property Costs	250
Transport Costs	4,815
Supplies, Services and Administration Costs	135,811
<b>Expense Total</b>	<b>1,285,777</b>
<b>Income</b>	
Fees and Charges	-2,500
<b>Income Total</b>	<b>-2,500</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,283,277</b>

\*Based on indicative estimates as at March 2023

## Expenses



## Income



# Our people, our posts

**Our People as at 1 April 2023**

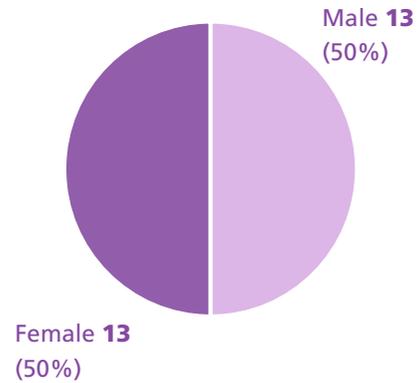


Number of people  
**26**

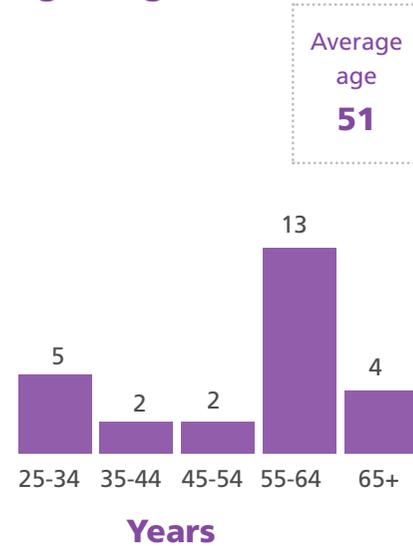


Number of posts  
**26**

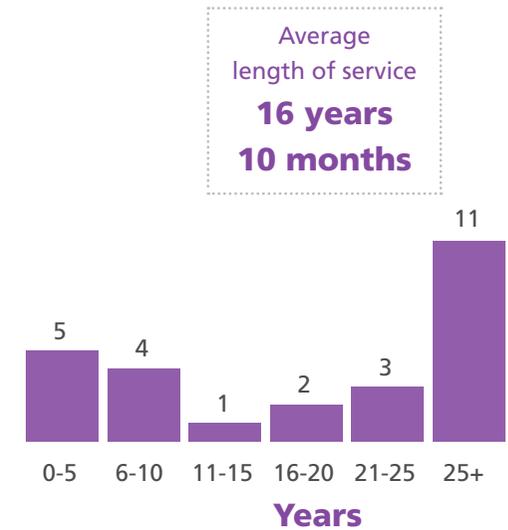
## Gender



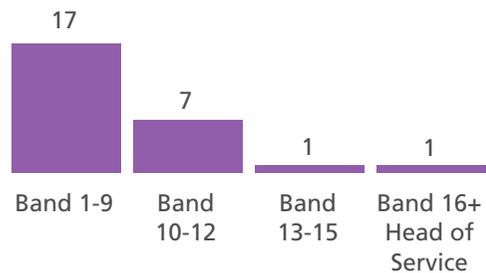
## Age range



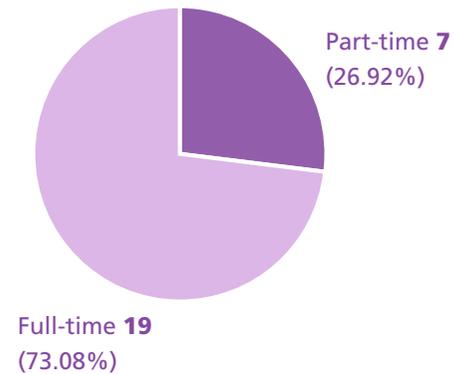
## Length of service



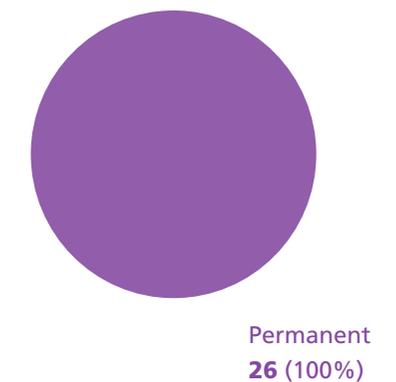
## Pay Band of Employees



## Employment Basis



## Employment Type



#### Highlights of workforce engagement and planning in 2023/2024:

- Our workforce plan has been developing to address the age profile of the Service and to ensure we are able to provide a continuity of Service into the future and appropriate succession planning for key posts within the Service to support our future needs.
- During 2023/24 the Service will be continuing its policy of growing our own Chartered Surveyors by creating a position for a Trainee Valuer through our productive partnership with Skills Development Scotland and Napier University. This process has been very successful in recent years as the Service adjusted to the demands of new legislation relating to Non-Domestic Rates. Similarly, we will continue to put staff forward for qualifications through the Association of Electoral Administrators to provide the necessary knowledge and understanding required to support our key functions. We will continue to review this to ensure we meet the needs of the main legislative changes impacting on the Service.
- We will continue to develop our staff through the Performance and Development Review process and review results from staff surveys to help inform our strategies and plans.



## Service Delivery 2023/24

What are we planning to do?	What team will do it?	Linked Strategy / Plan
Disposal of Revaluation 2023 Proposals	Valuation	Non-Domestic Rates (S) Act 2022
Review of Self-Catering properties	Valuation	Non-Domestic Rates (S) Act 2022
Annual Canvass of Electors 2023	Registration	Representation of the People Acts
Online Absent Vote Application Private Beta Trial	Registration	Elections Act 2022

## Change and Improvement Activities 2023/24

What are we planning to do and what is the intended outcome?	What team will do it?	Linked Strategy / Plan
Integration of Online Absent Voting	Registration	Elections Act 2022
Redesign of Electoral Management System to accommodate Postal & Proxy changes	Registration	Elections Act 2022
Implementation of Overseas Electors changes	Registration	Elections Act 2022
Service response to 10,000 voices	Registration	10,000 Voices

## Success Measures 2023/24

Success Measure	Target	Timescale / Frequency	Benchmark
Percentage of amendments made to the Valuation Roll	70%	Monthly	External: Scottish Assessors Association
Percentage of new entries made to the Council Tax Valuation List	80%	Monthly	External: Scottish Assessors Association

## Council Wide Indicators

Success Measure	Target	Timescale / Frequency	Benchmark
<b>People</b>			
The average number of days lost per all other (non teacher) local government employees through sickness absence	9 days	Monthly	Internal / External: LGBF
Percentage of days lost per employee through sickness absence as a percentage of total possible attendances	4%	Monthly	Internal
Percentage of staff who have completed an annual performance development review	95%	Monthly	Internal
<b>Enquiries / Complaints</b>			
Percentage of Elected Member enquiries dealt with through the Elected Members Enquiry Service within the agreed timescales	85%	Quarterly	Internal / External: Local Authority Complaint Handling Network
Percentage of Community Council enquiries dealt with through the Community Council Enquiry Service within the agreed timescale	85%	Quarterly	Internal
Percentage of MP/MSP enquiries dealt with through the Enquiry Service within agreed timescale	85%	Quarterly	Internal
Percentage of Youth Councillor enquiries dealt with through the Enquiry Service within the agreed timescale	85%	Quarterly	Internal
Percentage of Stage 1 complaint responses issued within statutory timescales	80%	Monthly	Internal / External: Local Authority Complaint Handling Network
Percentage of Stage 1 complaint responses where extension was authorised	Data only	Monthly	Internal / External: Local Authority Complaint Handling Network
Percentage of Stage 2 complaint responses issued within statutory timescales	80%	Monthly	Internal / External: Local Authority Complaint Handling Network

Success Measure	Target	Timescale / Frequency	Benchmark
Percentage of Stage 2 complaint responses where extension was authorised	Data only	Monthly	Internal / External: Local Authority Complaint Handling Network
Percentage of Freedom of Information and Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations requests received that have been responded to within 20 working days of receipt	90%	Monthly	Internal / External
Percentage of requests for subject access requests completed within one month	85%	Monthly	Internal
<b>Finance</b>			
Revenue Budget Outturn - Projected Outturn as a % of Budget	100%	Monthly	Internal
<b>Health and Safety</b>			
Number of Head of Service Safety Visits	2	Six Monthly	Internal
Total Significant Health and Safety Risk Priorities with Actions Overdue	0	Six Monthly	Internal
Total HSE/SFRS Interfaces resulting in legal enforcement action	0	Six Monthly	Internal
Total HSE/SFRS Interfaces with actions overdue	0	Six Monthly	Internal
RIDDOR reportable incidents outside of HSE legal reporting timescales	0	Six Monthly	Internal
Serious incident investigation reports overdue	0	Six Monthly	Internal
Total serious incident reports with actions overdue	0	Six Monthly	Internal
Number of RIDDOR reportable dangerous occurrences employee injuries and diseases	Service specific*	Six Monthly	Internal
Number of 3rd Party RIDDOR reportable incidents	Service specific*	Six Monthly	Internal
Number of near misses	Data only	Six Monthly	Internal
Number of employee accidents	Data only	Six Monthly	Internal
Number of violent incidents to employees	Data only	Six Monthly	Internal

\*Bespoke to service based on previous baseline information and subject to agreement between Service and H&S.

## Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer Risk Register

Risk	Risk Factors	Mitigation / Contingency
<b>Uncertainty over future external funding</b>	There may be a UK wide spending review ahead of 2024/25 that has an impact on this funding stream. There is a risk that we are unable to retain the existing staffing establishment which would affect our ability to carry out the statutory functions of the Assessor & ERO.	The initial funding was set out in the Financial memorandum of the Non-Domestic Rating (Scotland) Act 2020 however as the secondary legislation is enacted there is a risk that new burdens have an impact that has not been budgeted for in the initial allocation. Discussions are ongoing with Scottish Government to mitigate any adverse changes.
<b>Failure to implement our Workforce Strategy</b>	<p>The staffing profile is such that a loss of experienced staff would have a significant impact on our ability to service parts of our statutory functions particularly around electoral activities.</p> <p>There is a risk that any loss of qualified valuation staff may impact our ability to undertake key activities related to Non-Domestic Rating and Council Tax Valuation.</p>	We are creating multi skilled posts where possible to ensure that staff have the ability to work across all three of our functions to support any loss of staff.
<b>Failure to deliver critical/essential services</b>	<p>There is a risk that divergent policies between UK and Scottish Government creates additional workload and has an impact on our ability to resource any changes.</p> <p>There is a risk that there could be further reform of the rating system or that Council Tax could be replaced with a more onerous alternative.</p> <p>The impact of the Elections Act 2022 will introduce several new workstreams at the same time as the Service is implementing the Secondary legislation from the Non-Domestic Rates (S) Act 2020.</p> <p>There is therefore a risk that the Service does not have the capacity to absorb these changes and is unable to fulfil our statutory obligations.</p>	<p>Our ability to mitigate against it is low. Our recruitment of additional valuation staff through the Barclay Review funding will result in more trained staff should further change materialise in the future.</p> <p>Continued public awareness and communication will be required at a national level to support the changes from the Elections Act 2022, particularly around divergent policies which may create confusion with the public.</p>