

The Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011

Lothian Valuation Joint Board

Progress Update Review (PUR) Report by the PRSA Assessment Team

17th March 2022

Contents

1. The Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011..... 3
2. Progress Update Review (PUR) Mechanism..... 3
3. Executive Summary..... 4
4. Authority Background..... 4
5. Assessment Process..... 5
6. Records Management Plan Elements Checklist and PUR Assessment..... 6-8
7. The Public Records (Scotland) Act Assessment Team’s Summary..... 9
8. The Public Records (Scotland) Act Assessment Team’s Evaluation..... 9

1. Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011

The Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011 (the Act) received Royal Assent on 20 April 2011. It is the first new public records legislation in Scotland since 1937 and came into force on 1 January 2013. Its primary aim is to promote efficient and accountable record keeping by named Scottish public authorities.

The Act has its origins in *The Historical Abuse Systemic Review: Residential Schools and Children's Homes in Scotland 1950-1995* (The Shaw Report) published in 2007. The Shaw Report recorded how its investigations were hampered by poor recordkeeping and found that thousands of records had been created, but were then lost due to an inadequate legislative framework and poor records management. Crucially, it demonstrated how former residents of children's homes were denied access to information about their formative years. The Shaw Report demonstrated that management of records in all formats (paper and electronic) is not just a bureaucratic process, but central to good governance and should not be ignored. A follow-up review of public records legislation by the Keeper of the Records of Scotland (the Keeper) found further evidence of poor records management across the public sector. This resulted in the passage of the Act by the Scottish Parliament in March 2011.

The Act requires a named authority to prepare and implement a records management plan (RMP) which must set out proper arrangements for the management of its records. A plan must clearly describe the way the authority cares for the records that it creates, in any format, whilst carrying out its business activities. The RMP must be agreed with the Keeper and regularly reviewed.

2. Progress Update Review (PUR) Mechanism

Under section 5(1) & (2) of the Act the Keeper may only require a review of an authority's agreed RMP to be undertaken not earlier than five years after the date on which the authority's RMP was last agreed. Regardless of whether an authority has successfully achieved its goals identified in its RMP or continues to work towards them, the minimum period of five years before the Keeper can require a review of a RMP does not allow for continuous progress to be captured and recognised.

The success of the Act to date is attributable to a large degree to meaningful communication between the Keeper, the Assessment Team, and named public authorities. Consultation with Key Contacts has highlighted the desirability of a mechanism to facilitate regular, constructive dialogue between stakeholders and the Assessment Team. Many authorities have themselves recognised that such regular communication is necessary to keep their agreed plans up to date following inevitable organisational change. Following meetings between authorities and the Assessment Team, a reporting mechanism through which progress and local initiatives can be acknowledged and reviewed by the Assessment Team was proposed. Key Contacts have expressed the hope that through submission of regular updates, the momentum generated by the Act can continue to be sustained at all levels within authorities.

The PUR self-assessment review mechanism was developed in collaboration with stakeholders and was formally announced in the Keeper's Annual Report published on 12 August 2016. The completion of the PUR process enables authorities to be credited for the progress they are effecting and to receive constructive advice concerning on-going developments. Engaging with this mechanism will not only maintain the spirit of the Act by encouraging senior management to recognise the need for good records management practices, but will also help authorities comply with their statutory obligation under section 5(1)(a) of the Act to keep their RMP under review.

3. Executive Summary

This Report sets out the findings of the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011 (the Act) Assessment Team's consideration of the Progress Update template submitted for Lothian Valuation Joint Board. The outcome of the assessment and relevant feedback can be found under sections 6 – 8.

4. Authority Background

Lothian Valuation Joint Board state their mission as:

1. To ensure timeous publication and maintenance of the Valuation Roll.
2. To ensure timeous publication and maintenance of the Council Tax List.
3. To ensure timeous publication and maintenance of the Electoral Register and registration services at elections.
4. To develop, prepare and publish reports to improve customer knowledge and ensure attainment of good Community Focus.
5. To set standards and undertake corporate improvement in Service Delivery Arrangements and review the performance management and planning framework to ensure continuous improvement.
6. To deliver changes and improvements identified under the Transformation Programme and through the ongoing process of Structure and Process review.
7. To review, monitor and maintain organisational Risk Management and Internal Controls to ensure efficient and effective delivery of service.
8. To develop, adopt and review formal documentation and systems to ensure Standards of Conduct are adhered to.
9. To plan and deliver an organisational development strategy considering corporate initiatives to ensure efficiency and quality of service delivery.
10. To engage in key partnership working to ensure the integrated delivery of efficient government.
11. To review, develop and support the Health, Safety, and Wellbeing of all LVJB employees, creating an environment that enhances job satisfaction through investment in staff development, HR policies, systems and leadership

The Board comprises of elected members from each of the four constituent authorities. The membership reflects both the political and geographic characteristics of each of the authorities. The Board has in place an Appeals Sub-Committee, an Appointments Committee and a Joint Consultative Group.

<http://www.lothian-vjb.gov.uk/>

5. Assessment Process

A PUR submission is evaluated by the Act's Assessment Team. The self-assessment process invites authorities to complete a template and send it to the Assessment Team one year after the date of agreement of its RMP and every year thereafter. The self-assessment template highlights where an authority's plan achieved agreement on an improvement basis and invites updates under those 'Amber' elements. However, it also provides an opportunity for authorities not simply to report on progress against improvements, but to comment on any new initiatives, highlight innovations, or record changes to existing arrangements under those elements that had attracted an initial 'Green' score in their original RMP submission.

The assessment report considers statements made by an authority under the elements of its agreed Plan that included improvement models. It reflects any changes and/or progress made towards achieving full compliance in those areas where agreement under improvement was made in the Keeper's Assessment Report of their RMP. The PUR assessment report also considers statements of further progress made in elements already compliant under the Act.

Engagement with the PUR mechanism for assessment cannot alter the Keeper's Assessment Report of an authority's agreed RMP or any RAG assessment within it. Instead the PUR Final Report records the Assessment Team's evaluation of the submission and its opinion on the progress being made by the authority since agreeing its RMP. The team's assessment provides an informal indication of what marking an authority could expect should it submit a revised RMP to the Keeper under the Act, although such assessment is made without prejudice to the Keeper's right to adopt a different marking at that stage.

Key:

G	The Assessment Team agrees this element of an authority's plan.	A	The Assessment Team agrees this element of an authority's progress update submission as an 'improvement model'. This means that they are convinced of the authority's commitment to closing a gap in provision. They will request that they are updated as work on this element progresses.	R	There is a serious gap in provision for this element with no clear explanation of how this will be addressed. The Assessment Team may choose to notify the Keeper on this basis.
----------	---	----------	---	----------	--

6. Progress Update Review (PUR) Template: Lothian Valuation Joint Board

Element	Status under agreed Plan 31MAR16	Progress status 04JUN20	Progress status 17MAR22	Keeper's Report Comments on Authority's Plan 31MAR16	Self-assessment Update 20MAY20	Progress Review Comment 04JUN20	Self-assessment Update as submitted by the Authority since 04JUN20	Progress Review Comment 17MAR22
1. Senior Officer	G	G	G	Update required on any change.	No change at the moment although, for information, the Assessor is due to retire in September of this year.	The Keeper's Assessment Team thanks Lothian Valuation Joint Board for this update which has been noted.	Gary Elliott has been appointed as Interim Assessor and ERO. A recruitment drive for a permanent Assessor is due this summer with appointment in Sept 2021. <i>Update 12 March 2022: Gary Elliott has been appointed as Assessor.</i>	The Keeper's Assessment Team is grateful for this update on the appointment of the new Assessor.
2. Records Manager	G	G	G	Update required on any change.	No change.	No immediate action required. Update required on any future change.	No change.	Update required on any change.
3. Policy	G	G	G	Update required on any change.	No change.	No immediate action required. Update required on any future change.	Updated to reflect staffing changes.	Thank you for letting the Assessment Team know that Records Management policy statement has been updated to reflect staffing changes. It is important to ensure that it continues to reflect the authority's business functions.
4. Business Classification	G	G	G	Update required on any change.	No change.	No immediate action required. Update required on any future change.	No change.	Update required on any change.
5. Retention Schedule	G	G	G	Update required on any change.	No change.	No immediate action required. Update required on any future change.	No change.	Update required on any change.
6. Destruction Arrangements	G	G	G	Update required on any change.	No change.	No immediate action required. Update required on any future change.	No change.	Update required on any change.
7. Archiving and Transfer	G	G	G	Update required on any change.	No change.	No immediate action required. Update required on any future change.	No change.	Update required on any change.

8. Information Security	G	G	G	Update required on any change.	No change.	No immediate action required. Update required on any future change.	No change.	Update required on any change.
9. Data Protection	G	G	G	Update required on any change.	No change.	No immediate action required. Update required on any future change.	No change.	Update required on any change.
10. Business Continuity and Vital Records	G	G	G	Update required on any change.	No change.	No immediate action required. Update required on any future change.	No change.	Update required on any change.
11. Audit Trail	A	A	A	<p>...The Plan states that electronic records can be tracked by the application in which they were created and that this can be backed up by the imposition of naming conventions and version control. The Keeper notes that the Board is currently working on relevant file naming conventions (<i>Plan</i> page 10). He agrees that this should assist in locating records when necessary. The <i>Records Management Policy</i> also indicates the value of naming conventions and version control (section 3.2)...</p> <p>The Keeper can agree this element of the Board's plan under 'improvement model' terms. This means that he acknowledges that the Board has identified a gap in provision (version control and naming convention improvements are not yet fully in place). The Keeper recognises that the Board have put processes in place to close this gap (the adoption of SharePoint). The Keeper's agreement is conditional on his being updated as this project progresses.</p>	<p>We have recently migrated to Office 365 and, as part of that transition, intend to fully review and redesign our SharePoint installation and Intranet setup. The consolidation and transfer of this data is a sizeable task, but will provide further opportunities to improve classification, currency, accessibility and retention procedures. There is no practical timetable for this work at present, but the intention is to commence the project in 2020.</p>	<p>Like many Scottish public authorities, the Board have migrated to Office 365 and are taking this opportunity to make improvements in their SharePoint structure. This will hopefully provide an even more robust system in which to manage the authority's public records.</p> <p>Generally a SharePoint/O365 solution is bound to be incremental and take several years to bed-in properly. The Assessment Team remind the Board of the importance of appropriate policies, governance and staff training in making this major project a success.</p> <p>The Assessment Team looks forward to updates in subsequent PURs.</p> <p>This element remains at Amber while this work is ongoing.</p> <p>LVJB may be interested to note there is an 'All things SharePoint/O365 and the Cloud' discussion board facilitated by the PRSA Team at https://khub.net/group/public-records-scotland-act-discussion-group/group/forum/-/message_boards/message/314966059.</p>	<p>Notwithstanding the challenges faced by the organisation due to enforced home working by the COVID pandemic, we are pleased to report that our initial Sharepoint migration from our on premises installation to Office 365 is now complete. The next phase of this project involves the assessment and evaluation of Records Management functionality within the new software platform. This will include identifying content as records, creation of a file plan to enable the migration and management of our retention requirements, implementing event based retention rules, undertaking disposition reviews and setting specific rights of access.</p>	<p>The Assessment Team is pleased to hear that the initial SharePoint migration has been completed. It is also reassuring that the authority is giving consideration to the wider records management functionality impacted by this change.</p> <p>It looks like Lothian VJB is well on its way to addressing the changes brought about by the move to O365 environment. Whilst a significant step has now been completed, this element will remain at Amber while the wider project is ongoing. We look forward to being updated on further progress in consecutive PURs.</p>
12. Competency Framework	G	G	G	Update required on any change.	No change.	No immediate action required. Update required on any future change.	No change.	<p>The Assessment Team thanks you for this update on O365 records management functionality training. This is an important area, and it is reassuring to see Lothian Valuation Joint Board is committing resources to increase</p>

								staff competency – especially as this is a newly-adopted platform. Update required on any change.
13. Assessment and Review	G	G	G	Update required on any change.	No change.	No immediate action required. Update required on any future change.	No change.	Lothian Valuation Joint Board's continuing engagement with the Progress Update Review is a positive sign of its dedication to continuous assessment of its records management arrangements. Update required on any change.
14. Shared Information	G	G	G	Update required on any change.	No change.	No immediate action required. Update required on any future change.	No change.	Update required on any change.

7. The Public Records (Scotland) Act Assessment Team's Summary

Version

The progress update submission which has been assessed is the one received by the Assessment Team on 29 April 2021. The progress update was submitted by Bernie Callaghan, Head of Governance.

The progress update submission makes it clear that it is a submission for **Lothian Valuation Joint Board**.

PRSA Assessment Team's Summary

The Assessment Team has reviewed Lothian Valuation Joint Board's Progress Update submission and agrees that the proper record management arrangements outlined by the fourteen elements in the authority's plan continue to be properly considered. The Assessment Team commends this authority's efforts to keep its Records Management Plan under review.

General Comments

Lothian Valuation Joint Board continues to take its records management obligations seriously and is working to bring all elements into full compliance.

Section 5(2) of the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011 provides the Keeper of the Records of Scotland (the Keeper) with authority to revisit an agreed plan only after five years has elapsed since the date of agreement. Section 5(6) allows authorities to revise their agreed plan at any time and resubmit this for the Keeper's agreement. The Act does not require authorities to provide regular updates against progress. The Keeper, however, encourages such updates.

The Keeper cannot change the status of elements formally agreed under a voluntary submission, but he can use such submissions to indicate how he might now regard this status should the authority choose to resubmit its plan under section (5)(6) of the Act.

8. The Public Records (Scotland) Act Assessment Team's Evaluation

Based on the progress update assessment the Assessment Team considers that Lothian Valuation Joint Board continue to take their statutory obligations seriously and are working hard to bring all the elements of their records management arrangements into full compliance with the Act and fulfil the Keeper's expectations.

- The Assessment Team recommends authorities consider publishing PUR assessment reports on their websites as an example of continued good practice both within individual authorities and across the sector.

This report follows the Public Records (Scotland) Act Assessment Team's review carried out by



Iida Saarinen
Public Records Support Officer