

**The Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011**

**Dunbartonshire and Argyll and Bute Valuation Joint Board**

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

**18<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

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## 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 Dunbartonshire and Argyll and Bute Valuation Joint Board. The outcome of the assessment and relevant feedback can be found under sections 6 – 8.

### **4. Authority Background**

The Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute Valuation Joint Board was established as part of the 1996 reorganisation of local government in terms of The Valuation Joint Boards (Scotland) Order 1995 and is vested with the functions of the three valuation authorities (Argyll & Bute Council, East Dunbartonshire Council and West Dunbartonshire Council) in the former Strathclyde Region. With the agreement of the three councils the Board also has responsibility for the Electoral Registration function.

The Board will comprise 16 members who are appointed by the three councils with the Argyll and Bute Council and West Dunbartonshire Council each nominating 5 members and East Dunbartonshire Council 6 members. The quorum for Board meetings is 4 members with at least one from each council area.

For ease of reference during the assessment of the Progress Update Review, the authority will be referred to as 'The Board'.

## 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:

<b>G</b>	The Assessment Team agrees this element of an authority's plan.	<b>A</b>	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.	<b>R</b>	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.
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### 6. Progress Update Review (PUR) Template: Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute Valuation Joint Board (The Board)

Element	Status of elements under agreed Plan 18FEB16	Progress review status 12SEP22	Progress review status 18DEC23	Keeper's Report Comments on Authority's Plan 18FEB16	Self-assessment Update 30MAY22	Progress Review Comment 12SEP22	Self-assessment Update as submitted by the Authority since 12SEP22	Progress Review Comment 18DEC23
1. Senior Officer	<b>G</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>G</b>	Update required on any change.	This remains unchanged.	Thank you for letting the Assessment Team know that there have been no changes to this element. Update required on any future change.	Russell Hewton has replaced David Thomson as the Senior Officer of the Valuation Joint Board. The Job Profile for the Role is attached (DAB2023-01) which demonstrates at 6.2 responsibilities which include ensuring that arrangements are in place for the organisation to be fully compliant with existing and future legislation in relation to Records Management (amongst others).  A letter from	The Assessment Team thanks you for this update on new senior officer named under Element 1. This has been noted, and the receipt of both the job profile and the letter is also acknowledged with thanks. The Assessment Team wishes Mr Hewton best of luck in his new post.  Update required on any future change.

							Russell is included (DAB2023-02) which demonstrates recognition of his roles and responsibilities, and a renewal of the Board's commitment to ensure the effective management of its records and information. Having previously been the operational records manager, Russell has a good working knowledge of the Board's RMP.	
2. Records Manager	G	G	G	Update required on any change.	Robert Nicol has been replaced by Russell Hewton who has taken on the role of Depute Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer. The Job Description for the role as previously submitted (evidence item DAB 05) remains current.	Thank you for this update which has been noted.	Darryl Rae has replaced Russell Hewton in the role of Depute Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer. The Job Description for the role as previously submitted (evidence item DAB 05) remains current.	Thank you for letting the Team know that the VJB's records manager and our Key Contact has changed. This has been noted with many kind thanks. The PRSA welcomes Mr Rae into his post and would be happy to set

								up an introductory meeting should that be helpful.  Update required on any future change.
3. Policy	<b>G</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>G</b>	Update required on any change.	This remains unchanged.	Update required on any future change.	This remains unchanged.	Update required on any future change.
4. Business Classification	<b>G</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>G</b>	Update required on any change.	This remains unchanged.	Update required on any future change.	This remains unchanged.	Update required on any future change.
5. Retention Schedule	<b>G</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>G</b>	Update required on any change.	This remains unchanged.	Update required on any future change.	This remains unchanged.	Update required on any future change.
6. Destruction Arrangements	<b>A</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>A</b>	<u>Electronic</u> The updated Data Structure Project Plan (evidence item DAB 09a) shows the progress made in imposing the BCS structure upon the records held in shared drives. This will allow electronic records stored on the drives to be more easily identified and disposed of according to the requirements of the retention schedule. Evidence item DAB 37 provides guidance on disposal arrangements for records which	Progress has continued on this project, although the project update document was not updated for some time. This has now been updated and attached (Evidence DAB 9a(i)-2022), along with screenshots (DAB 9a(ii)-2022) demonstrating progress on the	Many thanks for this update on record destruction arrangements, and the provision of the now-updated project update document. It is positive to hear progress has been made, and is also being tracked	Work continues on this project, with the latest Project Plan Update attached (DAB2023-03). IT resource is required for much of the remainder of this project, which is scheduled for Summer of this year.	It is positive to hear that progress in this area is ongoing. Thank you also for providing a copy of the Project plan Update to highlight this.  This Element remains at Amber while the work to close the

				<p>will be amended as necessary as the abovementioned Project progresses.</p> <p><b>The Keeper can agree this element on an 'improvement model' basis. This means that the authority has identified a gap in provision (deletion of electronic records from shared drives) and has provided evidence of its commitment to putting procedures in place to close the gap. As part of this agreement, the Keeper requests that he is kept updated as the project moves forward.</b></p>	<p>old structures being reviewed and moved as necessary. With a new records manager in post, and a restructure of our servers in place, this project has received fresh impetus.</p>	<p>regularly.</p> <p>Although the gap in provision has not yet been closed and this Element will remain at Amber, the Board is working hard towards completion of this project. The Assessment Team look forward to being updated on further progress in subsequent PURs.</p>		<p>gap identified in 2016 continues. The Team looks forward to updates on this in subsequent PURs.</p>
7. Archiving and Transfer	G	G	G	Update required on any change.	This remains unchanged.	Update required on any future change.	This remains unchanged.	Update required on any future change.
8. Information Security	G	G	G	Update required on any change.	Where policies and procedures were previously accessed via the Board's Intranet site, this is in the process of being decommissioned, and those policies and procedures are now listed on	The Assessment Team thanks you for this update. It is good to hear that Policies and Procedures are being published on the Board's	This remains unchanged.	Update required on any future change.

					the Board’s public-facing website (www.saa.gov.uk/dab-vjb) – see evidence DAB 23a(i)-2022 for screenshots. The staff induction procedures were update recently to reflect this (evidence DAB 23a(ii)-2022).	website and are therefore readily accessible. The evidence provided is also noted with thanks.		
9. Data Protection	G	G	G	Update required on any change.	The newly appointed Depute Assessor and ERO whose role includes being the organisations Senior Information Risk Officer (SIRO) has undertaken training and examination in Data Protection and has been awarded a GDPR Practitioner Certificate (evidence DAB 38). Data Protection Training remains a part of the induction process for all staff.	See comments under Element 12.  Update required on any change.	The newly appointed Depute Assessor and ERO whose role includes being the organisations Senior Information Risk Officer (SIRO) is due to undertake training for and examination to achieve a GDPR Practitioner Certificate. The Board’s Data Protection Policy is now held on our public internet site (previously held on local intranet).	Thank you for this update on the changed location of the Data Protection Policy; this has been noted.  For comments on training, please see Element 12.

10. Business Continuity and Vital Records	G	G	G	Update required on any change.	This remains unchanged.	Update required on any future change.	This remains unchanged.	Update required on any future change.
11. Audit Trail	A	A	A	<p>The RMP states that, at present, the Board does not have comprehensive audit trail systems in place.</p> <p>Paper Council Tax and Non-Domestic records are stored in Council Tax List and Valuation Roll order and are kept within a secure area. Physical access is controlled under the provisions of the Visitor Access Policy (evidence item DAB 20) but there is no tracking mechanism in place for when records are removed from storage areas. There is however a commitment in the RMP to develop a file tracking system. The Board has submitted evidence showing its proposed process for providing audit trail functionality for its paper Non Domestic filing system (evidence item DAB 32). This will mean that a record will be kept of who has withdrawn a file and when and when it has been returned. The agenda for the Admin Meeting on 20 January 2016 has also been submitted (evidence item DAB 33) showing that this proposed system will be discussed there.</p>	With the exception of the update given above in relation to the shared drive project, this element remains unchanged.	The Keeper expects authority's RMP to provide evidence that a complete and accurate representation of all changes that occur in relation to a particular record is maintained. The shared drive project, mentioned in previous updates, is likely to continue to be resource-intensive. While gradual progress is expected, it is accepted that the implementation of comprehensive audit trail processes in a	<p>See update under element 6 in relation to the shared drive project.</p> <p>Initial work has taken place to source a Valuation and Case handling system for the Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rating functions. Procurement of this is about to commence, with a likely project duration of 2 years to full implementation and data migration. This is to include electronic records storage which, in time, will include digital images of all existing paper files. No further paper records are being</p>	<p>As reported under Element 6, the Assessment Team notes that work on the larger shared drive migration project continues.</p> <p>Thank you also for letting us know that the VJB is in the process of procuring a new line-of-business system.</p> <p>The Assessment Team notes that the VJB now operates its business fully digitally, with scans of legacy paper records completed where necessary.</p> <p>This Element will</p>

			<p><b>The Keeper looks forward to being kept updated on the progress of this project.</b></p> <p>The Board is currently in the process of developing a new structure for its shared drives. This will be based on the Data Structure (evidence item DAB 09) and appropriate access permissions will be allocated to the folder structure. The timescales for this project are laid out in the Data Structure Project Plan (evidence item DAB 09) with completion envisaged for roll out by April 2016.</p> <p>The Board has submitted an email from the records manager (see Element 2) detailing the file naming conventions in place for Non Domestic Valuation records stored on the shared drives.</p> <p><b>The Keeper can agree this element on an ‘improvement model’ basis. This means that the authority has identified a gap in provision (lack of comprehensive audit trail processes) and has provided evidence of the means by which it will close the gap. This agreement is dependent upon the Keeper being kept informed of the progress of</b></p>		<p>new set-up is likely to take time. The Team looks forward to hearing how this is progressing in subsequent PURs.</p>	<p>created – new items are now held in digital format, either in the new Drive Structure, or our legacy Document Hub application.</p>	<p>remain at Amber while the work to streamline audit trail processes within all systems in use continues. The Team looks forward to being updated on this matter in subsequent PURs.</p>
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				work to close the gap.				
12. Competency Framework	G	G	G	Update required on any change.	<p>R Hewton has taken over the role of Records Manager from R Nicol. Attendance at PRSA events has continued (Newcomers' surgery – 28/3/22, General surgery – 25/4/22) and planned attending at the upcoming June Conference series of events). Although R Hewton is not involved directly with the SAA Governance Committee, the Data Controller (D Thomson) is Chair of said Committee, and as such as an organisation there is a large amount of participation.</p> <p>R Hewton has joined the PRSA Discussion Group on Khub.</p>	<p>The Assessment Team thanks you for this update, and encourages the Records Manager to continue their engagement with the PRSA events and with the KHub discussion forum, as well as D Thomson's continuing positive involvement in the SAA Governance Committee.</p> <p>The Assessment Team acknowledges the receipt of Mr Hewton's GDPR Practitioner Certificate and commends this additional training undertaken</p>	<p>D Rae has taken over the role of Records Manager from R Hewton. Russell has continued to attend PRSA events, and has introduced Darryl to these.</p> <p>Darryl now represents the organisation on the SAA Governance Committee, ensuring continued participation, and learning and sharing best practice and procedure with similar organisations.</p>	<p>Thank you for confirming that the VJB will continue to attend PRSA Team's Surgeries where relevant, regardless of the change in records manager.</p> <p>Thank you also for indicating that the records manager continues to engage with the wider sector through committee work.</p> <p>As reported under Element 9, it the upcoming GDPR training and the Practitioner Certificate due to be obtained following the course by the Depute Assessor and</p>

						(see Element 9). Continuing staff induction training on Data Protection matters is also noted with thanks.		SIRO is noted with thanks.
13. Assessment and Review	<b>G</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>G</b>	Update required on any change.	This remains unchanged.	Update required on any future change.	This remains unchanged.	The Assessment Team would like to commend the Dunbartonshire and Argyll and Bute VJB for its participation in the PUR process.  Update required on any future change.
14. Shared Information	<b>G</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>G</b>	Update required on any change.	This remains unchanged.	Update required on any future change.	This remains unchanged.	Update required on any future 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 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023. The progress update was submitted by Russell Hewton, Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer.

The progress update submission makes it clear that it is a submission for **Dunbartonshire and Argyll and Bute Valuation Joint Board**.

The Assessment Team has reviewed Dunbartonshire and Argyll and Bute Valuation Joint Board's Progress Update submission and agrees that the proper record management arrangements outlined by the various 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

Dunbartonshire and Argyll and Bute 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 Dunbartonshire and Argyll and Bute Valuation Joint Board continues 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

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Iida Saarinen". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Iida Saarinen  
Public Records Officer