Economic Data Inquiry

Registers of Scotland

Registers of Scotland (RoS) collects, analyses and manages a significant amount of data as the guardians of 18 of Scotland's public registers. RoS is uniquely placed to provide important information about property in Scotland – a significant component of the Scottish economy. We are a producer of Official Statistics in Scotland, publishing regular property market reports compiled using data collected as part of the land registration process.

Background

RoS is the non-ministerial government department responsible for compiling and maintaining 18 public registers. These relate to land, property, and other legal documents. Our main registers are the Land Register of Scotland and the General Register of Sasines (the oldest public land register in the world, celebrating its 400th anniversary this year). Amongst others, we also maintain the Crofting Register and the Landlord Register, with additional new registers under development for property factors and letting agents.
Our registers ensure that every property in Scotland is protected for its owners, which in turn enables confident land and property transactions. Our stable land registration system underpins the Scottish economy.

Accurate and reliable property market data at the Scottish level.

The vast amount of data contained in our registers enables us to produce a range of valuable statistics on the property market (notably house prices). Our statistics are derived from high quality administrative data rather than surveys. This data is comprehensive and current, covering transactions across the whole of Scotland for all types of property sales, in residential and non-residential markets, and with actual sale prices, not just valuations. We are also developing an overseas owners dataset, which has the potential to feed into overseas investment statistics.

 All of our published statistics are produced in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Our quarterly, monthly and annual time-series datasets contain statistics from April 2003, including average price, sales volumes and market value broken down to local authority area. Further information about these statistics is in our guidance notes. We also hold data on cash and mortgage-financed sales.

Methodologies have been developed to add value to the transactional data by categorising properties by type, and also to identify new and existing buildings. A wide range of disaggregated analysis can be undertaken. For example, our annual 10-Year Property Price Report provides an overview of housing market trends in relation to cash and mortgage-financed sales volumes, the market within Scotland's seven cities, sales of properties within new-build developments, and high value residential sales.

RoS is continually reviewing and developing the statistics we publish, particularly for the housing market. We have been involved over the past couple of years in collaborative work, with the Office of National Statistics, HM Land Registry and Land & Property Services Northern Ireland, to develop a UK-level House Price Index (HPI). This enables statistics about the Scottish residential property market to be seen more clearly in the context of the market elsewhere in the UK and as such is a valued innovation. We began publishing data for the Scottish component of the UK House Price Index (HPI) in June 2016.

Utility

Our property market statistics are used by a wide range of stakeholders. Consumers of Official Statistics include local, regional and national policy-makers. The media takes an interest in our statistics, not only from a news perspective, but in relation to opinion and analysis, where our data lends weight due to its accuracy and reliability.

RoS is currently pursuing a digital transformation process and that digitisation will continue to play a central role in the way we provide services to our customers. In late 2017, we will launch ScotLIS, Scotland's Land Information Service. ScotLIS will enable customers and citizens to access RoS' data online for the first time.

Beginning by sharing RoS' own data in a user-friendly way and then combining it with other public sector and government data sets, ScotLIS will offer both a useful and unique view of Scotland.

ScotLIS has been designed and developed with its users. A collaborative approach is being adopted, where volunteers are being asked to review and provide feedback on the service at key incremental stages, helping us shape the service to meet their needs. This methodology will continue in parallel to the service being publicly available as new features and datasets are added. ScotLis will improve the accessibility of much of the data that we hold.
This is an overview of just some of the work that RoS undertakes, and we hope that this background can inform your enquiry.

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