Workforce Plan 2026-2029

Document Control

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1.0	First release	R Christie	28/08/2026

1. Purpose

This Workforce Plan sets out how the Highland and Western Isles Valuation Joint Board (the Board) will ensure it has the workforce capacity, capability, skills and organisational resilience required to deliver its statutory functions between 2026 and 2029.

The Workforce Plan supports delivery of:

- Service Plan
- Statutory Valuation for Non-Domestic Rating Functions
- Statutory Valuation for Council Tax Functions
- Electoral Registration Functions
- Barclay Reform Requirements
- Digital Transformation Priorities

The Plan identifies current and future workforce challenges and establishes actions to ensure the organisation remains appropriately resourced and capable of meeting service demands.

Workforce Planning Priorities

1. Recruit and retain skilled employees.
2. Strengthen succession planning arrangements.
3. Improve workforce resilience.
4. Develop leadership and management capability.
5. Support career progression.
6. Address skills gaps.
7. Reduce reliance on overtime.
8. Align workforce planning with organisational objectives.
9. Improve workforce data and performance reporting.
10. Support employee wellbeing and engagement.

2. Strategic Context

The Board operates within an increasingly complex environment.

Significant factors influencing workforce planning include:

- Three-yearly revaluation cycles following Barclay reforms.

- Increasing complexity of valuation legislation.
- Electoral registration legislative changes.
- Digital transformation requirements.
- Recruitment challenges within professional surveying roles.
- An ageing workforce and future retirement risks.
- Increased expectations relating to governance, audit and workforce development.

The Workforce Plan has been developed following detailed staffing reviews undertaken in 2025 and 2026, which identified the need for creation of a number of new posts, subsequently resulting in the formation of a revised Departmental Structure, and supports delivery of the Service Plan.

3. Workforce Planning Framework

Workforce planning is integrated throughout the organisation.

1. Service Plan
2. Workforce Plan
3. Skills Matrix
4. Training & Development Plan
5. Employee Review & Development (ERD)
6. Succession Planning
7. Annual Workforce Review

This framework ensures that workforce decisions directly support strategic objectives.

4. Current Workforce Profile

Workforce Composition

The Board workforce consists of employees across:

- Valuation Services
- Electoral Registration Services
- Administrative Support
- Information Technology
- Management
- Area Offices
- Temporary and Project Staff

See Appendix A – Departmental Structure Chart. Detailed staffing establishments are maintained separately through workforce establishment and budget reports.

Key Characteristics

The workforce comprises a mix of:

- Professional valuation staff
- Surveying technicians
- Electoral administration specialists
- Administrative support staff
- Information technology specialists
- Project and temporary workers

Regular monitoring is undertaken regarding:

- Headcount
- Full Time Equivalent (FTE)
- Vacancies
- Turnover
- Sickness absence
- Retirement projections
- Skills and qualifications

5. Workforce Risks and Challenges

The Board faces a number of workforce risks.

Recruitment Challenges

Recruitment and retention of qualified valuation professionals continue to present challenges across Scotland.

Risk Factors:

- Limited supply of qualified surveyors.
- Competition from other Assessors.
- Competition from the private sector.
- Remote and rural recruitment difficulties.

Succession Planning

Several experienced employees are approaching retirement.

Risks include:

- Loss of specialist knowledge.
- Loss of management experience.
- Reduced operational resilience.

Skills Gaps

Emerging skills requirements include:

- Professional valuation skills.
- Leadership and management capability.
- Information technology systems expertise.
- Data analysis and reporting.
- Project management.

Workforce Resilience

The Board remains dependent upon a small number of individuals with specialist knowledge in critical systems and business processes.

Improving resilience is therefore a priority.

6. Workforce Review Findings

A comprehensive review of staffing arrangements identified several themes.

Electoral Services

Strengths

- Stable staffing structure.
- Good operational performance.
- Strong commitment from staff.

Development Areas

- Succession planning.
- Career progression.
- Support during periods of peak activity.
- Leadership development opportunities.

Two new supervisory posts have been created within the Electoral team: Electoral Team Leader and Assistant Electoral Team Leader.

Valuation Services

Strengths

- Highly skilled workforce.
- Strong commitment to service delivery.
- Significant contribution to Scottish Assessors' Association activities.

Development Areas

- Recruitment.
- Performance measurement.
- Process improvement.
- Succession planning.
- Career progression.
- Clarification of management responsibilities.
- Workforce resilience.

Within the valuation team two new managerial posts of Divisional Valuer have been created along with three new trainee valuer posts.

Valuation Administration

Strengths

- Experienced employees.
- Strong knowledge of valuation systems.

Development Areas

- Workforce capacity.
- Performance measurement.
- Process improvement.
- Introduction of new processes.
- Career progression.
- Management structure.

Two new supervisory posts have been created within the Valuation Admin team: Valuation Admin Team Leader and Assistant Valuation Admin Team Leader.

Central Administration

Strengths

- Experienced employees.
- Knowledge of administrative systems.

Development Areas

- Workforce capacity.
- Improved knowledge of administrative systems.
- Performance measurement.
- Process improvement.
- Career progression.
- Management structure.

A new supervisory post of Management Support Officer has been created within the Central Admin team, and a Business Support Assistant post has also been created.

Information Technology

Strengths

- Significant in-house knowledge.
- Successful support of operational systems.

Development Areas

- Business continuity arrangements.
- Succession planning.
- Skills transfer.
- Team resilience.
- Reduction of single-point dependencies.

A new IT Support Officer post has been created within the IT team as support for the IT Manager, and the remaining IT post of Admin Assistant, currently vacant, is under review.

Area Offices

Development Areas

- Long-term management arrangements.
- Succession planning.
- Workforce resilience.
- Consistent support structures.

Management Team

Development Areas

- Clear definition of responsibilities.
- Leadership development.
- Strategic workforce planning.
- Change management capacity.

7. Workforce Vision 2027

By 2027 the Board will have:

- A fully resourced workforce structure.
- Clear career pathways.
- Effective succession arrangements for key roles.
- Improved workforce resilience.
- Reduced dependence on overtime.
- Enhanced management capability.
- A skilled and adaptable workforce.
- Strong integration between workforce planning and service delivery.
- Effective workforce performance information.
- A positive culture of development and continuous improvement.

8. Skills and Workforce Development

The Board will develop a workforce with the skills necessary to support future service delivery.

Priority Areas

Professional Skills

- MRICS qualifications.
- Surveying technician development.
- Professional valuation training.
- SAA participation and leadership.

Electoral Skills

- AEA qualifications.
- Legislative updates.
- Electoral management development.

Leadership and Management

- First-line management training.
- Coaching and mentoring.
- Leadership programmes.

Digital Skills

- Business systems.
- Data analysis.
- SharePoint.
- Microsoft 365.
- Business intelligence tools.

9. Succession Planning

Succession planning is essential to maintaining organisational resilience.

Critical Posts

Examples include:

- Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer.
- Depute Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer.
- Depute Electoral Registration Officer / Business Manager

- Assistant Assessor.
- Divisional Valuers.
- IT Manager.
- Electoral Team Leaders.
- Administrative Team Leaders.

Succession Planning Actions

- Identification of critical posts.
- Identification of potential successors.
- Development plans for future leaders.
- Mentoring arrangements.
- Acting-up opportunities.
- Job shadowing.
- Knowledge transfer plans.
- Creation of a Succession Planning Framework (see Appendix C).

Succession plans will be reviewed annually.

10. Organisational Development Priorities

During the life of this Plan the Board will:

Workforce Structure

- Review organisational structures.
- Ensure management responsibilities are clear.
- Improve resources within critical teams.

Career Pathways

- Support progression routes.
- Encourage professional qualifications.
- Increase employee retention.

Workforce Resilience

- Improve cross-skilling.
- Reduce single points of failure.
- Increase operational flexibility.

Employee Wellbeing

- Monitor workload pressures.
- Reduce dependence on overtime.
- Promote healthy work-life balance.

11. Workforce Performance Measures

The following indicators will be monitored annually.

Recruitment

- Vacancy rate.
- Time to fill vacancies.
- Internal promotion rate.

Retention

- Employee turnover.
- Early turnover.
- Exit interview completion rate.

Attendance

- Sickness absence levels.
- Wellbeing indicators.

Training

- Training completion rates.
- Qualification achievement rates.
- Professional memberships maintained.

Succession Planning

- Critical posts with identified successors.
- Staff participating in development programmes.

12. Workforce Risk Register

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Rating
Recruitment difficulties for professional staff	Medium	High	Medium
Retirement of experienced employees	Medium	High	Medium
Critical IT knowledge concentrated in few individuals	Medium	High	Medium
Skills shortages	Medium	High	Medium
Legislative changes impacting workforce demands	Medium	Medium	Medium
Excessive workload and overtime	Medium	High	Medium

Risk mitigation actions will be monitored via the Management Team.

13. Workforce Action Plan 2026-2029

Action	Lead	Target
Continue with staff recruitment - See Appendix B - Workforce Establishment Progress	Management Team	Ongoing
Complete workforce skills matrix	Management Team	March 2027
Identify all critical posts	Management Team	September 2026
Complete succession planning framework	Management Team	Ongoing
Implement career pathways	Management Team	Ongoing
Develop leadership training programme	HR/Management Team	September 2027
Improve workforce KPI reporting	Management Support Officer	September 2027
Reduce reliance on overtime	Management Team	Ongoing
Annual workforce review	Management Team	Annually

14. Monitoring and Governance

The Workforce Plan will be monitored through:

Quarterly

- Vacancy reports.
- Recruitment activity.
- Sickness absence.
- Training activity.
- Workforce risks.

Annually

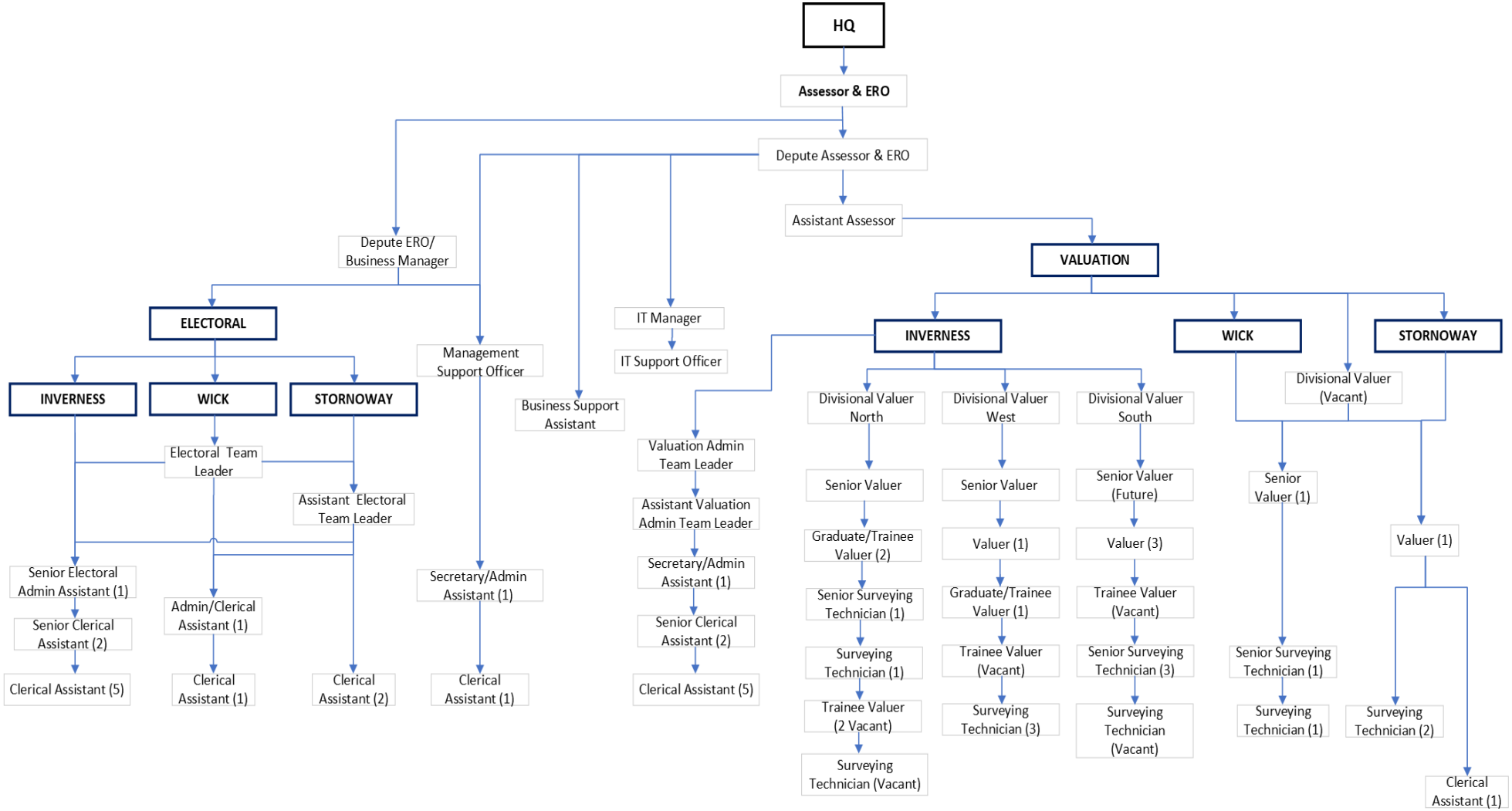
- Workforce profile review.
- Skills gap analysis.
- Succession planning review.
- Training effectiveness review.
- Workforce Plan refresh.

Reporting

Progress will be reported to:

- Management Team.
- The Highland and Western Isles Valuation Joint Board.

Appendix A – Departmental Structure



Appendix B – Workforce Establishment Progress

Post	Recruitment Progress
Divisional Valuer (2 posts)	One post filled
IT Manager	Post filled
IT Support Officer	Post filled
IT Admin Assistant	Post under review
Electoral Team Leader	Post filled
Assistant Electoral Team Leader	Post filled
Senior (Electoral) Admin Assistant	Post filled
Management Support Officer	Post filled
Business Support Assistant	Post filled
Surveying Technician (2 posts)	Posts filled
Valuation Admin Team Leader	Post filled
Assistant Valuation Admin Team Leader	Currently advertised
Electoral Clerical Assistant	Post filled
Val Admin Clerical Assistants (3 posts)	Posts now advertised
Trainee Valuers (4 posts)	Posts being advertised shortly
Surveying Technician	Post being advertised shortly

Appendix C – Succession Planning Framework

1. Purpose

The Highland and Western Isles Valuation Joint Board recognises that effective succession planning is essential to maintaining service continuity, preserving organisational knowledge, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of statutory functions. The purpose of this framework is to identify critical posts, assess succession risks, develop future leaders, and support organisational resilience.

Succession planning supports:

- Workforce resilience
- Service continuity
- Knowledge retention
- Leadership development
- Career progression
- Employee engagement
- Recruitment and retention strategies
- Delivery of the Workforce Plan 2026-2029

2. Succession Planning Objectives

The Board will:

1. Identify all critical posts.
2. Assess risks associated with retirement, resignation, promotion or absence.
3. Identify potential successor pools.
4. Develop employees through structured career pathways.
5. Support knowledge transfer and mentoring.
6. Reduce dependence on individual employees.
7. Review succession arrangements annually.

3. Succession Planning Methodology

Each critical post will be assessed using the following criteria:

Criticality

How important the post is to the delivery of statutory or operational services.

Resilience

The organisation's ability to maintain service delivery if the post becomes vacant.

Successor Readiness/Risk Rating

Rating	Definition
High	No successor identified and loss would significantly affect service delivery
Medium	Potential successor identified but development required
Low	Successor identified and development plan in place

4. Critical Posts Register

Senior Leadership Team

Critical Post	Current Risk	Successor Pool	Development Actions	Successor Pool Owner	Review Date
Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer (ERO)	High	Depute Assessor & ERO / Assistant Assessor	Strategic leadership, statutory responsibilities, Board governance	Assessor & ERO	March annually
Depute Assessor & ERO	Medium	Assistant Assessor	Operational leadership, statutory responsibilities, Board governance	Assessor & ERO	March annually
Assistant Assessor	Medium	Divisional Valuers	Leadership development, operational management	Assessor & ERO	March annually
Depute ERO / Business Manager	Medium	Management Support Officer/Team Leaders	Financial management, operational leadership	Assessor & ERO	March annually

Information Technology

Critical Post	Current Risk	Successor Pool	Development Actions	Successor Pool Owner	Review Date
IT Manager	Medium	IT Support Officer	Systems management, cyber security, procurement training	Depute Assessor & ERO	March annually
IT Support Officer	Medium	Internal development or external recruitment	Technical systems training	IT Manager	March annually

The IT structure has been redesigned specifically to improve resilience and reduce dependency on individual officers.

Electoral Services

Critical Post	Current Risk	Successor Pool	Development Actions	Successor Pool Owner	Review Date
Electoral Team Leader	Medium	Assistant Team Leader / Senior Admin Assistant	Leadership and supervisory training	Depute ERO / Business Manager	March annually

Critical Post	Current Risk	Successor Pool	Development Actions	Successor Pool Owner	Review Date
Assistant Electoral Team Leader	Low	Senior Admin Assistant	Team supervision and mentoring	Electoral Team Leader	March annually
Senior Admin Assistant	Low	Qualified Clerical Staff	AEA qualification and coaching	Electoral Team Leader	March annually

The creation of Electoral Team Leader and Assistant Team Leader posts has strengthened resilience, supervision and succession planning within Electoral Services.

Valuation Services

Critical Post	Current Risk	Successor Pool	Development Actions	Successor Pool Owner	Review Date
Divisional Valuer	Medium	Senior Valuers	Leadership development, SAA participation	Assistant Assessor	March annually
Senior Valuer	Medium	Qualified Valuers	Professional development and mentoring	Divisional Valuer	March annually

Critical Post	Current Risk	Successor Pool	Development Actions	Successor Pool Owner	Review Date
Valuer	Low	Trainee Valuers	MRICS support programme	Divisional Valuer	March annually
Trainee Valuer	Low	Surveying Technicians	Professional qualification pathway	Divisional Valuer	March annually

The revised valuation structure establishes a clear development pathway from Surveying Technician through to Divisional Valuer.

Valuation Administration

Critical Post	Current Risk	Successor Pool	Development Actions	Successor Pool Owner	Review Date
Valuation Admin Team Leader	Medium	Assistant Team Leader	Leadership training and performance management	Assistant Assessor	March annually
Assistant Valuation Admin Team Leader	Low	Admin Assistant	Team supervision and mentoring	Valuation Admin Team Leader	March annually

Critical Post	Current Risk	Successor Pool	Development Actions	Successor Pool Owner	Review Date
Admin Assistant	Low	Senior Clerical Staff	Supervision and coaching	Valuation Admin Team Leader	March annually

The creation of Valuation Admin Team Leader and Valuation Admin Assistant Team Leader posts has strengthened resilience, supervision and succession planning within Valuation Administration Services.

Central Administration

Critical Post	Current Risk	Successor Pool	Development Actions	Successor Pool Owner	Review Date
Management Support Officer	Low	Business Support Assistant	Leadership and management training	Depute Assessor & ERO	March annually

The creation of Management Support Officer post has strengthened resilience, supervision and succession planning within Central Administration Services.

5. Development Framework

Potential successors will be supported through the following development activities:

Leadership Development

- First Line Manager Programme
- Coaching and mentoring
- Team leadership opportunities

- Project leadership responsibilities

Professional Development

- MRICS qualifications
- AEA qualifications
- Continuous professional development
- Learning and development programmes

Workplace Learning

- Acting-up opportunities
- Job shadowing
- Cross-team working
- Committee and working group participation

Knowledge Transfer & Sharing

- Structured handovers
- Documented procedures
- Process mapping
- System documentation

6. Career Pathways

The Board supports internal progression wherever possible.

Electoral Pathway

Clerical Assistant → Senior Clerical Assistant → Senior Electoral Admin Assistant → Assistant Electoral Team Leader → Electoral Team Leader → Depute ERO & Business Manager

Valuation Pathway

Surveying Technician → Trainee Valuer → Valuer → Senior Valuer → Divisional Valuer → Assistant Assessor → Depute Assessor

Valuation Administrative Pathway

Clerical Assistant → Senior Clerical Assistant → Admin Assistant → Assistant Valuation Admin Team Leader → Valuation Admin Team Leader

Central Administrative Pathway

Clerical Assistant → Senior Clerical Assistant → Admin Assistant → Business Support Assistant → Management Support Officer → Depute ERO & Business Manager

Information Technology Pathway

IT Support Officer → IT Manager

These pathways support workforce sustainability and employee retention.

7. Annual Review Process

The Management Team will review succession planning annually as part of the Workforce Plan review.

The review will include:

- Critical post assessment
- Retirement projections
- Successor readiness
- Recruitment challenges
- Skills gaps
- Development plan progress
- Workforce risks

Findings will be reported to the Board through the annual Workforce Plan update.

8. Succession Planning Performance Measures

Measure	Target
Critical posts identified	100%
Critical posts reviewed annually	100%
Critical posts with successor identified	90%
Successors with development plans	100%
Annual succession review completed	Yes
Career pathways documented	100%