

BUILDING STANDARDS VERIFICATION

**Annual Performance
Report**

2022/23

West 
Dunbartonshire
COUNCIL

Version Control

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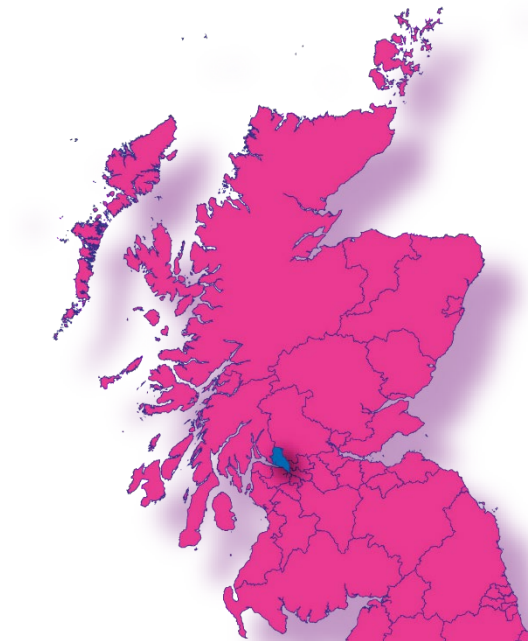
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1. Introduction

The verification performance report is a strategic planning and management tool that provides information about the local authority building standards service, communicates the vision and strategy, and sets out performance against strategic goals and targets. Building standards verifiers in Scotland are required to utilise the performance report to manage, monitor, review and develop strategies for their business, and should focus on the performance framework’s core perspectives and cross-cutting themes.

Our Area

West Dunbartonshire is one of the smallest local authorities in Scotland with just over 90,000 residents. With an area of approximately 70 square miles made up of rural, urban and waterfront areas it offers much as a place to live, work and visit with an attractive physical environment and reasonable house prices. The area combines natural scenic beauty, a strong historical industrial past and has good links to the motorway network and Glasgow International Airport. The area includes part of the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park. While the Council does face challenges, there is huge potential for growth and prosperity and the Council recognises its key role in making this happen in an environmentally and socially responsible manner.



The majority of the population is concentrated within the 3 principal towns of Clydebank, Dumbarton and Alexandria and their surrounding settlements.

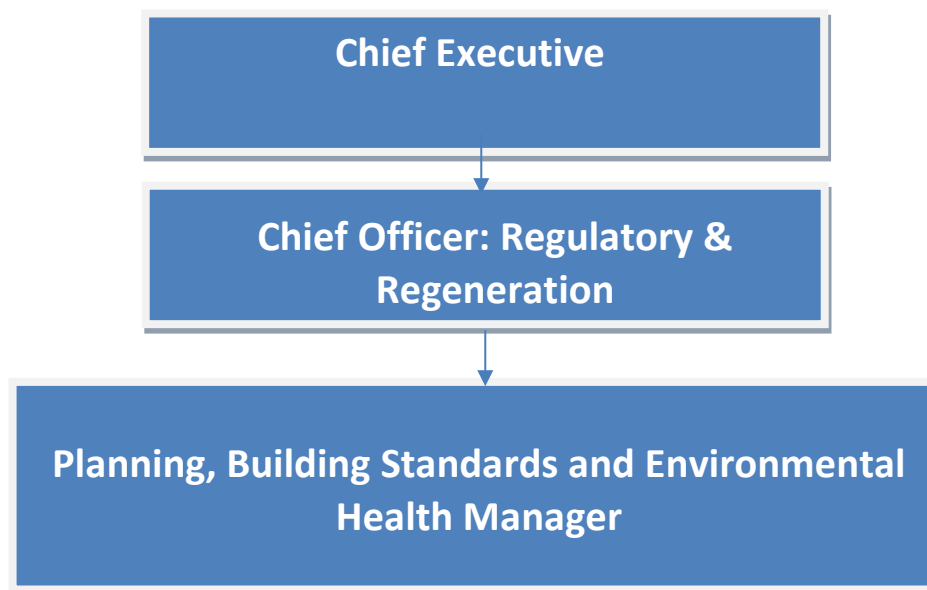
Building Standards Verification

Major employers within the area are predominately public sector based, such as the Local Authority and National Health Service. The world recognised Golden Jubilee Hospital is located in West Dunbartonshire and also the Vale of Leven Hospital. In addition, commercial and retail operators form a substantial proportion of the business sector throughout the Council area. Large private sector employers include Aggreko (temporary power generation), Chivas (Spirit Production) and National Australia Group (financial services). A variety of small and medium sized businesses also provide employment, goods and services to residents of the local area and beyond.

The Building Standards Service

West Dunbartonshire Council was appointed by the Scottish Ministers as the sole verifier for the Council area. The verification function is performed by the Building Standards section on behalf of the Council. As well as verification functions we also provide non-verification functions and the range of services provided by Building Standards is contained within section 2 of this report.

Building Standards operates within Regulatory and Regeneration Services. Day to day management of Building Standards is provided by the Planning, Building Standards and Environmental Health Manager, who has responsibility for Building Standards, Planning, Technical Support and Environmental Health services.



2. Building Standards Verification Service Information

Public Interest Statement

The purpose of the building standards system is to protect the public interest. The system sets out the essential standards that are required to be met when building work or conversion of a building takes place in order to meet building regulations.

The building standards system checks that proposed building work or conversion of a building meets standards; inspections are limited to a minimal necessary to ensure that legislation is not avoided. The control of work on site is not down to the system but is a matter for contracts and arrangements in place between a builder and client.

Verifiers, appointed by Scottish Ministers are responsible for the independent checking of applications for building warrants to construct or demolish buildings, to provide services, fittings or equipment in buildings, or for conversions.

Building Standards in West Dunbartonshire

The main role of the Building Standards Team is providing the verification service in relation to the requirements of the Building (Scotland) Act 2003. The Act aims to secure the health, safety, welfare and convenience of persons in and about buildings and others who may be affected by buildings or matters connected with buildings; to further the conservation of fuel and power; and to further the achievement of sustainable development. In order to achieve this aim, the team provides a range of statutory and non-statutory services which include:

Verification functions

- Verification of compliance with the building regulations of proposals in relation to building warrant applications, amendments to warrant, staged warrants and extensions to periods of validity of warrants;
- Inspection of work on site during construction and on completion relating to building warrants, in accordance with the Construction Compliance Notification Plan (CCNP)
- Verification of compliance of work in relation to Completion Certificate submissions where no warrant was obtained.

During 2021/22 we received 485 building warrant applications (including amendments) with a value of work in excess of £74,488,872.00. We received 677 completion certificate submissions in the same period.

Building Standards Verification

Dangerous and defective buildings

There are occasions when public safety may be jeopardised by the condition of buildings. An emergency call out service is provided by the Service. If action is required to safeguard the occupants or the general public, the Building Standards service will take action necessary to remove the danger by enforcing the requirements of the Building (Scotland) Act 2003. During 2021/22 we took action in three cases to have owners remove the danger being caused; normally as a result of storm or fire damage.

Unauthorised work

We are responsible for enforcing the requirements of the Building (Scotland) Act 2003 in relation to buildings constructed without a warrant or in contravention of conditions of warrant and for buildings whose limited life span has expired. In relation to work carried out during the time of the previous Building (Scotland) Act 1959 we provide a letter of comfort service to regularise situations of historic work which has been carried out without consent.

Licensing

We contribute to the consideration of various licensing applications made to the Council including alcohol licenses, houses in multiple occupation, sports grounds and open air concerts. This process has been streamlined by implementing an electronic process.

Raised structures

We consider and determine raised structure applications made to the Council under the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 for raised structures such as seating stands for circuses, stages for events & concerts.

Document searches

We provide a document search service providing information on building warrants and completion certificates that were issued in the last 25 years.

Pre- applications meetings

We provide a pre-application meeting service for developers and designers to enable early discussion of the procedures to be followed to obtain warrant approval, identification and discussion of key areas of design of proposed buildings relative to the building regulations. We work closely with our Planning Colleagues during this process. This is promoted especially for major developments such as development on Queens Quay, new schools, new superstore, extension to industrial units etc.

Fast track applications

We provide this verification service for domestic minor works and disabled adaptation applications.

Pandemic

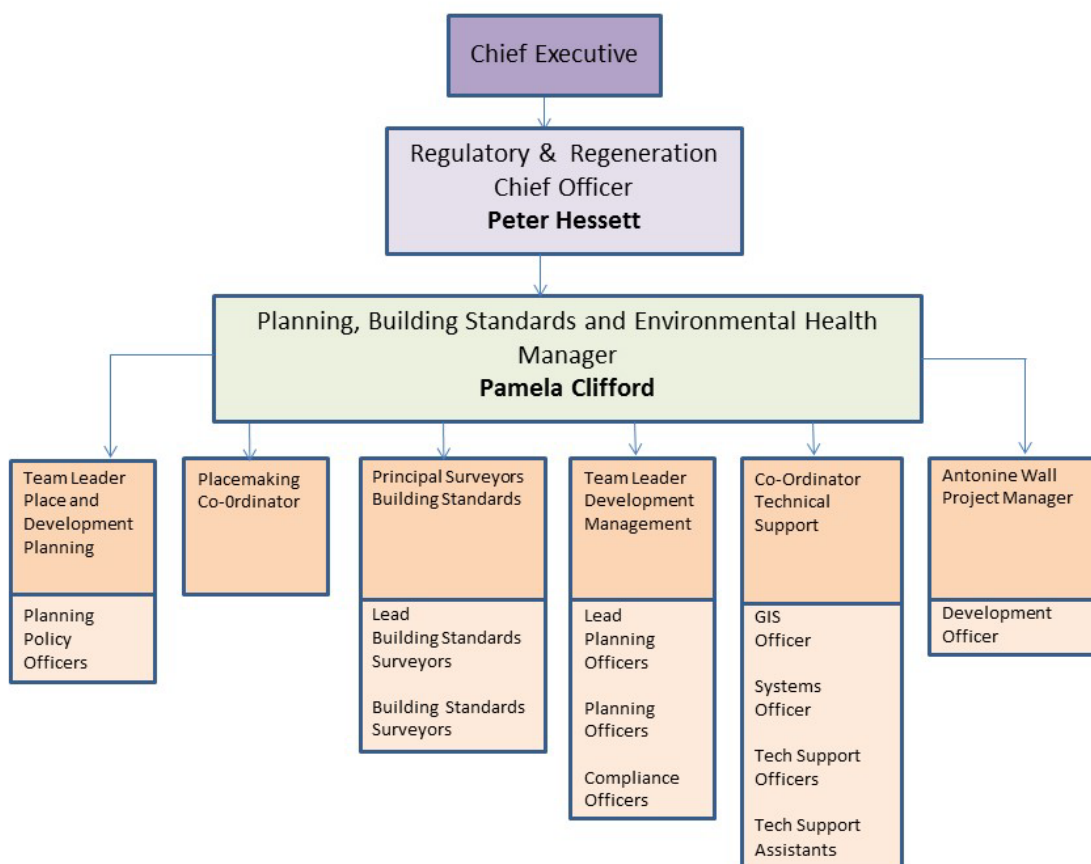
The pandemic has brought unprecedented challenges to both public and private sector services. We are working closely with all stakeholders in order to ensure construction works progress on site within Government guidelines and restrictions. We are continually reviewing and adapting our service during these uncertain times. A Risk Assessment has been compiled and approved for all our Building Standards Surveyors. A track and trace system has also been introduced for all site inspections. Inductions/Toolbox talks have been completed by all Surveyors with regards to site protocols, social distancing and personal hygiene. At present our Council office is closed and our Surveyors are working remotely. We have adapted our service to maintain site inspections as reasonably practical under the Construction Compliance Notification Plan (CCNP). This is partly achieved by accepting Certificates of Construction submissions for electrical and drainage installations. We also accept photographic/video evidence and supporting statements from a responsible person, which should be agreed with the Building Standards Surveyor prior to submission.

Building Standards Verification

Location

The Building Standards Team are located within the Council Offices at 16 Church Street which incorporates a Grade A listed façade of the Old Dumbarton Academy. The office is in a town centre location and is easily reached by the public transport network, bike or car and has adjacent parking facilities. The team operates alongside Technical Support, Development Management, Development Planning and Place, Antonine Wall Project, Place and Design Panel and Environmental Health services. The office provides flexible work space which allows greater cross service working as well as providing greater access to key Council services.

The Building Standards Team consists of 2 Principal Lead Surveyors, 1 Lead Building Standards Surveyor and 3 Building Standards Surveyors. The Building Standards Structure is incorporated within the diagram below. Due to the long term absence of the Principal Building Standards Surveyor (General Operations) this year, the Lead Building Standards Surveyor has taken up this position on a temporary basis.



Staffing Position

Snapshot of staffing position on 31 March 2021 (posts are full time equivalents).

	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4
Head of Building Standards Verification Service	0	0	0	1

Note: Tier 1 = Chief Executive; Tier 2 = Directors; Tier 3 = Heads of Service; Tier 4 = Managers

		Building Standards Verification Service	
Managers	No. posts	2	
	Vacant	1	
Main grade posts (surveyors)	No. posts	4	
	Vacant	1	
Technician	No. posts	0.5	
	Vacant	0	
Office support/ clerical	No. posts	2.5	
	Vacant	0.5	
TOTAL		10	

Note: Managers are those staff responsible for the operational management of a team/division. They are not necessarily line managers.

Staff age profile	Number
Under 30	1
30-39	0.5
40-49	4
50 and over	1

3. Strategic Objectives

Our Vision

“West Dunbartonshire Council will deliver high quality services led by priorities identified by the communities of West Dunbartonshire in an open and transparent way “

The Council’s Strategic Plan 2017- 2022 sets out the vision and direction for Council services over the next 5 years. It will inform the delivery of Council services and provide a context for decision making at a service level. The strategic priorities will be delivered through the Service Delivery Plans and those of the Strategic Partners in the Community Planning Partners. Key strategic priorities:

- Strong local economy and improved job opportunities;
- Supported individuals, families and carers living independently and with dignity;
- Meaningful engagement with active, empowered and informed citizens who feel safe and engaged;
- Open, accountable and accessible local government;
- Efficient and effective frontline services that improve the everyday lives of residents.

The Building Standards Service is identified as a lead service in delivering the first priority of a strong local economy and improved job opportunities. The Regulatory and Regeneration Services Delivery Plan 2021/22 sets out key actions to help deliver the Strategic Plan. It outlines the performance indicators to measure our success, provides an overview of services and resources, including employees and budgets, and considers the relevant risks. This year it has included a section on how the Services have adapted to the challenges of COVID.

Progress will be monitored and managed on a regular basis at Regulatory and Regeneration management team meetings and reported twice yearly to Corporate Services Committee, at mid-year and year end. One of the key priorities of the Delivery Plan is supporting regeneration projects and Building Standards play a key role in assisting to achieve this. In line with corporate priorities, we also continue to seek to be as effective and efficient as possible in the services we provide and our key service improvements for 2021/22 reflect this.

Key service improvements for 2022/23

- To fulfil the requirements of the Scottish Government 's Performance and Operating Frameworks for Building Standards verifiers;
- Improve workflow processes and automation;
- Monitor and improve processing times for building warrant applications in line with the KPO;
- Continue to improve/maximise electronic service delivery in support of the national eDevelopment portal;
- Focus on performance by providing quality on the job/site training for all Building Standard Surveyors;
- Continue to provide training opportunities for Building Standards Surveyors specific to their individual needs;
- Review processes for consultations in-house with Environmental Health;
- Review processes for consultation with Scottish Fire and Rescue;
- Continue to develop ways of improving working electronically including mobile working;
- Review all electronic forms and introduce new electronic forms to improve performance and customer delivery;
- Introduce quarterly Building Standards newsletter to keep stake holders abreast of changes to the service;
- Introduce electronic form for Section 50 licensing applications;
- Review the Building Standards Web Page to make it more user friendly and interactive;
- Review the Dangerous Building Register and recording of actions electronically and introduce new processes, where necessary;
- Review procedures for Safety in Sports Grounds inspections and certificates and introduce new procedures.

4. Key Performance Outcomes and Targets

The national verification performance framework is based on three core perspectives:

- Professional Expertise and Technical Processes;
- Quality Customer Experience; and
- Operational and Financial Efficiency.

There are also three cross-cutting themes, comprising:

- Public Interest;
- Continuous Improvement; and
- Partnership Working.

Summary of Key Performance Outcomes (KPOs)

Professional Expertise and Technical Processes	
KPO1	Minimise time taken to issue a first report or issue a building warrant or amendment to building warrant.
KPO2	Increase quality of compliance assessment during the construction processes
Quality Customer Experience	
KPO3	Commit to the building standards customer charter
KPO4	Understand and respond to the customer experience
Operational and Financial Efficiency	
KPO5	Maintain financial governance
KPO6	Commit to eBuilding Standards
KPO7	Commit to objectives outlined in the annual performance report

Summary of Key Performance Targets

KPO1 Targets	
1.1	95% of first reports (for building warrants and amendments) issued within 20 days – All first reports (including BWs and amendments issued without a first report).
1.2	90% of building warrants and amendments issued within 10 days from receipt of all satisfactory information – all building warrants and amendments (not including BWs and amendments issued without a first report).
KOP2 Targets	
2.1	Targets to be developed as part of future review of KPO2.
KPO3 Targets	
3.1	National customer charter is published prominently on the website and incorporates version control detailing reviews (reviewed at least quarterly).
3.2	95% of BSD requests for information on a BSD ‘Verifier Performance Reporting Service for Customers’ case responded to by verifier within 5 days.
KPO4 Targets	
4.1	Minimum overall average satisfaction rating of 7.5 out of 10.
KPO5 Targets	
5.1	Building standards verification fee income to cover indicative verification service costs (staff costs plus 30%).
KPO6 Targets	
6.1	Details of eBuilding Standards to be published prominently on the verifier’s website.
6.2	75% of each key building warrant related process being done electronically <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan checking • Building warrant or amendments (and plans) being issued • Verification during construction • Completion certificates being accepted
KPO7 Targets	
7.1	Annual performance report published prominently on website with version control (reviewed at least quarterly).
7.2	Annual performance report to include performance data in line with KPOs and associated targets (annually covering previous year e.g. April 2021 – March 2022).

5. Performance Data

This section provides a summary of our performance against all Key Performance Outcomes from 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022

Performance Targets

KPO Targets	1.1	1.2	3.1	3.2	4.1	5.1	6.1	6.2	7.1	7.2
	95% of first reports (for building warrants and amendments) issued within 20 days – all first reports (including BWs and amendments issued without a first report).	90% of building warrants and amendments issued within 10 days from receipt of all satisfactory information – all building warrants and amendments (not including BWs and amendments issued without a first report).	National customer charter is published prominently on the website and incorporates version control detailing reviews (reviewed at least quarterly).	95% of BSD requests for information on a BSD 'Verifier Performance Reporting Service for Customers' case responded to by verifier within 5 days.	Minimum overall average satisfaction rating of 7.5 out of 10	Building standards verification fee income to cover indicative verification service costs (staff costs plus 30%).	Details of eBuilding Standards are published prominently on the verifier's website.	75% of each key building warrant related processes being done electronically (Plan checking; BWs and amendments (and plans) issue; Verification during construction, CC acceptance)	Annual performance report published prominently on website with version control (reviewed at least quarterly).	Annual performance report to include performance data in line with KPOs and associated targets (annually covering previous year e.g. April 2016 – March 2017).
2021-2022 Q1	71.81%	33.66%	Published prominently (with review)	No cases referred to BSD 'Reporting Service'	6.2	135.01%	Published prominently	4 of 4 done	Published prominently (with review)	Includes all performance data
2021-2022 Q2	93.28%	53.49%	Published prominently (with review)	No cases referred to BSD 'Reporting Service'	6.2	49.42%	Published prominently	4 of 4 done	Published prominently (with review)	Includes all performance data
2021-2022 Q3	95.60%	64.86%	Published prominently (with review)	No cases referred to BSD 'Reporting Service'	6.2	61.15%	Published prominently	4 of 4 done	Published prominently (with review)	Includes all performance data
2021-2022 Q4	96.55%	71.01%	Published prominently (with review)	No cases referred to BSD 'Reporting Service'	6.2	91.31%	Published prominently	4 of 4 done	Published prominently (with review)	Includes all performance data
2022-2023 Q1	91.76%	63.24%	Published prominently (with review)	No cases referred to BSD 'Reporting Service'	6.2	67.40%	Published prominently	4 of 4 done	Published prominently (with review)	Includes all performance data
2022-2023 Q2	88.17%	60.82%	Published prominently (with review)	No cases referred to BSD 'Reporting Service'	6.2	65.56%	Published prominently	4 of 4 done	Published prominently (with review)	Includes all performance data
2022-2023 Q3	96.34%	79.71%	Published prominently (with review)	No cases referred to BSD 'Reporting Service'	6.2	107.72%	Published prominently	4 of 4 done	Published prominently (with review)	Includes all performance data
2022-2023 Q4	97.00%	91.25%	Published prominently (with review)	No cases referred to BSD 'Reporting Service'	9.5	104.82%	Published prominently	4 of 4 done	Published prominently (with review)	Includes all performance data
2023-2024 Q1	94.12%	85.06%	Published prominently (with review)	No cases referred to BSD 'Reporting Service'	9.5	97.11%	Published prominently	3 of 4 done	Published prominently (with review)	Includes all performance data

Professional Expertise and Technical Processes

KPO1 Targets - Minimise time taken to issue a first report or issue a building warrant or amendment to building warrant.	
1.1	95% of first reports (for building warrants and amendments) issued within 20 days – All first reports (including BWs and amendments issued without a first report).
	Actual performance against this target for 2021/22 is 87% Q1 2023/2024: 94.12%
1.2	90% of building warrants and amendments issued within 10 days from receipt of all satisfactory information – all building warrants and amendments (not including BWs and amendments issued without a first report).
	Actual performance against this target for 2021/22 is 55% Q1 2023/2024: 85.06%
<p>Commentary: Long term staff absence has made this a challenging year, with a loss of experienced staff. Agency staff have helped to bridge this gap, which has cleared a backlog of applications, affecting this performance figure. The introduction of improved IT processes should improve this further.</p>	
KPO2 Targets	
2.1	Targets to be developed as part of future review of KPO2.
	Construction Compliance and Notification Plans (CCNP's) fully achieved in 2021/22 is 95%
<p>Commentary: We have a part-time agency Building Standards inspector who has made a large impact on the backlog of inspections caused by the suspension of onsite inspections during the COVID-19 pandemic. We have also used photographs, remote video inspections and the certifiers of construction scheme to achieve the CCNP requirements.</p> <p>Although no targets have yet been developed by the Scottish Government in relation to this KPO the following contextual information is provided - there were 606 CCNP's considered during 2021/22. Of these, 95% were fully achieved by the Council as verifier and 24% fully achieved by the relevant person.</p>	

Protocols for Dealing with Work

We have protocols and working practices in place to ensure that we have effective and consistent verification of warrant application and completion certificate submissions. Work allocation risk management procedures ensure that applications are given to staff who are suitably qualified and experienced to deal with them. In addition we operate a random sample check of 5% of warrant and completion certificate submissions to ensure the quality and technical aspects of our decisions is accurate. Opportunity exists within the protocol to allow less experienced staff to deal with some higher risk applications where appropriate and this is subject to an internal control/checking system

Performance Management Systems

We have systems in place to enable reports to be run from our back office database to allow workload to be managed and performance data to be collected and analysed. As well as providing data for KPO returns to the Scottish Government, performance reports assist in the management of the team workload. Performance and workload within the team is discussed at regular team meetings.

Training and Development/CPD

The Council recognises that it is essential to have staff with the right education and skills to enable them to successfully undertake their respective roles. Building Standards Surveyors have appropriate educational qualifications and most are members of professional organisations and complete CPD in accordance with their membership requirements. All staff have access to corporate training packages via iLearn accounts. All staff have access to relevant legislation, statutory instruments, technical handbooks, guidance documents, procedural handbooks, etc. Additional training needs and CPD support are identified and made available via the corporate “Be the Best” initiative with 1-2-1 discussions held throughout the year. Officers are encouraged to identify their training needs and this is supported by a corporate training budget and a small service budget. Building Standards Surveyors have their own Training Plans which the Principal Building Standards Surveyor (General Operations) oversees and reviews on a regular basis. A Building Standards Surveyor from Edinburgh City Council provided training on report writing to Building Standards Surveyors. The Technical Support Co-ordinator is undertaking the Building Surveying Course at Glasgow Caledonian University on a day release basis and this is being supported by the Council. She has just started year 3 of the course. The national Competency Assessment Scheme (CAS) is to be introduced this year to all Building Standards Authorities to assess the quality of the Building Standard workforce.

One of our Surveyors has recently had a blog published to mark the launch of the Building Standards Workforce Strategy, and shares her experience of joining the profession. <https://blogs.gov.scot/building-standards/2020/10/01/a-building-standards-career/>



Benchmarking

We are members of Local Authority Building Standards Scotland (LABSS) and work with other Local Authority colleagues to enhance national delivery of building standards in Scotland. At a regional level, we are members of the LABSS Clyde Valley consortium of verifiers (comprising Argyll & Bute, East Dunbartonshire, Glasgow, East Renfrewshire, Renfrewshire, Inverclyde and West Dunbartonshire Councils) to share best practice, encourage consistency, benchmark and discuss issues. Working with LABSS partners allows us to make progress to achieving consistency on a national level of relevant technical matters. The Planning, Building Standards and Environmental Health Manager was a member of the Scottish Government Building Standards Workforce Strategy Working Group which helped to shape the recently launched National Building Standards Workforce Strategy. Key actions of the Strategy is to ensure that local authority verifiers are able to recruit, retain and develop a skilled workforce to provide a first class Building Standards service with resilience to meet fluctuating demands. The Council supports the Strategy and will help the Building Standards Division in meeting the actions.

Succession Planning

Our team structure in building standards allows the opportunity of internal succession for appropriately qualified and experienced staff members in the event of a current post holder leaving. We encourage our staff to assume greater responsibilities and gain broader experience within our service and hope to develop this further in 2022/23 given the volume of significant development taking place in West Dunbartonshire together with the capability of existing staff members.

Fit For Future Service Review

In late 2021 the Building Standards team underwent a Fit for Future Service Review by the Council’s Organisational Development Team where findings and recommendations were proposed to improve the building standards service in terms of performance and customer delivery. These included a review of our web page, ICT systems, customer and staff engagement. An improvement plan is being taken forward which has identified necessary improvements and actions as detailed below:

- Introduce quarterly Building Standards newsletter to keep stake holders informed of changes to the service;
- Introduce electronic form for Section 50 licensing applications;
- Improve customer delivery – greater access to Surveyors
- Remove obsolete online forms;
- Review the Building Standards Web Page to make it more user friendly and interactive;
- Consider the wellbeing matters of staff.

Quality Customer Experience

KPO3 Targets	
3.1	National customer charter is published prominently on the website and incorporates version control detailing reviews (reviewed at least quarterly).
	The national and local customer charters are published prominently on our website, incorporating version control and reviewed at least quarterly.
3.2	95% of BSD requests for information on a BSD ‘Verifier Performance Reporting Service for Customers’ case responded to by verifier within 5 days.
	No cases were referred to the BSD Verifier Performance reporting Service.
KPO4 Targets	
4.1	Minimum overall average satisfaction rating of 7.5 out of 10.
	West Dunbartonshire’s overall satisfaction rating was 6.2 out of 10 This is an improvement from the previous year.

Customer Communication

We recognise the importance of effective communication with our service users. Our website has a dedicated building standards sub-page which provides a single source of matters relating to the building standard service. We promote the use of the national e-building standards portal via our website and also have some additional forms available for services that do not fall within our verification function (e.g. for temporary raised structure applications). We provide various ways of communication, principally digital communication via our website and email but also including hard copy mail, face to face meetings, and telephone. While we predominantly communicate by email in relation to case management of building warrant applications, provision has been made to allow communication by post where service users do not have email. During the pandemic communication has been electronic. Also this year we have introduced a quarterly newsletter to inform our customers of performance and any changes in service delivery or staffing.

Customer Charter

We have the national customer charter in place as well as our local customer charter (joint local charter with the Planning service). Both charters are published prominently via our website and are regularly reviewed throughout the year. The charters set out our aims, vision, values and service commitments as well as providing general standards that can be expected from our team.

Customer Feedback

The Council is open to receiving feedback, good and bad, from all service users. This assists us in identifying areas for improvement and confirms areas in which we are doing well. We participate in and promote use of the annual national customer satisfaction survey carried out by the Scottish Government in order to gain feedback from our customers. We are committed to the survey and provide appropriate contact data to allow the survey to be undertaken. Survey results are reviewed and suggested service improvements are considered for implementation where possible.

We also seek customer feedback at a local level via an online survey; a link for participation is provided on our website and is also provided along with all completion certificate acceptance documents that are issued. However we have regular communication with large developers and regular users of the system who are always willing to give good or bad feedback and in the coming year we will seek to evolve a method of recording this. During the Fit for Future Review independent engagement with regular customers took place and actions arising from it are included in the Improvement Plan.

We provide information on how to make a complaint about our service via our website and customer charter.

Accessibility of Service

Service users have the opportunity to contact us by a variety of methods; including email, website, telephone and letter or by visiting our office. Our team are located within the Council's, purpose built offices in a town centre location that is easily accessible by bus, rail and road with car parking facilities in close proximity. Staff are available to be contacted by phone or email Monday to Thursday from 8.45am to 4.45pm and from 8.45am to 3.55pm on Fridays. The Council has public access to its offices between 9.30am to 4.30pm Monday to Thursday and until 3.30pm on Fridays for service users who wish to visit us in person. Meetings and site visits out with these hours can be made available by prior arrangement directly with the relevant Surveyor.

Our offices at Church Street are currently reopening following Scottish Government advice regarding COVID. Valid applications have a named surveyor allocated, who can be contacted directly. General enquiries for the Building Standards team can still be made through our Technical Support Team on 0141 951 7930 or by emailing building_standards@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

We maintain a regularly reviewed website containing appropriate information on the building standard system and the services we provide. We also provide a staff appointment system for project specific meetings and onsite inspections.

Building Standards Verification

Pre-application Advice

We work closely with our Planning colleagues to provide a joint service to developers and designers. We provide pre-application advice meetings to enable early discussion of the procedures to be followed to obtain warrant approval, along with identification and discussion of key areas of proposed buildings relative to the technical aspects of the building regulations.

For smaller projects the use of our website is encouraged in order that service users gain useful information on the building standards system. We refer to and provide a link to the Scottish Government's publication "Building Standards Customer Journey"; which provides a useful guide for householders to the building standards process and explanation of the roles and responsibilities involved for those carrying out work to domestic properties.

We receive ad hoc pre-application enquiries by telephone and email on specific aspects of the building regulations in relation to proposed work and these are allocated to relevant staff for investigation and response.

We meet with key customers in relation to their projects and opportunity is provided for issues of concern being raised, discussed and resolved at an early stage. As our Offices are currently closed due to Coronavirus and face to face meetings are not possible, we encourage the use of emails, Zoom, MS Teams, WhatsApp to discuss these issues.

Customer Agreements

Customer agreements are available to applicants for which the standard 20 day target for initial verification may not be appropriate due to the scale or complexity of the proposed work. In conjunction with our Planning colleagues we also have a Developer Protocol which is offered in respect of our key regeneration sites. The Council is committed to taking a proactive role in order to facilitate high quality development on these key development sites and both our Planning and Building Standards teams play a key part in ensuring the redevelopment of such sites takes place. Significant progress is being made on the key regeneration sites at Queens Quay and Dumbarton Waterfront, with the care home, health and care centre and energy centre completed on Queens Quay. The affordable housing scheme at this location is nearing completion. The new Renton Campus met its timescale for welcoming the children to the new school and the major extension at the Golden Jubilee hospital is progressing, with completion due in 2023. The Acting Principal Building Surveyor has been working on three major building warrants at Cameron House which has allowed the hotel to reopen the old existing buildings following a major devastating fire. The new extension is progressing well, with plans to open before the summer season. Chivas have continued to invest in the area and are currently nearing completion on a large office extension to their Kilmalid site.

We have also been happy to help expedite a warrant for a new laboratory facility for Astra Zenica at their Clydebank site, to aid in the production of vaccines for COVID-19. The Building Standards Team has worked very closely with the respective development teams to ensure that these developments are being delivered timely and to an acceptable standard.



Customer Dissatisfaction (procedural or technical matters)

We seek to resolve any issues of customer dissatisfaction quickly and efficiently. While our customer charter provides information on how to complain about the actual service received from the building standards team, it is recognised that there is a need to be able to resolve issues that are more of a procedural or technical nature. In the first instance we advise customers to raise the issue higher within our own team structure for further consideration and review which would be in the first instance Principal Building Standards Surveyor (General Operations) and then Manager.

We participate in the dispute resolution process undertaken by LABSS and will when appropriate refer any customers who are not content with our decision in relation to a procedural or technical matter to this. We participate in the dispute resolution process nationally by providing appropriate comments back to LABSS for any cases referred to us for comment or review.

We recognise that the time taken to provide our first response to building warrant applications is important to the majority our customers and we allocate a high proportion of our resources to minimising this time and this has been improving in recent months. For building warrant applications which do not have a customer agreement, we aim to respond within 20 working days of a valid application being received.

Building Standards Verification

While this may not be achievable on every occasion, we recognise that some form of escape route option requires to be made available to customers facing unreasonable response times and we provide information via our website on contacting the Scottish Government in relation to applications that may take longer than the 35 day backstop period for initial assessment (warrant processing escape route).

Operational and Financial Efficiency

KPO5 Targets	
5.1	Building standards verification fee income to cover indicative verification service costs (staff costs plus 30%).
	Our performance for 2021/22 is 84% : Q1 2023/2024: 97.11%
	Commentary: West Dunbartonshire Council provided a service aimed at being responsive and to meet obligations in response times and recognised that within this overall aim if it is to maintain a capable workforce it will face fluctuations, sometimes significant, between income and staff costs.
KPO6 Targets	
6.1	Details of eBuilding Standards to be published prominently on the verifier's website.
	eBuilding Standards availability is published prominently on our website.
6.2	75% of each key building warrant related process being done electronically <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan checking • Building warrant or amendments (and plans) being issued • Verification during construction • Completion certificates being accepted
	In 2021/22 we achieved at least 75% of applications being processed electronically in 4 out of 4 of the key processes identified by the Scottish Government.

	<p>Commentary: We are currently reviewing our systems that would enable us to electronically verify works during construction on site and it is our intention to trial mobile tablet devices in the coming year.</p> <p>The Council encourages the submission of building standards applications etc. via the national e-building standards portal. Where applications are received in paper format, we scan these and the application is then processed, assessed and dealt with electronically from that point onwards via our electronic workflow system. Electronic applications are encouraged in preference to paper based applications and during the pandemic the majority of submissions are electronically and through the portal.</p>
KPO7 Targets	
7.1	Annual performance report published prominently on website with version control (reviewed at least quarterly).
	Published prominently with version control and reviewed.
7.2	Annual performance report to include performance data in line with KPOs and associated targets (annually covering previous year e.g. April 2021 – March 2022).
	The performance report includes data covering 2021/22 and is published on the Councils website.

Team Structure

Our operational building standards team consists of 2 Principal Lead Surveyors, 1 Lead Building Standards Surveyor (vacant) and 3 Building Standards Surveyors. The team is split on a geographical basis which is overseen by the Principal Lead for General Operations with 3 Surveyors covering these areas. The Principal Surveyor for major projects is responsible for applications of scale and importance in terms of impact on the area, those involving innovative designs and construction methods and departures from established guidance. The Lead Surveyor assists the Major Projects Principal. The three Building Standards Surveyors are primarily responsible for applications for existing domestic premises and for small scale housing developments. Opportunity exists to involve Surveyors in the work of the Lead Surveyor where appropriate. A lead surveyor was appointed in April 2021, but this coincided with the medium to long term absence of both principal surveyors and one surveyor, so has been acting principal surveyor since May. Experienced agency staff have helped support the team, by developing the surveyors as well as a valuable role in all stages of the verification process. We have seen improvements in performance for both new and revised applications since the summer and hope to see further improvements as the IT systems are updated to allow automatic uploads from eBuilding Standards and the use of Enterprise.

Time Recording System

We utilise a self-developed time recording software system that allows us to monitor our costs in providing the verification system. This is used to assist us provide relevant performance information to the Scottish Government.

Financial Monitoring/Governance

Our service budget is discussed regularly at Service and Management Team meetings. The Manager holds monthly meetings with the Service Accountant to ensure that outturn is being achieved. Income is monitored on a monthly basis to ensure that estimates are reflected accurately in the actual fees received. Meetings take place in advance of the budget being finalised for the following year to ensure that all costs and outgoings can be taken into account.

Building Standards follow Council's policies and procedures in relation to anti-bribery, corruption and fraud. We also follow Council policy in relation to conflicts of interest and a register is kept of any declarations made.

IT Systems

We use a software system provided by Idox (Uniform) to provide us with a database of applications which allows us to keep track of and produce documentation in relation to the various applications made to us. We use our corporate electronic document management system (CIVICA) to store and view applications and their accompanying supporting documents. We also utilise the workflow functionality of CIVICA to provide case management and electronic assessment of applications. Staff have Microsoft Office suite of programs available to assist them with their function and we use Access to run reports relative to performance and case management. In the next few months we are intending to use Enterprise for workflow and as a performance management tool and are putting together a business case for a full IDOX work system.

Digital Services

We deal with all our building warrant applications digitally. A high proportion of applications and documents are submitted to us electronically via the national e-building standards portal and this has increased in recent months. Any paper based applications or documents that are received are scanned and imported into our electronic document management system (CIVICA) to allow digital assessment and workflow processes to be undertaken. We issue and store warrant approvals and completion certificates electronically. While we do not currently have a viable solution that enables us to undertake inspections on site by referring to electronic approved plans; we are trialing the use of mobile tablet devices. We also intend to refer to other verifiers to learn from their experience of tablet use.

The majority of our communication with applicants/agents takes place electronically via email, including provision of building warrant approvals and completion certificate acceptance documents. We have provision in place to communicate by post for any applicants/agents who do not have email facilities.

Internal Communication Strategy

Corporate information is provided by a variety of means to staff; including email and intranet use as well as information posters in appropriate areas. Team meetings provide the opportunity for the exchange of information between staff and the discussion of relevant operational and technical issues. The team also benefits from its relatively small size and being located within the same open plan office environment, allowing a lot of informal communication and exchange of information to occur rapidly on a day to day basis. During the pandemic, Surveyors and support staff and other officers have been communicating through jabber, WhatsApp, MS teams and Zoom to ensure the Building Standard process continues. Staff are encouraged to register with LABSS in order to obtain access to additional technical and procedural information and to be aware of current issues nationally within building standards.

6. Service Improvements and Partnership Working

This section should include a summary of service improvements and examples of partnership working performance against all KPOs and performance targets.

In the previous 12 months (2021/2022) we –

Number	Continuous improvement action	Status
1	Continued to fulfill Operating and Performance Framework requirements	Complete
2	Ensured quarterly KPO reports were submitted via Scot Government portal	Complete
3	Reviewed and improved relevant processes to increase efficiencies	Complete
4	Improved processing times for building warrant applications	Ongoing
5	Supported the use of electronic service delivery	Complete
6	Tried tablets for viewing digital plans on site	Ongoing
7	Continued to attend LABSS meetings	Complete
8	Continued to attend Clyde Valley Consortium meetings	Complete
9	Continued to act as Clyde Valley Consortium technical lead	Complete
10	Retained a high level of service user satisfaction	Complete
11	Reviewed our website to ensure it is up to date, clear and user friendly	Complete
12	Ensured appropriate on the job training was provided to the new Building Standards Surveyors	Ongoing
13	Facilitate development of support staff in relation to aspiring to become qualified as a Building Standards Surveyor	Ongoing
14	Make use of social media to promote the Building Standards Service	Ongoing
15	Developed a solution for digital/electronic stamping of approved plans	Complete
16	Reviewed the Building Standards Team Structure to meet the challenges of development pressure and resources	Complete

In the next 12 months (2022/2023) we will –

Number	Continuous improvement action	Timescale
1	Continue to fulfill Operating and Performance Framework requirements	Ongoing
2	Ensure quarterly KPO reports are submitted via Scot Government portal	Ongoing
3	Review and improve relevant processes to increase efficiencies	Ongoing
4	Improve processing times for building warrant applications	Ongoing
5	Continue to support use of electronic service delivery	Ongoing
6	Continue to trial tablets for viewing digital plans on site	Ongoing
7	Continue to attend LABSS meetings	Ongoing
8	Continue to attend Clyde Valley Consortium meetings	Ongoing
9	Assist and support the BSD in meeting the actions of the Workforce Strategy	Ongoing
10	Seek to retain a high level of service user satisfaction	Ongoing
11	Review our website to ensure it is up to date, clear and user friendly	Ongoing
12	Continue on the job training and ensure individual training plans are implemented for all Building Standards Surveyors	Ongoing
13	Facilitate development of support staff in relation to aspiration to become qualified as a building standards surveyor	Ongoing
14	Seek to make use of social media to promote the building standards service	Ongoing
15	Work with universities to facilitate student work experience opportunities	Ongoing
16	Continue to engage with our partners and customers and consider new partnerships where the opportunity arises.	Ongoing
17	Review processes for consultation in – house with Environmental Health Department	Ongoing
18	Review processes for Consultation with Scottish Fire & Rescue	Ongoing

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19	Review and improve dangerous buildings process in Uniform	Ongoing
20	Continue to work through our Improvement Plan from the Fit for Future Service review	Ongoing
21	Review our procedures for issuing Safety Certificates for Safety in Sports Grounds.	Ongoing

In the previous 12 months (2020/21) we worked with –

Scottish Government – Building Standards Division

Scottish Government – Housing Statistics Unit

Local Authority Building Standards Scotland (LABSS)

Clyde Valley Consortium – LABSS

Planning Team – West Dunbartonshire Council

Environmental Health Team – West Dunbartonshire Council

Consultancy Services – West Dunbartonshire Council

Asset Management Team – West Dunbartonshire Council

Housing Services – West Dunbartonshire Council

Licensing Services – West Dunbartonshire Council

Trading Standards Service – West Dunbartonshire Council

Organisational Development Team (Fit for Future Review) – West

Dunbartonshire Council

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

Police Scotland

Developers and their design agents



7. Building Standards – Additional Data

Verifiers provide returns to Scottish Government on their verification performance and workload. The performance data relates to the building standards verification performance framework and the workload data relates to the numbers of building warrant applications; completion certificates; fees; costs; certificates (certification, energy performance; sustainability; enforcement cases for year 2021/22 .

Building warrants and amendments to building warrant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 485 Applications • 513 Decisions
Completion certificates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 677 Submissions • 790 Decisions (incl. 173 rejections)
Certification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 232 Certificates of design submitted • 219 Certificates of construction submitted
Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 259 copy certificates received (domestic) • 0 Copy certificates received (non-domestic)
Statements of Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 477 Copy certificates received (domestic) • 1 Copy certificates received (non-domestic)
Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Notices served under sections 25 to 30 • 0 Cases referred to procurator fiscal • 0 Cases where LA has undertaken work

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OTHER FORMATS

This document can be made available on request in alternative formats such as large print, Braille, audio tape or computer disc as well as in five community languages.

本文件也可應要求，製作成其他語文或特大字體版本，也可製作成錄音帶。

अनुरोध पर यह दस्तावेज़ अन्य भाषाओं में, बड़े अक्षरों की छपाई और सुनने वाले माध्यम पर भी उपलब्ध है

ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ, ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਅਤੇ ਆਡੀਓ ਟੇਪ 'ਤੇ ਰਿਕਾਰਡ ਹੋਇਆ ਵੀ ਮੰਗ ਕੇ ਲਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

درخواست پر یہ دستاویز دیگر زبانوں میں، بڑے حروف کی چھپائی اور سننے والے ذرائع پر بھی میسر ہے۔

هذه الوثيقة متاحة أيضا بلغات أخرى والأحرف الطباعية الكبيرة وبطريقة سمعية عند الطلب.