

North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

Building Standards Verification

Annual Performance Report

2021-22 Version Q2 21-22

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Title: Annual Performance Report 2021 -2022

Authority: North Ayrshire Council

Verifier: Economic Development and Regeneration

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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.

It will allow the assessment of building standards performance outcomes over a range of key national objectives, including:

Overall time taken in the decision-making process

Certainty of timescales in respect of decision making, the assessment process and the provision of advice

Delivery of compliant development

Management and assessment of building warrants and completion certificates

Clear communications and open engagement

Sharing of best practice

An overall 'open for business' attitude.

The three core perspectives are listed below with the Public Interest, Continuous Improvement and Partnership Working cross-cutting themes:



NORTH AYRSHIRE

North Ayrshire is a medium sized local authority located some 25 miles South-West of Glasgow. Its total area is some 340 square miles, almost equally divided between the mainland and the islands of Arran & Cumbrae. It has a total coastline of 140 miles (42 on mainland and 98 on islands). Over three quarters of North Ayrshire's population live in urban areas such as the main settlements of Irvine and Kilwinning, or within accessible smaller towns. The remainder of the population live in rural areas with 4.8% of the total population living in remote or very remote rural areas.

North Ayrshire being on the West Coast of Scotland has in excess of 20 beautiful golf courses some of which have hosted the Open Championship final Qualifying rounds, the Ladies Scottish Open, the Junior Open Championship and for the first time Dundonald Links in Irvine hosted the Scottish Open Championship in July 2017.

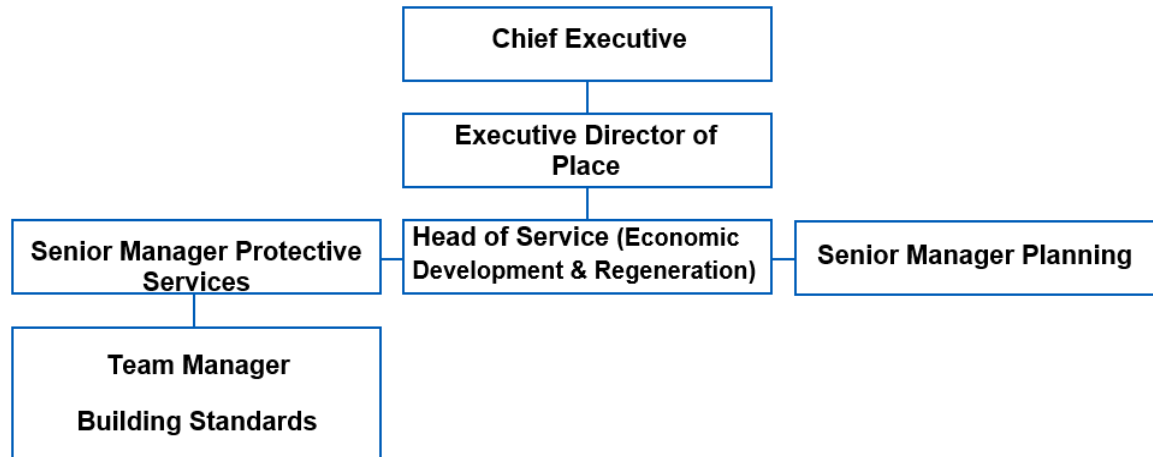
North Ayrshire's total resident population was 136,130 in 2015. The social and economic context of North Ayrshire is mixed with the islands of Arran, Cumbrae and the northern coastal region being relatively affluent in contrast to the other areas.

North Ayrshire is more dependent on traditional manufacturing industries compared to Scotland as a whole and the main employers in the area include North Ayrshire Council itself, Ardagh Glass, Sigma Aldrich, GlaxoSmithKline, Caledonian Paper Plc, DSM Nutritional Products, EDF Energy, Magnox, Chivas Brothers Ltd, Taste of Arran, UPM Caledonian and British Polythene Industries.

The Building Standards Section currently comprises of two teams of 4 surveyors, each with a responsibility for a geographical area. Each team is a self-contained multi-functional unit having all the necessary professional skills, competence and experience to deliver the full range of verification services offered by the section.

The teams are also responsible for non-verification work including enforcement in respect of dangerous and defective structures, property complaints, unauthorised works, consultations, licensing inspections and liaison with North Ayrshire Access Panel.

Directorate Organisational Chart:



Building Standards Verification Service Information

Building Standards forms part the Council’s Protective Services Section within the Economic Development and Regeneration, Place Directorate with the Protective Services Senior Manger reporting to the Head of Service for Economic Development and Regeneration. Building Standards operates from a single office within the Council’s headquarters at Cunninghame House, Irvine, KA12 8EE.

As a result of the Councils Change Programme Building Standards was reorganised in October 2012 which resulted in two Senior Building Standards Surveyors being replaced by one Team Manager, the Chief and Assistant Chief were replaced by the Senior Manager of Protective Services (which incorporates Building Standards, Environmental Health and Trading Standards).

The two teams of 4 surveyors, Landward and Seaward, each have a responsibility for their designated geographical area. The teams work as self-contained multi-functional units having all the necessary professional skills, competence and experience to deliver the full range of verification services offered by the section. The surveyors in each team have been together for a number of years and this allows for a greater consistency and continuity during covered site visits. The Building Standards service provides an ‘office duty service’ where someone can come along and speak to a surveyor about the area they live in without first having to make an appointment. Electronic enquiries are welcomed via the Council’s ‘Contact us’ service. This allows cover to be provided for all site visits within North Ayrshire Council.

Following on from our success in winning the inaugural Scottish Building Standards award at the 2016 LABSS AGM & Conference, North Ayrshire Council Building Standards were again winners of the Scottish Building Standards Award for "National Building Standards Performance Excellence" presented at the 2017 LABSS AGM & Conference in the category of best medium sized local authority, in recognition of our hard work, excellent service and performance delivery.

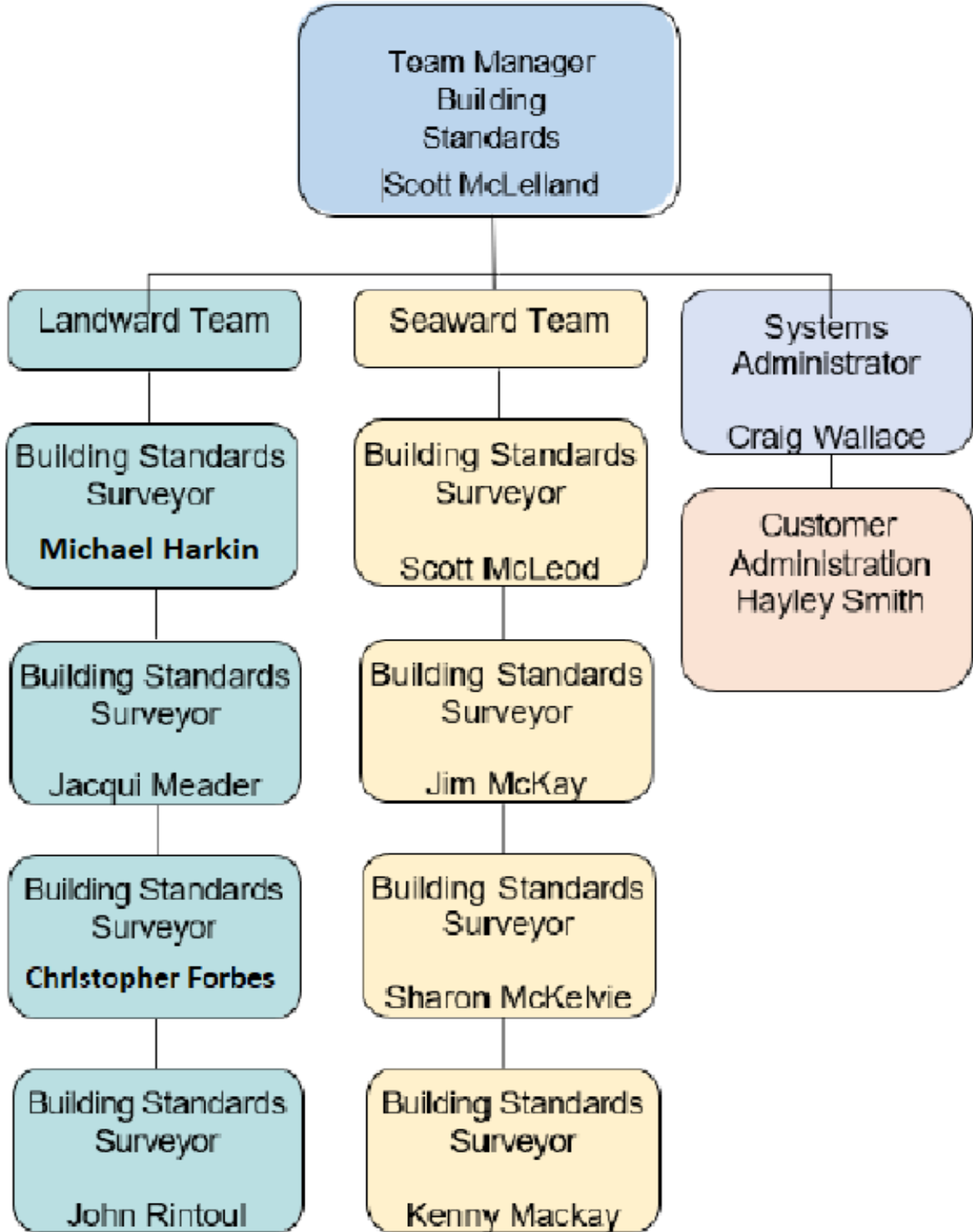
Public Interest Statement:

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.

North Ayrshire Council Verifiers, appointed by Scottish Ministers for the next six years 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 structure:



Staffing position on 1st April 2019 (posts are full time equivalents).

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

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

		Building Standards Verification Service	Other
Managers	No. posts	1	
	Vacant	0	
Main grade posts (surveyors)	No. posts	8	
	Vacant		
System Administrator	No. posts	1	
	Vacant	0	
Office support/ Administrator	No. posts	2	Access to centralized support staff from Business Support
	Vacant	0	
TOTAL			

Note: Office support/clerical is a shared resource, as such age profile not included below.

Staff age profile	Number
Under 30	0
30-39	2
40-49	2
50 and over	6

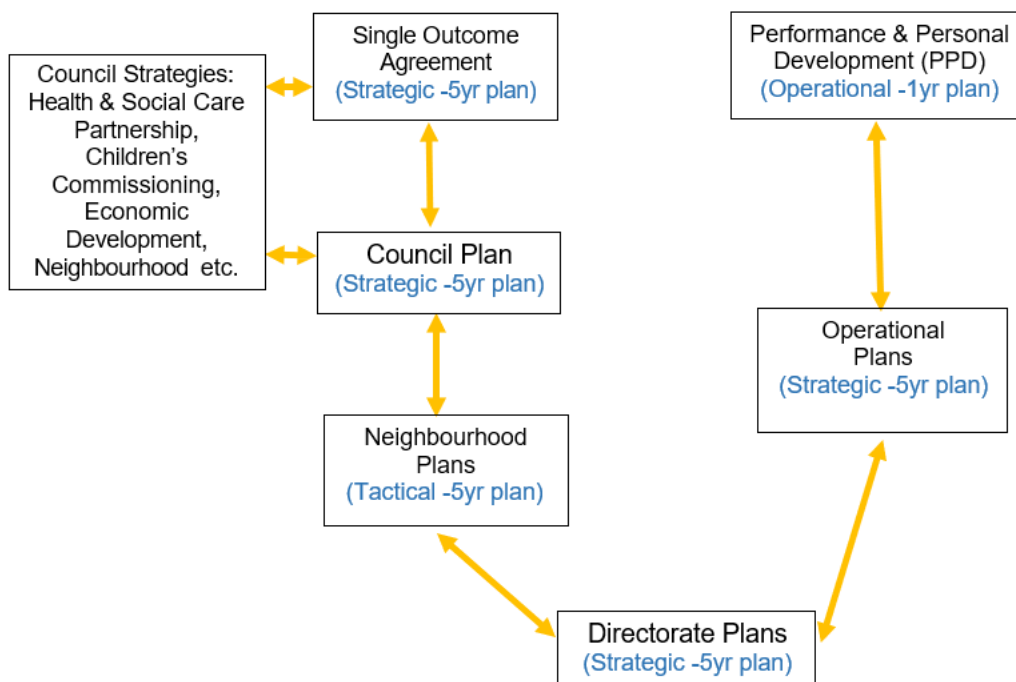
Strategic Objectives

The statutory public interest objectives of the Building Standards System are firmly embedded in the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) between North Ayrshire Council, North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership and the Scottish Government which outlines how we will achieve our shared Vision of 'North Ayrshire – A Better Life'.

The Agreement updates and replaces the former Community Plan, and Council Plan.

The diagram below shows the link between the SOA and other plans.

North Ayrshire Council – Golden Thread



Regional Economic Vision for Ayrshire

Our vision is for Ayrshire to be a vibrant, outward looking, confident region, attractive to investors and visitors, making a major contribution to Scotland's growth and local well-being, and leading the implementation of digital technologies and the next generation of manufacturing.

The Ayrshire Growth Deal

The AGD will contribute to this regional vision, creating a growing, innovative, smart, more productive and inclusive economy, by developing Ayrshire's core strengths and ensuring our communities benefit from economic growth.

The Building Standards service has specific links to at least 5 of the 16 key national outcomes of the Scottish Government, namely 9, 10, 12, 14 & 16 as noted below:

We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger.

We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need.

We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations.

We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production.

Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.

Current Departmental issues

The departmental issues to be addressed 2019/20 are as follows:

Budget pressures with emphasis on fee income monitoring

Staff support through training, ensuring staff are kept up to date with industry changes

Recruitment and retention of suitably qualified/experienced staff members

Implement lessons learned from national and local customer satisfaction survey results and customer comments

Provide electronic site survey hardware fully integrated with Idox software packages to enhance the e-building standards process

Key Strategic Objectives

North Ayrshire Council's Building Standards key strategic objectives for the coming year are to:

Improve our eBuilding Standards service (electronic on-site inspection).

Delivery of our performance framework plan.

Continue to be an active member of and fully commit to the South West Scotland Consortium Group.

Fully engage with and promote membership in LABSS.

Engage in partnership working with all stakeholders.

Ensure the continued health, safety and welfare of persons in or about buildings of North Ayrshire.

To continue to be among the top performing Building Standards Authorities in Scotland.

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 2019 – March 2020).

Performance Data

Professional Expertise and Technical Processes

The aim of this perspective is to show that we possess the necessary professional expertise to efficiently and effectively undertake all technical aspects of building standards verification. This is achieved by on-going training and development and providing a commitment to delivering streamlined and transparent technical processes that meet our customer needs and that are compliant at all times with relevant legislation. Risk Management Protocols are in place for the allocation and processing of applications, dealing with structural design, site inspections and the acceptance or rejection of completion certificates. We will continue to develop and implement the reporting systems relative to the procedures and guidelines of the performance framework for 2020-21 and the new Operating and Performance

Frameworks. In conjunction with East Ayrshire, South Ayrshire and Dumfries & Galloway Councils, North Ayrshire Council forms part of the SWSCG.

The group meets on a regular basis to share best practice, technical guidance, benchmarking data and to facilitate training. North Ayrshire Council and the South West Scotland Consortium Group continue to be actively involved with national policy and working groups via LABSS.

Quality Customer Experience

The aim of this perspective is to ensure that we provide high quality standards and services to customers, underpinned by clear and transparent communications with an accurate understanding of different customer and stakeholder needs. The insights and actions taken in response to this intend to bring about continuous improvement of the customer experience, which will be regularly measured and assessed.

All relevant information to North Ayrshire Council Building Standards is available on our website including our customer charter. We are currently looking to improve our working practices by developing agile working across the Service over the next one to two years without detriment to the current service we provide. At present our correspondence is normally via telephone, emails and letters and we operate an office rota where staff are available to answer any queries without the requirement for a formal appointment.

Operational and Financial Efficiency

The aim of this perspective is to ensure that we are managing the building standards verification operations and finances in the most efficient and effective way possible; this is achieved by efficient use of funds and resources, ensuring high levels of productivity and having a fit-for-purpose infrastructure such as IT systems.

Our service has been well structured and developed over the years to provide a robust service delivery to our customers. Management systems are in place to monitor verification and non-verification budgets.

Building Standards operate an application processing system "Uniform" provided by IDOX. The system stores all our application information, it provides performance reporting facilities and letters relating to Building Warrant applications. Uniform is supported by the Council's ICT service and a dedicated System Administrator. We ensured that the appropriate procedures and systems were in

place ready for the launch of e-Building Standards. This proved to be a great success with approximately 60% of applications and approvals now being dealt with electronically as an end to end process.

Verification Activity and Performance

During the 2019-2020 financial year, 1032 Building Warrant Applications and Late Completion Applications were received by North Ayrshire Council. The performance measures in relation to the verification activity as stipulated previously are shown below along with the previous 2 years for comparison.

Year	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
% of Building Warrants responded to within 15 days	70.53%	94.47%	95.68%
% of Building Warrants issued within 6 days	94.20%	99.16%	100%
Average time taken to respond to a completion certificate	8.09 days	3.26 days	2.66 days
% of completion certificates issued/accepted within 3 days	92.78%	98.71%	99.98%

The profile of the 1046 building Warrant applications received, based on the value of the works, is noted below along with the previous 2 years for comparison.

Value	Year	2019/20 (1032)	2018/19 (1046)	2017/18 (1073)
£5000 or less		41%	43%	42%
£5001 to £30,000		33%	35%	34%
£30,001 to £500,000		23%	19%	22%
Greater than £500,000		3% *	3% **	2% ***

* 23 applications greater than £1,000,000

** 20 applications greater than £1,000,000

*** 19 applications greater than £1,000,000

Service Improvements and Partnership Working

In the previous 12 months (2019/20) we did –

Utilise the existing risk management protocol and implement a system for recording the implementation on Uniform. Status = Complete

Record compliance during construction in accordance with LABSS guidance. Status = Ongoing

Monitoring and reporting on the:

Time taken to grant a building warrant including providing verifier/applicant splits.

Times taken to issue determined domestic and non-domestic building warrants.

Weekly performance targets for each surveyor and their workloads.

Quarterly fee income and budgetary controls. Status = Ongoing

Re-appointment as sole Building Standards verifier for North Ayrshire Council for the maximum 6 year term. Status = Complete

Analysed results from National and Local Customer Surveys and used results to identify areas where improvements and changes to established practices could be made. Status = Ongoing

Preparation for the implementation of eBuilding Standards including participation in carrying out testing of software and hardware. Ensuring all staff were adequately trained in the processes. Status = Complete

Amalgamation of paper and electronic building warrants through scanning of completed applications and installing on back office systems. Status = Ongoing

In the next 12 months (2020/21) we will –

Procure suitable hardware equipment to assist Surveyors in carrying out onsite checking of ebuilding and scanned building warrants. (3 to 6 months)

Support staff through PPD process to achieve suitable CPD and encourage and assist unqualified staff to obtain professional membership of RICS, ABE, CIOB etc. (12 months)

Maintain our current levels of performance and continue to strive to identify areas of improvement and ensure these are implemented. (12 months)

Ensure that any critical comments from the customer satisfaction surveys are identified and acted upon timeously. (12 months)

Continue to participate in and further develop the South West Scotland Building Standards Consortium (SWSBSC) for peer reviews, technical dispute resolution, benchmarking and training. (12 months)

In the previous 12 months (2019/20) we worked with –

East Ayrshire Council, South Ayrshire Council and Dumfries & Galloway Council via South West Scotland Building Standards Consortium (SWSBSC)

Scottish Fire and Rescue.

North Ayrshire Access Panel (NAAP) (Disability Issues)

External Structural Engineers

Idox

Local Authority Building Standards Scotland (LABSS)

Building Standards Division of the Scottish Government (BSD)

In the next 12 months (2020/21) we will –

Continue close engagement with other local authorities and groups, e.g. Local Authority Building Standards Scotland (LABSS).

Engage with external stakeholder organisations and groups on Building Standards issues.

Commitment to support local and national training and development/CPD.

Continue to work together with LABSS/BSD/SWSBSC on technical issues.

Implement mobile working for all eBuilding Standards applications.

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.

Building warrants and amendments to building warrant

Year 19/20

Applications - 895 BW applications, 204 amendment applications

Decisions - 291 BW approved 0 Refused, 91 amendment applications approved, 0 refused

Q1 - 20/21

Applications - 145 BW applications, 19 amendment applications

Decisions - 39 BW approved 0 Refused, 10 amendment applications approved, 0 refused

Q2 - 20/21

Applications - 280 BW applications, 44 amendment applications

Decisions - 178 BW approved 0 Refused, 21 amendment applications approved, 0 refused

Q3 - 20/21

Applications – 223 BW applications, 35 amendment applications

Decisions – 70 BW approved, 3 Refused, 20 amendment applications approved, 0 refused

Q4 - 20/21

Applications - 238 BW applications, 30 amendment applications

Decisions - 83 BW approved, 0 Refused, 17 amendment applications approved, 0 refused

Year 20/21

Applications - 886 BW applications, 128 amendment applications

Q2 – 21/22

Decisions - 370 BW approved, 3 Refused, 68 amendment applications approved, 0 refused

Completion certificates

Year 19/20 - Completion Submissions - 630 Completion Decisions - 951 accepted, 64 rejected

Q1 - 20/21 - Completion Submissions - 52 Completion Decisions - 34 accepted, 1 rejected

Q2 - 20/21 - Completion Submissions - 72 Completion Decisions - 98 accepted, 1 rejected

Q3 - 20/21 - Completion Submissions – 207 Completion Decisions – 159 accepted 16 rejected

Q4 - 20/21 - Completion Submissions - 163 Completion Decisions - 232 accepted, 7 rejected

Year 20/21 - Completion Submissions - 494 Completion Decisions - 523 accepted 25 rejected

Certification

Year 19/20 - Certificates of design submitted 730 Certificates of construction submitted 6309

Q1 - 20/21 - 14 Certificates of design submitted 98 Certificates of construction submitted

Q2 - 20/21 - 62 Certificates of design submitted 1145 Certificates of construction submitted

Q3 - 20/21 – 96 Certificates of design submitted 963 Certificates of construction submitted

Q4 - 20/21 - 152 Certificates of design submitted 753 Certificates of construction submitted

Year 20/21 - 324 Certificates of design submitted 2959 Certificates of construction submitted

Q2 – 21/22

Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs)

Year 19/20 - Domestic Certificates Received – 295 Non Domestic Certificates Received - 8

Q1 - 20/21 - 3 Domestic Certificates Received - Non Domestic Certificates Received – 0

Q2 - 20/21 - 30 Domestic Certificates Received - 0 Non Domestic Certificates Received

Q3 - 20/21 – 43 Domestic Certificates Received – 1 Non Domestic Certificates Received –

Q4 - 20/21 - 39 Domestic Certificates Received - 25 Non Domestic Certificates Received –

Statements of Sustainability

Year 19/20 - Domestic Statements Received - 240 Non Domestic Statements Received – 22

Q1 - 20/21 - 0 Domestic Statements Received - 0 Non Domestic Statements Received

Q2 - 20/21 - 21 Domestic Statements Received - 0 Non Domestic Statements Received

Q3 - 20/21 -21 Domestic Statements Received – 1 Non Domestic Statements Received –

Q4 - 20/21 - 10 Domestic Statements Received- 0 Non Domestic Statements Received –

Year 20/21 - 52 Domestic Statements Received Non Domestic Statements Received – 1

Q2 – 21/22

Enforcement

Year 19/20 - Notices Served - 1

Cases referred to procurator fiscal – 0 Cases where LA has undertaken work – 0

Q1 20/21 - Notices Served - 0

Cases referred to procurator fiscal – 0 Cases where LA has undertaken work – 0

Q2 20/21 - Notices Served -0

Cases referred to procurator fiscal – 0 Cases where LA has undertaken work – 0

Q3 20/21 - Notices Served – 0

Cases referred to procurator fiscal – 0 Cases where LA has undertaken work – 0

Q4 20/21 - Notices Served - 0

Cases referred to procurator fiscal – 0 Cases where LA has undertaken work – 0

Year 20/21 - Notices Served - 0

Cases referred to procurator fiscal – 0Cases where LA has undertaken work - 0