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East Dunbartonshire Council

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Building Standards Verification

**Annual
Performance
Report**

2018-2019

Table of Contents

1. Introduction to the verifier
2. Building Standards Verification Service Information
3. Strategic Objectives
4. Key Performance Outcomes and Targets
5. Performance Data
6. Service Improvement and Partnership Working
7. Building Standards – Additional Data

Amendment Record		
Date	Issue No.	Details of change
07 August 2019	1	New Document
14 November 2019	2	Updated
2 March 2020	3	Updated
17 December 2021	4	Updated

1. Introduction to the Verifier

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.

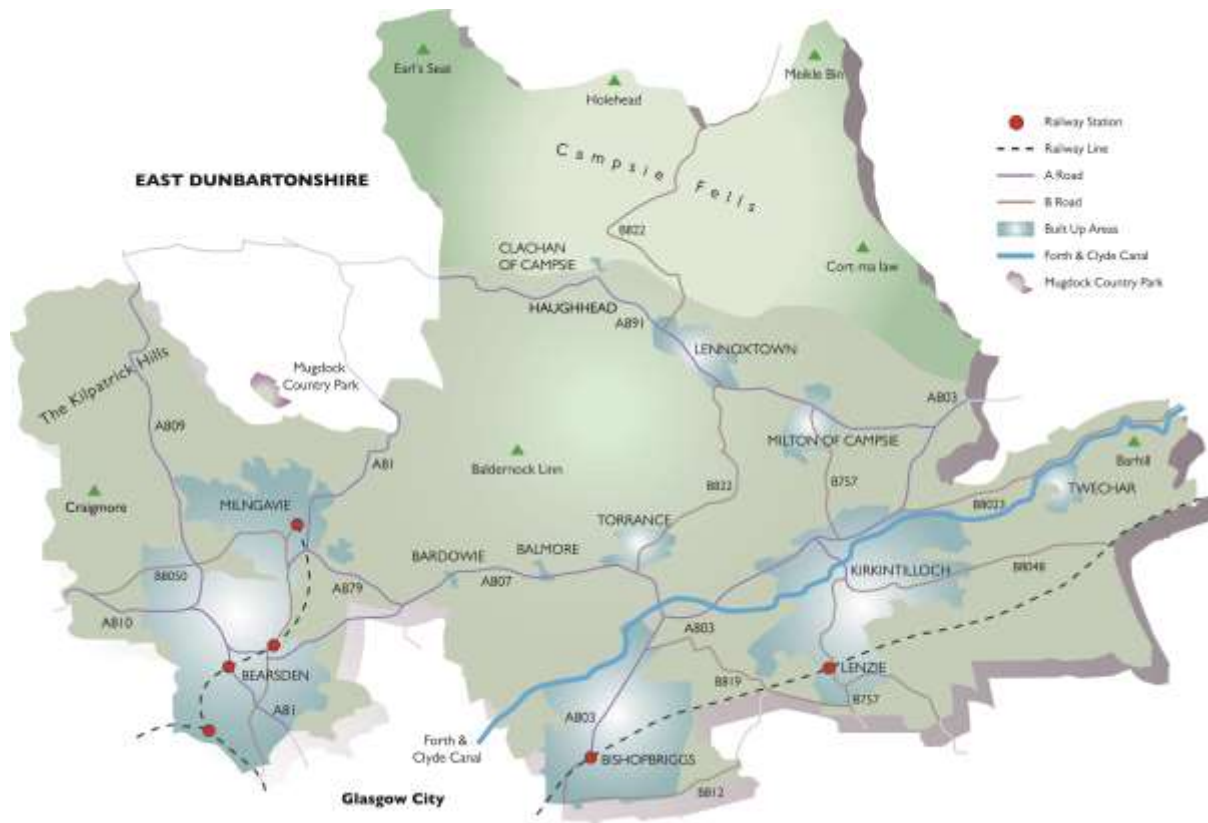
Building Standards verifiers in Scotland are required to utilise the performance report to manage, monitor, review and develop strategies for their business and should focus on the performance framework's core perspectives and cross-cutting themes.

East Dunbartonshire Context

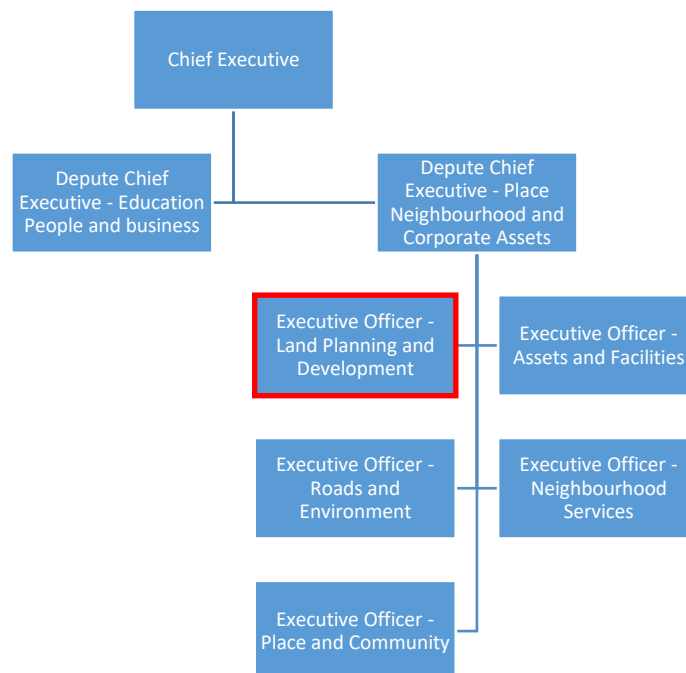
East Dunbartonshire has a population of approximately 104,580 with over 43,000 households and lies to the north of Glasgow, bounded by the Campsie Fells and Kilpatrick Hills and covers an area of 20,172 hectares (77 square miles).

East Dunbartonshire comprises the suburban and rural towns and villages of :-

- Bearsden (population 27,460)
- Bishopbriggs (population 23,080)
- Kirkintilloch (population 19,660)
- Lennoxton (population 3,770)
- Lenzie (population 8,770)
- Milngavie (population 12,820)
- Milton of Campsie (population 3,810)
- Torrance (population 2,420)
- Twechar (population 1,390)
- Approximately 81% of residents own their own home with 19% of residents living in rented accommodation.



The Building Standards Team sits within the Land Planning and Development Service, one of five services within the Place Neighbourhood and Corporate Assets Directorate which delivers the council’s planning policy, development management planning, building standards, sustainability policy and GIS functions.



2. Building Standards Verification Service Information

The Building Standards Service is located at Broomhill Industrial Estate, Kilsyth Road, Kirkintilloch, G66 1TF. However this is an office with limited reception facilities and customers submitting warrants or paying fees are encouraged to either do this online, over the phone or at one of the Council's Hub buildings in Bearsden, Bishopbriggs, Kirkintilloch and Lennoxton town centres. During the COVID-19 pandemic, all staff who have the facility to work from home were advised to do so, this has been ongoing and remains in place as of December 2021. Risk assessment protocols are in place for the undertaking of site inspection work.

The purpose of the building standards system is to protect the public interest by encouraging enterprise, reducing inequalities through ensuring accessibility and providing safer communities through the application of standards relating to personal safety and fire reduction. 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.

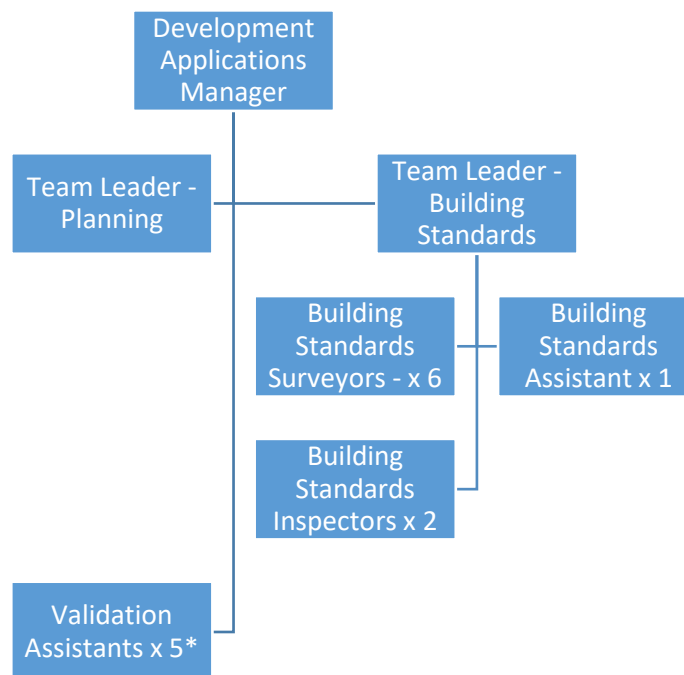
Verifiers appointed by the Scottish Ministers are responsible for the independent checking of applications for building warrants to construct or demolish buildings, to provide services, fittings or equipment in buildings, or for conversions.

The above service is delivered through the following functions:

- **Building warrants** – We will assess these applications and advise the applicant of any areas where their proposal does not meet the building regulations. When it has been demonstrated that the proposal complies with the building regulations a warrant will be issued. In rare circumstances where a development cannot be altered to comply we will refuse the application.
- **Reasonable Enquiry** – We will carry out inspections on ongoing building works at the relevant stages. (During the COVID-19 pandemic applicants and agents have been advised to utilise alternative methods of demonstrating compliance – such as photographic information and RVIs – remote video inspections)
- **Enforcement** - In instances where warrantable work is carried out without permission or conditions on a building warrant are not met we can serve enforcement notices.
- **Completion Certificates** - Issue and accept or reject completion certificate submissions. (During the COVID-19 pandemic applicants and agents have been advised to utilise alternative methods of demonstrating compliance – such as photographic information and RVIs – remote video inspections)

- **Dangerous Buildings** – Where a building has become a danger to the public through either an incident or natural deterioration we will take action to make it safe.
- **Licensing Consultations** – We carry out inspections in conjunction with our colleagues in licensing to ensure temporary events such as circuses, festivals and other fairs are safe for members of the public to attend.

The building standards service is delivered by the Development Applications Team which also provides the Council’s Development Management Planning function:



	Tier 1 (Chief Executive)	Tier 2 (Depute Chief Executive)	Tier 3 (Executive Officer)	Tier 4 (Manager)
Head of Building Standards Verification Service			X	

The table below indicates a snapshot of the staffing position within the Building Standards Service on 06 November 2019:

Post Title	No. of FTEs	Vacant
Development Applications Manager	0.5*	0
Building Standards Team Leader	1	0
Building Standards Surveyors	5	1
Building Standards Assistant	1	0
Building Standards Inspector	2	0
Validation Assistant	2.5 ⁺	0
Total	12	1

*Development Applications Manager is one FTE but is shared equally with planning

⁺The validation team consists of 5 FTEs, however the team is shared equally with planning.

Staff Age Profile	Number
Under 30	3
30-39	2
40-49	2
50 and over	5

3. Strategic Objectives

Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2017-2027

As part of East Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnership the Council has prepared the Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2017-2018. This document sets out 10 year goals for the local area and 6 Local Outcomes based on the themes of Economic Growth and Recovery, Employment and Skills, Children and Young People, Safer and Stronger Communities, Adult Health and Wellbeing and Older Adults, Vulnerable People and Carers.

While Building Standards has some role in all of these themes East Dunbartonshire Council's Land Planning Policy Service is identified as a 'key partner' in the delivery of Local Outcome 1 – *'East Dunbartonshire has a sustainable and resilient economy with busy town centres, a growing business base and is an attractive place in which to visit and invest.'*

2021-2022 Strategic Objectives

In the coming year the Building Standards Service aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Support economic growth in East Dunbartonshire through providing an efficient and effective service to domestic and commercial developments.
- To fulfil the requirements of the Scottish Government's Performance and Operating Frameworks for Building Standards Verifiers.
- Contribute to the provision of vital new facilities throughout East Dunbartonshire through our role in delivering the Council's capital programme. In 2019/2020 this includes some significant projects including the construction of four new nurseries, an additional support needs school and a replacement sports centre.
- Provide an effective service to support local and national housebuilding targets in terms of both market and affordable housing through the timely processing of building warrants and completion certificates. A number of large housing sites are currently proposed or approved through planning applications with the associated building warrants anticipated in 2021/2022. There are also a number of developments currently underway which will generate significant work in terms of completions.
- Improve performance on processing building warrants and completion certificates and the reporting of this in line with the KPO.

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.

These are measured using the following 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 process
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.

KPO1 Targets	
1.1	95% of first reports (for building warrants and amendments) issued within 20 days – all first reports (including BWs and amendment 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).
KPO2 Targets	
	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 2016 – March 2017).

5. Performance Data

Professional Expertise and Technical Processes

KPO1 Targets	
1.1	95% of first reports (for building warrants and amendments) issued within 20 days
	Actual performance against this target in 2018-19 – 58.80%
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 in 2018-19 – 44.02%

What we did in 2019-20

Performance in the final two quarters of this year was severely affected by reduced staffing levels and this is reflected in the figures above. Following unsuccessful recruitment it was recognised that a new approach was necessary. Prior to re-advertising vacant posts the team structure was revised to introduce a new Building Standards Inspectors post. The intention of this was two-fold, firstly to provide additional support for the surveyors to allow them to focus more on the office based assessment of warrant applications and secondly to create a more sustainable team structure which allows for succession.

What we aim to do in 2021-22

The loss and subsequent recruitment of staff continued to have a significant impact on performance for the first half of 2021-22. As of December 2021, we currently have one remaining Building Standards Surveyor post to fill.

The revised structure described above proved successful in attracting new staff initially when implemented in 2019. New recruits in 2021 included a previous member of staff and two new inspectors. Through peer review of cases, mentoring by more experienced staff and support for formal training our target for the coming year is to build a self-reliant and resilient team. In the medium to long term this should ensure performance is restored and there is greater resilience within the team to deal with staff departures.

KPO2 Targets	
2.1	Targets to be developed as part of future review of KPO2
	Actual performance – 16.59% of Completion Certificates Submissions accepted

What we did in 2020-21

As described above we have recruited another two new Building Standards Inspectors to the team. This role is intended to be primarily site based and will provide us with significant additional capacity to ensure compliance during construction. We issue a CCNP document with every Building Warrant approval outlining the specific stages of construction that we wish to be notified of.

What we aim to do in 2021-22

With the new Building Standards Inspectors now in place, and just one vacancy remaining as of December 2021, we intend to add additional focus to improving construction compliance on site. In addition, with new technical staff also in place, the intention is to review reporting of CCNPs, in particular training of new staff to ensure accurate data input thus improving the percentage of CCNPs fully achieved.

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)
	Achieved
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.
	Achieved

What we did in 2020-21

Both charters are up to date and present on the website. These were regularly updated to reflect changing staffing levels to ensure customers were aware of potential delays with applications, however we now have almost a full compliment of staff in place which resulted in significant improvement in performance.

Additional communication with customers was also carried out through social media and website updates.

Any requests for information from the BSD have been responded to within the 5 day timeframe.

What we aim to do in 2021-22

We will continue to update both customer charters quarterly or as required and respond to any BSD requests within the relevant timeframe.

KPO4 Targets	
4.1	Minimum overall average satisfaction rating of 7.5 out of 10.
	6.9

What we did in 2020-21

The increase in staff resulted in a significant increase in performance, which was reflected by an increase in the customer satisfaction survey rating.

What we aim to do in 2021-22

We hope that with the ongoing recruitment of staff, we can continue to improve performance. A customer satisfaction rating in excess of 7.5 out of 10 is therefore an achievable target and every effort will be made in the remaining quarters of this year to achieve this.

Operational and Financial Efficiency

KPO5 Targets	
5.1	Building standards verification fee income to cover indicative verification service costs (staff costs plus 30%).
	Fee income for 2018-19 – 230.25% of total staff costs

What we did in 2020-21

Due to the successful recruitment into vacant posts, there has been a significant reduction in the percentage of fee income relative to staff costs, thus providing a much more balanced system relative to full cost recovery in the Building Standards Service.

What we aim to do in 2021-22

With staff stability now achieved, and all vacancies now being filled within Building Standards, we will monitor closely fee income relative to staff costs. The intention is to ensure re-investment of fees to enable a Building Standards Service which offers best value whilst delivering on all KPO expectations, providing improvements where possible. Our accounts section will provide us with quarterly reports to assist in monitoring fee income

against expenditure. In addition, East Dunbartonshire Council is currently undergoing a full service review, and as part of this process it is intended to continue to strive to achieve the most efficient and effective service to our stakeholders.

target	
6.1	Details of eBuilding Standards to be published prominently on the verifier's website.
	Achieved
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
	Achieved -

What we did in 2020-21

EBuilding Standards is promoted prominently on the Council's website. Three clicks from the main front page displays a large banner and link taking the customer to the eDevelopment.scot website.

All of the processes involved in a building warrant application for both customers and staff can now be carried out electronically. All are now well established as electronic with the exception of verification during construction.

We undertook a process of digitising all historic building warrant files. This involved files dating as far back as 1975 being indexed and scanned. This should ensure improved and more efficient access to the documents contained in these for staff and customers.

What we aim to do in 2019-20

Tablets to view plans during site visits are now available and are being promoted amongst staff. Full use of these by surveyors and inspectors by 2020 is identified as an objective in Section 6.

KPO7 Targets	
7.1	Annual performance report published prominently on website with version control (reviewed at least quarterly).
	Achieved
7.2	Annual performance report to include performance data in line with KPOs and associated targets (annually covering previous year).
	Achieved

What we did in 2020-21

The 2018-2019 annual performance report is now on the Council's website within the Building Standards section.

What we aim to do in 2021-22

We will aim to review the annual performance report quarterly.

6. Service Improvements and Partnership Working

The previous 12 months (2020-21) was a period of significant transition for the Building Standards Service and our main focus has been on enhancing knowledge within the team to ensure the verification service continues to be provided and improved where possible. However we have been working closely with the BSD on an improvement plan to ensure the service operates as effectively as possible in the future. As a result this document is more forward looking and does not include an update on actions from the previous year which forthcoming versions will.

In the next 12 months (2021-22) we will:

Number	Continuous Improvement Plan Action	Status
1	Create enhanced reporting tools and mechanisms to ensure timely quarterly KPO reports submitted via the Scottish Government portal.	Ongoing
2	Continue to promote use of e-building standards and use of the portal for new submissions and revised submissions.	Complete
3	Ensure use of tablets for digital plans at site visits is implemented.	Ongoing
4	Take on technical lead role for Clyde Valley Consortium.	Complete
5	Attend LABSS meetings and establish a rota to ensure all staff have the opportunity to attend.	Ongoing
6	Improve processing time for building warrant applications.	Ongoing
7	Recruit for vacant posts	Complete
8	Provide appropriate on the job training and mentoring to new surveyors and inspectors.	Ongoing
9	Improve customer satisfaction.	Ongoing
10	Facilitate development of assistants and inspectors towards becoming qualified as a building standards surveyor.	Ongoing
11	Review current Building Standards team structure through the Service Review process to ensure it is effective and identify any need for a change to the number or make up of posts.	Ongoing

In the previous 12 months we worked with the following partners:

- Scottish Government – Building Standards Division
- Local Authority Building Standards Scotland (LABSS)
- Clyde Valley Consortium (mainly through LABSS dispute resolution & technical group)

- Planning Team – East Dunbartonshire Council
- Major Assets Team – East Dunbartonshire Council
- Licensing Team – East Dunbartonshire Council
- Housing Services – East Dunbartonshire Council
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Services
- Developers and their agents

In the next 12 months we will:

Continue to engage with the above partners but will also consider new partnerships where they can be beneficial to our service delivery.

We will seek to support the potential creation of a graduate apprenticeship degree course through promoting this with suitable unqualified staff and maintaining communication with the relevant university.

7. Building Standards – Additional Data

Verifiers provide returns to the 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 and sustainability) and enforcement cases. For the period 2020-21: -

Building warrants and amendments to building warrant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1321 Applications • 1185 Decisions
Completion certificates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1093 Submissions • 985 Decisions
Certification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 747 Certificates of design submitted • 42 Certificates of construction submitted
Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 241 Copy certificates received (domestic) • 3 copy certificates received (non-domestic)
Statements of Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 208 Copy certificates received (domestic) • 2 Copy certificates received (non-domestic)
Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 Notices served under Sections 25 to 30 • 0 Cases referred to procurator fiscal • 0 Cases where LA has undertaken work