Planning and Economic Development

Building Standards Verification Annual Performance Report 2020-2021

SOUTH
LANARKSHIRE
COUNCIL

Community and Enterprise
Resources

Contents

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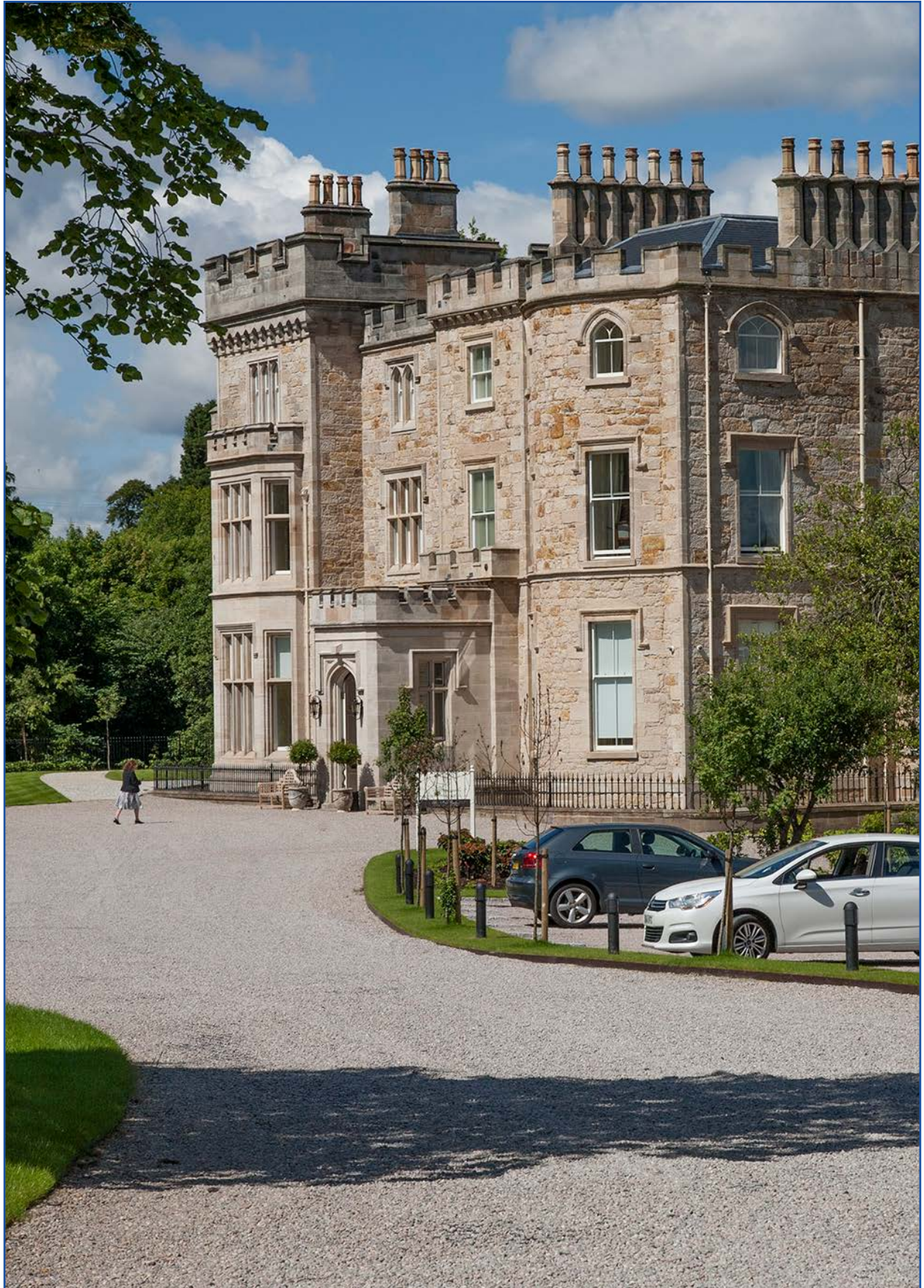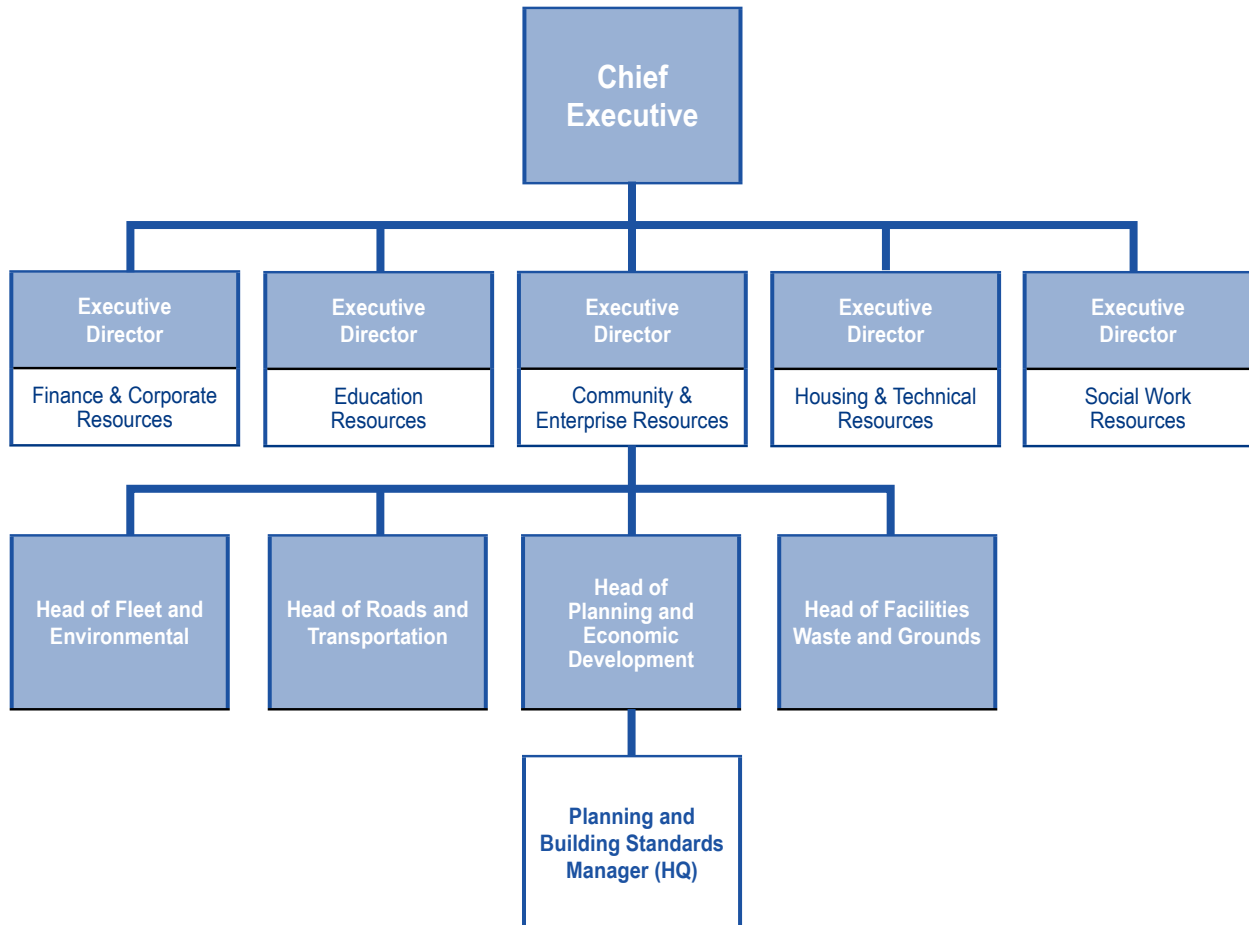
1.0   Introduction to South Lanarkshire Council as verifier

1.1   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.

1.2   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.

1.3   South Lanarkshire is home to more than 316,000 people and is one of the largest and most diverse areas of Scotland. The Council covers 180,000 hectares of land stretching from close to the centre of Glasgow to near the Scottish Borders. The area has a mix of urban, rural and former mining environments – almost 80% is classed and agricultural but 70% of the population live in the major settlements in the north.

1.4   There are four towns in South Lanarkshire with a population of more than 20,000 (East Kilbride, Hamilton, Rutherglen and Cambuslang) and a further 23 towns and settlements with a population of more than 1,000.

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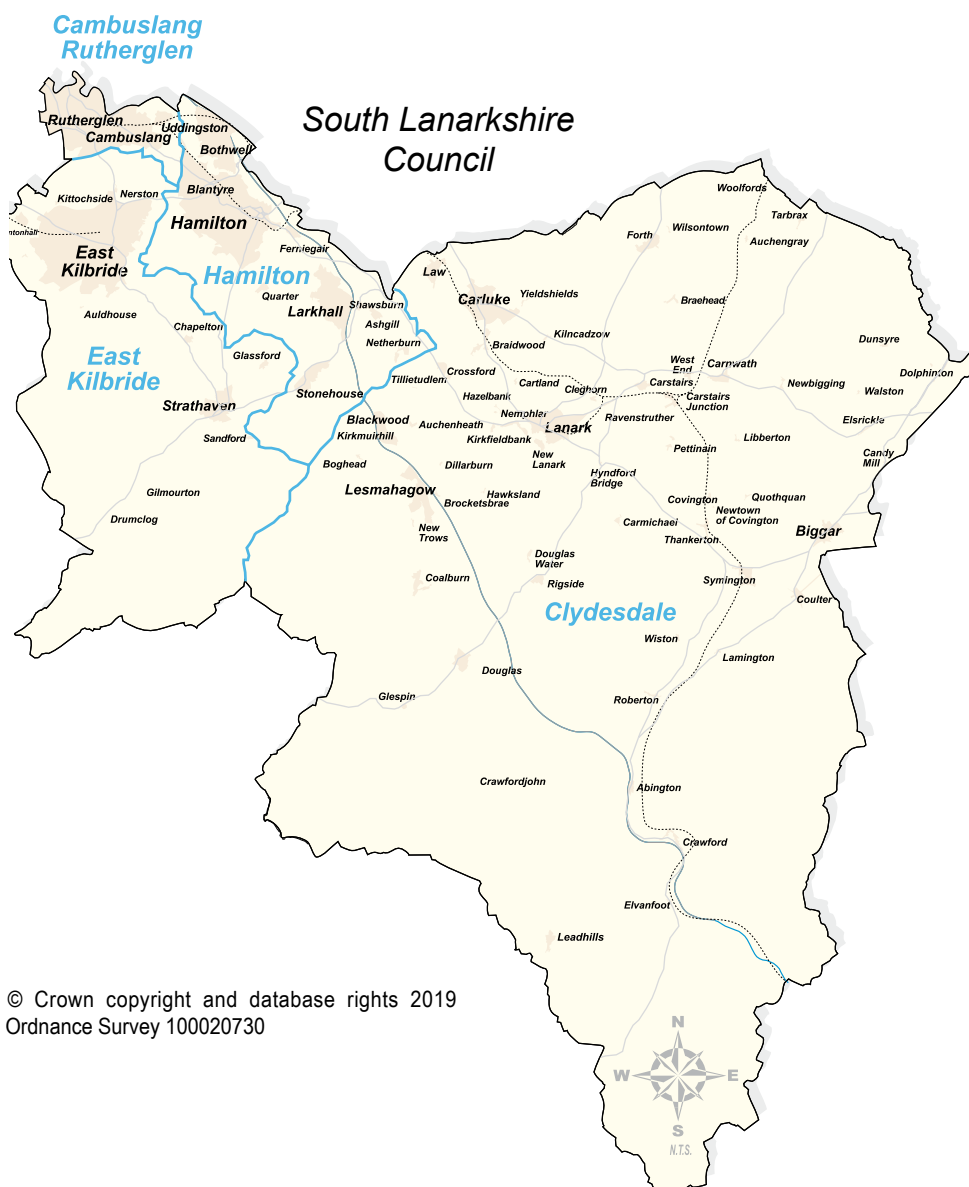
1.5   South Lanarkshire's Building Standards Service is part of Community & Enterprise Resources. The Resource comprises four service areas – Facilities, Waste and Grounds Services; Roads and Transportation Services; Fleet and Environmental Services and Planning and Economic Development Services. Building Standards is part of the Planning and Economic Development Service.

1.6   The Resource is supported by a Performance and Development Team and Support Team. The Resource employs over 3,000 people who together provide a wide range of services for local communities.

High Level Organisational Structure

```
                          Chief
                          Executive

  Executive      Executive      Executive      Executive      Executive
  Director       Director       Director       Director       Director

  Finance &      Education      Community &    Housing &      Social Work
  Corporate      Resources      Enterprise     Technical      Resources
  Resources                     Resources      Resources

  Head of Fleet and    Head of Roads and    Head of            Head of Facilities
  Environmental        Transportation       Planning and       Waste and Grounds
                                            Economic
                                            Development

                                            Planning and
                                            Building Standards
                                            Manager (HQ)
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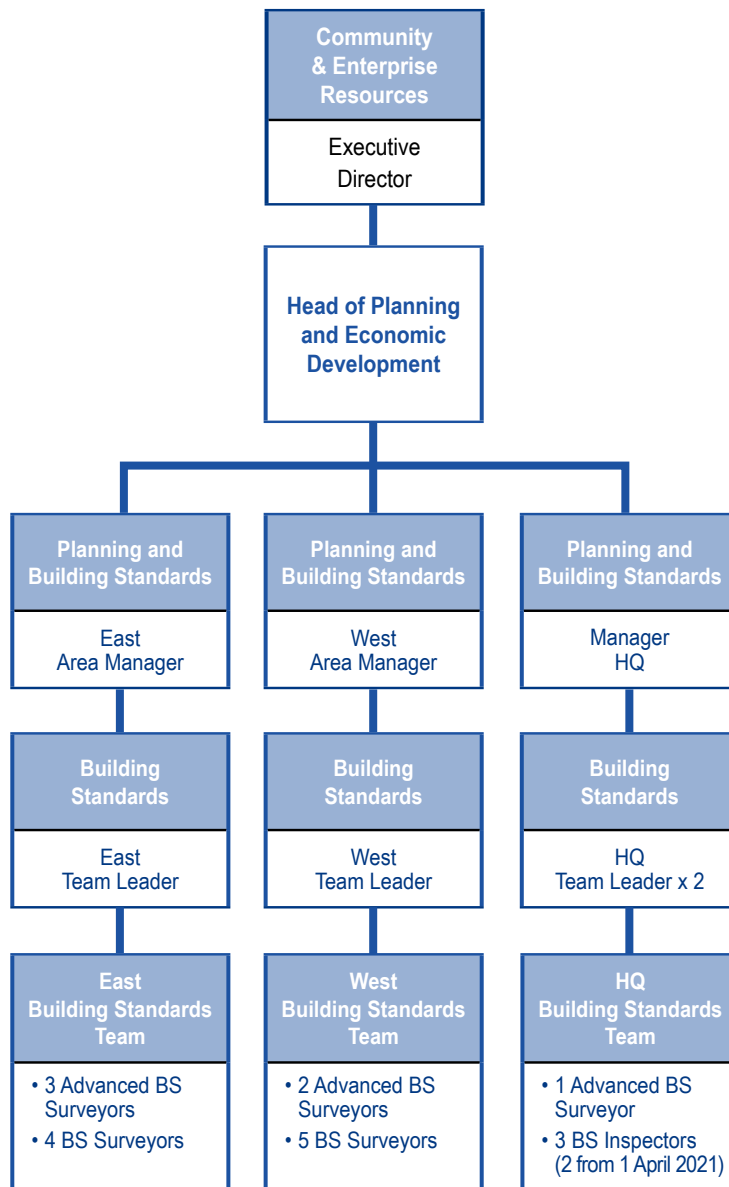## 2.0   Building Standards Verification Service Information

2.1.   The Council's Building Standards Service work is undertaken by three teams comprising a Headquarters team and two Area Office teams. The total number of staff is 21.8 full time officers.

2.2   All three teams are located in the Community & Enterprise Resources HQ building in Hamilton. Each team is managed by a Planning and Building Standards Area Manager and each Building Standards Team is led operationally by a Building Standards Team Leader. The HQ Team deals with the strategic aspects of service delivery including setting policy, publishing guidance and monitoring performance. It also liaises with the Scottish Government, other Councils and stakeholders as required.

2.3   The two area teams handle all the building warrant applications submitted in accordance with the requirements of the Building (Scotland) Acts, regulations and other associated legislation. The area teams are also responsible for other functions in addition to that of verifier including enforcement of matters in respect of dangerous buildings and unauthorised works, provisions relating to Energy Performance Certificates, licensing, houses in multiple occupation, safety at sports grounds, letters of comfort and document searches as part of the house conveyancing process. The Planning and Building Standards service is supported by a joint administration team.

2.4   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 the 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.

2.5   In his letter of 30th March 2017, the Minister for Local Government and Housing, Kevin Stewart MSP, appointed South Lanarkshire Council as verifier for a period of six years. This appointment for the maximum period of time recognised the continued strong performance of the Council's Building Standards service.

2.6   While the period 2020-2021 has been significantly affect by the COVID-19 pandemic, during this time, the Building Standards service has adapted and was able to provide a full range of services during the last 12 months.

Planning and Economic Development Structure

Community & Enterprise Resources
Executive Director

Head of Planning and Economic Development

Planning and Building Standards	Planning and Building Standards	Planning and Building Standards
East Area Manager	West Area Manager	Manager HQ

Building Standards	Building Standards	Building Standards
East Team Leader	West Team Leader	HQ Team Leader x 2

East Building Standards Team	West Building Standards Team	HQ Building Standards Team
• 3 Advanced BS Surveyors • 4 BS Surveyors	• 2 Advanced BS Surveyors • 5 BS Surveyors	• 1 Advanced BS Surveyor • 3 BS Inspectors (2 from 1 April 2021)

2.6   The information provide below gives a snapshot of the staffing position on 31 March 2020.

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

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

Tier posts	Managers		Main grade posts (Surveyors)		Technician posts		Office support (shared with planning)		Totals
	No. of posts	Vacant	No. of posts	Vacant	No. of posts	Vacant	No. of posts	Vacant	
Building Standards Verification Service	4	0	14.8	0	3	0	6*	0	27.8

Note: for the purposes of the above table, 'managers' are listed as the four area office Building Standards Team Leaders.

Each area team is managed by a Planning and Building Standards Manager.

* Shared with Planning.

Note: From 1 April 2021, the number of BS inspectors will reduce from 3 to 2.

Under 30	**2**
30-39	**4.8**
40-49	**8**
50 and Over	**7**
Total	**21.8**

Note – age profile information does not include support/clerical officers.

3.0   Strategic Objectives

3.1   The Council's vision to 'improve the quality of life of everyone in South Lanarkshire' remains at the heart of the Council Plan 'Connect'. The vision and values of the Plan link to the key objectives of each Resource.

Community and Enterprise Resources is responsible for a wide range of services that enhance our quality of life within the Council area. The Planning and Economic Development Service directly contribute to the work of the Resource through a number of objectives, key of which is to provide Planning and Building Standards services which guide and control physical development and land use in the area.

3.2   Specific actions for the Building Standards service are included within the Planning and Economic Development Service Action Plan 2021-22 (draft). These actions are noted in the table below along with associated measure and timescales.

Resource objective: Physical development and land use in the area is enabled, guided and controlled to help facilitate economic growth.	
Action - Promote continued growth and regeneration through sustainable economic and social development within a low carbon economy, and guide decision making on the location of new development and regeneration.	Steps we will take to deliver our action - Review and update guidance for building standards surveyors in relation to climate change mitigation in new buildings and the adaptation of existing buildings, and develop service specific actions.
Action - Provide effective and efficient Planning and Building Standards service.	Steps we will take to deliver our action - Percentage of Building Warrant applications receiving initial assessment within 20 working days (Target 95%). Number of Certificate of Completion submissions responded to within 3 working days (Target 80%). Retain Customer Service Excellence awards for both the Planning service and Building Standards service. Review and update local surveys and other forms of customer engagement carried out to measure customer satisfaction with both the Planning and Building Standards services and preparation of action plan to address procedural and performance issues raised. Maintain or improve the rating of the Building Standards service as reported through the annual national Scottish Government Customer Satisfaction Survey to Support the Building Standards Verification Performance Framework. Annual focus group event held for customers of both the Planning and Building Standards services and preparation of action plan to address procedural and performance issues raised.

Resource objective - Other actions in support of delivering the Plan and achieving Best Value	
Action - Work with internal and external partners to adopt the Scottish Government's Workforce Strategy for the Building Standards Verification Service.	Steps we will take to deliver on our action - Deliver on local level commitments and actions within the Scottish Government's Workforce Strategy in line with the required timescales.

4.0   Key Performance Outcomes and Targets

4.1   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.
KOP3 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.
KOP4 Targets	
4.1	Minimum overall average satisfaction rating of 7.5 out of 10.
KOP5 Targets	
5.1	Building standards verification fee income to cover indicative verification service costs (staff costs plus 30%).
KOP6 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. • Plan checking • Building warrant or amendments (and plans) being issued • Verification during construction • Completion certificates being accepted
KOP7 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).

5.0 Performance Data

5.1   Professional Expertise and Technical Processes

Professional Expertise and Technical Processes		RAG
KPO1	Minimise time taken to issue a first report or issue a building warrant or amendment to building warrant.	
1.1	Target - 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).	
	SLC result – 95%.	
Comment: While this years performance is an improvement over the 2019-20 figure, this is due to the reduction in application numbers submitted during the COVID 19 affected period.		
1.2	Target - 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).	
	SLC Result – 86%.	
Comment: While this years performance is an improvement over the 2019-20 figure, this is due to the reduction in application numbers submitted during the COVID 19 affected period.		
KPO2	Increase quality of compliance assessment during the construction processes.	
	It is noted the performance measure for this KPO is still under review. Reporting for this measure shows that during 2020-21, 40% of CCNP's were complied with. The main reason for non-compliance was non notification of commencement and other stages outlined in the CCNP document by the applicant/relevant person.	
Comment: None.		

5.2   Quality Customer Experience

Professional Expertise and Technical Processes		RAG
KPO3	Commit to the building standards customer charter.	
3.1	National customer charter is published prominently on the website and incorporates version control detailing reviews (reviewed at least quarterly).	
	SLC Result – our charter remains published prominently on the Councils website.	
Comment: None.		
3.2	Target - 95% of BSD requests for information on a BSD 'Verifier Performance Reporting Service for Customers' case responded to by verifier within 5 days.	
	SLC Result – No requests received.	
Comment: None.		
KPO4	Understand and respond to the customer experience.	
4.1	Target - Minimum overall average satisfaction rating of 7.5 out of 10.	
	SLC Result – overall average satisfaction rating of 8.4 out of 10.	
Comment: In February 2021 South Lanarkshire Council was awarded Customer Service Excellence for the 8th year, the service is fully compliant will all CSE criteria with 12 areas of 'compliance plus'.		

5.5   Operational and Financial Efficiency

Operational and Financial Efficiency			RAG
KPO5	Maintain financial governance		
5.1	Target - Building standards verification fee income to cover indicative verification service costs (staff costs plus 30%).		
	SLC Result – Total verification staff costs for 2020-21 were £1,249,039. Total verification fee income for 2020-21 was £1,542,266.		(green)
Comment: None.			
KPO6	Commitment to eBuilding Standards		
6.1	Details of eBuilding Standards to be published prominently on the verifier's website.		
	SLC Result – the options open to customers are fully detailed in the Councils website. In addition, staff are encouraged to recommend that customers use the national portal for the submission of applications and application related mail. Currently around 90% of applications are submitted online.		(green)
6.2	Target - 75% of each key building warrant related process being done electronically • Plan checking • Building warrant or amendments (and plans) being issued • Verification during construction • Completion certificates being accepted		
	SLC Result: • Plan Checking – electronic plan checking is undertaken for all applications with minor exceptions. • Building warrant or amendments (and plans) being issued – electronic approval via email is in place for all applications containing 10 plans of less. • Verification during construction – no electronic work being undertaken • Completion certificates being accepted – all completion certificate acceptances are being issued electronically where an email address is provided for the relevant person.		(amber)
Comment: The ongoing absence of a national plan sharing solution continuous to frustrate our ability to approve larger applications electronically. Work is underway to establish processes related to the acceptance of remote verification evidence, this is limited to photographic evidence at this time.			

Operational and Financial Efficiency		RAG
KPO7	Commit to objectives outlined in the annual performance report.	
7.1	Annual performance report published prominently on website with version control (reviewed at least quarterly).	
	SLC Result – The Annual Performance Report for 2020-21 is published on the Council website and will be reviewed each quarter throughout 2021-22.	
Comment: None.		
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).	
	SLC Result – This report includes comprehensive performance data for the period April 2020 to March 2021.	
Comment: None.		

6.0   Service Improvement and Partnership Working

6.1   In the previous 12 months (2020-21) we:

Number	Continuous improvement action	Status
1	Introduced revised processes, protocols and guidance as related to the delivery of building standards services in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.	Complete
2	Continue to develop IDOX software solutions for the management of building warrant applications and associated processes.	Ongoing
3	Retained Customer Service Excellence award for 8th year and undertaken customer engagement exercise.	Complete
4	Review annual local customer satisfaction survey process.	Ongoing
5	Submit all quarterly KPO reporting and update Annual Performance Report.	Ongoing
6	Respond to SG information requests and consultations.	As required
7	Introduce revised Planning and Building Standards operational structure.	Complete
8	Process local actions outlined within the National Building Standards Workforce Strategy	Ongoing
9	Progess actions associated with the national program for digital transformation.	Ongoing
10	Achieved targets as highlighted in the Planning and Economic Development Service Action Plan for 2020-21.	Complete
11	Contribute to the work of LABSS as required to ensure the delivery of a robust verification service nationally.	Ongoing

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

Number	Continuous improvement action	Timescale
1	Continue to develop IDOX software solutions for the management of building warrant applications and associated processes	Ongoing
2	Retained Customer Service Excellence award for 9th year and undertake customer engagement exercise.	December 2021
3	Complete review of annual local customer satisfaction survey process.	December 2021
4	Submit all quarterly KPO reporting and update Annual Performance Report.	Ongoing
5	Respond to SG information requests and consultations	As required
6.	Process local actions outlined within the National Building Standards Workforce Strategy.	As required
7.	Progess actions associated with the national program for digital transformation.	As required
8.	Achieve targets as highlighted in the Planning and Economic Development Service Action Plan for 2021-22.	March 2022
9.	Contribute to the work of LABSS as required to ensure the delivery of a robust verification service nationally.	Ongoing

6.3   In the previous 12 months (2018-19) we worked with:

6.3.1   Building Standards Division of Scottish Government – SLC participation within a number of national working groups looking at new national guidance and policy documents. This allows the Scottish Government to use our feedback based on customer insight to shape national direction.

- Quality of plans sub group – Alan McAulay

- Review of verification operating framework – Brian Kelly

- Digital Transformation working group – Alan McAulay

- Lead officer for Compliance Plan work stream – Alan McAulay

6.3.2   National Workforce Strategy launch – SLC contributed to launch and strategy with a 'good news' case study as related to career progression of Fiona Farrell.

6.3.3   Community Meals Service volunteers – during the period March to July, officers from the service assisted our colleagues in delivering meals and providing support to vulnerable members of our community as part of the COVID-19 response.

6.3.4 Care and Repair in SLC – liaison ongoing with Care and Repair in South Lanarkshire has sought to confirm lines of communication for customer enquiries and also the Services expectation in terms of assessment times and quality of warrant submission

6.3.5 Care Inspectorate – SLC staff continue to lead in the introduction of better communication between the Care Inspectorate and Local Authority Building Standards. 2020 related evidence includes making comment on the draft document 'Care Homes for Adults – The Design Guide' as well as sharing feedback from care inspectorate officials with colleagues from other councils. This has clear links to using customer and partner insight to inform service delivery.

6.3.6 Multi-agency Tactical Group – this forum re-established for 2019 allows local agency's such as Police, SFRS and local authority departments to discuss matter of mutual interest. Note – no meetings of this group have taken place due to COVID restrictions and other priorities on group partners. However during 2020 our officers shared guidance from Police Scotland with site managers as related to theft of plant from site.

6.3.7 Safety Advisory Group – the SLC forum, was established in 2019 to provide a more joined up approach to the consideration of application for live events. Update for 2020 – a service restructure has resulted in a new and more robust approach to licensing activities in general, from August 2020 a single officer will process all licensing applications, this will allow for a more consistent approach with clearer lines of communication.

6.3.8 SLC Housing and Technical Resources – we coordinate Scottish Government consultation responses with colleagues in H&T. We also agreed a single point of contact for H&T for building warrant applications related to a programme of nursery school development work.

6.3.9 STAS and Registered Details - these services are provided by LABSS allow for pre-approval nationally of standard building designs. South Lanarkshire remains the lead partner for Bellway, Keepmoat Homes and Barratt Homes West. New for 2020 SLC acted as lead authority for a range of new STAS and RD (registered detail) applications.

6.3.10 Sharing house completion data with Waste services – monthly reports are provided to the Councils' Waste Services section to allow for a quicker and more effective consideration of customer needs with regards to bin collection services.

6.3.11 National Building Standards Portal – work remain ongoing on the promotion of this portal, during periods of lockdown around 90% of application are submitted via the national portal. Use of the portal supports the current approach to working from home.

6.3.12 Operation Doric – Our work in relation to this initiative remains ongoing. Promotion of this partnership has been presented as corporate evidence as part of the Councils Best Value Audit.

6.3.13 Adaptation fast tracking process – the existing standard warrant submission package continues to provide a template for the submission of adaptation applications. This allows for a quicker processing time which in turn benefits homeowners.

6.3.14 Alternative view process – a number of alternative view applications were considered and approved during 2020.

6.3.15   Local Authority Building Standards Scotland – In a similar way to the BSD, SLC are represented within LABSS in many strategic areas namely:

- Member of Executive – Alan McAulay

- Technical Director – Alan McAulay

- Consortia technical representative – Andrew Turriff

6.3.16   Central Authorities Consortia – while linked with LABSS activities, this forum allows for discussion at a more local level, partners are North Lanarkshire, Stirling, Falkirk and Clackmannanshire Councils.

6.3.17   South Ayrshire Council – SAC engineers are used as a backstop for checking structural calculations which are out with the scope of our own in-house engineers, thus providing customers with certainty of service response.

6.3.18   Environmental Health – Building Standards respond to weekly consultation requests from EH on building warrant application submissions thereby ensuring any applicant is aware of legislative requirements stemming from EH regulations.

6.3.19   Planning Service – Extensive joint working is undertaken on a daily basis through the cross checking process.

6.4   In the next 12 months (2021-22) we will continue to engage with our partners outlined above, including strengthening partnership working where necessary and consider new partnerships where opportunities exist.

7.0   Building Standards – Additional Data

7.1   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	**2267** Applications **1959** Decisions
Completion certificates	**1770** Applications **1735** Decisions
Certification	**1014** Certificates of design submitted **14** Certificates of construction submitted
Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs)	**934** Copy certificates received (domestic) **5** Copy certificates received (non-domestic)
Statements of Sustainability	**753** Copy certificates received (domestic) **5** Copy certificates received (non-domestic)
Enforcement	**0** Notices served under sections 25 to 30 **0** Cases referred to procurator fiscal **0** Cases where LA has undertaken work **4** Cases of direct action under S29