

Environmental Services

Building Standards Verification Service

Annual Performance Report

2017/18



Moray Council Building Standards

Annual Performance Report

Record of Document Revisions

Version	Description of Change	Date
1.0	Publication of new format Report	31/08/2017
1.1	Updated Performance Information (Qtr 2)	31/10/2017
1.2	Updated Performance Information (Qtr 3) Updated staff profile and organisation chart. Minor revision to IT Systems and Digital Services	31/01/2018
1.3	Updated Performance Information (Qtr 4) Staffing – resourcing and contingencies added	18/04/2018

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1.0 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.

1.1 Moray Council

Moray is located midway between the cities of Aberdeen and Inverness and borders the Moray Firth. The geographical area of Moray extends to 861 square miles with a population of some 94,000. The principal towns within Moray are Elgin, (population 23,100); Forres, (population 10,150); Buckie, (population 8,500); Lossiemouth, (population 7,050) and Keith, (population 4,700).



Moray is principally rural, the main industries being distilling, farming and tourism. One half of all the distilleries in Scotland are located in Moray along with the major air base of RAF Lossiemouth and Kinloss Army Barracks as well as being home to the world famous family run companies Baxters of Speyside and Walkers Shortbread.

The Moray Council comprises of 26 Members, employs over 4000 staff and has an annual budget for the period 2017/ 2018 of £200m.

1.2 Responsibilities

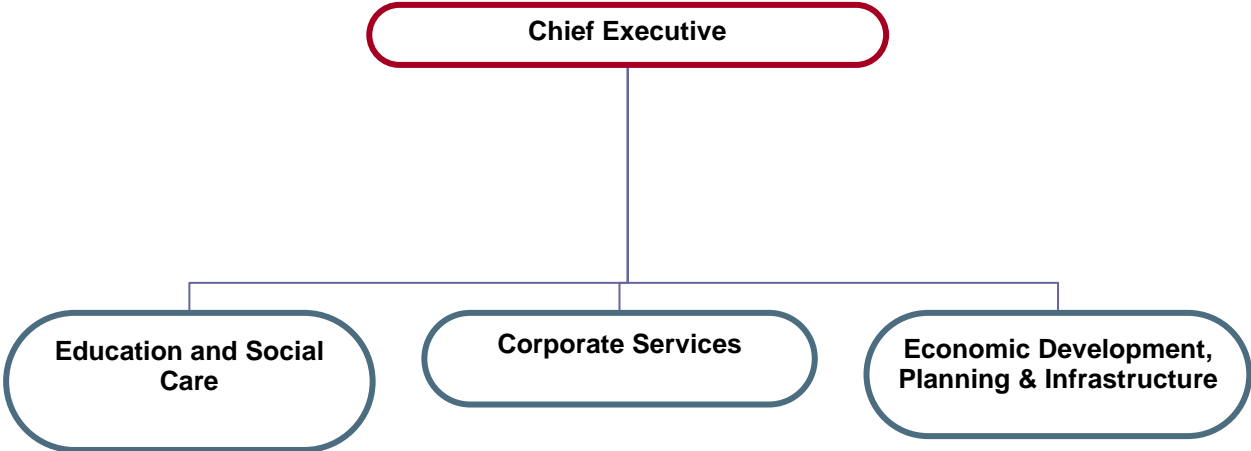
The Building Standards service has responsibility to secure the health, safety, welfare and convenience of persons in or about buildings and of others who may be affected by buildings or matters connected with buildings. It also aims to further the conservation of fuel and energy and achieve sustainable development.

Building Standards has two distinct roles, enforcement and verification. Verification is principally achieved through the application of the Building Standards (Scotland) Regulations 2004 when considering applications for Building Warrant and the submission of Completion Certificates.

In addition to this Building Standards also deal with dangerous and defective buildings and provide advice to the Licensing section as required.

1.3 Moray Council – Organisational Structure

The Council departmental structure is as follows:

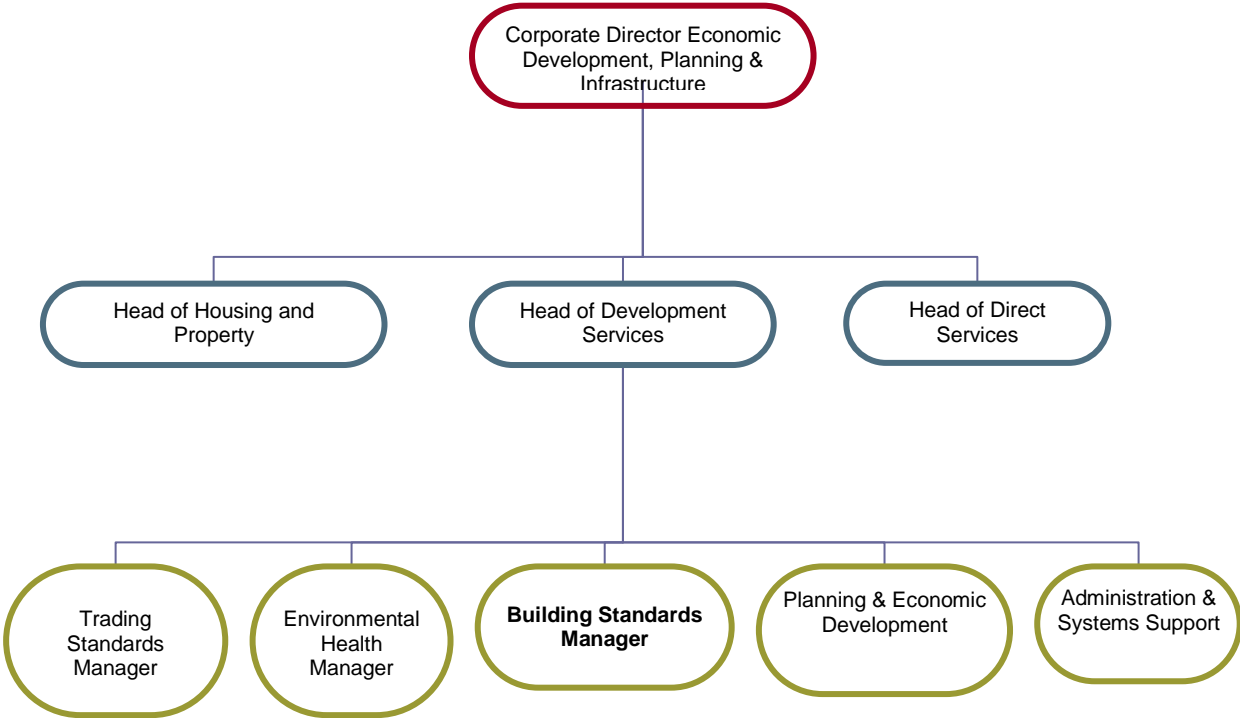


Moray Council's Building Standard's service is located within the Development Services section of Environmental Services. Development Services has 4 core functions. These are:

- Building Standards
- Environmental Health
- Trading Standards
- Planning & Economic Development
 - Development Management
 - Planning & Development

These functions are then supported by an Admin & Systems Support team

The following organisational chart shows the reporting relationship within Environmental Services.



2.0 Building Standards Verification Service Information

2.1 Purpose

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.

2.1 Location

The Building Standards Service is delivered from the Council headquarters building in Elgin. The Service moved to new office accommodation in October 2012 within the Council Headquarters.

Moray Council opened a new £4million headquarters annex in February 2012. Although not based within this office accommodation, the Building Standards Service makes use of the modern accessible facilities for desk duty, meetings and training.

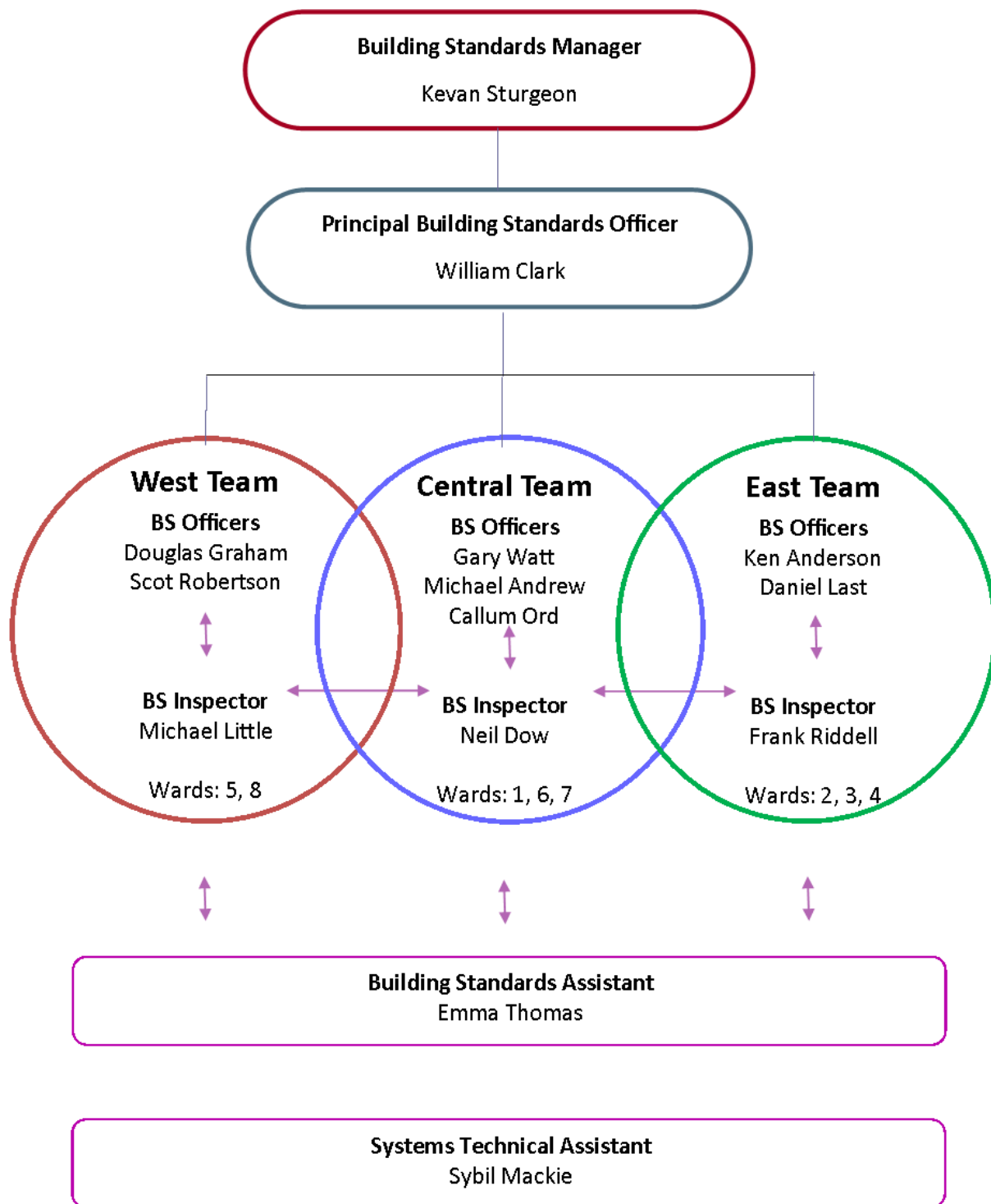
2.2 Services and Function

Building Standards has two distinct roles, enforcement and verification. Verification is principally achieved through the application of the Building Standards (Scotland) Regulations 2004 when considering applications for Building Warrant and the submission of Completion Certificates.

Moray Council's Building Standards Service works closely with Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council in the Grampian Consortium Group. The aim of the group is to develop and maintain consistency in the delivery of the Building Standards Service across the three Councils

2.3 Staffing

In the current climate of tight budgets in addition to the changes necessitated by the introduction of eBuilding Standards the staffing and resources of the Service have recently been reviewed. Two additional posts, an additional Building Standards Inspector and a Building Standards Assistant were approved following the increase in building warrant fees and have now been filled. The team structure has been reviewed and we are working towards the composition indicated in the following diagram.



Staff numbers, Grades and experience.

Building Standards Officer (Grade 7-9) – 5 @ Grade 9, 1@Grade 8, 1@Grade 7
 Building Standards Inspector (Grade 7-8)
 Building Standards Assistant (Grade 6)
 Systems Technical Assistant (Grade 5)

The career grade scheme gives details of the qualifications and experience required for each stage. This resourcing structure is the minimum required to provide the Building Standards Service in Moray.

Contingencies

The Building Standards Service in Moray has agreements in place with external consultants for use when expertise is not available in-house. These are Structural Engineers and Fire Engineers. If on occasion there are reduced resources in-house due to long-term absences or a sudden increase in applications submitted etc. arrangements are in place with our Consortium group and beyond via LABSS to assist with the verification of warrant applications. Links are also in place with a recruitment agency should it be necessary to engage staff for a short-term contract.

The table below shows the staffing position on 31 March 2018 (posts are full time equivalents).

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

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

		Building Standards Verification Service	Other
Principal Officers	No. posts	1	
	Vacant		
Main grade posts (surveyors)	No. posts	7	
	Vacant		
Main grade posts (inspectors)	No. posts	3	
	Vacant		
Technician/Assistant	No. posts	1	
	Vacant		
Office support/ clerical	No. posts	1	6
	Vacant		
TOTAL		13	6

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	3
30-39	2
40-49	1
50 and over	8

3.0 Strategic Objectives

3.1 Moray Council: Moray 2026

The Moray 2026 a Plan for the Future identifies the need to work in partnership to deliver the necessary outcomes to ensure Moray is an area where people choose to live, learn work and enjoy. The Moray Community Planning Partnership is committed to delivering sustainable economic development to underpin this and enable its citizens to achieve their full potential.

The partnership has established five priority areas:

1. A growing, diverse and sustainable economy – this is the top priority at the heart of the future success of Moray. It covers business, employment, infrastructure, public services and the third sector developing sustainable communities.
2. Healthier Citizens – the main areas identified for improvement are: to reduce incidence of obesity, reduce the number of smokers, reduce alcohol dependency and improve mental health and wellbeing.
3. Ambitious and confident young people - the focus under this heading is to improve the life chances of children by supporting them and their families at the earliest possible stages and as required thereafter to give all children in Moray the best possible opportunities to achieve their potential.
4. Adults living healthier, sustainable independent lives safeguarded from harm – the main areas identified are:
 - a) Reshaping the support available for older people to ensure their needs are met to sustain active lives in the community and
 - b) Reduce the number of households in fuel poverty.
5. Safer communities – whilst recognising that Moray is a safe place to live, we need to do more to protect those most vulnerable and at risk and be proactive to ensure that communities feel safer in the years ahead.

For each of the 5 priorities a range of targets have been identified which aim to provide measurements of the outcomes we are seeking to achieve. The community planning partners will monitor performance against these targets and report on progress to the public.

Our activities to achieve these outcomes are supported within the corporate framework across human resources, financial management, procurement, risk management, health and safety, business continuity and performance management.

3.2 Departmental Priorities

The Development Services priority in the Corporate Plan is to achieve Sustainable Economic Development. The priorities to meet this outcome are:

- To provide leadership for economic growth.
- To support local business and attract inward investment.
- To provide certainty for developers and working relationships that encourage development.
- To identify external funding to support economic development activities.

3.3 Key Service Objectives

The Building Standards key strategic objectives for the coming year are:

- Ensure that the terms of the Verification Operating Framework are met and/or implemented.
- Work to achieve the targets set out in the National Performance Framework ensuring no red markers.
- Address the actions for improvement set out in the Appointment of Verifiers in order to achieve the full 6-year period of appointment.
- Continue and improve Benchmarking with our benchmarking family leading to service improvements.

4.0 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	
	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).

5.0 Performance Data

5.1 Summary of performance against Key Performance Outcomes & Targets.

KPO TARGETS	1.1	1.2	3.1	3.2	4.1
	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).	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
Performance 2017/18 Q4	84.72%	64.29%	Published prominently (with review)	No cases referred to BSD 'Reporting Service'	7.2

KPO TARGETS	5.1	6.1	6.2	7.1	7.2
	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).
Performance 2017/18 Q4	104.99%	Published prominently	4 of 4 done	Published prominently (with review)	Includes all performance data

5.2 Professional Expertise & Technical Processes

5.2.1 Protocols for dealing with work

Policies and procedures are in place for all aspects of the verification process. These are all stored electronically for ease of access by all staff.

5.2.2 Performance management systems

A suite of reports is available to monitor various elements of our performance and workloads. These are used to provide reports to Council Committee and quarterly information to the Building Standards Division of Scottish Government.

We also have daily reporting of outstanding workloads that allow monitoring of all staff. From this workflows can be monitored and managed. We have recently purchased the Enterprise Workflow Management system from Idox and are currently setting up the tasks and reports. This will ultimately help with the performance management of the Service.

5.2.3 Training and development/CPD

All staff are subject to the Employee Review and Development programme on an annual basis. Training plans are being developed and various CPD events and staff training days are provided throughout the year.

5.2.4 Benchmarking/shared services

Moray Council is actively involved in the Grampian Consortium alongside Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City Councils. The Consortium meets quarterly and provides the opportunity to exchange information and develop joint initiatives to improve service delivery with Benchmarking being a standing item on our agenda. The group also aim to establish a consistent approach to interpretation of policies and technical guidance, share best practice and facilitate training. Moray Council and the Grampian Consortium Group are actively involved with national policy and working groups via LABSS.

Moray Council have also been instrumental in setting up a benchmarking group using the SOLACE group of Authorities. These include, East Ayrshire, East Lothian, Fife, North Ayrshire, Perth & Kinross, South Ayrshire and Stirling Councils. Information is collated on a quarterly basis and comparison charts produced. It is hoped to progress the group with a view to sharing best practice.

5.2.5 Succession planning

Moray Council has a corporate succession planning policy in place but in addition Building Standards supports the following:

- The service supports staff to progress through their career grade and encourages them to obtain professional qualifications.

- A Technical Group has been developed within the Grampian Consortium Group. Joint Agent seminars and staff training days are held with the consortium members as required.
- We participate in the Scottish Type Approval Scheme (STAS).

5.3 Quality Customer Experience

5.3.1 Customer communication strategies

Information relevant to the Building Standards service is available on our website. In addition, eNews bulletins are sent to agents with service updates and other important developments. This form of communication also provides a vehicle for the transfer of information back to the Building Standards team by promoting feedback on the service we provide.

A link to a questionnaire is attached to all emails, written correspondence and our website. This is primarily in place to gauge the level of customer satisfaction however also provides an avenue for providing service feedback and ideas for areas of improvement.

We also intend to set up focus groups and hold seminars with our regular agents.

5.3.2 Customer Charter

The Building Standards Charter is reviewed/updated quarterly and is available on our website.

5.3.3 Customer feedback (national/local)/analysing and changes to systems

Locally customer feedback can be received via the permanent email/website link to Survey Monkey, formal complaints procedures, interaction with customers and by inviting feedback.

Any improvements we make to our service due to customer requests/feedback will be advertised on our website.

Customer feedback on a national level is received from LABSS and the Building Standards Division (BSD). The feedback from the National Customer Satisfaction Survey is useful to make comparisons with other authorities and some very useful comments are normally received. However, with the anonymous nature of the survey it is difficult to follow up and act on some of the matters raised.

5.3.4 Accessibility of service

The Council Offices are open to the public from 8.45am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday however, Building Standards Officers can be available between 7.00am and 7.00pm by appointment. In addition, a Duty Officer is available 2.00 - 4.00pm each day for general enquiries.

All forms and guidance documents are also available on our website.

5.3.5 Pre-application advice

We encourage and welcome requests for guidance in advance of submitting any building warrant applications. As mentioned in 5.3.4 above a duty officer is available each day for general enquiries in person or by telephone. Written enquiries are also encouraged and we have an eForm available for this purpose on our website.

In addition, we promote a more formal service for pre-submission advice for larger projects. This is a chargeable service at £120 per hour but offers substantial benefits for the applicant/agent. Agreement could be reached in the way forward in terms of the Technical Standards and also to determine what information may be required to process the warrant such as fire engineer reports, structural certification, site investigations etc. Information on the service is available on our website.

5.3.6 Customer agreements

We have a process in place for Customer Agreements. The take up has not been particularly huge but for larger or more complex projects they have proved successful.

5.3.7 Customer dissatisfaction (procedural or technical)

We support the Local Authority Building Standards (LABSS) dispute resolution process for both technical and procedural issues. We will initial consult with our consortium partners and to the wider LABSS membership as required.

Moray Council has a corporate formal complaints procedure for customers who feel dissatisfied with a service. Full details and information are available on our website.

5.4 Operational & Financial Efficiency

5.4.1 Team structure

The Building Standards section is split into East, Central and West Areas. Within these areas a further sub-division exists to provide an allocated area for workload distribution. Should an Officer require to deal with an application out with their area for professional development then this will be encouraged. Boundaries are also flexible depending upon workloads.

5.4.2 Time recording system

A time recording system is in place which monitors staff time allocation in relation to the verification and non-verification work.

5.4.3 Financial monitoring/governance

A Service Level Agreement is in place with the Council's Accountancy Team that includes formal quarterly meetings. Other ad-hoc meetings will be arranged as required.

Monthly budget monitoring statements are provided electronically to the Building Standards Manager.

5.4.4 IT systems

Building Standards utilise the IDOX Uniform system. This system provides reporting and letter generation facilities. The Enterprise workflow package has recently been purchased. Development of the system and staff training is complete and the system went live in January 2018.

IDOX Uniform also provides information to our public access system which is available from our website. This facilitates the Building Standards Register.

We also use the IDOX Document Management System and all files and papers are now either produced/saved electronically or scanned on receipt. Since the introduction of the national eBuilding Standards system documents received via the web portal are saved directly into the back office systems. Over time this will considerably reduce the amount of storage space required for files as well providing an efficient mechanism to view files and documents.

The Building Standards section also make use of Microsoft SharePoint.

All telephone calls for Building Standards are received by our Contact Centre and the Lagan workflow system for the transfer of calls and recording of data is being used.

Our IT systems are supported by Moray Councils ICT team and System Support personnel within Environmental Services.

5.4.5 Digital Services

We currently receive around 80% of all new applications electronically via the national web portal. The remaining applications that are received on paper are scanned into our back-office systems by a corporate mail and scanning team that has been operational since July 2013. All documents received after October 2012 were back-scanned into the system. All applications are assessed electronically and all correspondence is by email unless the applicant expresses otherwise. All staff are equipped with laptops, dual monitors, tablets and smartphones to enable digital working.

5.4.6 Finance systems

Corporate Intranet based Financial Management systems are in place which can be accessed by the Building Standards Manager at any time.

5.4.7 Internal communication strategies

Regular communications between staff are undertaken face to face and by e-mail and informal discussions are held on a daily basis.

Our meeting structure consists of weekly workload briefings and technical meetings. More formal meetings are held quarterly and although the focus is on performance opportunities exist to cover other areas as required.

6.0 Service Improvements and Partnership Working

In the previous 12 months (year/year) we did –

Number	Continuous improvement action	Status
1	Implement National eBuilding Standards System	Complete
2	Set up Benchmarking with SOLACE Group of Authorities	Complete
3	Improve performance against national targets	Complete

In the next 12 months (year/year) we will do –

Number	Continuous improvement action	Timescale
1	Ensure terms of the Verifiers Operating Framework met/implemented	March 2018
2	Work to achieve targets set out in National Performance Framework	March 2018
3	Address actions for improvement set out in Appointment of Verifiers	March 2018
4	Continue and improve benchmarking leading to service improvements	Quarterly

In the previous 12 months (2016/17) we worked with:

- Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council via the Grampian Consortium Group
- Other local authorities via Local Authority Building Standards Scotland (LABSS)
- SOLACE group of Authorities as a benchmarking group
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- External Structural Engineers
- External Fire Engineers

In the next 12 months (2017/18) we will:

- Engagement with other local authorities and groups, e.g. Local Authority Building
- Standards Scotland (LABSS)
- Engagement with external stakeholder organisations and groups
- External support for local training and development/CPD
- Commitment to work together on technical issues

7.0 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.

The information in the table relates to 2017/18 Quarter 3.

Building warrants and amendments to building warrant	243 Applications 234 Decisions
Completion certificates	303 Submissions 262 Decisions
Certification	71 Certificates of design submitted 26 Certificates of construction submitted
Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs)	61 Copy certificates received (domestic) 0 Copy certificates received (non-domestic)
Statements of Sustainability	55 Copy certificates received (domestic) 1 Copy certificates received (non-domestic)
Enforcement	3 Notices served under sections 25 to 30 0 Cases referred to procurator fiscal 0 Cases where LA has undertaken work