



**Renfrewshire Council**  
**Building Standards Verification**  
**Annual Performance Report**  
**2020/21**

## Version control

<b>Version</b>	<b>Issue Date</b>	<b>Reviewed</b>	<b>Summary of changes</b>
1.0	31.07.2018	AMC	Quarter one 2018/19
1.0	31.10.2018	AMC	Quarterly review, Building Standards staffing position updated.
1.0	31.01.2019	AMC	Quarterly review, Building Standards staffing position updated.
1.0	31.03.2019	AMC	Quarterly review, annual performance figures added. C.I.P updated, Building Standards staffing position updated.
1.0	31.07.2019	AMC	Quarterly review, Building Standards staffing position updated.
1.0	31.10.2019	AMC	Quarterly review, Building Standards staffing position updated.
1.0	31.01.2020	AMC	Quarterly review, no change.
1.1	30.04.2020	AMC	Quarterly review, staffing position, C.I.P and annual performance update 2019-20.
1.1	06/07/2020	AMC	Quarterly review, Building Standards staffing position updated.

# Table of Contents

---

1. Introduction to the Local Authority
2. Building Standards Verification Service Information
3. Strategic Objectives
4. Key Performance Outcome and Targets
5. Performance Data
6. Service improvement and Partnership Working
7. Building Standards – Additional data

**Key contact:** Alex MacCalman, Assistant Development Standards Manager, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley, PA1 1JD  
Phone 0141 618 7909 or email [alex.maccalman@renfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:alex.maccalman@renfrewshire.gov.uk)



- 1.5 Renfrewshire is a thriving area for business and economic activity, with Glasgow Airport within its boundaries and excellent transport links across the West of Scotland, nationally and internationally. Employment levels in Renfrewshire have returned to levels experienced before the crash of 2008, with key sectors of employment being in the health and care sectors, transportation and manufacturing.
- 1.6 Renfrewshire has a proud cultural heritage, with Paisley having the second highest concentration of listed buildings in Scotland. From historic museums, civic buildings, mills and observatories, the area has a rich history and thriving local cultural scene which is driving local regeneration plans and supporting the development of the area as a prospective tourism destination.
- 1.7 With a net budget of approximately £380m, and over 7900 employees, Renfrewshire Council provides a diverse range of services to local people, businesses and communities. The Council has a vital role to play locally; shaping the places which people live and work in, driving the local economy, providing education and learning, supporting and caring for vulnerable people and facilitating local democracy.
- 1.8 The organisation has a strong track record of innovation and embracing new approaches to service delivery. Since 2011/12, the Council has managed a total of £117 million of savings and cost pressures. The Better Council Change Programme has been an important element of the Council's approach to transformation and supporting longer term financial sustainability.
- 1.9 Partnership is key to what we do in Renfrewshire. From driving economic and cultural regeneration to providing housing and education, the Council works with a range of partners across the business, public, third and community sectors to improve outcomes. There is a strong partnership focus on early intervention and prevention, working together to ensure that we get the best use of the resources we have and focus on improving outcomes for local people.
- 1.10 The Council's Building Standards service is located within the Planning and Housing Services Division of the Communities, Housing and Planning Services Directorate. The Directorate was restructured on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2018 and now includes the Communities and Public Protection service.
- 1.11 The Planning and Housing Services Division are responsible for providing a landlord function to 12,000 council houses, providing homeless and housing support services, the strategic assessment management of the council's housing, the development and delivery of Renfrewshire's local development plan and local housing strategy, and the administration the Planning and Building Standards systems.

1.12 The Communities and Public Protection Division consist of the following services; Community Learning, Trading Standards and Licensing, Business Regulation, Environmental Improvements, Renfrewshire Community Safety Partnership, Street Stuff and Team Up to Clean Up. The services provide a range of advice, support and development initiatives as well as having enforcement responsibilities in relation to Consumer Protection, Food Law and Health and Safety.



## 2. Building Standards Verification Service Information

- 2.1 The purpose of the building standards system is to protect the public interest. The system sets out the essential standards to be met when building work or conversion of a building takes place in order to meet building regulations.
- 2.2 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 it is a matter for contracts and arrangements in place between a builder and client.
- 2.3 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.
- 2.3 The Building Standards verification service is part of the Development Standards section which is located within the fourth floor of Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley. In 2011, the Building Standards and Development Management sections were amalgamated into one section – Development Standards. The responsibility for the management of the section previously sat with the Development Standards Manager who reported to the Head of Planning and Housing.
- 2.4 The Development Standards Manager’s role is now vacant and the management structure of the section is currently being reviewed.
- 2.5 The Building Standards team consists of an Assistant Development Standards Manager (Building Standards) supported by one Lead Building Standards Surveyor, five Building Standards Surveyors, three Assistant Building Standards Surveyors and one Building Standards Technician who assists the building warrant validation process and carries out a significant proportion of the site inspection work for the purposes of reasonable inquiry.
- 2.6 The section has two teams based around an East/West geographic split and the workloads and demands of the service are closely monitored to ensure that increased resources are directed where most required.

Head of Planning and Housing

Development Standards Manager

Assistant Development Standards  
Manager (Building Standards)

Lead Building Standards Surveyor

Building Standards Surveyor x 5

Assistant Building Standards  
Surveyor x 3

Building Standards Technician

2.7 The surveying staff and technicians are allocated workloads on a competency basis as per our risk management protocols thereby ensuring that the public interest principle is maintained by matching staff competence with task complexity.

2.8 During the financial year 2019/2020 the service received 1345 building warrant applications, covering construction work with an estimated value of just over £171 million which generated approximately £822,000 in fees. A total of 2037 completion certificates were submitted, and 4476 site inspections carried out.

2.9 The Building Standards section has a number of roles and responsibilities out with our verification role, these activities include;

- Enforcement under sections 25-30 of the Building (Scotland) Act 2003, including the provision of 24 hour dangerous building cover via a standby system,
- Safety at Sports Grounds legislation for St Mirren Football Stadium,
- Section 89 – Raised platform certificates,
- Letters of comfort and Building Standards Enquiries,
- Event safety inspections for licensed public events/gatherings, and
- Inspections of Houses in Multiple Occupation.

2.10 The staffing position as of the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020 was as follows;

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

		Building Standards Verification Service	Other
Managers	No. posts	1	
	Vacant	0	
Lead Building Standards Surveyor	No. posts	1	
	Vacant	0	
Building Standards Surveyor	No. posts	5	
	Vacant	0	
Assistant Building Standards Surveyor	No. posts	3	
	Vacant	0	
Building Standards Technician	No. posts	1	
	Vacant	0	

Staff age profile	Number
Under 30	1
30-39	2
40-49	4
50 and over	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>

### 3. Strategic Objectives

3.1 The main aim of the Building Standards section is to provide a regulatory service that meets the needs and expectations of our customers and communities. As a direct service provider, we recognise the role we play as both an enabler and a regulator, and the importance of providing a consistent, professional and coordinated service that provides a regulatory framework that protects the public interest and encourages investment and sustainable economic growth within Renfrewshire.

3.2 **The 2019/20 departmental service improvement plan contains a specific action in relation to the Development Standards service. This action relates to ongoing continuous improvements to the delivery of the regulatory services provided by Development Management and Building Standards.**

28. Develop improvements to the delivery of regulatory services (within Development Standards)	Ongoing	This will enhance customer experience and deliver process efficiencies.	Development Standards Manager	<p>Through the delivery of our annual and quarterly continuous improvement plan.</p> <p>Through ICT and software improvements we will deliver efficiency benefits</p> <p>We will re-evaluate business processes in the light of the Scottish Government review of the Scottish Planning System.</p> <p>Continuously monitor performance and we provide monthly, quarterly and annual returns to the SG.</p>	Council Plan Community Plan
--	---------	---	-------------------------------	---	--------------------------------

3.3 The annual performance report takes cognisance of the above objective and expands upon this continuous improvement action by setting strategic objectives for the Building Standards service for the forthcoming 12 month period. These strategic objectives are;

- To fulfil the requirements of the Scottish Government's Performance and Operating Frameworks for Building Standards verifiers,
- Replace and upgrade our existing case management and document management systems to a new casework, document and workflow system,
- Improve processes and increase efficiencies,
- Improve processing times for building warrant applications,
- Improve customer satisfaction,

## 4. Key Performance Outcomes and Targets

4.1 The national verification and 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

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 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

## 4.2 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).
KPO2 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"> <li>• Plan checking</li> <li>• Building warrant or amendments (and plans) being issued</li> <li>• Verification during construction</li> <li>• Completion certificates being accepted</li> </ul>
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

- 5.1 This section of the annual report provides a summary of our performance against all KPO's from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

Professional Expertise and Technical Processes		
KPO1 Targets		RAG
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).	
	<b>Actual performance against this target for 2019/20 is 52.8%</b>	
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).	
	<b>Actual performance against this target for 2019/20 is 55.6%</b>	
Commentary:  Performance figures are low and is primarily due to the cumulative effect of carrying a long-term vacancies for assistant building standards surveyor posts.		
KPO2 Targets		
2.1	Targets to be developed as part of future review of KPO2.	
	<b>Construction Compliance and Notification Plans (CCNP's) fully achieved in 2019/20 87.9%</b>	
Commentary:  Although no formal targets have been set the following information has been provided for information purposes. During 2019/20 the section conducted 3648 site inspections and recorded 88 instances of major non-compliance and 500 instances of minor non-compliance. Instances of non-compliance are recorded where corrective action was required by the relevant person to meet building standards and the approved plans. 100% of CCNP's were fully achieved by the verifier, 87.9% were achieved by the relevant person.		

KPO3 targets		
3.1	National customer charter is published prominently on the website and incorporates version control detailing reviews (reviewed at least quarterly).	
	<b>The national customer charter is published prominently on our web site and has been reviewed</b>	
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.	
	<b>No cases have been referred to the BSD</b>	
<p>Commentary:</p> <p>The national customer charter will be reviewed by the end of the next quarter and a local customer charter will be developed by the end of Q4.</p>		
KPO4 Targets		
4.1	Minimum overall average satisfaction rating of 7.5 out of 10.	
	<b>Renfrewshire's overall satisfaction rating is 7.2.</b>	
<p>Commentary:</p> <p>None.</p>		

KPO5 Targets		
5.1	Building standards verification fee income to cover indicative verification service costs (staff costs plus 30%).	
	<b>Building Standards verification fee income was £1,156,836, total staff verification costs plus 30% were £561,106.</b>	
Commentary: None.		
KPO6 Targets		
6.1	Details of eBuilding Standards to be published prominently on the verifier's website.	
	<b>eBuilding Standards is published prominently on our website</b>	
6.2	75% of each key building warrant related process being done electronically <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan checking</li> <li>• Building warrant or amendments (and plans) being issued</li> <li>• Verification during construction</li> <li>• Completion certificates being accepted</li> </ul>	
	<b>Where a building warrant or amendment to building warrant application has been submitted via the portal all applications are vetted, approved and inspected onsite using digital processes. As a percentage of all building warrants received including hard copy applications and for 2019/20, this equates to an 81.8% digital processing rate (Vetting, approval and site inspection). The majority of completion certificate acceptance and rejections are now being issued electronically however, although not currently measurable, we would estimate the figure is between 60-70%.</b>	
Commentary: None.		
KPO7 Targets		
7.1	Annual performance report published prominently on website with version control (reviewed at least quarterly).	
	<b>Published prominently</b>	
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).	
	<b>The report includes performance data for the full year from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 - 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.</b>	
Commentary: None.		

5.2 In addition to the requirements of the National Performance Framework, Renfrewshire Council Building Standards have additional outcomes that compliment and sit in parallel with the National Framework KPO's and the strategic aims of the Council. These outcomes fall under the same schematic themes as the national KPO's and link to the key outcomes of the departmental service improvement plan.

#### Professional Expertise and Technical Processes:

- Outcome 1 – We will have protocols and working practices in place which ensure effective and consistent verification of building warrant applications and processing of completion certificates in a manner which enhances the public interest principle.
- Outcome 2 – We will ensure the service continues to be efficient and reactive to stakeholder requirements.
- Outcome 3 – We will ensure our staff have ongoing training and development which is relevant to the tasks they perform.
- Outcome 4 – We will share best practice and encourage consistency within our consortia and benchmarking partners.
- Outcome 5 – We will work towards achieving national consistency on all technical issues.
- Outcome 6 – We will encourage our staff to assume greater responsibilities and gain broader experiences within our service.

#### Quality Customer Experience:

- Outcome 7 – We communicate clearly and effectively with our stakeholders.
- Outcome 8 – We have clear and transparent customer service standards.
- Outcome 9 – We are represented and participate in national and local forums.
- Outcome 10 – We will contribute to the national customer survey to allow stakeholder feedback and research and we will gather information on the quality of the services we provide
- Outcome 11 – We are committed to making our service easily accessible to all members of the community.
- Outcome 12 – We have a process in place that provides dissatisfied customers with an escape route should our performance standards fall short of customer expectations.
- Outcome 13 – We have systems in place which continue to receive external validation of our competence.

### Operational and Financial Efficiency:

- Outcome 14 – We will ensure the service continues to operate efficiently and is structured in a manner that fulfils stakeholder requirements.
- Outcome 15 – We have a time recording system which accurately records our activities.
- Outcome 16 – We will ensure that we use our financial resources and assets to secure effective and efficient service delivery.
- Outcome 17 – We will procure and utilise our IT systems in a manner that supports the verification process and our core business activities.
- Outcome 18 – We have financial systems which support our business needs.
- Outcome 19 – We communicate clearly and effectively with one and other.

### 5.3 To achieve the above outcomes the Building Standards section will:

- Ensure all protocols and guidance notes are reviewed and updated on an annual basis or when necessitated by internal or external change (Outcome 1)
- A 5% random sample of all building warrant applications will be reviewed thereby encouraging continued consistency of interpretation, compliance, service delivery, data input and to ensure that protocol requirements are being met with respect to the building warrant approval, reasonable inquiry and the completion certificate processes (Outcome 1).
- Risk assessment protocols will be reviewed annually to take cognisance of the requirements of the Construction Compliance and Notification Plan and any outcomes from our staff appraisal process (Outcome 1).
- Continue to monitor inspection arrangements and resource and develop in line with Construction Compliance and Notification Plan methodology (Outcome 1).
- System reporting has been developed to allow interrogation of reasonable inquiry non-compliance items to allow national reporting and to inform intelligent inspection practices (Outcome 1).
- Continuous workload monitoring via Enterprise to ensure the efficient allocation and verification of building warrant applications (Outcome 2).
- Enterprise tasks have been updated regarding to allow dynamic workload monitoring as per the requirements of the performance framework and KPO's (Outcome 2).
- Enterprise graphs provide all surveying staff and managers with individual performance information relative to average office performance, KPO requirements and internal targets (Outcome 2).
- Conduct annual appraisals to review, support and assist staff training, development and performance (Outcome 2).

- Conduct annual appraisals to review, support and assist staff training, development and performance (Outcome 3).
- Continued benchmarking comparisons with our consortia/benchmarking partners (Outcome 4).
- Explore further benchmarking opportunities and build upon previous joint training sessions (Outcome 4).
- We will continue to participate in, and encourage consortia discussion on all LABSS technical issues (Outcome 5).
- Upon publication we will adopt and implement national LABSS guidance notes (Outcome 5).
- Consider ways in which the staff appraisal process can contribute to effective succession planning for the service (Outcome 6).
- Web site to be regularly updated with KPO information and details of escape route to be published upon our web site along with consortia information (Outcome 7).
- Continue to issue correspondence to inform customers of impending 9 month deemed refusal (Outcome 7).
- Continue to issue letters informing customers of impending building warrant expiry dates (Outcome 7).
- Continue to issue letters at key points in the building warrant process advising customers on KPO's commitments, escape route process and that they may be contacted for research purposes re National customer survey (Outcome 7).
- Continue to issue an acknowledgement letter which clearly sets forth our performance commitments by responding to the majority of warrants within 20 days and what happens if the 35 day backstop target has not been met i.e. customer escape route.
- Issue a 20 day letter which informs customers if their application has missed the initial 20 day target and reaffirms our commitment to deal with the application within the further 15 days i.e. 35 day back stop period (Outcome 7).
- Our web site will be updated with the National charter and thereafter reviewed annually (Outcome 8).
- Attendance at LABSS meetings (Outcome 9).
- Attendance at consortia and benchmarking meetings (Outcome 9).
- Participate in the national survey and assist the Building Standards Division with the supply of customer data (Outcome 10)
- Provide a fully compliant Part one of the Building Standards register (Outcome 11).
- Conduct an annual review of all online forms and web content (Outcome 11).
- We will continue to ensure our office remains open and accessible to all visitors (Outcome 11).
- We will have a duty surveyor available at all times during opening hours (Outcome 11).

- Where necessary, we will identify why targets have not been met and address any underlying issues (Outcome 12).
- Continue to have working practices in place to support and secure retention of our OHSAS 18001 accreditation (Outcome 13).
- Implement any improvements or recommendations received from the external accreditation audit process (Outcome 13).
- We will monitor our team structures to ensure they remain fit for purpose (Outcome 14).
- Review the time recording system to ensure it accurately reflects verification and non-verification activities and that it continues to be fit for purpose (Outcome 15).
- Applications will be checked against the R.I.C.S Building Cost Information Service guide to verify that submitted estimated costs are accurate and, as a result, ensuring fee recovery is correct and calculated on an equitable basis (Outcome 16).
- Continue to hold regular meetings with our Finance department to improve upon our existing financial reporting and monitoring (Outcome 16).
- Continue post-approval scanning of approved hardcopy plans to minimise data loss and further explore the use of our Electronic Document Retrieval and Management System (EDRMS) (Outcome 17).
- Continue to utilise our Geographical Information System to inform and support the verification process (Outcome 17).
- Continue to develop our software systems to enhance and seek further efficiencies with the services we provide (Outcome 17).
- We will continue to use PECOS to ensure that all goods and services are procured electronically (Outcome 18).
- Continue to hold quarterly building standards team meetings (Outcome 19).

## 6. Service Improvements and Partnership Working

6.1 In the previous 12 months the Building Standards service have carried out the following improvement actions;

Number	Continuous Improvement Action	Status
1	All quarterly KPO reporting has been submitted.	Complete
2	Explore mobile working platforms to assist and facilitate with reasonable inquiry process.	Complete
3	Review the newly vacant Assistant Building Standards Surveyors post against service needs.	Complete
4	Continue to review and develop business processes which contribute towards minimising the time taken to grant a building warrant - automation of standard letters/emails.	Ongoing
5	Hold a quarterly meeting with our consortia/benchmarking partners.	Complete
6	Finalise and upgrade to a satisfactory mobile working solution to assist and facilitate with reasonable inquiry process.	Complete
7	Complete the Acolaid to Uniform and document management migration.	Ongoing
8	Attendance at LABSS meetings 2019/20.	Complete

6.2 In the next 12 months we will;

Number	Continuous Improvement Action	Timescale
1	Submit all quarterly KPO reporting and update the Annual Performance report as required.	Quarterly
2	Conduct annual performance appraisals	Apr 2021
3	Develop a local customer charter.	Dec 2020
4	Hold a quarterly meeting with our consortia/benchmarking partners.	Quarterly
5	Review the management structure of the Development Standards section.	Mar 2021
6	Complete the Acolaid to Uniform case and document management system migration.	Mar 2021
7	Attendance at LABSS meetings 2020/21.	Quarterly
8	Commit to further recruitment and training of graduate / assistant building standards surveyors to fill the building standards skills gap.	Jun 2020
9	Encourage and sponsor newly recruited assistant surveyors to attain professional qualification.	Dec 2020
10	Review time recording processes	Mar 2021

6.3 In the previous 12 months we worked with;

- Local Authority Building Standards Scotland – Renfrewshire Council provided secretarial support to LABSS and were represented on the LABSS executive team.
- Scottish Government Building Standards Division – we liaised in relation to information request for High Rise Domestic buildings.
- Clyde Valley Consortia – we have regularly met with and benchmarked against our consortia partners. We have also contributed, through our Technical representative, to Consortia technical enquiries.

- Inverclyde and Scottish Borders Council's – we shared inhouse Fire Engineering expertise.
- Renfrewshire Council Housing section – we provided regulatory advice in relation to the Council's High Rise Domestic building stock.
- Renfrewshire Council's inhouse structural engineer – we have continued to utilise inhouse expertise in relation to checking structural calculations.

6.4 In the next 12 months we will continue to work and liaise with the above partners and where necessary consider new partnership arrangements.

## 7. 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.
- 7.2 The following table provides data for the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020;

Building warrants and amendments to building warrant	1345 Applications 1165 Decisions
Completion certificates	1860 Applications 1795 Decisions
Certification	400 Certificates of Design 89 Certificates of Construction
Energy Performance Certificates (EPC's)	745 Copy certificates received (Domestic) 13 Copy certificates received (Non - Domestic)
Statements of Sustainability	707 Copy certificates received (Domestic) 12 Copy certificates received (Non - Domestic)
Enforcement	12 Notices served under sections 25 – 30 0 Cases referred to the procurator fiscal 1 Cases where LA has undertaken work