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THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

**Building Standards
Verification Annual
Performance Report
2019-2020**

Contents

Front cover image – New housing development at Sighthill, Edinburgh

Version Control Information

Version	Date	Comments	Date for next review
0.1	29 April 20	Development of joint documents	29 April PM
0.2	29 April	Agreeing format and section	30 April
0.3	30 April	Setting out deliverables	6 May
0.4	6 May	Review by managers	20 May
0.5	20 May	Final Version	

Introduction statement from the Scottish Government

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.

Section 1. Introduction to the Verifier

Edinburgh is known throughout the world as a historic city and our nation's capital. Over recent decades it has built a reputation as a successful and prosperous city – regularly voted as one of the best cities in the world to live in, it attracts more visitors than any UK city outside London and more inward investment than any other Scottish city.

Population and economy

The City of Edinburgh Council's area is home to 536,775 people.

The Council area includes the City of Edinburgh which contains most of the population, as well as a large rural hinterland. Within the rural area are the towns and villages of South Queensferry, Kirkliston, Newbridge and Ratho. Edinburgh has a rich built heritage with conservation areas covering much of the city. There are two World Heritage Sites: The Old and New Towns of Edinburgh and The Forth Bridge. It is a continuously growing, densely populated city with many flatted residential properties and has a vibrant economy with a mix of employment sectors.

Between 2006 to 2020 Edinburgh's population grew by 13% against a population increase in Scotland during the same period of 7%. This growth is expected to continue with a projected population of 619,000 by 2037.

Key employment sectors include health; financial and insurance; education; retail; professional, scientific and technical; and accommodation and food services.
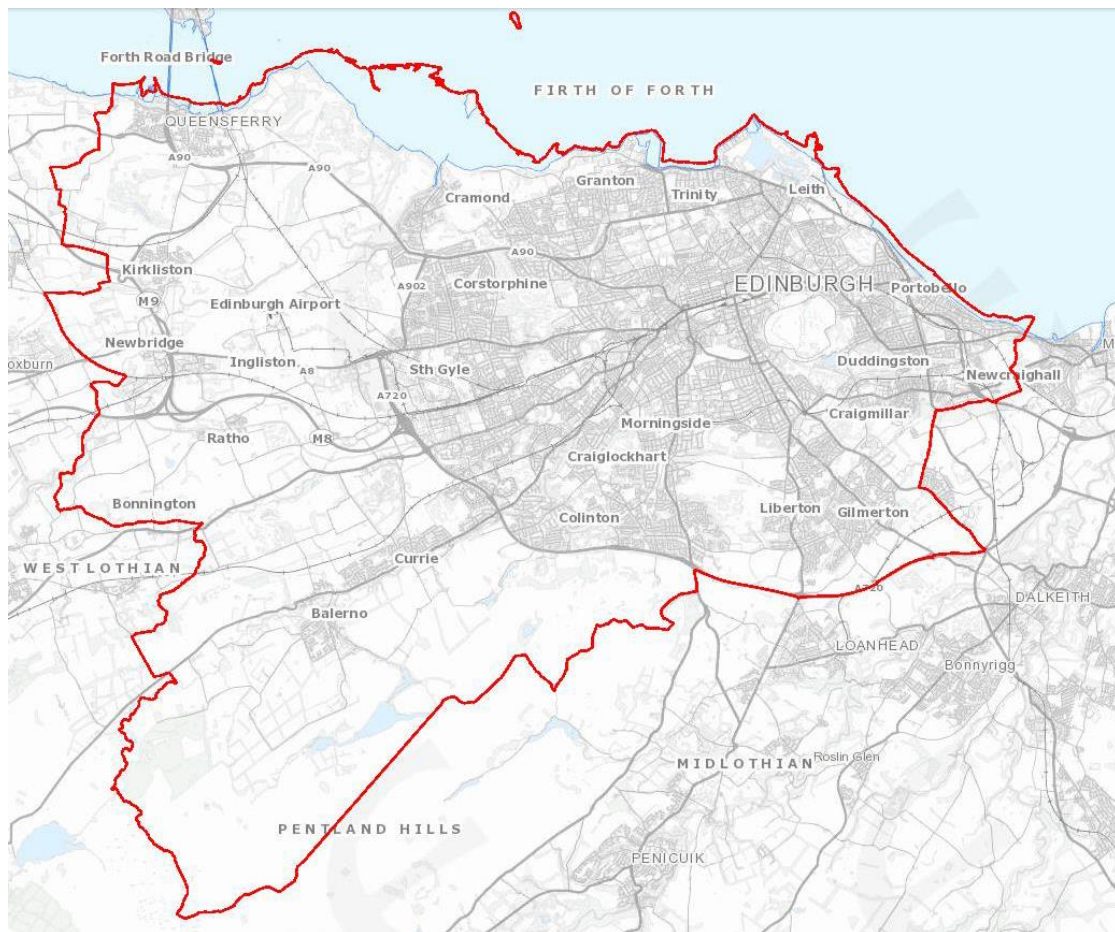
The Council is: -

- A transparent Council that works for all, committed to delivering improved public services and empowering our citizens.
- A Council that is committed to listening to local people and working together with local communities
- A Council where co-operation, fairness, accountability, and responsibility really matter
- A Council that supports businesses and ensures Edinburgh continues to be a city that provides opportunities for employment, innovation, growth, and investment, and
- A Council that actively promotes and champions Edinburgh to the benefit of the city and its people.

Recent exciting and innovative pledges from the Council include:

- £1.3bn plans to transform Granton Waterfront
- A drive towards the city operating on a "net-zero" carbon basis by 2030 – this is 15 years before Scotland's national net-zero target for 2045.
- Launch of our 'City Mobility Plan – draft for consultation' - this is a ten-year strategy that sets out proposals to transform the way people, goods and services travel around the city.

We have made significant progress in the last ten years, however more of the same is not an option. Now is the time for bolder, more transformational action.

Map showing the extent of the Council's administrative boundary.

Section 2. Building Standards Service Verification Service Information

2.1 Where to find Building Standards

The Building Standards team along with colleagues in related Planning teams are all based on the ground floor of Waverley Court in East Market Street, Edinburgh. This building houses the majority of Council services.

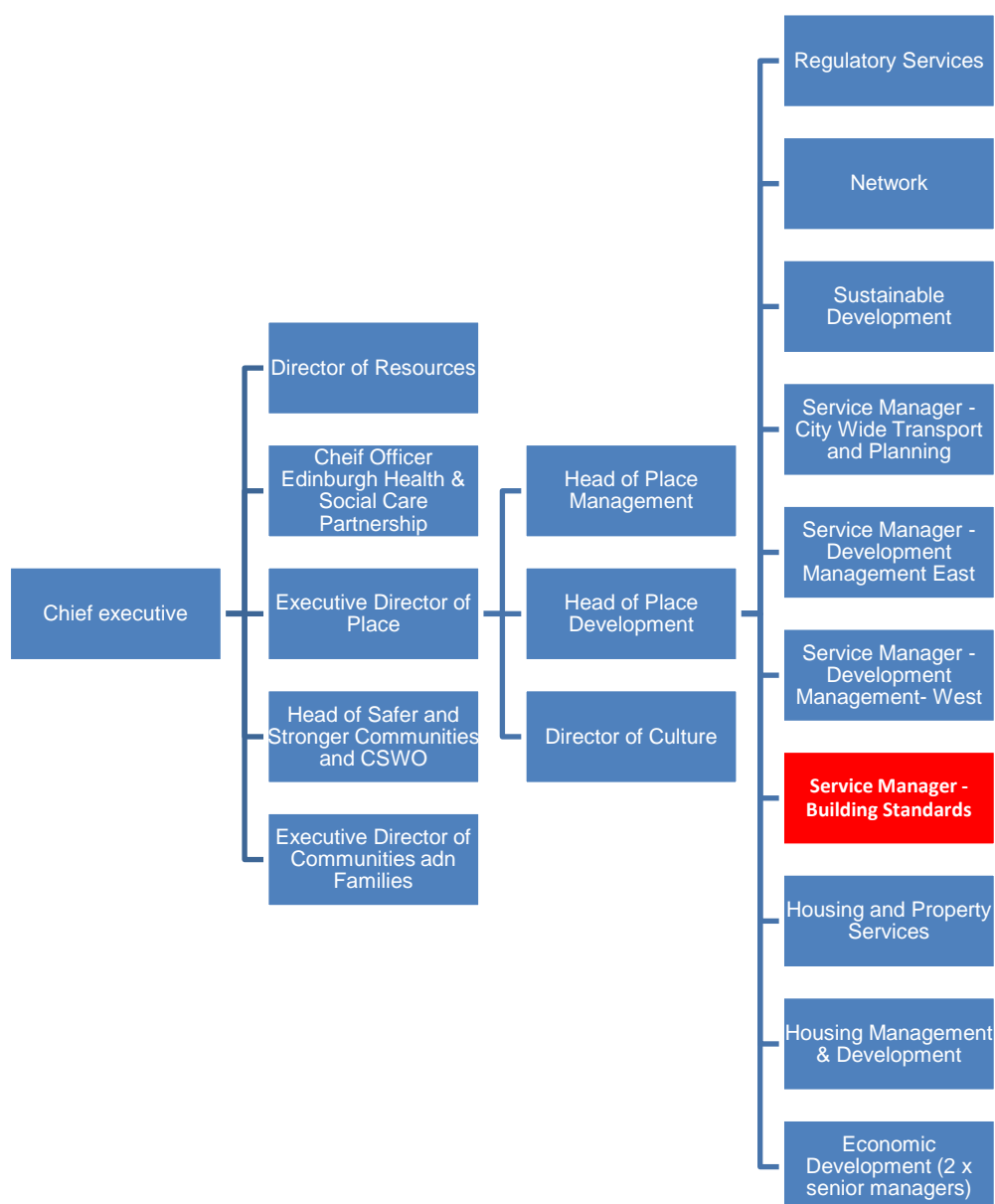### 2.2 Overall roles and responsibilities of Building Standards

The Building Standards service has a major role to play in the contribution of the overall Council commitments. The City is one of the largest Building Standards services in the UK in relation to both the number of building warrant applications processed each year and the fee income received. During the financial year 2019/20, the service received 5421 building warrant applications, covering building construction work with an estimated value of just under £1 billion which generated approximately £4 million in fees.

The verification services and functions carried out include:

- Verification of Building Warrants under the Building (Scotland) Act 2003.
- Enforcement in relation to Building Standards matters under the Building (Scotland) Act 2003.
- Consultee to applications in relation to Houses in Multiple Occupation and Liquor Licensing.
- Provide preliminary advice on the procedures to be followed to obtain building warrant approval, in advance of a formal application;
- Maintaining a public record register of building warrants, completion certificates and energy performance certificates.
- Work with the Scottish Government's Building Standards Division, to meet the fundamental overarching principles of driving forward the future of building standard throughout Scotland.

The Council's Building Standards service is located within the wider Place Development service (part of the Directorate of Place). Other services within Place Development include Planning, Transport, Licensing, Housing, business growth/inclusion and Housing Repairs. These support a wide range of services to local communities as well as the development industry.

Place Development covers a number of the Council's regulatory functions including enforcement, licensing, environmental health, social housing and economic growth. The natural synergies across the directorate provide opportunities for collaboration, multi-disciplinary teams and a high-level consistent approach across delivery.

Organisational chart:

- Chief executive
  - Director of Resources
  - Cheif Officer Edinburgh Health & Social Care Partnership
  - Executive Director of Place
    - Head of Place Management
    - Head of Place Development
      - Regulatory Services
      - Network
      - Sustainable Development
      - Service Manager - City Wide Transport and Planning
      - Service Manager - Development Management East
      - Service Manager - Development Management- West
      - **Service Manager - Building Standards**
      - Housing and Property Services
      - Housing Management & Development
      - Economic Development (2 x senior managers)
    - Director of Culture
  - Head of Safer and Stronger Communities and CSWO
  - Executive Director of Communities adn Families

Senior Management with Council	Number of posts (FTE at 31 October 18)	Vacancies (not included in numbers of posts)
Chief Executive	1	
Executive Director of Place (Tier 1)	1	
Head of Place Development (Tier 2)	1	

2.3 Building Standards Organisational Structure

The Building Standards Service chart on the following page sets out the revised structure of the Building Standards service. The Building Standards Service Manager reports to the Head of Place Development.

One of our commitments to our employees was to ensure that once improved performance was back to meeting the Scottish Government targets and being sustained, we would look at introducing a revised structure. The revised structure was delivered in the latter part of 2019, with the introduction of a temporary role of Operations Manager for the Service. One of the aims of this change was a shift in the management levels within the Service. The appointment of the Operations Manager has allowed the Service Manager to keep oversight of Building Standards and have an increased focus on the management of the Planning Service.

It was important that we engaged and listened to our employees in shaping the final structure. A series of employee engagement sessions were undertaken over a 10-week period and feedback helped shape the transition into 4 key teams:

- Site Inspection/Compliance
- Plan Reporting (all applications up to £250k)
- Majors (all applications £250k and above)
- Improvement Team

The new ways of working were introduced in February 2020 and early indications show that this is proving successful. There are weekly reviews with the Management Team and subsequent reviews with the Team Managers and their new teams.

The Improvement Team has become a permanent feature within the service (using resource from the current budget envelope). Ensuring improvements are sustained and continuous improvement embedded, are a priority. The Improvement Team share tools/techniques with colleagues across the Planning Service and other areas within the Place directorate.
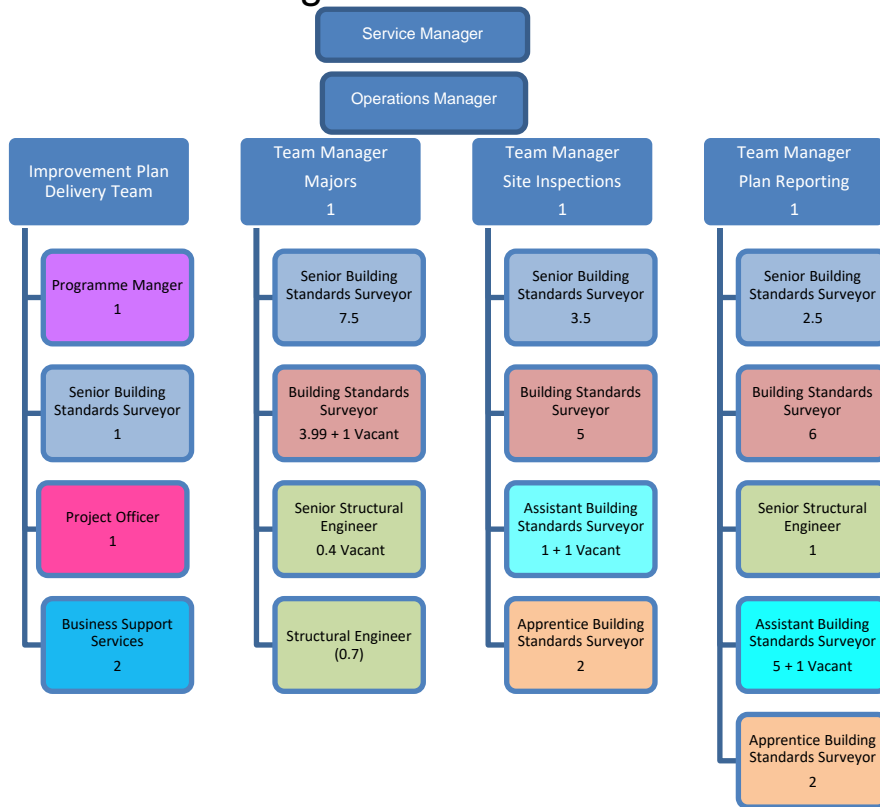
Transactions Team

The efficient and effective delivery of the building standards service relies heavily on input from the Council's Transactions team. Whilst the line management responsibilities for this team sit out with the direct control of Building Standards management, the team are included in all team briefings, training and improvement initiatives.
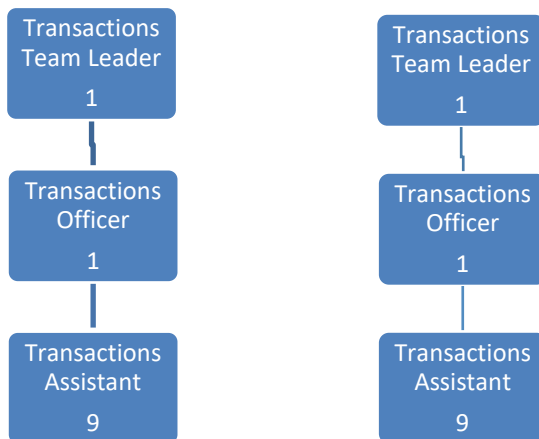
Building Standards Full Time Equivalent Posts	Number of posts (FTE at 31 March 19)	Vacancies (not included in numbers of posts)
Building Standards Service Manager (Tier 3)	1	
Programme Manager	1	
Operations Manager	1	
Team Managers	3	
Senior Building Standards Surveyors	13.5	1
Senior Structural Engineers	1	0.4
Building Standards Surveyors	15.9	
Structural Engineers	0.6	
Assistant Building Standards Surveyors	6	2
Apprentice Building Standards Surveyors	4	
ICT Lead Officer	1	
Business Support Officer	1	
Business Support Services	2	1
Total employees (FTE within service area)	51	4.5
Transactions Team Manager (FTE)	1	
Transactions staff (FTE)	6	

Staff age Profile within service area	Number of posts
Under 30	13
30 – 39	11
40 – 49	6
50 and over	24

Building Standards Structure

Service Manager

Operations Manager

Improvement Plan Delivery Team

- Programme Manger — 1
- Senior Building Standards Surveyor — 1
- Project Officer — 1
- Business Support Services — 2

Team Manager Majors — 1

- Senior Building Standards Surveyor — 7.5
- Building Standards Surveyor — 3.99 + 1 Vacant
- Senior Structural Engineer — 0.4 Vacant
- Structural Engineer — (0.7)

Team Manager Site Inspections — 1

- Senior Building Standards Surveyor — 3.5
- Building Standards Surveyor — 5
- Assistant Building Standards Surveyor — 1 + 1 Vacant
- Apprentice Building Standards Surveyor — 2

Team Manager Plan Reporting — 1

- Senior Building Standards Surveyor — 2.5
- Building Standards Surveyor — 6
- Senior Structural Engineer — 1
- Assistant Building Standards Surveyor — 5 + 1 Vacant
- Apprentice Building Standards Surveyor — 2

Transactions Team

- Transactions Team Leader — 1
  - Transactions Officer — 1
    - Transactions Assistant — 9

- Transactions Team Leader — 1
  - Transactions Officer — 1
    - Transactions Assistant — 9

Public Interest Statement

Public Interest Statement

The purpose of the building standards system is to protect the public interest. The system sets out the essential standards that are required to be met when building work or conversion of a building takes place in order to meet building regulations.

The building standards system checks that proposed building work or conversion of a building meets standards; inspections are limited to a minimal necessary to ensure that legislation is not avoided. The control of work on site is not down to the system but is a matter for contracts and arrangements in place between a builder and client.

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.

How to find us

Building Standards is located in the Council's headquarters at Waverley Court:

Building Standards	Telephone: 0131 529 3550
The City of Edinburgh Council	
Waverley Court	
4 East Market Street	
Edinburgh	
EH8 8BG	

www.edinburgh.gov.uk/buildingstandards

Section 3. Strategic Objectives

3.1 City of Edinburgh Council Strategic Goals

The goals and vision for the Council, the Service and ultimately Building Standards are set out in the Corporate Plan 2017-2022. It gives a commitment to improve services, enhance quality of life for citizens and making best use of public resources. To do this, the Council have made 52 Commitments to the city. These commitments are structured around six themes:

- Delivering an economy for all – local jobs, growth, and affordable housing
- Building for a future Edinburgh – a planning system that works to protect and develop our city
- Delivering a sustainable future – a better environment and transport system that works for all
- Delivering for our children and families – improving lives and futures
- Delivering a healthier city for all ages – strong and vibrant communities
- Delivering a Council that works for all – more empowered, transparent, and improved public services

3.2 The Vision of the Service

> **Vision**
>
> **Our aspiration of the service is to be one of the top performing Building Standards Verifiers in Scotland. We will build a reputation as a great organisation to do business with and to work for.**

We strive to improve our service to:

- Deliver an excellent Verification service that fulfils the requirements of Scottish Government Ministers as set out in the Operating Framework;
- Is customer focused taking account of customers' needs, and delivers best practice in terms of consistency of interpretation and predictability of service,
- Deliver high levels of performance in terms of meeting the targets set in the Building Standards Performance Framework.
- Review service delivery practices as required to address any issues identified through national customer surveys, and
- Deliver targeted, cost effective, value for money services that meet operational needs and customer demand.

3.3 Building Standards Strategic Objectives

For the forthcoming year the primary objectives for Building Standards are: -

- To continue to deliver timeous and consistent service to our customers.
- To continue growth in uptake in use of the eBuilding Standards system.
- To work with our IT service to enhance mobile paperless working.

The role of Building Standards within this business plan is to:

- Assist economic growth;
- Support the housing programme;

- Help ensure our built environment is protected and enhanced;
- Ensure value for money while meeting the needs of our citizens; and,
- Deliver excellent customer service.

3.4 Delivering Building Standards services with the current Covid-19 pandemic

Like so many facing this tragic global pandemic, the Council has responded to the crisis by ensuring critical services are prioritised and delivered across the city. This has allowed new operating models to be tested and rolled out.

Operations during this period

We are striving to keep as much business as usual going during these unprecedented times. We have had to make some adjustments to the service, alongside promoting the submission of applications through the eBuilding Standards Portal.

- To ensure applications can continue to be processed, we are promoting the use of payments via the eBuilding Standards Portal. Where necessary payments can be made via BACS. This has ensured payments can be made despite the usual service of phone and in office credit / debit card payments having closed as a result of Coronavirus measures.

- Guidance has been provided from Scottish Government relating to the signing of certificates of design administered by SER and BRE. We are now able to accept unsigned documents rather than the "wet" signature previously required.

- Guidance has been provided from Scottish Government regarding the extension of warrants which expire during the current "lockdown" measures. An application for an extension to the period of validity should still be made formally, complete with the appropriate form and fee, however this will be automatically granted for a period of 9 months regardless if any previous extensions have been given. For any warrants which expired prior to this period of uncertainty an extension to life will be considered in the normal manner and only granted where appropriate.

- Warrants which reach the "deemed refusal" date during the current period will be granted an extension if desired to assist in facilitating an approval.

Staff Wellbeing

During this time, the wellbeing of all our staff is a priority for our Service. Regular contact using video technology for team meetings and regular 1-1 telephone calls with all staff, helps to identify those who may find they are struggling with the new operating environment.

ICT

The significant investment made by the service in ICT and the introduction of Surface Pro technology to all staff, has enabled the Service to continue to deliver excellent performance during these unprecedented times. The technology has positioned the service very well in response to the global pandemic with 100% of the staff working from home.

Customer engagement

Prior to the pandemic, customer engagement remained a priority area for the service. As we look to economic recovery, the engagement with our customers is even more critical. A programme of calls to our major developers and agents is allowing us to keep a focus on what might become a priority when restrictions are lifted. This ongoing dialogue helps the service look at the pipeline of work and continues to build on strengthening relationships.

Section 4. Key Performance Outcomes and Targets

4.1 Introduction

Continuous improvement is recognised as key in 'raising the bar' for quality, compliance, consistency and predictability of verification activities. This principle was at the core of the introduction of a best value Balanced Scorecard for verifiers in 2005. This approach was assessed by the Scottish Government when the appointment of verifiers was reviewed in 2011. As a result, a Building Standards Performance Framework (BSPF) which set out 9 Key Performance Outcomes (KPO's) that Verifiers were required to achieve was introduced. In 2017, following a further Scottish Government review, the framework was updated to bring it more in line with current practice and to reduce the KPOs in number from 9 down to 7.

The verifier is required to complete and submit performance reports quarterly to the Scottish Government. 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.

4.2 Summary of Key Performance Outcomes (KPOs)

The table below sets out the current list of KPO's for which targets are set by the Scottish Government. In Section 5 more detailed information on these KPO's is provided to explain the targets that have been set.

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

4.3 Summary of Key Performance Targets

The table below summarises the 7 KPO's including, where appropriate, the targets against which verifiers are assessed by the Scottish Government. It is of note that not all the Outcomes necessarily relate to performance e.g. KPO6.1

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 • Plan checking • Building warrant or amendments (and plans) being issued • Verification during construction • Completion certificates being accepted
KPO7 Targets	
7.1	Annual performance report published prominently on website with version control (reviewed at least quarterly).
7.2	Annual performance report to include performance data in line with KPOs and associated targets (annually covering previous year e.g. April 2019 – March 2020).

Section 5. Key Performance Outcome Data

KPO1 Targets - Minimise time taken to issue a first report or issue a building warrant or amendment to building warrant	
1.1	

Quarter of year 2019/20	% of 1st reports and grants of warrant with no 1st report within 20 day target
1	97%
2	94%
3	96%
4	97%

This represents our best yearly performance since we started recording first reports in 1998. The backlog of applications awaiting first reports for more than 20 days previously stood at 320 in July 2018. This has now been reduced to zero. With the measures we have put in place to monitor performance, we expect these high performance levels to continue in the coming years.

2.1

Quarter of year 2018/19	% of building warrants and amendments issued within 10 days
1	79%
2	82%
3	83%
4	89%

The Council continues to work towards the target of 90% of building warrants and amendments issued within 10 days from receipt of all satisfactory information. Although we have fallen marginally short of achieving this figure, we have shown a steady growth over the previous year and are confident that it will be achieved in the first quarter of 2020 / 2021. The backlog of applications where revised plans have been submitted and an assessment has not been carried out within 10 days, previously stood at 350 in November 2018. This has now been reduced to a figure that consistently sits at less than 10.

The priority for the next year is to ensure that the backlog remains at this low level and that we consistently achieve the target for the percentage of applications receiving building warrants within 10 days.

KPO3 Targets – Commit to the Building Standards Customer Charter	
3.1	The National Customer Charter is displayed prominently on the website. This document was reviewed in late 2019 to ensure it reflects current targets. A further review of this Charter will take place during 2020.
3.2	All BSD requests for information on a BSD 'Verifier Performance Reporting Service for Customers' cases are responded to by the Council within 5 days.

	KPO4 Targets - Understand and respond to the customer experience
4.1	The overall satisfaction with the Building Standards service from the 2019 annual nation survey conducted by the Building Standards Division in Q3 2018/19 was 5.4. This was an improvement on the previous year where the rating was 4.3

Key issues arising from our customers are:

- Communications;
- Timescales; and,
- Consistency

There are several measures underway to address these, examples include:

- A Building Standards Stakeholder Panel made up of a range of customers.
- We issue a regular newsletter to over 1500 customers, and our Councillors. It sets out progress we are making on improvements and provides information to assist customers in progressing applications more quickly.
- We review our incoming calls via our call centre to ensure scripts are up to date and appropriate.

There has been a sustained improvement in performance this year as set out in KPO1 above. The impact of these improvements on our customers should be evidenced in this year's Customer Satisfaction Survey

The introduction of our new workstreams will provide a greater degree of consistency throughout all tasks. Additionally, a number of measures have now been embedded which will further aid consistency throughout the Section. These include a suite of new and updated procedures for the whole building warrant process, training and mentoring for staff and template checklists for smaller applications such as conservatories and extensions.
A quality assurance process has also been developed to ensure that procedures are followed and kept up to date. |

KPO5 Targets - Maintain financial governance				

5.1		**Q1**	**Q2**	**Q3**	**Q4**
	Fee income	£1,093,505	£1,095,359	£885,220	£950,087
	Expenditure	£584,403	£488,477	£668,760	£673,333
	Staffing costs:	£533,985	£474,322	£631,572	£589,961
	Non staff costs:	£50,418	£11,861	£21,641	£79,588
	Other investment:	£0	£2,294	£15,547	£3,784

5.1 (continued)

Building standards verification fee income is to cover indicative verification service costs (staff costs plus 30%).

While overall, staff costs plus 30% are below the annual income, there is considerable investment in the service, including in the new IT system.

KPO6 Targets - Commit to eBuilding Standards

| 6.1 | Full details of the Building Standards Service in Edinburgh is available on the Council website at www.edinburgh.gov.uk/buildingstandards

This includes a link to the eBuilding Standards website. |
|---|---|
| 6.2 | Plan checking of both building warrants and amendments are in excess of the 75% target and over 86% were processed electronically during 2019/20.

A major investment was made in mobile technology with all members of staff receiving Microsoft Surface computers. These allow staff to work remotely and to carry out site inspections without the need for paper plans.

Completion certificates are submitted online and processed electronically in many cases. |

KPO7 Targets - Commit to objectives outlined in the annual performance report

7.1	The annual verification performance report for 2019-20 is on the Council website at: https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/council-performance-reports/building-standards-performance/1
7.2	The annual verification performance report for 2019/20 includes performance data.

Professional Expertise and Technical Processes

Protocols for dealing with work –
- A fundamental review of our Procedures was undertaken in 2018. This is an ongoing area of activity to ensure we continually change and improve and that our procedures are amended to reflect these changes.
- All staff briefing sessions and workshops are held to discuss and test the procedures and to ensure that they are fully understood.
- We have a robust Quality Assurance Framework that dovetails with the Self-Assessment that will be introduced this year.
- We have a skills matrix that is used to ensure applications are allocated to staff who are suitably qualified and experienced to deal with them.
- In addition, a minimum of 5% of building warrants are checked by senior surveyors to ensure consistency.

Performance management systems –
- At divisional level - Building Standards Senior Managers meet with colleagues across Place Development weekly to discuss a range of current issues, with performance management being a standing monthly agenda item.
- At service level - we have a dedicated Improvement Team that develops an ongoing programme of improvement, including details of the work and performance targets of the Service.
- At team level - staff utilise the Enterprise workflow management system; this uses a traffic light system to prioritise workloads to ensure key outcomes are met.
- Weekly management teams have a structured agenda which includes service performance.
- Individually - staff have the opportunity to participate in monthly one to one session with the team leader so any performance issues can be discussed and addressed. They also take part in the Councils' Annual Performance Framework where individual discussions take place on "looking back" at performance in the last 6 months and "looking forward" for the next 6 months.
- The Enterprise Reporting Tool provides a clear view of workload allocation on every application. It is flexible and allows reallocation of work during periods of staff absence. Targets are also set through annual performance conversations. Regular meetings are held between team managers and senior managers to discuss performance and an improvement plan is in place to remedy current problems.

Training and development/CPD –
The organisation recognises the staff are key to efficient and effective service delivery. On this basis we seek to ensure they receive regular training on all aspects of the role, be it procedural or technical.
- Employee Review and Development is a key methodology used by the Council from which are derived individual training and development needs. To assist in this process, we have in place a competency framework against which staff are measured.

- We hold monthly All Staff Team meetings which include training as a standing item on the agenda. This allows for those who have attended events to share knowledge with colleagues as well as identifying any training requirements.
- Formal training is provided internally to aid surveyors pursuing a professional membership (CABE/RICS/CIOB). A formal training partnership with the CIOB also provides surveyors a platform to pursue a professional membership to aid the individual and ensure the service has suitably qualified professionals.
- The service aims to provide 36 hours of training per year per member of staff.
- In addition to this, other centralised training is given which concentrates on health and safety requirements and changes to legislation. This helps to meet RICS professional training requirements.
- Staff are encouraged to attend meetings of LABSS to keep abreast of national issues affecting the Building Standards profession.

Benchmarking –

We recognise the benefit of active participation in benchmarking and closer collaborative working. To this end we continue benchmarking with: -

- Southeast Scotland Consortium which comprises colleagues from Fife, Midlothian, East Lothian, West Lothian, Scottish Borders and ourselves. This is one of 7 consortia set up by LABSS. The consortia aims are: -
    - Developing best practice in the application of procedures.
    - Improving uniformity of interpretation and application of the technical standards.
    - Feeding in to the work of the Local Authority Building Standards Scotland (LABSS).
- The Building Standards Division of the Scottish Government (BSD)
- The 32 Scottish Local Authorities through the work of Local Authority Building Standards Scotland (LABSS).
- The SOLACE group of authorities which share data to allow us to compare ourselves against a variety of similar authorities (with a mix of urban and large rural areas)
- The service has met with Glasgow City Council, South Lanarkshire Council, Fife Council, Dumfries and Galloway Council and Angus Council to benchmark the Council's work.

Shared Services –

Currently CEC Building Standards provides structural engineering resource to another local authority (Midlothian) and early exploratory conversations have taken place with East Lothian Council regarding engineer resource. We have also collaborated with Argyle and Bute Council and Aberdeen Council on the processing of warrant applications.

Succession planning –

- The age profile is changing with a mix of ages throughout the service. A People Plan has been put in place and part of this considers succession planning for the Service.
- Exploration of a number of flexible contracts is considered alongside our ongoing commitment to appoint Graduate Apprentices.

Quality Customer Experience: -

Customer communication strategies –

- A communications plan has been developed and will be introduced this year. This covers a range of customers, including applicants and agents, the public and councillors. It sets out existing and new methods for communicating with them.

- An Annual Customer Forum is held. This is a joint forum with colleagues in our Planning Service, which is widely attended, with the feedback being used to inform improvement plans.

- A customer newsletter and ongoing updates on blog and twitter will become common practice in the coming year.

Charter –

- The National Customer Charter was approved in May 2016 and published on the Council website. This document links to the Planning and Building Standards Customer Service Charter which clearly sets out the level of service the Council will provide for the Building Standards service in Edinburgh. Both charters are available from the Council's website. It is kept up to date via reviews.

- Alongside the joint Charter with Planning colleagues, it was agreed to develop a separate Charter for Building Standards. This Charter was developed and approved by BSD in 2019.

Customer Engagement and feedback –

- The service is fully involved in national surveys and is also committed to local surveys to obtain customer feedback.
- Complaints are monitored and lessons learned are used to make changes to the service.
- Outbound calls are undertaken to our Customers to seek feedback on our Improvements areas.
- The service has also established a Stakeholder Panel to advise it and hold it to account on the delivery of its improvement programme.

Customer Advice –

Pre-submission advice is available through the help desk surveyor or by writing/emailing the service. For smaller developments, the enquirer is asked to look at the information on the Council website. The email, phone and face to face service is available from 9am to 1pm every weekday.

Accessibility of Service –

As a customer focussed service, we aim to make the service as accessible as possible which we do through the following methods: -

- The customer contact centre is manned by staff who are specifically trained to deal with most general enquiries at first point of contact.
- We publicise, on our website and in all correspondence, a generic e-mail address to which general enquiries can be sent. This is monitored daily to ensure there are no delays in responding.
- We are prepared to meet locally with agents to discuss proposed warrants, although more and more 'discussions' now take place through electronic means.

Pre-Application Service –

- We welcome pre-warrant application discussions for significant or complex developments incorporating new or innovative design. We advise that this service can be undertaken at the designer's office if coming to Waverly Court is inconvenient.
- Electronic pre-warrant "discussions" also take place on a regular non-formal basis for smaller development proposals.

Customer Agreements –

A customer agreement is provided for any application which falls within the service's Major Applications Team which has a construction cost of £250,000 or greater. With each customer agreement, the service endeavours to meet with applicants before the submission of an application or as soon as reasonably practicable after an application has been received. The intention of the customer agreement is to pre-empt any major technical matters applicable to the proposals and to also agree critical procedural elements (i.e. Staged Building Warrant structure).

Customer Dissatisfaction (procedural or technical) –

The technical standards are now framed in a manner that they are guidance as opposed to the regulations which are mandatory. On occasion there can be differences in opinions over a technical or procedural matter, or a perceived lack of consistency with another verifier. To address this Local Authority Building Standards Scotland (LABSS) have in place a dispute resolution service. This can involve the verifier escalating the enquiry to LABSS who then seek a national view before publishing their interpretation. The Council has a robust complaints procedure for dealing with all forms of complaint.

Operational and Financial Efficiency: -

Team Structures –
The Building Standards teams are based on a new revised structure. Set out on page 9.

Financial Monitoring –
Monthly monitoring of fee income is undertaken, and verification costs and income are reported on a quarterly basis to the BSD.
We have quarterly meetings taking place with finance across the wider Place Directorate, these are supported with monthly financial monitoring meetings with the Senior Accountants (allocated to BS) and the BS Management team.

IT Systems –
We use the Uniform system linked to the IDOX document management system. This in turn links in to the Scottish Government eDevelopment portal which permits customers to lodge applications electronically. Since 2018, there has been significant investment in the ICT technology that underpins service delivery, including the roll out of Surface Pro devices to all members of staff. The recent essential switch to homeworking by all staff has been made possible by this ICT investment.

Digital Services –
A full range of digital services including online applications and website information is available. We are seeking to continually look at a channel shift and increase the levels of business conducted electronically. We have invested in the appointment of an ICT Lead officer who is dedicated to align our improvement programme with digital opportunities.

Finance Systems –
the Building Standards service adheres to the Council's financial policies and budgets and spending is kept under review. At a team level, all monies received in respect of building warrant fees are logged. This permits money received and budgets to be monitored by our finance colleagues.

Internal communication strategies –
The Council recognises the importance of having clear lines of communications to ensure staff are kept motivated and feel involved. There are regular corporate updates, including a blog from the Chief Executive. Our internal intranet (the ORB) provides excellent updates on all news, vacancies, wellbeing and self-service. The Building Standard service hold regular team briefs and team meetings which are very interactive and encourage participation of staff across the service.

Section 6. Service Improvement and Partnership Working

The Building Standards service has made significant improvement since the audit of November 2017, where the Scottish Government identified a range of areas for improvement. These included: -

- Leadership and Management;
- Performance;
- Culture of Continuous Improvement; and,
- Customer.

Specific objectives were developed as part of the Building Standards Improvement Plan 2018-2021 which was agreed with the Scottish Government.

The Service reports to the Building Standards Division, each quarter on key deliverables achieved, and key objectives planned for next quarter.

Continuous Improvement Actions delivered 2019/20: -
The Service has delivered significant improvements over the past 12 months in

Improvement Theme	Objective	Timescale / Rating	Evidence
Leadership and Management	**Sustainable Improvements** Promote a culture of efficiency and sustainability and be held accountable for delivering services cost effectively.		**Team Manager Development** ✓ Ongoing programme of coaching and mentoring with all team managers. Activities included "conversation spotlight" (coaching on what can often be difficult conversations).
	Structured to deliver improvements Support the delivery of a future service model that continues to drive and support improvement and transformational change, maximising the use of tools and opportunities as part of approach.		**Future Service Delivery Model** ✓ As part of ensuring success of our future delivery model, a review of site inspection /reasonable inquiry commenced in the latter part of 2019. This review has helped shape the new team model. The review took into account lessons learned from an earlier site inspection

Improvement Theme	Objective	Timescale / Rating	Evidence
			project which was run between July and December 2018 and examined best practice from other authorities and customer feedback
	Workforce Planning Have a clear workforce profile and set of indicators that measure retention, wellbeing, perceptions and satisfaction levels of employees in relation to the service	🟩	**Making best use of resource** ✓ During a review of our workforce profile, we examined the pressure locally and nationally to recruit to Surveyor (Grade 7) posts. We decided to use the budget for our Grade 7 vacancies in a more creative way by recruiting an increased number of Grade 6 Assistant Surveyor posts.
		🟩	**Stress Risk Workshops** ✓ As part of our workforce wellbeing, we undertake an annual stress survey. We used the findings to develop a series of workshops. The workshops were run as part of our commitment to all staff to address the issues raised in Stress Risk Assessment surveys
		🟩	**Engagement Sessions** ✓ Engagement sessions took place with all staff on the proposed and future model of service delivery.

Improvement Theme	Objective	Timescale / Rating	Evidence
	Leadership Competency Framework Invest in our management team and use the "Leadership in a Box" method to continue to identify specific development needs, coach and monitor Team Managers and Senior Grades		✓ Work undertaken with Team Management behaviour using the Myers Briggs personality approach. This provided individual profiles to ensure natural synergies and playing into individual management styles and strengths.
			✓ Team Managers attended a session on Leadership in a Box programme. The course is part of a Council wide approach to build confident, self-aware leaders to drive future services. Three team members commenced in the first Phase intake.
	Employee Competency Framework Continue to coach, mentor and support staff through BS competency framework.		✓ A skills matrix has been developed to transition staff through the grades. The matrix has been highly commended by our colleagues in HR as a model of good practice
			✓ Each employee has an individual workplan with development activities agreed.

Improvement Theme	Objective	Timescale / Rating	Evidence
	Manage individual and team performance Continues to drive forward a performance culture with teams and individuals within the service.		✓ Developing, managing and monitoring performance across the service is embedded in day to day work. The daily allocation and monitoring of workloads, has allowed Team Managers to manage and shift resource as and when required to meet demands on the service.
			✓ A business case was presented to Head of Place Development to gain approval to recruit to the service. The recruitment of Grade 8, 7 and 6 posts are now complete. New team members have commenced employment.
			Financial Budget Monitoring ✓ Session took place with all Team Managers on the control and management of the Building Standards Budget. This work provides a platform for continually reviewing our service spend.

Improvement Theme	Objective	Timescale / Rating	Evidence
Improve strategic planning and create a culture of continuous improvement	**Policies** Have policies, strategies and plans in place which reflect the internal and external factors such as the current financial, political, local and national agendas.		**Briefings on Technical Standards** ✓ Staff Briefings on Technical Standard
			Benchmarking ✓ Benchmarking with other Local Authorities on best practice.
			External Factors ✓ Quarterly meetings with BSD on improvements and external factors with impact on Building Standards
	Continuous Improvement/Change The service uses performance information to target, improve and reshape its services to manage demand and increase cost effectiveness.		**Procedures** ✓ Procedures amended to reflect ongoing changes made in the improvement programme
			Ways of Working ✓ ISO 9001 in-service audits were carried out on granted warrants, completions, and procedures.
			Delivering Excellence ✓ Using "Engage Process" digital mapping Technology, several staff from across the service attended a workshop to investigate the benefits of this tool. The change programme in 2020/2021 will utilise this tool to map end to end work activities
			Procedures ✓ Procedures for Refused Warrants, Demolition Warrants, Limited Life Buildings and Conversion Warrants all updated.

Improvement Theme	Objective	Timescale / Rating	Evidence
		🟩	**Site Inspection Review** ✓ A Site Inspection review took place with the findings of this forming the basis of a staff workshop.
		🟩	**Site Inspection Workshop** ✓ A workshop took place to walk through and agree the operating model to determine how the dedicated site inspection/compliance team will operate.
		🟩	**Quality Assurance** ✓ Our approach and method for Quality Assurance was presented to the Improvement Board in November 2019. This was partly to reassure our Internal Audit team of our robust approach but also to advise the Board on our progress and findings.
		🟩	**Internal Audit – Closure Report** ✓ The Closure Report for the Internal Audit (which took place in 2017) was presented to Improvement Board in November 2019. The report findings were very positive and reflected well on the closure of all actions.
	Digital Continue to invest in ICT technology and ensure the service understands the benefits and opportunities of the digital agenda.	🟩	**ICT** ✓ Further development of Enterprise for Uniform was rolled out as part of an ongoing programme to allow better work allocation, workflow and case monitoring.
		🟩	✓ A substantial financial investment was made to deploy Surface Pro devices across the

Improvement Theme	Objective	Timescale / Rating	Evidence
			Service. This will aid the departments aim in moving towards a fully electronic system and allow staff to mobile work and carry out site inspections without the need for paper plans.
			✓ Rollout of first phase of Enterprise commenced
			Telephone Handling
			✓ A new system for managing telephone calls was implemented, with all phone calls filtered through a central point of contact within the office. This will provide an improved service for customers and also filter out unnecessary requests going to surveyors (i.e. checking on the status of an application and making appointments), allowing surveyors to concentrate on technical matters.
Performance: Improve response times to Building Warrant Applications	**Performance** Sustain above 95% of warrants being issued first reports within 20 day target Achieve Scottish Government target of 90% of warrants being granted within 10 days of receiving satisfactory info.		✓ Q4 figures showed 97% of warrants being issued first reports in 20 day target and 89% of warrants being granted within 10 days of receiving satisfactory info.
			✓ Managers and surveyors continue to monitor performance on a daily basis and are provided with weekly reports to identify workload and priorities.
			✓ The capacity of the Plan Reporting Team was increased to 14

Improvement Theme	Objective	Timescale / Rating	Evidence
Improve Customer Service	**Customer Insight** Continue to develop insight on customer experiences, needs and preferences and make positive changes as a result of analysing these.		surveyors with the addition of the Graduate Apprentice Surveyors. This is helping upskill all members within this team.
			Complaints Analysis and handling ✓ A review of the handling of complaints and compliments was undertaken, and a staff training session held. Further review planned for 2020/2021.
	Customer Engagement Engage customers, partners, and stakeholders when we plan and improve the service.		**Customer Newsletter** ✓ Our second, third and fourth edition of our customer newsletter were issued during 2019.
			Stakeholder Panel ✓ Further meetings of our Stakeholder Panel took place.
			Customer Engagement ✓ A strategic engagement programme commenced with our major application customers to provide a pre-warrant discussion service to discuss best practice, outline our expectations for a smooth submission and to give early indication of any high-level design issues. This has proven invaluable in terms of building trust and relationships with our key stakeholders.

Improvement Theme	Objective	Timescale / Rating	Evidence
			Annual Customer Forum ✓ Annual customer forum (which is a joint forum with our planning colleagues) was held in September 2019. Key action points from this helped shape 2020/2021 improvement actions.
	Customer Satisfaction Continue to use set of indicators/survey questions that measure customers' perceptions, satisfaction levels (national and local surveys/outbound calls**)**		**National Survey Results** ✓ The survey results for 18/19 were used to inform the Customer Improvement Strand for 2019/2020
	Customer Standards The service agrees with its customers at the outset what they can expect from the service it provides.		**Site Inspection Reminders** ✓ Appointment system - the Admin Support Team commenced a process of outbound calls to advise the customer of their site inspection date and whether it is an AM or PM slot. Follow up calls are made the day before the appointment has been scheduled to confirm both the appointment and a specific time slot.
			Customer Charter ✓ A specific Customer Charter for Building Standards was developed and approved by BSD.
			Review of Contact Centre call provision ✓ A review commenced in January 2020 to look at the incoming calls to the Corporate Call centre. Determining the Top 10 enquiries and call scripts etc.

Continuous Improvement Actions planned for 2020/21: -

The Service has a number of improvement actions planned for the year ahead.

Improvement Theme	Objective	Timescale
Leadership and Management	**Future Service Delivery Model - Business Support** ✓ To bring a balance to the support for the overall BS Team, a business case has been approved for new roles within the service. Job profiles and adverts will be developed for a Project Officer and Admin Support roles. These roles are funded from the current budget envelope and are critical to ensure ongoing sustainment of the improvement programme.	**Oct 2020**
	Future Service Delivery Model – review ✓ It is important to ensure the new model of operation is efficient and effective. Ongoing review will take place during 2020/2021 to ensure against a backdrop of wider Council pressures, the model is not only affordable but flexible and offers a collaborative approach with key internal services.	**Oct 2020**
	Workforce profile ✓ The workforce profile is a key factor in sustaining our performance and ensuring a balance of experience and attracting new talent to the service. During the course of the next year, it will be reviewed regularly. It will also recognise the recent work undertaken at national level with BSD on the workforce planning strand of improvements.	**Nov 2020**
	Stress Risk Workshops ✓ Further work to drill down and focus on key findings has commenced. With regular pulse checks on staff wellbeing throughout the year.	**Nov 2020**
	Wellbeing ✓ A wellbeing survey will be undertaken with all staff as part of addressing the necessity for home working during the current Covid-19 pandemic.	**June 2020**

Continuous Improvement Actions planned for 2020/21: -

Improvement Theme	Objective	Timescale
Performance and Continuous Improvement	**Ways of Working** ✓ ISO 9001 in-service audits will continue to be conducted on granted warrants, completions, and procedures.	**Ongoing**
	Performance ✓ Improve response times for progressing completion certificates and ensure compliance with completion certificate processes	**Ongoing**
	Quality workshop on 1st Reports ✓ A workshop will be developed for all staff to attend. It will look at a sample of current practice and agree best practice/requirement for consistency from all officers.	**Nov 2020**
	Internal Audit – Follow up ✓ In order to reassure Internal Audit that actions are being sustained a follow up internal audit will be conducted later in 2020. There has been an excellent working relationship with colleagues in Audit and we engage them on a number of occasions to test our procedures.	**Nov 2020**
	Delivering Excellence ✓ A series of "Delivering Excellence" sessions are planned to take an end to end approach to our business as usual activities. These provide a walkthrough of the current key processes, examined and challenged by teams and will provide improved processes for introduction.	**Ongoing**
	Self-Assessment ✓ The Service will undertake a self-assessment approach to examine key areas across the business. The Assessment model will be based on the Public Sector Improvement Framework. (PSIF)	**Nov 2020**
	Efficient/Effective working ✓ We will continue to look at the use of ICT to drive forward efficiencies and streamline service	**Ongoing**

Improvement Theme	Objective	Timescale
Customer Improvements	**Customer Satisfaction on change activities** ✓ In order to test recent changes with our customers, we will continue undertaking a series of outbound calls to test customer satisfaction on a variety of service areas.	**Ongoing**
	National Customer Survey / Customer Engagement Plan ✓ The results of the National Customer Survey have been released. The Service area will spend time comparing and analysing results and developing an action plan as part of the Customer Engagement Plan. Areas will include communications, engagement, consistency of service and complaints and satisfaction.	**Oct 2020**
	Review of Contact Centre call provision ✓ A review was commenced in January 2020 to look at the incoming calls to the Corporate Call centre. Determining the Top 10 enquiries and call scripts etc. Revised scripts will be agreed. Call Centre Staff will be given access to Uniform to arrange call back tasks for BS staff.	**Aug 2020**
	Engagement ✓ Ongoing programme of engagement with our key stakeholders will continue. It has intensified during this period of unprecedented times but will continue to engage and support our key stakeholders in moving forward.	**Ongoing**
	Customer Service Excellence ✓ As part of the introduction of our self-assessment model, we will build an evidence base against the Customer Service Excellence Criteria.	**Dec 2020**
	Working in partnership with our customers to design and implement our change activities ✓ We intend to use focus groups to test change initiatives (including our channel shift options)	**Ongoing**

Partnership working

Building Standards does not and cannot operate effectively and efficiently by working in isolation. The following are examples of how partnership working has driven collaboration and improved service delivery.

Within the Council

Planning Services	Working collaboratively to encourage development within the City.
Legal Services	Consult and discuss matters of legislative interpretation with our solicitors and progress applications. Consultation on enforcement.
Licensing	Consultee for applications in relation to Houses in Multiple Occupation and Liquor Licensing.
Housing Services	Work with colleagues to ensure the delivery of the Council's commitment to social housing.
Economic Development/Inclusive Growth	Collaborative working on building warrants that have significant impact for inward investment, ensuring early engagement & efficient progression through the process.

Outwith the Council

Southeast Scotland Consortium which comprises colleagues from Fife, Midlothian, East Lothian, West Lothian, Scottish Borders and ourselves	Identifying best practice; improving consistency in the application and interpretation of technical standards.
LABSS	Participate in consultations and attend meetings.
Scottish Fire and Rescue Service	Consultation as and when on dangerous buildings and other specified applications
Scottish Government	Participation in strategy forums, benchmarking and sharing of best practice.
Midlothian Council	Sharing resource with structural engineer

Section 7. Building Standards – Additional Data

In 2019/20, Building Standards performance was as follows:

Building warrants and amendments to building warrant	• 5421 building warrant applications received including amendment to warrants • 4837 decisions made on building warrant applications
Completion certificates	• 8635 completion certificates submitted • 7733 decisions made
Certification	• 802 certificates of design submitted • 1217 certificates of construction submitted
Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs)	• 1017 copy certificates received (domestic) • 52 copy certificates received (non-domestic)
Statements of Sustainability	• 1408 copy certificates received (domestic) • 112 copy certificates received (non-domestic)
Enforcement	• 1 Notices served under sections 25 to 30 • 0 Cases referred to procurator fiscal • 1 Cases where LA has undertaken work