

# Building Standards

## Annual Verification Performance Report

### 2024 – 2025 Version 2.17





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## 1. Introduction to the Local Authority

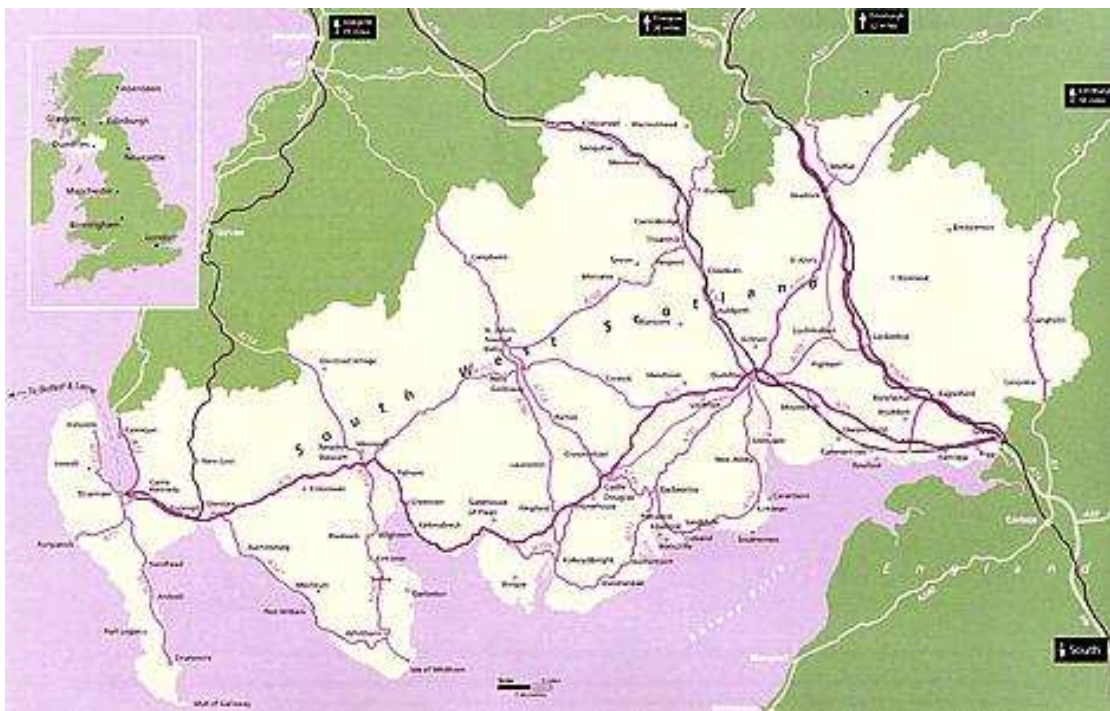
The verification performance report is a strategic planning and management tool that provides information about the local authority building standards service, communicates the vision and strategy and sets out the performance against strategic goals and targets.

Building Standards verifiers in Scotland are required to utilise the verification performance report as a means to manage, monitor, review and develop strategies for their business with a focus on the three core perspectives listed below and the public interest and continuous improvement cross-cutting themes:

- Professional Expertise & Technical Processes
- Quality Customer Experience
- Operational & Financial Efficiency

Dumfries and Galloway is the third largest region in Scotland covering 2,380 square miles. In the National Records for Scotland in 2012, the population was recorded as 148,030.

The largest town in the region is Dumfries with a population of 37,110, next is Stranraer with 10,600 people and then Annan with 8,240. All other villages and towns have a population of 4,000 or less. There are about 60 people for every square mile, which is significantly lower than the Scottish average of 168 people for every square mile and reflects the sparsely populated rural areas of the region.



The main employment sectors in the region are:

- Public sector
- NHS
- Business and customer services
- Manufacturing
- Distribution and logistics
- Tourism
- Retail

The purpose and mission of Building Standards are simple and straight forward.

**Purpose** – the purpose of the Building Standards Service is 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 to buildings. It also strives to further the conservation fuel and energy and achieve sustainable development.

**Vision** – to be the best local authority service provider in relation to health, safety, welfare, and convenience of the people of the area in relation to the built environment.

**Mission** – To retain the status of verifier for the geographical area of Dumfries and Galloway

The principal purpose to secure the health, safety welfare and convenience of citizens and visitors to Dumfries and Galloway in relation to the built environment is achieved by the following five distinct roles provided by the Building Standards Service:

- Verification role
- Enforcement role
- Advisory role (Both by statute and voluntarily)
- Statutory services, and
- Non statutory services

The verification role covers:

- The verification of compliance of applications for Building Warrants:
- The verification of compliance of Completion Submission with No Warrant:
- The verification of completed work on site:

The enforcement role covers:-

- Action under sections 25-30 of the Building (Scotland) Act 2003

The advisory role covers:-

- The licencing (Scotland) Act 2005
- The Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982
- The Cinema Act 1985
- The Theatres Act 1968
- The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005
- The Building (Scotland) Act 1959 (Letters of comfort)
- The Building (Scotland) Act 2003 (pre application discussions and letters of comfort – exempt work)

The statutory services role covers:

The provision of a two-part Building Standards Register:

- Part 1 – web based and to be maintained for all time.
- Part 2 - to be in any format, and to be maintained for a minimum of 25 years or until the building is demolished and
- Energy Performance of Building (Scotland) Regulations 2008

The non-statutory services role covers:

- The provision of a letter of comfort regime to cover:-
  - Historic unauthorised works where minimal associated risk is identified.
  - Confirmation of exemption from regulations.
  - Confirmation work carried out as in line with expired warrant.
- Provision of copy documents.
- Pre application discussions.

The Building Standards Section sits within the Economy and Development, and the management structure of same is indicated on Figure 2 overleaf.

**Any queries or comments in relation to this document should be directed to:**

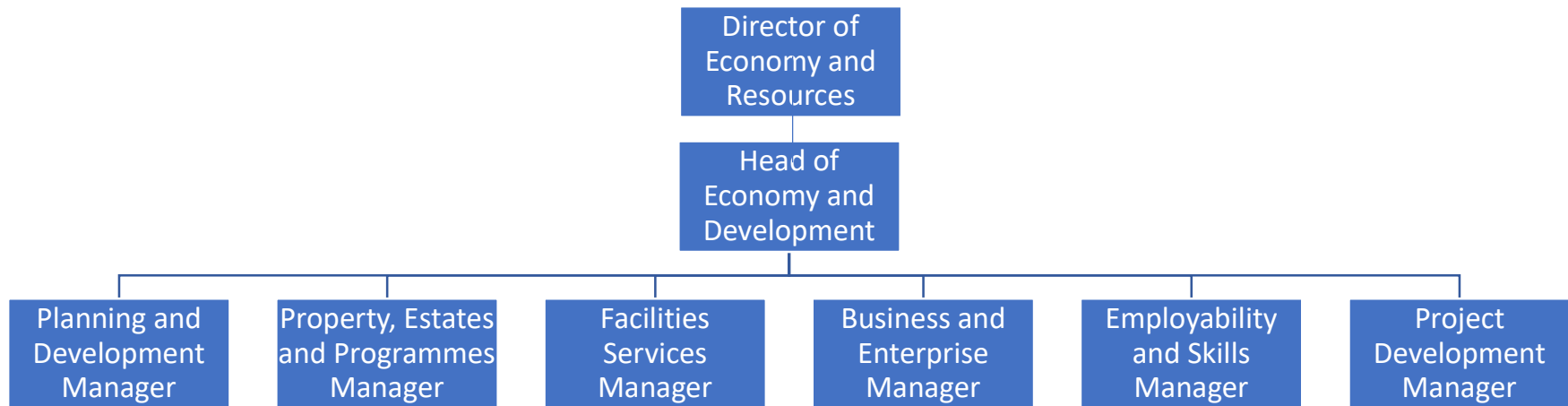
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Figure 2 – Management Structure

### Economy and Development Management Structure



## 2. Building Standards Verification Service Information

Verifiers appointed by Scottish Ministers, are responsible for the independent checking of Building Warrant applications. An application is required for the following:-

- to construct or demolish a building or buildings.
- to provide services, fittings, or equipment in buildings.
- for conversions of buildings from one use to another.

The Building standards section operates a decentralised service delivery model, with two administrative centres. One in Dumfries and the other Stranraer. A high level of local delegation exists with the Team Leader and Principal Building Standards surveyor responsible for the approval of all building/application types and also the issue of enforcement notices and completion certificate acceptances. The Building Standards Surveyors have delegated responsibility for the approval of domestic buildings and associated completion certificate acceptances.

Both the Stranraer and Dumfries offices provide the same range of services to the public i.e. site inspections, processing of Building Warrant applications, dangerous buildings, enforcement, together with a number of non- statutory services. The core administrative functions of the service predominantly take place in the Dumfries office.

The Building Standards service operates a duty officer system.\* The said duty officer is available to answer all general telephone enquiries between 9am and 12.30pm (Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays). In addition, the duty officer is also available to answer “drop-in” enquiries without an appointment for customers who prefer a face-to-face meeting. All staff are available to deal with Case specific enquiries during normal office hours and similarly requests for inspections are also taken during this period. Following the lifting of Covid restrictions, the service has continued with an enhanced agile working policy, with many of the staff working from home/remote from the traditional office base. It is important to note that, this has not replaced the existing office-based environment but has embraced the numerous advantages such an arrangement offers. Virtual meetings with our customers via Microsoft Teams are encouraged. Another function which has been adopted as a consequence of the covid lockdown is the enhanced use of remote inspections via video or using photographic evidence. While this is and has to be strictly controlled it has proven to be popular and advantageous for our customers. Benefits are gained for environmental, productivity and convenience reasons. Please note, this is an enhancement to our service offering, it has not replaced traditional methods of inspection and face to face meetings on site.

The Building Standards service are responsible for carrying out other functions in Dumfries and Galloway. These include enforcement of unauthorised buildings and associated construction work. This involves measures to ensure appropriate retrospective approvals are obtained, and that work associated with these buildings is fully compliant.

In protecting the public interest, the Building Standards function also provides an important advisory role and customer service in respect of:

- The Licencing (Scotland) Acts 1976 and 2005
- The Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982
- The Safety at Sports Grounds Act 1975

The purpose of the building standards system is to protect the public interest, it is not intended to provide protection to a client in a contract with a builder. The system, therefore, does not so much control building as set out the essential standards to be met when building work or a conversion takes place, and only to the extent necessary to meet the building regulations.

The system is pre-emptive, designed to check that the proposed building work meets the standards. Inspections during construction and on completion are to protect the public interest in terms of compliance with the building regulations and to discourage avoidance of the legislation. The inspections do not provide a system to control work on site, that is a matter for the contracts and arrangements put in place between a builder and the client.





Our enforcement role covers action in relation to buildings which would cause a danger to the public or those persons frequenting such a building.

In our statutory role we provide a two-part register, Part 1 is a dynamic on-line electronic register. Part 2 can be in any format and is maintained for at least 25 years.

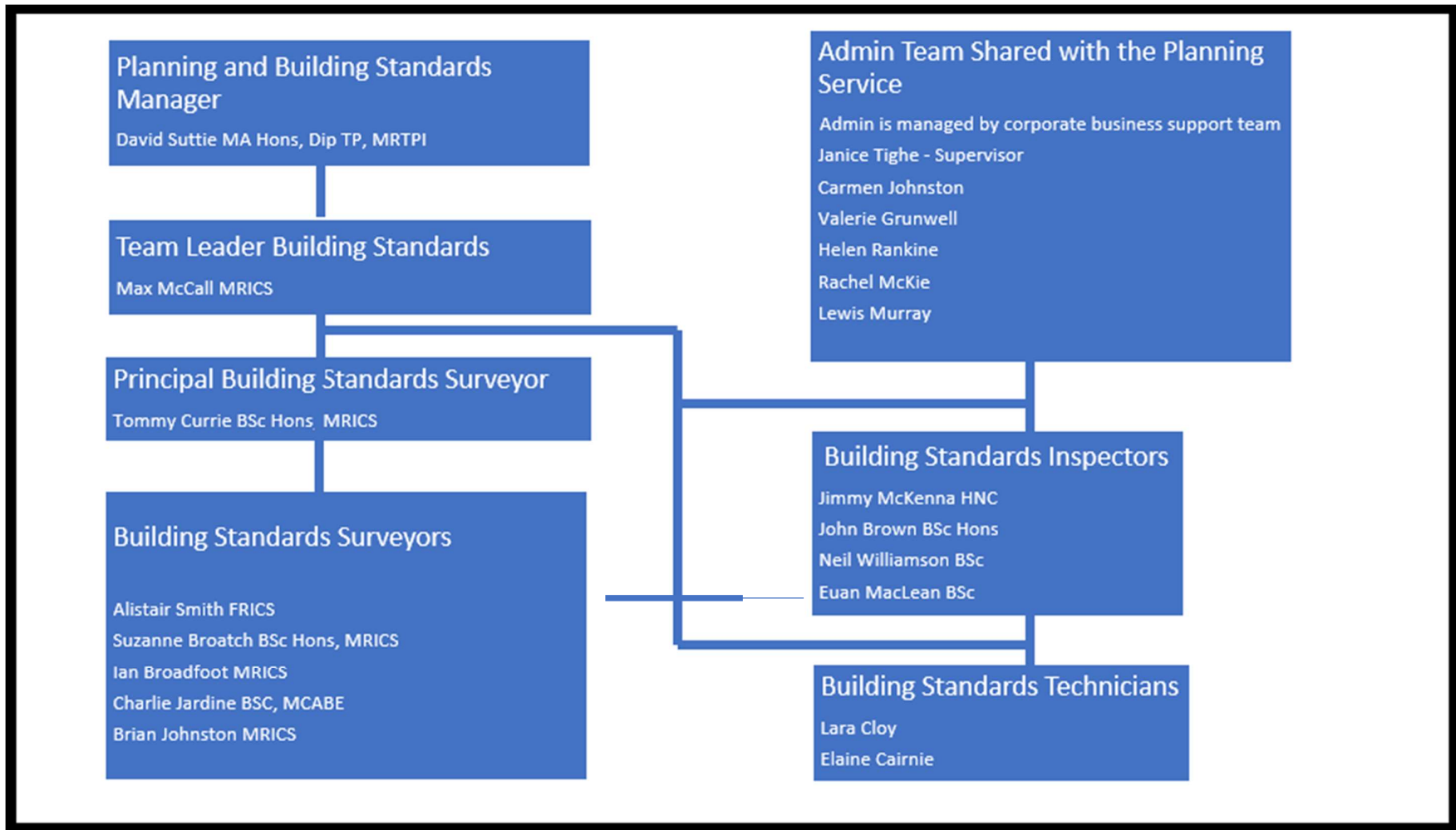
Our non-statutory services include the provision of copy documents, confirmation of exempt works, and in certain circumstances, the provision of letters of comfort in relation to historic unauthorised works. We also offer pre-application discussions to assist applicants and agents in the design process.

We provide a robust advisory and consultative role with other organisations, and have strong partnership arrangements with:

- Scottish Fire & Rescue Service
- Police Scotland
- HSE
- SEPA
- Local Licensing Board
- Local Disability Coalition
- DG Voice
- Occasional Licenses
- Houses in Multiple Occupation
- Public Entertainment Licencing
- Safety Advisory Group (Building Standards is a key member)
- Civil Marriages
- Raised Structures
- The Safety at Sports Ground Act
- The Theatres Act
- The Disability Discrimination Act
- The Civic Government (Scotland) Act
- The Licensing (Scotland) Act
- Used Car Dealers



Figure 3 - Service Structure



	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4
<b>Head of Building Standards Verification Service</b>				1

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

		Building Standards	Other
<b>Managers*</b>	No of posts	1	0
	Vacant	0	0
<b>*Building Standards one of 4 No services within managerial remit</b>	No of posts		
	Vacant		
<b>Team Leaders</b>	No of posts	1	0
	Vacant	0	0
<b>Lead Surveyors</b>	No of posts	1	0
	Vacant	0	0
<b>Senior Surveyors</b>	No of posts	5	0
	Vacant	0	0
<b>Assistant Surveyor</b>	No of posts	0	0
	Vacant	0	0
<b>Graduate Surveyor</b>	No of posts	0	0
	Vacant	0	0
<b>Inspector</b>	No of posts	4	0
	Vacant	1	0
<b>Technician</b>	No of posts	2	0
	Vacant	0	0
<b>Other Specialist (Structure, fire etc)</b>	No of posts	0	0
	Vacant	0	0
<b>Other Role</b>	No of posts	0	0
	Vacant	0	
<b>TOTAL</b>			

Staff age profile	
<b>61 and over</b>	4
<b>56-60</b>	2
<b>50-55</b>	4
<b>40-49</b>	3
<b>30-39</b>	0
<b>25-29</b>	0
<b>16-24</b>	0

<b>Office Hours – 09.00 to 17.00</b>	
<b>Duty officer “drop-in” service. Tuesday and Thursday - 09-00 -12-30 Kirkbank, Dumfries</b>	
<b>Dumfries office</b>	Militia House, English Street, Dumfries, DG1 2HS
<b>Phone – Building Standards</b>	Tel 01387 260199
<b>Email – Building Standards</b>	<a href="mailto:BSteammailbox@dumgal.gov.uk">BSteammailbox@dumgal.gov.uk</a>
<b>Email – Property information requests</b>	<a href="mailto:PropertyInformationRequests@dumgal.gov.uk">PropertyInformationRequests@dumgal.gov.uk</a>
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/building">www.dumgal.gov.uk/building</a>



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### 3. Strategic objectives

Building Standards is a statutory Service, the principal aim of which is to secure the health, safety, welfare, and convenience of persons in or about buildings, further the conservation of fuel and power, and further the achievement of sustainable development. This aim is achieved through primary and secondary legislation. These are the key national policy drivers.

The delivers a wide range of integrated support and development activities which play a crucial role in the delivery of the region's Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) and related Council Priorities:

The Council in its Pledge has established some clear priorities and principles about the way it wishes to work.

The key priorities are:

- Build the local economy.
- Provide the best start in life for all our children.
- Protect our most vulnerable people.
- Be an inclusive council.

These priorities and principles are further complimented by the following council values:

- Protection - for our most vulnerable people – pre-birth and early years, children and adults at risk, transition periods, those experiencing deprivation and poverty, and older people and places.
- Prioritisation - at a time of financial challenge we need to maximise the impact of spend on positive outcomes for our people and economy and invest in those areas of greatest need.
- Prevention – we need to intervene early at the key stages of people's lives and make our region confident and resilient.

The Building Standards Service as part of the Economy and Development service group has tangible links to the above corporate priorities.

The Planning and Environment Services Business Plan for 2016 – 2018 sets down the following purpose and aims:

The Economy and Development service provide a range of statutory services to the public in relation to the Council's functions as Building Standards verifier and assessor, Planning Authority. This includes determining planning applications, building warrants, issuing completion certificates, carrying out enforcement activities, preparing and reviewing planning policies and guidance, and a range of specialist environmental activities and advisory services.

The aims of the Service are to:

- Ensure safety, wellbeing, and inclusion in the built environment, promoting good design standards and sustainability.
- Contribute to sustainable development and the achievement of sustainable economic growth in support of the Regional Economic Strategy
- Ensure the protection and enhancement of the region's key built and natural environment assets.

Service objectives:

At the heart of our service delivery, and underpinning the work of our teams, is a commitment to delivering the most efficient and effective services for our customers through the continuous development of our highly skilled and empowered workforce.



We have developed a bespoke set of objectives to drive the delivery of our business.

1. To develop and support a thriving and inclusive economy and promote Dumfries and Galloway as a safe, healthy, and attractive place to live, work, invest and visit.
2. To promote, protect, sustain, and enhance our region's towns, villages, and countryside.
3. To facilitate travel through the provision of sustainable transport systems which are safe, accessible, well maintained, and integrated.
4. To protect and enhance the health, safety, and wellbeing of our communities through the provision of customer focused regulatory and other statutory services.
5. To reduce the region's carbon emissions and energy consumption
6. To positively engage and influence National, UK and European policy for the benefit of the region's communities and economy.
7. To prioritise and maximise the effective use of available resources.

Within Building Standards, the aim is to provide a service which is timeous and responsive to the differing needs of developers, contractors, and individuals while at the same time providing information which is accurate and up to date.

Building Standards key objectives in the coming year are to implement the Key Performance Outcomes and commitments borne from the Verifiers national submission to Ministers.

Broadly, developments in the following areas will be a priority:

- Maintain and extend the Verification appointment period.
- Engaging with Local Authority Building Standards Scotland (LABSS) to deliver a consistent customer experience nationally and further enhance Local Authority Verification
- Participate in the Southwest Scotland Building Standards Consortium
- Implement Performance Framework and Operating Framework and report to Scottish Government on same
- Continue to develop improvements in performance and the customer experience.



## 4. Key Performance Outcomes and Targets

Continuous improvement is recognised as key in raising the bar for quality, compliance, consistency, and predictability of the verification service. This cannot be achieved without benchmarking, setting targets, and measuring performance. This has been at the core of the Building Standards Balanced Scorecard system since its introduction in 2005.

More recently, Key Performance Outcomes (KPOs) have been reviewed by Scottish Government working with Local Authority Building Standards Scotland and the result is a new Performance Framework which better measures Verifier's performance in relation to the needs of customers.

The framework is based on 3 core perspectives:

- Professional Expertise and Technical Processes
- Quality of Customer Experience; and
- Operations and Financial Efficiency

These are coupled with cross cutting themes of:

- Public Interest
- Continuous Improvement; and
- Partnership Working

From April 2017, the KPOs are as follows:-

<b>Professional Expertise &amp; Technical Processes</b>	
<b>KPO1</b>	Minimise time taken to issue a first report or issue a building warrant or amendment to building warrant.
<b>KPO2</b>	Increase quality of compliance assessment during the Construction process
<b>Quality Customer Experience</b>	
<b>KPO3</b>	Commit to the building standards customer charter
<b>KPO4</b>	Understand and respond to the customer experience
<b>Operational &amp; Financial Efficiency</b>	
<b>KPO5</b>	Maintain financial governance
<b>KPO6</b>	Commit to eBuilding Standards
<b>KPO7</b>	Commit to objectives outlined in the annual performance report

The targets set against the above outcomes are as detailed below:

<b>KPO1 Targets</b>	
<b>1.1</b>	95% of first reports (for building warrants and amendments) issued within 20 working days – all first reports. (including BWs and amendments issued without a first report)
<b>1.2</b>	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>KPO2 Targets</b>	
	Targets to be development as part of future review of KPO2.
<b>KPO3 Targets</b>	
<b>3.1</b>	National customer charter is published clearly on the website and incorporates version control detailing reviews (reviewed at least annually).
<b>3.2</b>	95 % of BSD requests for information on a BSD 'Verifier Performance Reporting Service for Customers' case responded to by verifier within 5 days.
<b>KPO4 Targets</b>	
<b>4.1</b>	Minimum overall average satisfaction rating of 7.5 out of 10.
<b>KPO5 Targets</b>	
<b>5.1</b>	Building standards verification fee income to cover indicative verification service costs (staff costs plus 30%).
<b>KPO6 Targets</b>	
<b>6.1</b>	Details of eBuilding Standards to be published clearly on the verifier's website.
<b>6.2</b>	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>KPO7 Targets</b>	
<b>7.1</b>	Annual performance report published clearly on website with version control (reviewed at least quarterly).
<b>7.2</b>	Annual performance report to include performance data in line with KPO's and associated targets (annually covering previous year e.g. April 2017 – March 2018)

## 5. Performance Data

### **Professional Expertise & Technical Processes Protocols**

A suite of Corporate and Building Standards specific policies and procedures are in place to deal with every aspect of the verification process and specially address the requirements identified within Appendix B of the Operating Framework. A complete operating manual for our back-office system (Uniform) is accessible on the Building Standards Sharepoint website for any member of staff.

### **Performance Managements Systems**

The Uniform system includes the Enterprise task module which acts as a performance management system at Officer, Team Leader, and Manager levels. The system identifies tasks to be completed and operates a “traffic-light” system for those tasks which contribute to KPOs. Work is easily re-allocated when circumstances dictate, and applicants and agents are kept informed of the progress of their application.

### **Training & Development**

The Council operate a corporate Performance, Development & Review appraisal system for all staff. From the appraisal, specific training needs are identified and requests for training funding are submitted to the senior management team. Staff are encouraged and permitted to attend Continual Professional Development (CPD) training events including those organised by their professional body eg RICS, CABE.

The council’s Corporate Training Unit run a suite of courses for staff of all levels. A team “training day” is held annually, which is supplemented by numerous “mini” bespoke in-house training sessions organised throughout the year.

Quality training events are also arranged by the Southwest Building Standards Consortium of LABSS e.g. NICEIC/SELECT electrical training.

### **Benchmarking/shared service**

Dumfries and Galloway Council in conjunction with North, East, and South Ayrshire Councils form the Southwest Building Standards Consortium of LABSS – the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service are also represented.

This group meet on a regular basis and its main purpose is to establish a consistent approach to interpretation of policies and technical guidance, performance benchmarking, share best practice and facilitate training. D & G staff and the SWBS Consortium are actively involved with national policy and working groups

### **Succession Planning**

Succession planning is provided through the support provided to staff in order to advance their qualifications and experience. The Building Standards service operates a “Grow Your Own” policy which has seen a number of staff trained to honours degree level and furthermore, provided the additional support required to gain professional “Chartered Surveyor” status. Team members progressing through the RICS training scheme are mentored and supported internally by other members of the Building Standards team. We currently have two RICS training “Assessors” embedded within the Building Standards Team.

Staff within the team support LABSS at Executive and Management levels The team regularly process applications for the Scottish Type Approval Scheme, and we currently have two members of the team assigned as technical representatives to LABSS.

**Performance against KPOs**

Performance measurement should be a blend of quantitative figures and qualitative measures such as customer satisfaction. The National Customer Satisfaction survey provided an overall satisfaction rating of 8.1 for Dumfries and Galloway Building Standards.

**Comments regarding performance**

Performance throughout 2019/20 has fallen short of that required under the Scottish Government's Building Standards verification performance framework, in particular, KPO1. In response, set against the backdrop of this disappointment, Dumfries and Galloway Council have taken steps to address this decline. A service review has been carried out, and a detailed action plan has been produced as a consequence of this. A copy of this plan is available to view in detail on the building standards website. On the back of this plan the Scottish Government have reappointed Dumfries and Galloway Council as verifiers for a further 3 years (to May 2023). Work is currently underway and many of the action points set out in the plan have been implemented. Key actions still pending include a work sharing agreement with North Lanarkshire Council, and also recruitment of additional staff to strengthen the team. It is expected that these measures will yield noticeable performance improvements going forward.

PUBLIC

Targets	1.1	1.2	3.1	3.2	4.1	5.1	6.1	6.2	7.1	7.2
	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 clearly on the website and incorporates version control detailing reviews (reviewed at least annually).	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.	Building standards verification fee income to cover indicative verification service costs (staff costs plus 30%).	Details of eBuilding Standards to be published clearly on the verifier's website.	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>	Annual performance report published clearly on website with version control (reviewed at least quarterly).	Annual performance report to include performance data in line with KPO's and associated targets (annually covering previous year e.g. April 2017 – March 2018)
2023/24 Yearly Totals	86%	88%	Published prominently with review	No cases referred to BSD	7.3	132%	Published prominently	4 of 4 done	Published prominently with review	Includes all performance data
2023/24 Q2	87%	88%	Published prominently with review	No cases referred to BSD	7.8	118%	Published prominently	4 of 4 done	Published prominently with review	Includes all performance data
2023/24 Q3	91%	90%	Published prominently with review	No cases referred to BSD	7.8	127%	Published prominently	4 of 4 done	Published prominently with review	Includes all performance data
2023/24 Q4	91%	88%	Published prominently with review	No cases referred to BSD	7.3	148%	Published prominently	4 of 4 done	Published prominently with review	Includes all performance data
2024/25 Q1	81%	93%	Published prominently with review	No cases referred to BSD	100	186%	Published prominently	4 of 4 done	Published prominently with review	Includes all performance data

## Quality Customer Experience

In February 2017 Dumfries and Galloway Building Standards were once again awarded the Customer Service Excellence accreditation. The report highlighted a number of areas of good practice and five areas were awarded the highest grading of “Compliance Plus”.

All the aims within the Performance Framework related to customer are secured by holding Customer Service Excellence accreditation. Customer Service Excellence is designed to operate on three distinct level

- As a driver of continuous improvement. By allowing us to self-assess our capability, in relation to customer focussed service delivery, identifying areas and methods for improvement.
- As a skills development tool. By allowing individuals and the team to explore and acquire new skills in the area of customer focus and customer engagement, thus building capacity for delivering improved services.
- As an independent validation of achievement. By allowing us to seek formal accreditation to the CSE standard, demonstrate competence, identify key areas for improvement and celebrate their success.

The Customer Service Excellence covers competency, systems and improvement plans in all the following areas:

- Customer communication strategies – web site, newsletters, training events
- Customer Charter – published on our web site.
- Customer feedback (national/local)/analysing and changes to systems. – feedback questionnaires, improvement plans, etc
- Accessibility of service – all available channels
- Pre-application advice – encouraged at all levels of development.
- Customer agreements – offered especially for large developments.
- Customer dissatisfaction (procedural or technical) – full complaints process available.

A decision was taken not to seek re-accreditation in 2018 however, the principles and good practice learned during the 9 years of accreditation, are still firmly embedded within the Building Standards service. Customer interaction is a key element, and the service works hard to gain feedback which can be developed into service improvements. The CSE ethos changes the culture and focus of customer service and puts it front of house when providing our service. Many compliments are received some examples from the 2019 National Customer Survey are shown below.

*“Our dealings with the Service in Dumfries have been pleasant, efficient and very satisfactory. Thank you”.*

*“Staff became more approachable and helpful as time went on, and they realised I really did want their help, instead of taking the approach of ‘enforcement’ of rules and regulations”.*



## Operational & Financial Efficiency

### Team

The team is split, with dedicated inspectors carrying out the bulk of on-site verification, and surveyors responsible for plan checking and inspections of larger more complex projects, as well as the majority of other building standards functions as listed above. A high level of delegation exists whereby the surveyors are responsible for the issue of Building Warrants and Completion certificate acceptances for domestic projects.

### Protocols for dealing with work.

Allocation of Building Warrant applications is subject to a “triage” protocol whereby upon submission, an initial assessment takes place by the team leader or Principal Building Standards Surveyor. Applications are allocated to a case officer based upon a number of factors, including size and complexity of the project together with the intended risk category of the building. High value, complex and higher risk buildings are distributed to the most experienced members of the team and those holding the RICS or equivalent qualification. Low value domestic projects are allocated to less experienced members of the team.

Inspections are carried out using the Construction Compliance Notification Plan (CCNP) as a minimum baseline expectation. Preparation of the CCNP is carried out in accordance with the Building Standards Division’s verification handbook. An inspecting officer is allocated when the CCNP is prepared, and the chosen officer’s name contact details appear on the document issued to the developer. The team leader/Principal Surveyor allocates the inspecting officer using the same protocol as the Building Warrants and broadly follows the complexity/value/risk category of the project. This differs slightly whereby some of the inspections may be shared between the experienced surveyor and a less experienced officer. eg, fire related inspections such as compartmentation/cavity barriers carried out by the experienced surveyor, with a less experienced officer dealing with drainage tests/inspections.

### Performance management

All work carried out is subject to scrutiny in terms of performance, quality, and timeliness. Officers and management both utilise “Enterprise” workflow management package which is an enhancement to the Uniform casework system. “At a glance work” allocation and performance is viewable to each member of the team including admin support. The system operates using a traffic light system whereby, warnings/alerts are clearly visible to the officer when deadlines are approaching or have been breached. Managerial overview of each member of the team is viewable and system allows for reactive work re-allocation/balancing of workload. The Enterprise workflow system is enhanced by a comprehensive package of graphs which are linked to the Casework system and update “live” in real time. This is supplemented by a comprehensive suite of performance reports. The suite of reports/graphs are available to all members of the team who are encouraged to monitor and check their own performance.

Key performance reports/graphs include:-

- Applications for building warrant which have not been responded to
- Completion Certificate submissions which have not been responded to
- List of warrant applications with no response by case officer
- List of warrants pending, awaiting response by customer
- No of applications assigned per office.
- Value of building warrant submissions by officer
- No of inspections by officer



Time recording of verification services from application to approval, and also site start to completion is logged by each team member. This is collated on a monthly basis and a comparison of verification and non-verification services provided.

KPO Performance data is submitted Quarterly to the BSD via the ScotXed data recording platform. Quarterly KPO reports are posted on the Building Standards "Sharepoint" site and accessible to all members of the team. They are also posted on the Council's Building Standards website. KPO reports are supplemented by monthly "mini" reports designed to offer a snapshot of key performance indicators that are more reflective of the current position.

Corporate KPI performance is reported quarterly via the council's "Pentana" reporting framework with the performance targets/reporting mirroring the national KPO performance framework.

Performance is a permanent item on the agenda of all monthly team meetings. Previous and projected performance is discussed.

#### **Financial monitoring/governance**

Dumfries and Galloway council ensures strong financial governance by setting an annual budget and a tight monitoring system. Close cooperation exists between the building standards service and the departmental finance officer.

#### **IT systems**

Building Standards along with our Development Management colleagues operate an integrated paperless case management system hosted by IDOX and a suite of products. The system went live in July 2016. This involved a significant investment both financially and also in terms of allocation of staff resource with the ultimate aim being to provide end to end electronic processing. This aim has been partially achieved with all building warrant applications are processed and issued electronically. Tablet devices have been issued to all staff and plans can now be viewed electronically for use on site. To enhance the functionality of the tablet devices, a software application (IDOX "Building Inspector") has been purchased and installed. The system is currently being refined to suit our own needs and not yet fully operational. This will hopefully be fully functional before the end of the next reporting quarter and will have achieved our aim of having a complete end to end paperless system.

#### **Digital services**

Whilst paper-based building warrant submissions are not excluded, all aspects of the verification process are offered digitally to customers. Plans and associated paperwork lodged traditionally, are scanned into the IDOX back-office system upon receipt. The success of the system is evidenced by the fact that 80% of new applications are submitted via the National portal.

#### **Finance systems**

The Council utilise the financial system INTEGRA with complete monitoring and reporting capabilities. A system for accepting online card payments via the Council's corporate website is currently under development and it is hoped will be fully operational in the early part of 2020.

#### **Internal communication strategies**

The internal communication is "top down" with Corporate, service and departmental level meetings held monthly and information cascaded accordingly. A team wide meeting is held every month with

a set agenda. Individual staff member meetings on a 1-2-1 basis are often superseded by the close working relationships within the team. Team Leader operates an “open door” policy. Staff training and supervised training further contribute to internal communication.

**Engagement**

As mentioned previously, Dumfries and Galloway is part of the Southwest Building Standards Consortium and wider LABSS network, with the aim of providing consistency and improving the quality-of-service delivery at regional and national levels.

Using the principles adopted under the CSE process, regular meetings with our agent’s focus group are held, and specific training needs for our agents can be identified and implemented.



## 6. Service Improvements and Partnership Working

A comprehensive and fully detailed/itemised improvement plan is available and is published on the Dumfries and Galloway [building standards website](#). This plan contains a full list of all service improvements planned for the upcoming 12 months and beyond. Some highlights of the previous 12 months service improvements are indicated below:

Number	Continuous Improvement Action	Status
1	Instigated a protocol to ensure all applications and supporting documents include email address, mobile or daytime contact telephone number. Ongoing programme to ensure the Uniform casework system constantly updated with up-to-date contact details. Process has been successful with over 97% communications now issued/received via email.	Complete
2	Implemented a more rigorous approach to poor quality applications, fee deficit and fee challenges. Series of reminder letters issued weekly. Failure to respond to 2 reminders, and application is cancelled. (Previously, applications would sit invalid awaiting customer action)	Complete
3	Created a suite of fillable pdf forms for non-statutory services	Complete

4	Opened up "Microsoft Teams" to external customers, thus allowing video conferencing and live review of alternative evidence. (Video inspection)	Complete
5	Building Standards linked to the Council's online card payment mechanism enabling payments to be made by customers outwith the eBuildingStandards online portal eg payment of top-up fees, fee correction payments and non-statutory services.	Complete
6	Recruit 2 No Building Standards Technicians to strengthen the team.	Complete
7	Introduce and Integrate IDOX Document Management System upgrade. Revise processes and procedures to benefit from the enhancements this upgrade brings.	Complete
8	Rationalise hard copy paper archive and perform major housekeeping project. In accordance with national and corporate records retention protocols	Complete
9	Explore possibility of digitising entire Building warrant archive pre eBuildingStandards.	Complete
10	Replace current IDOX Uniform casework system Move from a traditional network/server based system to IDOX's "cloud" based system. This should improve data speeds, system stability/reliability and reduce "planned system maintenance downtime". Approval given and preparation for transition to new system underway.	Complete

#### Continuous improvement actions planned in the next 12 Months

Number	Continuous Improvement Action	Status
1	Implement verification performance framework	Ongoing
2	Improve performance by Initiating work sharing arrangement with North Lanark Council	Ongoing
3	Recruit 1 No trainee building standards surveyor. New employee to enrol in national Modern apprentice scheme.	Ongoing
4	Initiate training regime for the newly recruited Building Standards Technicians	Ongoing
5	Create and provide a suite of process documents for the newly recruited Building Standards technicians	Ongoing
6	Review Idox casework and document management system with a view to moving from Hosted thick client to thin client (Cloud based infrastructure).	Ongoing
7	Review Idox processes with a view to incorporating enhancements to Enterprise tasks and document management.	Ongoing
8	Upgrade IDOX inspection App to latest version to incorporate enhancements into day to day working practices.	Ongoing

9	Initiate collaboration with Council GIS mapping/Gazetteer team to incorporate UPRN's on Building warrant not yet provided with finalised address eg new build/converted properties	Ongoing
10	Collaborate with council GIS mapping team to create additional information layers (Building Standards related).	Ongoing
11	Provide a standardised method for logging/recording/archiving RVI and photographic alternative evidence.	Not Started
12	Switch from fleet of traditionally fuelled pool vehicles to full EV's	Ongoing
13	Explore possibility of utilising packaged software application to enable "batch stamping" of building warrant plans.	Ongoing
14	Investigate the use of CRM software to provide a solutions to aid the customer eg Inspection request tool	Not Started
15	Redesign Customer Charter and Annual performance report to replicate Dumfries and Galloway Council corporate format	Ongoing

#### North Lanarkshire Council Partnership

In an effort to address performance issues, D & G Council entered a partnership agreement with North Lanarkshire Council. The arrangement involves plan checking of submitted Building Warrant applications and includes preparation of assessment reports, checking of resubmitted plans and providing recommendation for issue of building warrant approvals. A "soft start" of the process was made in Q1 2022, and was fully implemented in Q2 of 2022. Improvements have begun to show through in the Q2 & Q3 performance figures (see table in section 5 above). Further improvements are expected going forward.

#### In the previous 12 months (2022/23) we worked with:

- North Lanarkshire Council to formulate a work share partnership.
- North, East, & South Ayrshire Councils via the Southwest Building Standards Consortium Group
- Dumfries and Galloway Council Planning Service
- Other Local Authorities via LABSS
- Scottish Fire & Rescue Service
- North, East, & South Ayrshire Councils via the Southwest Building Standards Consortium Group
- Other Local Authorities via LABSS
- Scottish Fire & Rescue Service

- IDOX user's group



## 7. Building Standards – Additional Data

The performance data outlined below relates to the building standards verification performance framework and offers a monthly view of key statistics that offers an easy to read “at a glance” snapshot of monthly service performance.

Reporting Quarter Q1					Monthly performance – Year at a glance												
Year					2023				2024								
Month					Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	
<b>KPO1(a) Average time taken to grant a warrant</b>																	
Total number of building warrants issued (Includes Amendment to Warrant)					103	143	104	143	118	78	83	104	86	108	92	91	
Average time taken to grant a building warrant. (In Days). Note: This figure is made up of time taken by both the applicant and D & G Council as verifier. A significant portion of this time the council has no control over ie time spent with applicant/agent					46	36	44	49	40	31	63	34	62	75	59	63	
<b>KPO1(b) Percentage of valid building warrant applications assessed (Issue of first report)</b>																	
Number of first reports issued					125	153	121	107	103	84	96	114	100	116	120	92	
% Within 15 days					58	69	72	72	72	68	44	57	62	47	43	51	
% Within 20 days					82	88	92	96	92	90	91	85	98	77	78	76	
% Within 35 days					98	99	99	99	100	100	99	99	99	100	99	99	
% more than 35 days					2	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	
<b>KPO1(c) Percentage of building warrants approved after receiving all necessary additional information</b>																	
% Within 6 days					65	70	70	71	65	76	56	81	76	55	78	64	
% Within 10 days					82	94	87	89	93	90	78	95	91	90	93	85	
% Within 15 days					98	98	95	95	96	100	84	97	94	90	100	90	
% more than 15 days					2	2	5	5	4	0	16	3	6	1	0	10	
<b>KPO2 Percentage of fully achieved construction compliance notification plans (CCNP)</b>																	
% fully achieved by Verifier					100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<b>KPO4 Understand and respond to the customer experience</b>																	
Satisfaction rating from the last National Customer Survey					4.7	4.7	4.7	7.3	7.3	7.3	8.1	8.1	8.1	10	10	10	
<b>KPO6 Commit to eBuildingStandards</b>																	
Total No of building warrants lodged					128	128	101	133	111	88	99	106	130	108	109	100	
Number of building warrant applications lodged through the eBuildingStandards submission portal					128	128	101	133	111	88	99	106	130	108	109	100	
% of building warrant applications lodged through the eBuildingStandards submission portal					100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Number of completion certificates lodged through the eBuildingStandards submission portal					131	107	126	112	106	81	137	145	149	139	79	104	
<b>Dangerous Buildings</b>																	
Number of reported incidents attended by Building Standards					12	18	18	16	22	17	25	19	15	21	16	22	

**Completed summary of Annual Workload data 2023/24**

**Note, these are the previous Year's figures and are shown to provide comparison with current year's performance.**

<b>Building Warrants and Amendment to Warrants</b>	<b>Applications Lodged</b>	<b>1391</b>
	<b>Warrants approved</b>	<b>1313</b>
<b>Completion certificates</b>	<b>Certificates lodged</b>	<b>1349</b>
	<b>Decisions</b>	<b>1256</b>
<b>Certification</b>	<b>Certificates of design submitted</b>	<b>93</b>
	<b>Certificates of construction Submitted</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Energy Performance Certificates (EPC's)</b>	<b>Certificates received (Domestic)</b>	<b>217</b>
	<b>certificates received (Non-Domestic)</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Enforcement</b>	<b>Notices served under sections 25 – 30</b>	<b>37</b>
	<b>Cases referred to Procurator Fiscal</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>Cases where Local Authority has undertaken work</b>	<b>5</b>



## Version control



revision	Author	Date	Review Details
1.1	M McCall	15/10/17	Major document refresh, revised tables
1.2	M McCall	06/01/18	Review, updated performance
1.3	M McCall	06/04/18	New Year, minor revisions.
1.4	M McCall	20/07/18	Review, updated performance
1.5	M McCall	17/10/18	Review, updated performance
1.6	M McCall	12/01/19	Review, updated performance
1.7	M McCall	10/04/19	New year, enhanced performance information
1.8	M McCall	11/07/19	Review, updated performance
1.9	M McCall	11/11/19	Review, updated performance
2.0	M McCall	16/04/20	Updated information from national customer survey, updated staff structure, photographic images
2.1	M McCall	10/07/20	Review, updated performance

2.2	M McCall	09/10/20	Review, expanded section relating to operational and financial efficiency, updated performance, and improvement plan.
2.3	M McCall	20/01/21	Review, updated performance. Included additional service improvements.
2.4	M McCall	16/04/21	Major Review, Update Report to accord with 2021 report template.
2.5	M McCall	04/08/21	Review, updated performance
2.6	M McCall	06/10/21	Review, performance, and improvement log updates.
2.7	M McCall	01/02/22	Review, performance, and improvement log updates. Update staffing structure/family tree
2.8	M McCall	24/05/22	Review, performance, full year data, and improvement log updates.
2.9	M McCall	06/07/22	Review, performance, and improvement log updates. Minor corrections
2.10	M McCall	02/11/22	Review, performance, and improvement log updates. Add section re North Lanark Partnership arrangement.
2.11	M McCall	31/01/23	Performance and improvement log updates. Added information re enhanced agile working, remote verification, and virtual meetings via MS Teams.
2.12	M McCall	30/03/23	Review, performance, and improvement log updates. Minor corrections
2.13	M McCall	09/07/23	Review, performance, and improvement log updates. Minor corrections, Summary of annual performance data for year 2022/23
2.14	M McCall	12/10/23	Review, performance, and improvement log updates. Minor corrections
2.15	M McCall	06/01/24	Review, performance, and improvement log updates. Minor corrections
2.16	M McCall	30/03/24	Review, performance, and improvement log updates. Minor corrections, Summary of annual performance data for year 2023/24
2.17	M McCall	17/07/24	Review, performance, and improvement log updates. Minor corrections.