



Building Standards Verification Service

Balanced Scorecard 2013-2014



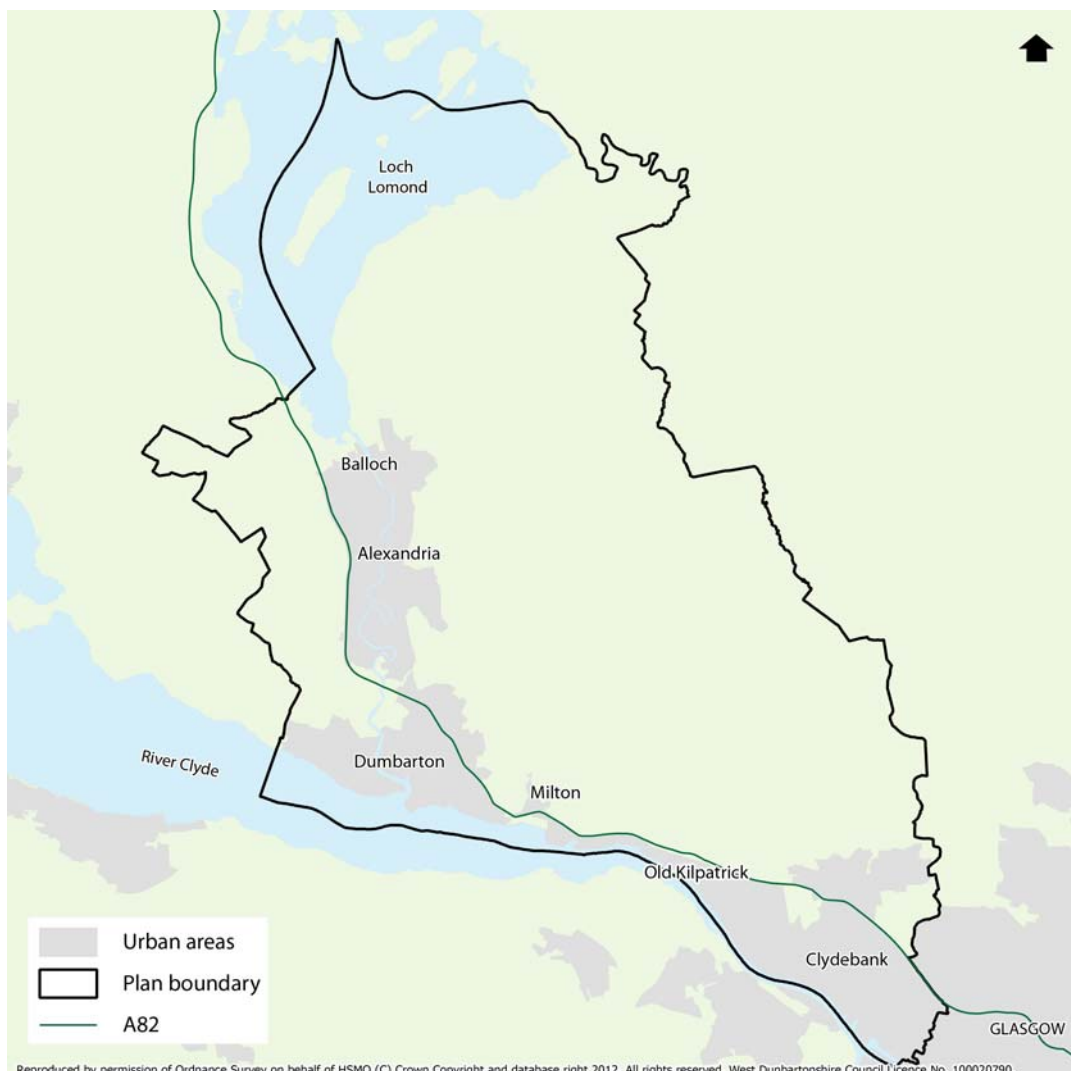
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1. Introduction

West Dunbartonshire is a small local authority with a population of approximately 91,000 residents. The Council area offers much as a place to live, work and visit. Businesses consider that the area combines a solid employee base with an attractive physical environment and reasonable house prices. The area combines natural scenic beauty, a historical industrial past and has good links to the motorway network and Glasgow International Airport. While the Council does face challenges, there is huge potential for growth and prosperity and the Council recognises its key role in making this happen in an environmentally and socially responsible manner.

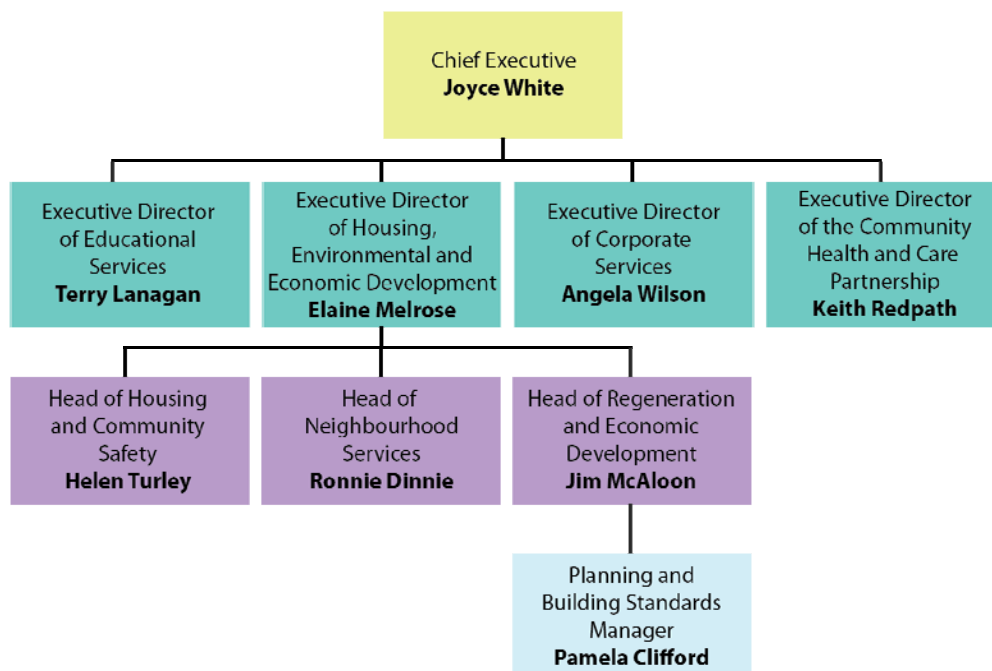
The Council area, covering approximately 70 square miles, consists of a mixture of both urban and rural areas. The majority of the population is concentrated within the 3 principal towns of Alexandria, Dumbarton and Clydebank and their surrounding villages.



Major employers within the area are predominately public sector based, such as local government and NHS. Large private sector employers include Aggreko (temporary power generation), Polaroid (eye wear) and National Australia Group (financial services). A variety of small and medium sized enterprises occupy many of the industrial estates and business parks within the area.

Building Standards operates within the Regeneration and Economic Development service area of the Department of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development. Day to day management of Building Standards lies with the Planning and Building Standards Manager, who as well as Building Standards also has responsibility for Development Management and Forward Planning services.

The following organisational chart indicates the Council structure from Chief Executive to Planning and Building Standards Manager.



The Building Standards team provide the full range of verification services in relation to Building Warrant Applications and carry out other duties under the Building (Scotland) Act. In addition, the team provides the street naming service and contributes to various licensing applications that are made to the Council.

Balanced Scorecard

The balanced scorecard is a strategic planning and management tool that is used in business organisations to align business activities to the vision and strategy of the organisation, improve internal and external communications, and monitor performance against strategic goals.

Building standards verifiers in Scotland are required to utilise the balanced scorecard 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

2. Building Standards Verification Service Information

Public Interest Statement

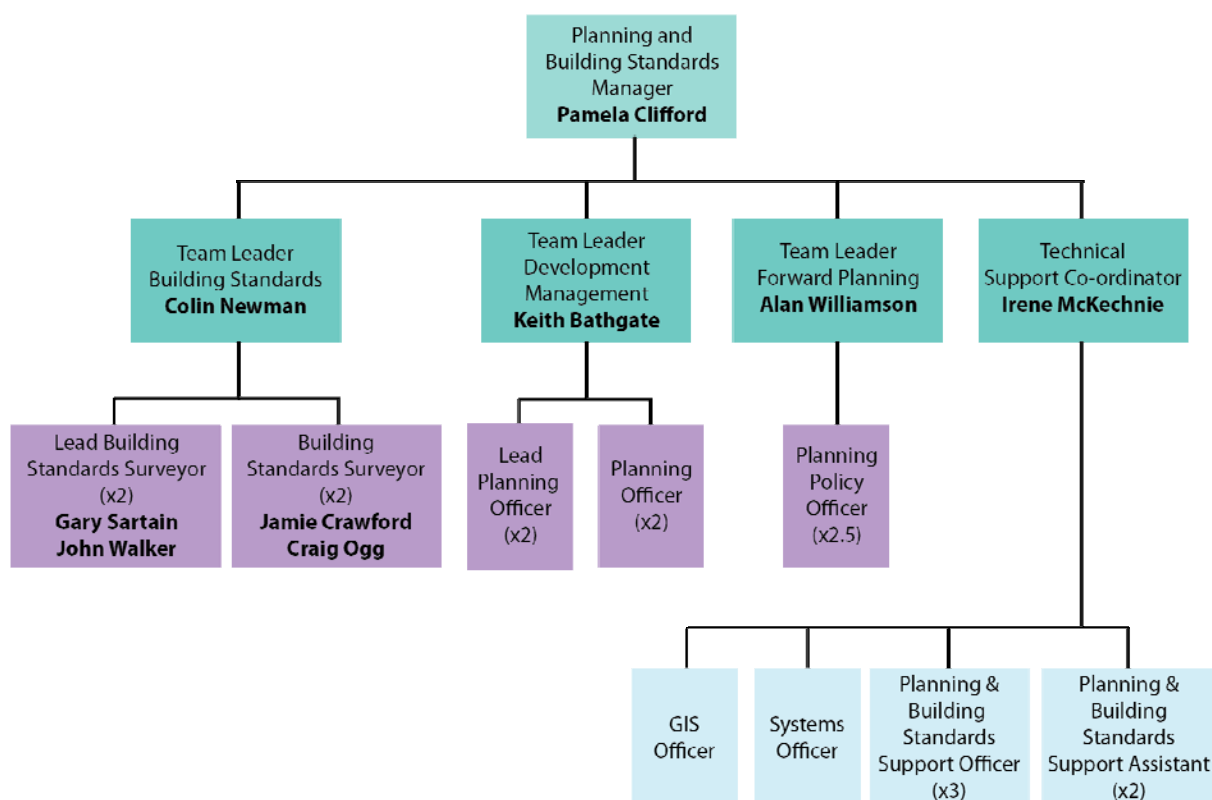
The purpose of the building standards system is to protect the public interest. The system sets out the essential standards that are required to be met when building work or conversion of a building takes place in order to meet building regulations.

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.

Building Standards in West Dunbartonshire

West Dunbartonshire Council's Building Standards Team are located in Clydebank within the Council Offices at Rosebery Place. The team operate alongside Development Management and Forward Planning colleagues. These 3 teams, along with a shared Technical Support Team, occupy an open plan office situated on the 3rd floor of the Council Offices. The office location and set up allows a close working relationship internally between all teams and provides an easily accessible point of contact for applicants, developers and agents. The following diagram illustrates our structure:



Verification Work

The main role of the Building Standards Team is providing a verification service in relation to Building Warrant Applications and Completion Certificate Submissions. This includes

- pre-application discussions and advice;
- assessing Building Warrant Applications;
- inspection of construction on site; and
- assessing Completion Certificate Submissions.

Non- Verification Work

In addition to its work as a verifier, the team have responsibility to act as required with regard to other relevant areas. These include:

- dangerous and defective buildings;
- unauthorised works (including dealing with letter of comfort applications for older work);
- allocation of street naming and numbering (and contributing to the updating of the Corporate Address Gazetteer);
- considering raised structure applications;
- contributing to the consideration of various licensing applications made to the Council (including alcohol licenses, houses in multiple occupation, sports grounds and open air concerts); and
- contributing to property enquiry searches.

3. Strategic Objectives

Council Vision

The Council's vision is "A prosperous West Dunbartonshire recognised as a dynamic area within a successful Scotland."

Priorities for the Council have been established as:

- Improve economic growth and employability;
- Improve life chances for children and young people;
- Improve care for and promote independence with older people;
- Improve local housing and environmentally sustainable infrastructure; and
- Improve the well being of communities and protect the welfare of vulnerable people.

Department Strategic Objectives

The objectives of the Department's Strategic Plan for 2013/18 of direct relevance for Building Standards are:

- Improve economic growth and employability;
- Improve local housing and environmentally sustainable infrastructure;
- Improve and develop our ability to deliver efficient and effective assets.

Building Standards Key Objectives 2013-14

Improving the service provided by Building Standards over the next year will continue to build on achievements over previous years and will focus on the following key objectives:

- Maintain improved performance on processing building warrants and completion certificates;
- Implement e-building standards to allow more effective methods of working and improved customer services;
- Continue along with neighbouring Councils to benchmarking on process, best practice and cost;
- Encourage greater use of electronic communication, including the provision of web-based information;
- Engagement with regular users of the building standard system through surveys and users forum;
- Continue to facilitate regular working between Planning and Building Standards teams; and
- Continue offering a pre-application consultation service for Building Warrants.

4. Key Performance Outcomes – (*Professional Expertise & Technical Processes, Customer Experience & Operational & Financial Efficiency*)

- **Professional Expertise & Technical Processes**

- **Protocols for dealing with work**

The Council has a risk management protocol for handling building warrant applications and completion certificate submissions. This ensures that work is allocated to staff who are suitably qualified and experienced to deal with it. Opportunity exists within the protocol to allow less experienced staff to deal with some higher risk applications where appropriate; subject to an internal control/checking system.

- **Performance management systems**

Staff workload is monitored to maximise performance throughout the team and ensure that any significant delays are identified and work reallocated as necessary. Over previous years, our performance in relation to building warrant applications and completion certificate submissions has been steadily improving and for year 2012/13 the team not only met, but exceeded all of its performance targets. This is summarised in the table below:

Indicator	Target	Performance Achieved 2012-13
Responding to Building Warrants within 20 days	80%	97%
Issuing Building Warrants within 10 days following receipt of additional information	80%	93%
Average time to Inspect Completion Certificate Submissions	Max. 5 days	2.4 days
Issuing Completion Certificate Acceptances within 3 days	80%	97%

From October 2013 we have been collecting additional data in relation to our work under the building standards verification system and reporting this information as part of our quarterly reporting to the Scottish Government. This is being carried out as part of the national Key Performance Outcomes and is replicated by verifiers throughout Scotland. This additional reporting is still in its early stages and it is currently too early to analyse the data submitted in order to draw comparisons between verifiers and provide an overall national picture.

- **Training and development/CPD**

All team members have individual Performance and Development Frameworks in place and both staff and Council work towards achieving the aims set out within them. These identify personal objectives and individual staff development needs, as well as any training requirements that are to be fulfilled to meet the development need. The Council recognises the importance of continued development of its staff and a department training plan and budget has been approved and is implemented. In addition, staff are afforded opportunities to attend appropriate CPD events within the Council and externally.

- ***Benchmarking/shared services/partnership work***
We are active participants in the Clyde Valley Building Standards Consortium and benchmarking group. We recognise that knowledge can be gained and improvements to services implemented as a result of the experiences and working practices of other local authorities in relation to building standards. The benefits of the benchmarking group have proved to extend beyond the group meetings, allowing procedural and technical issues to be quickly raised and discussed with others via email and/or telephone.
 - ***Commitment to work together on technical issues***
Working together with Local Authority Building Standards Scotland (LABSS) and other local authorities, via the Clyde Valley Consortium, on procedural and technical matters allows us to benefit from the experiences and views of others, and assists us in resolving issues that arise and we are committed to continue with this. As a small team this has been invaluable. In addition, the Scottish Type Approval System (STAS) can assist developers making applications for repeating building types throughout Scotland and can provide a solution to common technical issues. We are committed to the continued application and development of STAS and LABSS examination of how the use of STAS can be developed and further increased.
 - ***Succession planning***
Following organisational change in 2010-11, the section was restructured to provide 2 different levels of Building Standards Surveyor. Opportunity now exists for Building Standards Surveyors to shadow Lead Building Standards Surveyors on larger projects in order to broaden their experience, while Lead Building Standards Surveyors have been provided with more responsibility for their own work and the work of the Building Standards Surveyors. No formal succession planning arrangements are in place, however as a result of the organisational change opportunity now exists for career progression through the structure for eligible staff.
- ***Quality Customer Experience***
 - ***Customer communication strategies***
We provide information on our services, application forms and guidance notes via our website and at our reception area. Performance indicator information is also available via our website and at reception area. The Council's website was re-designed and re-launched in August 2012 to provide new and updated information, while providing a more user friendly layout. Building Standards used this as an opportunity to re-examine and improve our web-based information. We also used a recent forum to communicate with agents regarding the introduction of the national Key Performance Outcomes and to answer questions on a variety of matters. The forum was well received and we have plans to hold additional forums.
 - ***Charter – Local and National***
Our Customer Charter for Planning and Building Standards outlines what service standards our customers can expect and how they can help us achieve them. We recently replaced our individual section charters with this combined local charter covering Building Standards, Development Management and Forward Planning. This is available via our website and at our reception area. We have incorporated the Building Standards elements of our combined charter into the National Building Standards Charter and this is also available via our website and at our reception.

– ***Engagement (national and local forums)***

In August 2012 we held a users forum to make agents aware of recent and forthcoming changes to the Planning & Building Standards systems. This included details of the new Key Performance Outcomes. Opportunity was also made available for users to voice any concerns and discuss issues that they have had with the service. The forum was well received and future forums will be arranged as a result of the feedback received. A survey carried out as part of the forum indicated that users were generally satisfied with the service they receive; with a high proportion indicating that they considered our service to be good or excellent. At a national level, the Council is committed to participation in the National Stakeholders Forum that is to be arranged.

– ***Customer feedback***

The Council is open to receiving feedback, good and bad, from all customers. This assists us in identifying areas for improvement and confirms areas in which we are doing well. We carry out an annual survey of users of the service to obtain their views and act upon relevant comments received. We look forward to assisting with the first national customer survey to be organised by the Scottish Government and taking part in the discussion of results and resolution of any issues arising.

– ***Accessibility of service***

Building Standards are located within the Council Offices in Clydebank. The offices are conveniently located adjacent to the main shopping area and are well served by public transport. Free car parking is available adjacent to the offices. Located on the 3rd floor, we are open to the public Monday-Thursday 0845–1645 and on Fridays from 0845–1600. Building Standards Surveyors make themselves available for pre-arranged appointments and meetings regarding specific projects.

We provide a pre-application consultation service and will meet with customers to discuss their projects and assist in early identification of any major issues.

For customers who visit us without an appointment or who telephone, we provide a duty surveyor system to enable enquiries to be dealt with promptly.

The Council introduced a Developer's Protocol in 2012 as a means of enabling the development process associated with large sites. It shows our commitment to taking a more proactive role in facilitating appropriate development on key development sites. We encourage early and effective engagement which will assist in avoiding delays and difficult situations arising during the building warrant and planning processes.

– ***Escape route***

We recognise that the time taken to provide our first response to building warrant applications is important to the majority our customers and we allocate a high proportion of our resources to minimising this. For building warrant applications which do not have a customer agreement, we aim to respond within 20 working days of a valid application being received. While this may not be achievable on every occasion, we recognise that some form of escape route option requires to be made available to customers facing unreasonable response times. We take part in and contribute to national data collection to ascertain the extent of this issue. We have also taken part in discussions with both the Scottish Government and Local Authority Building Standards Scotland to set up a formal escape route process if this is found to be required.

– ***Recognised external accreditations***

At present we do not hold any recognised external accreditations, however this is an area that has not been discounted from future consideration.

- **Operational & Financial Efficiency**

- **Team structure**

The core work within the team relates to the provision of verification services. For operational purposes the team is split into 2, with each team covering a specific geographical area. Lead Building Standards Surveyors within each area focus on the major applications that contribute to regeneration and economic growth of the Council area. The Building Standards Surveyors deal with the majority of domestic and relatively minor non-domestic applications; however opportunity exists to involve these team members in the work of the Lead Building Standards Surveyors. This arrangement is replicated within the Development Management Team and it provides opportunity for close working across the services in relation to major and minor developments to the benefit of both the applicant and Council. The Building Standards Team Leader deals with day to day operational matters, as well as contributing to the strategic direction of the service. Workloads are monitored to identify backlogs and work is reallocated within the Building Standards Team as necessary. The Building Standards Team are enthusiastic, continues to grow in experience and are keen to assist our customers.

- **Time recording system**

We utilise a self-developed time recording software system to allow us to monitor our costs in providing the verification system. In 2012-13 we spent 96% of our time carrying out work relating to our verification function.

- **Financial monitoring/governance**

The service budget is discussed regularly at Team Leader and Management Team meetings. Regular meetings are held with the Departmental Accountant to ensure that outturn is being achieved. Income is monitored on a monthly basis to ensure that the estimates are reflected accurately in the actual fees. Meetings take place in advance of the budget being finalised for the following year to ensure that all costs and outgoings can be taken into account.

- **IT systems**

Both the Building Standards and Planning Teams are users of a software system provided by Idox (Uniform). This provides us with a database of applications, allowing us to keep track of and produce documentation relative to the various applications made to us. We will shortly be commencing an upgrading of the system in order to assist us in the reporting on the new national key performance outcomes. The Council has allocated funding to allow the introduction of an e-building standards system. This aims to provide a more efficient delivery of the service, along with improved workflow and case management. Our staff form part of the project team taking this forward and it is expected that the project will be implemented and go live in 2014.

- **Finance systems**

Fee income reports are produced in house and reviewed monthly, with revisions made where necessary to the projected annual income budget.

– ***Internal communication strategies***

Corporate information is provided via a variety of means to staff. This includes employee newsletters, email, intranet articles and team briefings. Planning and Building Standards Team Leader meetings are held monthly with both the Planning and Building Standards Manger and the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development. Within the Building Standards Team, monthly meetings provide an opportunity for the exchange of information between staff and discussion of relevant operational and technical issues. The team also benefits from being relatively small and being located within the same office, allowing a lot of informal communication and exchange of information to occur rapidly on a day to day basis.

5. Building Standards – Additional Data (Local Authority Annual Return)

1	Building Warrant (BW)	Number
1.1	No. of BW Applications (including "late" applications)	409
1.2	No. of "late" BW applications (as included above)	16
1.3	No. of BW approved	356
1.4	No. of BW refused	0
1.5	No. of amendment to BW applications	100
1.6	No. of amendment to BW applications approved	91
1.7	No. of amendment to BW applications refused	0
Comments:		
2	Completion Certificates (CC)	Number
2.1	No. of CC submissions (including those where no warrant was obtained)	439
2.2	No. of CC submissions where no warrant was obtained ("late" CCs as included above)	18
2.3	No. of CC submissions accepted	382
2.4	No. of CC submissions rejected	51
Comments:		
3	Fees	Number
3.1	Total value of works for BW applications (including "late" applications)	44103079
3.2	Total value of works for amendment to warrant applications	7420795
3.3	Total value of works for CC submissions where no warrant was obtained	72133
3.4	Total Value of Work	51596007
3.5	Total building warrant fee income (including 'late' BW)	217823
3.6	Total amendment to warrant fee income	20062
3.7	Total CC fee income where no warrant was obtained	2912
3.8	Total Fee Income	240797
Comments:		
4	Costs	Number
4.1	Total expenditure on verification	291505
Comments: based on building standards salary costs of £233578 x 96% verification time, add 30% factor		
5	Certification	Number
5.1	No of certificates of design (building structures) provided	161
5.2	No of certificates of design (energy) domestic provided	2
5.3	No of certificates of design (energy) non-domestic provided	0
5.4	No of certificates of construction (electrical) provided	29
5.5	No of certificates of construction (drainage, heating and plumbing) provided	1
Comments:		
6	EPCs	Number
6.1	No of copy EPCs received for domestic buildings under Standard 6.9	91
6.2	No of copy EPCs received for non-domestic buildings under Standard 6.9	6
Comments:		

7	Statements of Sustainability	Number
7.1	No of copy Statements of Sustainability for domestic buildings under Standard 7.1 "Bronze"	30
7.2	No of copy Statements of Sustainability for domestic buildings under Standard 7.1 "Bronze +"	1
7.3	No of copy Statements of Sustainability for domestic buildings under Standard 7.1 "Silver"	0
7.4	No of copy Statements of Sustainability for domestic buildings under Standard 7.1 "Gold"	0
7.5	No of copy Statements of Sustainability for domestic buildings under Standard 7.1 "Platinum"	0
7.6	No of copy Statements of Sustainability for non-domestic buildings under Standard 7.1 "Bronze"	0
7.7	No of copy Statements of Sustainability for non-domestic buildings under Standard 7.1 "Bronze +"	0
7.8 *	No of copy Statements of Sustainability for non-domestic buildings under Standard 7.1 "Silver"*	N/A
7.9*	No of copy Statements of Sustainability for non-domestic buildings under Standard 7.1 "Gold"*	N/A
7.10*	No of copy Statements of Sustainability for non-domestic buildings under Standard 7.1 "Platinum"*	N/A
	<i>*7.8 to 7.10: Higher levels for Silver, Gold and Platinum are not currently possible for non-domestic.</i>	

Comments:

8	Enforcement	Number
8.1	No of section 25 notices issued	0
8.2	No of section 26 notices issued	0
8.3	No of section 27 notices issued	0
8.4	No of section 28 notices issued	0
8.5	No of instances where the local authority has taken action under Section 29	7
8.6	No of section 30 notices issued	2
8.7	No of enforcement cases reported to the Procurator Fiscal	0
8.8	No of cases from above where the local authority carried out work	0

Comments: In most dangerous building incidents attended our staff managed to ensure owners arranged to carry out immediate work to remove danger.