



Building Standards Verification Service

Balanced Scorecard 2017 – 2018

Key Contact

Jack Leslie – Building Standards Manager

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Version.	Date.	Notes.
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1.3.	01/01/2018.	2017/2018 Balanced Scorecard Q3.
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1. Introduction

Lying off the north-east coast of Scotland, between John O’Groats and the Shetland Isles, Orkney is an archipelago of over 70 islands and skerries, 17 off which are inhabited. With a coastline totalling 570 miles, the islands cover an area of 376 square miles, more than half of which is taken up by the Mainland, the group’s largest island.

Orkney can be divided into three distinct regions – the North Isles, the South Isles and the Mainland. Although Burray and South Ronaldsay are ‘islands’ they are connected to the Orkney mainland via causeways called the Churchill Barriers.

With a population of 21,850 - the majority of people live on the Mainland, with the greatest population concentrations around the main towns of Kirkwall and Stromness. Kirkwall, the capital, is the administrative centre of Orkney with a population of 7,500.

Orkney Map



Environment

The islands of Orkney are mainly low lying with a landscape of green fields, heather moorland heath and lochs. The underlying sandstone rock breaks-down easily to form good fertile soils and much of the landscape is farmed. The exception is the island of Hoy which is famous for dramatic hills and valleys and spectacular cliffs.

Employment

Farming and fishing continue in the top employment sectors of the islands, with beef farming being the mainstay of the agricultural community, Orkney is renowned for its quality beef production. The white and crab fishing fleets are well established and Orkney has the largest crab processing plant in the UK. The oil industry provides

important employment opportunity with the Flotta Oil Terminal remaining active 40 years after becoming fully operational in 1976. Tourism and food processing have become increasingly important and Orkney has become one of the busiest ports in Scotland for visiting cruise ships and liners. Orkney has fast become a key player in the renewable energy sector with wind, wave and tidal developments all prevalent on the islands. The construction industry remains buoyant and continues to be a major source of employment. Orkney Islands Council is the largest employer with a workforce of approximately 1,500 staff.

Building Standards

The Building Standards service is located at The Council Offices, School Place, Kirkwall, KW15 1NY and our main responsibilities include:

Provision of the Verification service for the determination of Building Warrant applications and Completion Certificate submissions to ensure that buildings are constructed or adapted to:

- Secure the health, safety, welfare and convenience of persons in or about buildings and of others who may be affected by buildings or matters connected with buildings.
- Further the conservation of fuel and power.
- Further the achievement of sustainable development.

Enforcement activity empowered by the Building (Scotland) Act 2003.

Maintenance of the Building Standards Register.

Orkney Islands Council

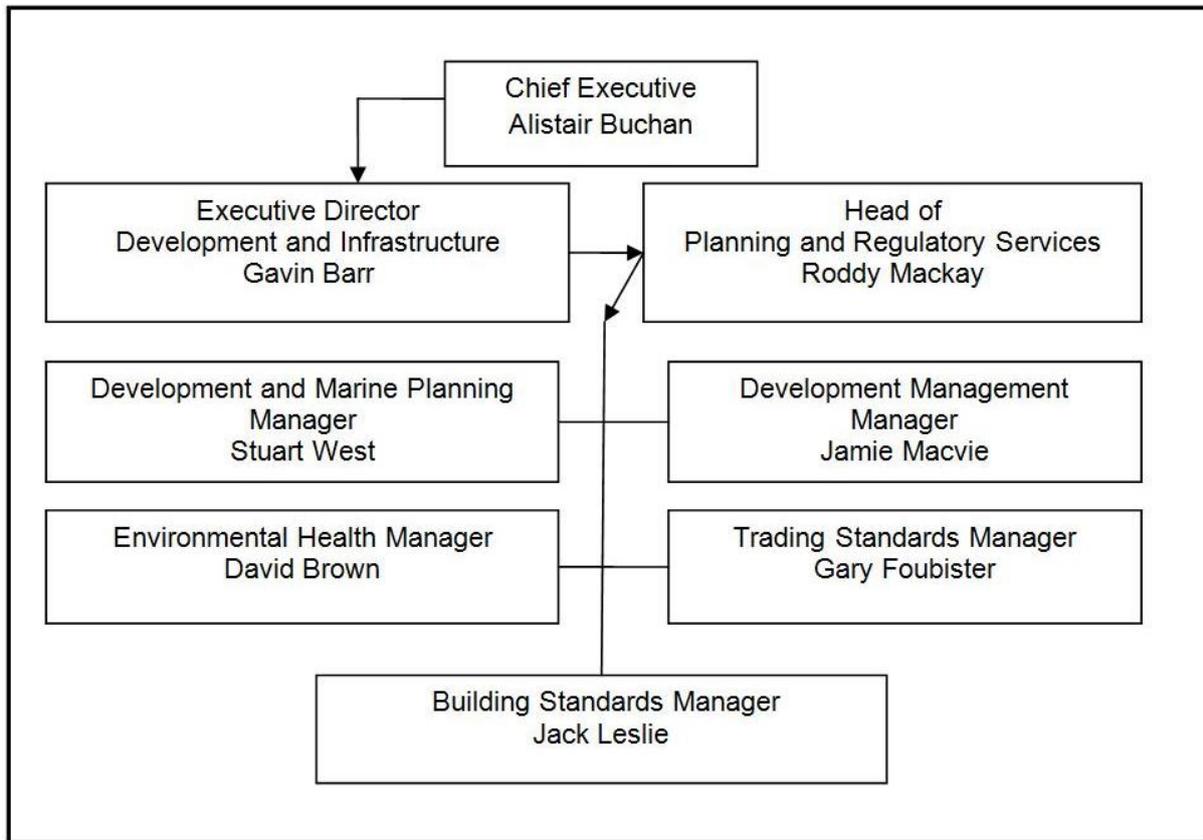
As a Council, our activities touch the lives of everyone living in our island community, from Schools to the care of the elderly, from rubbish collection to maintaining the county's roads and from caring for burial grounds to handling Planning Applications. OIC has an impact on many aspects of everyday life.

With such wide ranging responsibilities, we are committed to providing good-value, high quality services across the county. That commitment means we are continually looking for ways to improve the way we work.

We are well aware that Local Authorities can be seen by some as remote, mysterious and bound up in red tape. But the principle of open government is important to us. Debates in the Council Chamber are often lively affairs, widely reported in the local media, and can be watched in comfort from a public gallery.

We never forget that we are here to serve the public, with a big role to play in improving the quality of life enjoyed by people throughout the islands. We work closely with organisations like Highlands and Islands Enterprise, NHS Orkney and Orkney Housing Association and we respond to feedback from Community Councils.

The following organisational chart provides an overview of the Council structure from the Chief Executive down to the Building Standards Manager:



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, continuous improvement and partnership working cross-cutting themes:

- Professional Expertise and Technical Processes.
- Quality Customer Experience.
- Operational and Financial Efficiency

2. Building Standards Verification Service Information

Public Interest

“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”.

Location

The Building Standards Service is located at the Orkney Islands Council Offices, School Place, Kirkwall, Orkney, KW15 1NY.

The One-stop Shop, which is the main reception area for all Council enquiries is located on the ground floor and is easily accessible. Building Standards staff are available to deal with enquiries between 09:00 – 17:00, Monday to Friday.

Contact details

Officers can be contacted by telephoning 01856873535, Fax 01856886450 or email building.standards@orkney.gov.uk

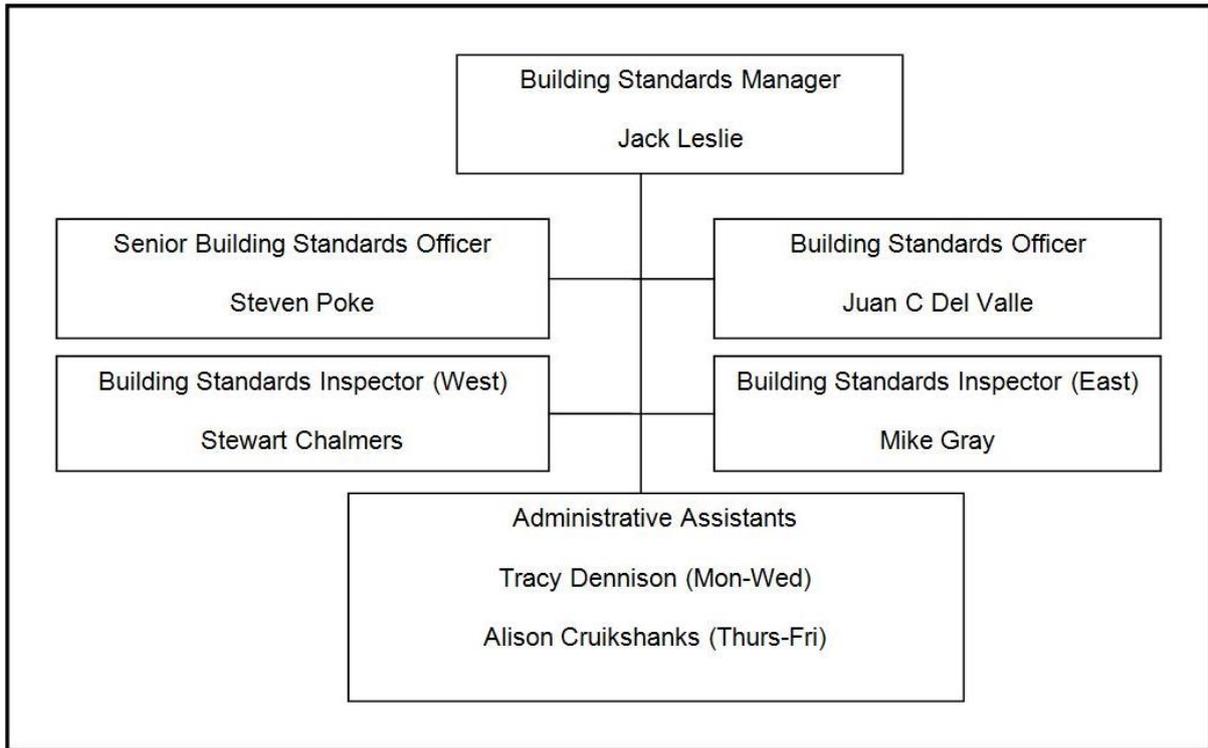
Service delivery

In addition to the main Verification services previously described Building Standards also provide or assist with the following:

- Licensing - provide expert technical advice, inspection services and certification relating to applications made under the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982.
- Home Improvement Grant – provide assessment and inspection services in conjunction with Orkney Health and Care for Private Sector Housing Grants made under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 and the Council's Scheme of Assistance.
- Small Repairs Grant Scheme - administer and provide an inspection service for the Council's Small Repairs Grant Scheme in conjunction with Orkney Care and Repair.
- Property Enquiry Certificates - accommodate requests for Property Enquiry Certificates.
- Information requests from internal and external bodies - e.g. Council's Corporate Services, Local Authority Building Standards in Scotland, Scottish Government Building Standards Division, Freedom of Information requests.
- Collection of housing statistics for onward transmission to the Scottish Government i.e. NB1-2 and Stock4.

Building Standards Team

The Building Standards team comprises a Manager, two Building Standards Officers, two Building Standards Inspectors and an Administrative Assistant. The organisational chart below is indicative of the current post holders:



Inspection areas

For the purpose of reasonable inquiry (inspection) we have broken the islands down to East and West inspection areas.

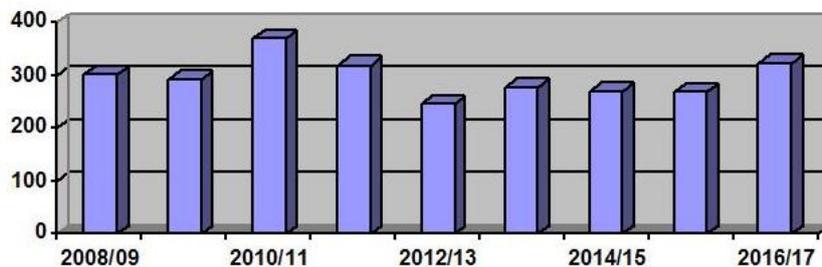
Stewart Chalmers, Building Standards Inspector, is responsible for inspection services in the West Mainland, West side Kirkwall and St Ola, Shapinsay, Stronsay, Eday, Sanday and Papa Westray.

Mike Gray, Building Standards Inspector, is responsible for inspection services in the East Mainland, East side Kirkwall and St Ola, Linked South Isles, Hoy, Flotta, Graemsay, Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre, Westray and North Ronaldsay.

Building Warrant Activity

The following graphs provide an indication of recent years' service activity:

Building Warrant Applications



2008-2009.	303.
2009-2010.	293.
2010-2011.	371.
2011-2012.	319.
2012-2013.	245.
2013-2014.	278.
2014-2015.	270.
2015-2016.	269.
2016-2017.	323.

The numbers of Building Warrants submitted in Orkney increased in the period up to 2005/2006 when a peak total of 520 Warrants were submitted representing an 65% increase since 2002/2003.

2016/2017 witnessed a 20% increase in Building Warrant activity compared to the previous year with 323 Warrants.

Schools Investment Programme

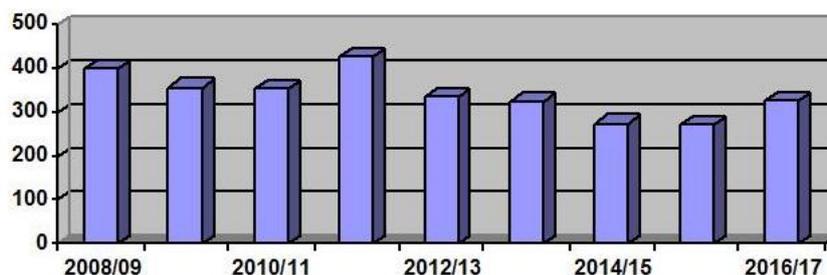
2011/2012 Warrants include those for the Councils Schools Investment Programme comprising a new Stromness Primary School, Kirkwall Grammar School, Halls of Residence and extension to the Pickaquoy Centre. The four developments with a combined estimated cost of works in the region of £58m is the largest building project undertaken in Orkney, were a corporate priority and were granted completion during 2013.

New Hospital and Healthcare Facility

A staged Building Warrant for the construction of a new integrated hospital and healthcare facility in Kirkwall was received in October 2016. With the cost of works estimated at approximately £60m this is the largest single development ever reviewed by the Building Standards service. With Stage 1 Foundations; Stage 2

Drainage; and Stage 3 Superstructure applications approved; works commenced on-site May 2017 and the development is due for completion spring 2019.

Completion Certificates Issued



2008-2009.	399.
2009-2010.	357.
2010-2011.	354.
2011-2012.	427.
2012-2013.	336.
2013-2014.	324.
2014-2015.	274.
2015-2016.	272.
2016-2017.	327.

Figures for the numbers of Completion Certificates issued steadily increased between 2003 to 2004 and 2008 to 2009 – 94% increase with a significant increase since 1 May 2005, coinciding with the commencement date for new Building Regulations. The high volume of Completion Certificates issued 2011 to 2012 is linked to a number of multi-plot housing developments being completed.

eBuildingStandards

The eBuilding Standards service was launched on 24 August 2016, which enabled the electronic submission of applications for Building Warrants and other related forms, such as Completion Certificates.

To access the eBuilding Standards service visit eDevelopment.scot - a single landing page leading both to the eBuilding Standards service and the ePlanning service launched in January 2016. Just one registration is needed, so if you are already registered on ePlanning.scot you will be able to use the same login details for eBuildingstandards.scot

Between 1 October and 31 December 2017 – 54 Building Warrants, 10 Amendment to Building Warrants, 2 Completion Certificates, 65 notice regarding start of work, 1 notice of work stage complete and 39 additional supporting document submissions were received via the eBuildingStandards portal.

Performance Framework

From 1 April 2013 Local Authority Verifiers have recorded performance against Key Performance Outcomes developed jointly by the Scottish Governments Building Standards Division and Local Authority Building Standards in Scotland. The KPOs have been introduced with a view to embedding a culture of continuous improvement underpinned by a greater focus on peer review, benchmarking and sharing of best practice. The following table provides a brief summary of our performance against the reportable outcomes in the inaugural year, [click here to view the National Building Standards Verification Performance Reports](#).

Orkney Island Council – Building Standards Service				
Summary KPO information				
	KPO1 – Average time to grant a Warrant*.	KPO2 - % of CCNPs fully achieved**.	KPO3 - % of 1st reports issued within agreed CA target***.	KPO3 - % of 1st reports issued within agreed 20 day target.
2013/2014.	52.71 Days.	26 of 50 = 52%.	No Warrants attracted customer agreement.	359 of 391 = 92%.
2014/2015.	57.30 Days.	84 of 137 = 61%.	3 of 3 =100%.	339 of 342 = 99%.
2015/2016.	53.69 Days.	153 of 185 = 82.7%.	3 of 3 = 100%.	365 of 370 = 98.65%.
2016/2017.	41.21 Days.	255 of 269 = 94.80%.	7 of 7 = 100%.	402 of 405 = 99.26%.
2017/2018 Q1.	42.77 Days.	43 of 49 = 87.75%.	1 of 1 = 100%.	134 of 135 = 99.26%.
2017/2018 Q2.	46.33 Days.	92 of 96 = 95.83%.	2 of 2 = 100%.	97 of 97 = 100%.
2017/2018 Q3.	65.79 Days.	57 of 64 = 89.06%.	2 of 2 = 100%.	60 of 60 = 100%.
2017/2018 Q4.	33.88 Days.	67 of 84 = 79.76%.	3 of 3 = 100%.	133 of 139 = 95.68%.

*Working days – does not reflect the proportionate time taken by the applicant or Verifier.

**does not reflect the level of CCNPs fully achieved by the Verifier.

***CA relates to Warrants with an estimated cost of works greater than £2m or where innovative design proposed.

In addition to the statutory KPOs additional performance targets are monitored to reflect continuous improvement in the following areas:

Period	Building Warrant applications recorded within 2 working days	Completion Certificate Submissions responded to within 14 days
2011/2012.	299 of 319 = 93.7%.	451 of 452 = 99.7%.
2012/2013.	232 of 245 = 94.7%.	332 of 334 = 99.4%.
2013/2014.	261 of 278 = 93.9%.	305 of 311 = 98%.
2014/2015	260 of 271 = 95.9%.	274 of 275 = 99.6%.
2015/2016.	243 of 269 = 90.33%.	264 of 264 = 100%.
2016/2017.	282 of 333 = 84.68%.	324 of 326 = 99.38%.
2017/2018 Q1.	92 of 115 = 80%.	71 of 73 = 97.25%.
2017/2018 Q2.	63 of 72 = 87.50%.	108 of 108 = 100%.
2017/2018 Q3.	56 of 68 = 82.35%.	78 of 78 = 100%.
2017/2018 Q4.	82 of 105 = 81.90%.	98 of 100 = 98%.

From the 1 April 2017, as a condition of the reappointment process, Building Standards will follow new Operating and Performance Frameworks incorporating revised outcomes and targets. Performance against these goals will be reported here from 1 July 2017. For customers who are dissatisfied with Verifier performance, the Building Standards Division Customer Performance Reporting Service can be accessed at the Scottish Government Building Standards Division: buildingstandards@gov.scot or by telephone on 01312446511.

Verification process.	Period.	Period.	Period.	Period.
	2017/2018 Q1.	2017/2018 Q2.	2017/2018 Q3.	2017/2018 Q4.
% of 1 st reports issued within 20 days (target 95%).	134 of 135 = 99.26%	97 of 97 = 100%.	60 of 60 = 100%.	133 of 139 = 95.68%.
% of Building Warrants issued within 10 days from receipt of all satisfactory information (target 90%).	44 of 80 = 55%	54 of 78 = 69%.	50 of 52 = 96.15%.	74 of 78 = 94.87%.
% of CCNPs fully achieved (local target 80%).	43 of 49 = 87.75%.	92 of 96 = 95.83%.	57 of 64 = 89.06%.	67 of 84 = 79.76%.
Verification fee income covers Verification service cost.	Income £113,301. Verification cost £72,371.	Income £104,830. Verification cost £76,436.	Income £95,534. Verification cost £75,490.	Income £89,096 Verification cost £78,530.
% of key Building Warrant process completed electronically for applications received via the eBuildingStandards portal. (target 75%).				
Plan checking.	92 of 92 = 100%.	72 of 72 = 100%.	38 of 38 = 100%.	104 of 104 = 100%.
Building Warrants issued.	82 of 82 = 100%.	73 of 73 = 100%.	33 of 33 = 100%.	70 of 70 = 100%.
Verification during construction.	134 of 134 = 100%.	198 of 198 = 100%.	152 of 152 = 100%.	185 of 185 Inspections = 100%.
Completion Certificates accepted.	6 of 6 = 100%.	22 of 22 = 100%.	15 of 15 = 100%.	41 of 41 = 100%.

3. Strategic Objectives

The overarching goal/vision of the service

To deliver a professional Building Standards service which is accessible and responsive to our customers wishes. Embedding a culture of continuous improvement while maintaining the public interest across all service areas.

Departmental issues to be addressed in the coming year

The introduction of eBuildingStandards has placed an additional operational burden on our existing staff resource. The added on-going tasks associated with provision of the electronic Building Standards service are having a negative impact on other service related development tasks. In an attempt to raise awareness of, and improve this position we propose to submit a growth-bid to add a Technician post to the existing team structure. Mindful of forecast budget pressures we are aware that this may not be easy to deliver.

Wherever possible we will prioritise actions not completed during 2016 – 2017. These include Risk Management Protocols relating to dangerous and defective buildings; and retention and disposal of non-current records. Undertaking a local customer satisfaction survey is also a high priority and we will target completion by Spring 2018.

Having successfully been reappointed as Building Standards Verifier for our geographical area for a six year period, commencing 1 May 2017, reappointment has introduced a new operational and performance framework effective from 1 April 2017. These set new and challenging performance targets for the years ahead. Figures for the first reporting period between 1 April to 30 June 2017 will provide a picture of how well we currently perform against these goals and determine where improvement measures are required in order to demonstrate that we continue to provide an effective, customer focused service.

The key strategic objectives for the coming year

The Council's values as set out in The Council Delivery Plan 2015 - 2018 are:

- Promoting survival – to support our communities.
- Promoting sustainability – to make sure economic, environmental and social factors are balanced.
- Promoting equality and fairness – to encourage services to provide equal opportunities for everyone.
- Working together – to overcome issues more effectively through partnership working.
- Working with communities – to involve Community Councils, community groups, voluntary groups and individuals in the process.
- Working to provide better services – to improve the planning and delivery of services.

The Council's priorities as set out in the Council Delivery Plan 2015 - 2018

1. Care and support for those who need it.
2. Promote successful, thriving communities.
3. Housing to meet the needs of Orkney's people.
4. A low carbon Orkney-Renewables, Energy and Opportunity.
5. Orkney's Economic Development.
6. Orkney's Transport Networks.
7. What we need to do.

The aim of Development and Infrastructure is to support the Council's mission statement to "Work together for a better Orkney" through the following Service objectives:

- Promoting economic growth and investment in Orkney, in traditional, innovative and emerging industries; seeking funding for initiatives that enable economic growth and additional employment.
- Providing Business Gateway services.
- Providing access to funding for both economic development and community development funding which levers other external funding to the county.
- Identifying, devising and progressing area or community based regeneration projects.
- Facilitating the transport of people and goods by air, sea and road through the provision of well-maintained and integrated transport network, including the operation of internal ferry, marine and towage services and island airfields.
- Appraising, advising, designing, procuring, supervising, contract managing, monitoring and project managing building and infrastructure projects including key elements of the Council house build programme, together with maintenance of all property assets.
- Providing oversight and monitoring the Council's Capital Programme process.
- Guiding and managing new development to ensure that it is appropriately sited, designed and constructed through Building, Planning and Regulatory Services.
- Protecting and enhancing Orkney's high quality natural and built environment including the maintenance of public spaces, care of the built heritage, archaeology and buildings, burial grounds and street cleansing.
- Providing high quality services to residents, communities, businesses and visitors including providing a well-managed, efficient, and effective waste collection and disposal service.
- Protecting the health, safety and welfare of people living, working and visiting Orkney by the provision of regulatory services that protect the safety of buildings, public health, and the rights of consumers.

The Building Standards Service specific Key Performance Outcomes identified at Section 4 link to many of the Council Delivery Plan 2015-2018 and Development and Infrastructure Service Plan April 2016 – March 2019 priorities and objectives.

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

Professional Expertise and Technical Processes

Protocols for dealing with work

Our existing suite of Risk Management Protocols will be continually monitored to reflect changes to legislation and procedures. Additional RMPs to be added as required improving the efficiency and predictability of the service.

Dangerous/Defective Building procedure

Local Authorities are required by Sections 28 and 29 of the Building (Scotland) Act 2003 to protect the public interest in relation to defective and dangerous buildings. This function is served by Building Standards for the Orkney Islands Area. To ensure a proportionate reaction to reports of defective or dangerous buildings we will refresh our procedures for this area of work and include the provision of Charging Orders introduced by The Buildings (Recovery of Expenses) (Scotland) Act 2014.

Records management

Formalise procedures for the retention of records as required by Section 24 of the Building (Scotland) Act 2003 and the Council's Retention and Disposal Schedule in an attempt to minimise historic physical storage of non-current records.

Performance management systems

Performance management systems (Service Plan, Balanced Scorecard, BS Continuous Improvement Plan, "How Good is our Council" self-evaluation assessment) will be adapted to reflect service priorities and objectives.

Training and development/CPD

Staff are encouraged and supported in development and training through the annual Employee Review and Development process. We will work with the Scottish Building Standards Division (BSD), Local Authority Building Standards in Scotland (LABSS), Highlands and Islands Consortium (H and IC) and Glasgow Caledonian University to identify and participate in training relevant to service delivery. Continued participation with our local CPD group, and with the Chartered Association of Building Engineers. Support and participate in the Councils Corporate Learning and Development Policy with particular emphasis on the iLearn modules.

Benchmarking/partnership work

Continued benchmarking and sharing of good practice through our membership of LABSS and the Highlands and Islands Consortium. Promote partnership working with the relevant person during reasonable inquiry and Completion Certificate process.

Commitment to work together on technical issues

We are committed to working together on technical matters to ensure consistency and predictability in our service delivery. Issues raised through team meetings, Consortium Group or LABSS are discussed locally and at national level through Forum Groups (Knowledge Hub). Provide the Technical Rep to link between LABSS and HandIC on all technical concerns raised. Examples include production of HandIC Consortium and LABSS Technical/Policy notes. Continued support for LABSS Scottish Type Approval Scheme.

Workforce planning

In 2010 a review was carried out of the Council's workforce management arrangements which highlighted a number of weaknesses. As a result the Council approved a framework of policies including a Learning and Development Policy; a competency framework; and a revised Performance Review and Development Scheme. We will continue to apply these policies during the coming year. In addition the Development and Infrastructure service developed a Workforce Plan in autumn 2016 identifying any future staffing requirements and the impact predicted budget cuts may have on delivery of services.

Quality Customer Experience

Customer communication strategies

Customer communication is primarily by letter or email; regular information updates are emailed to our agents group and posted on our website. Documents can be made available on request in accessible formats for those with sensory impairment or who have a first language other than English. Loop induction systems are available at the One Stop Shop and throughout the Council's premises.

Charter (local/national)

Our BS Customer Charter, which incorporates a national and local Customer Charter, is reviewed annually, with quarterly updates to promote KPO and eBuildingStandards progress. The Charter is available to view at our Offices and published prominently on the Council website.

Engagement (national and local forums)

Continuation of our local Planning and Building Standards Forum bringing changes to legislation and procedures to our Stakeholder's attention. Deliver regular local Building Standards newsletters to our stakeholders in an attempt to improve the quality of Building Warrant applications received. Participation in the national forum and encourage our local stakeholders to take an active part at national level.

Customer feedback (local and national)/analysing and changes systems.

Maintain the local Customer Satisfaction Questionnaire process (last survey completed February 2014) to bring customer driven improvements to service delivery. Previous upgrades include continuation of service during lunchtime; information updates posted regularly on our website, arrange new regulation training events, dedicated phone line for each member of staff, deliver a formal procedure for electronic communication, establish a local procedure for the number of documents presented with the initial Warrant application, provide clear guidance to ensure a consistent approach when calculating the estimated cost of works and associated Warrant fee. We will participate in the national questionnaire and encourage our Stakeholders to do the same, making all the information readily available on our Building Standards website.

Reasonable inquiry

It would appear that our customers expect a greater degree of on-site inspection by the Verifier than those raised in the risk based CCNP. To ensure we develop the correct balance of inspection to satisfy both customer expectation and our regulatory function we will continue to monitor our inspection services. This will be an ongoing process with an initial internal review focusing on on-site inspection procedures, inspection recording, and continued investigation of mobile building control functionality.

Customer expectations

The time taken to process and obtain a Building Warrant emerges as an important customer expectation. Amended Key Performance Outcomes introduced from 1 April 2017 require Verifiers to minimise the time taken to issue a first report or to issue a Building Warrant or Amendment of Building Warrant. With performance relating to this process available from 2013/2014, we will monitor performance against this and the further six reportable indicators introduced by the 2017 Performance Framework for Verifiers. Performance information will be made available quarterly on the Council's website, the Building Standards Balanced Scorecard, and Customer Charter. In the unlikely event that performance reaches unacceptable levels a review of services and service delivery will be undertaken in the first instance by the Principal Building Standards Officer.

Accessibility of service

Accessibility of our service is described in the Building Standards Customer Charter. We will expand on recent accessibility improvements and consult our customers on how best to enhance service accessibility for their convenience. Recent improvements include the provision of a direct dial facility for each member of the team and a continuation of the service at the Councils One-stop Shop between 09:00 – 17:00. A new area Office opened in Stromness in 2016 and we will explore opportunities for a Building Standards presence in this Office on at least one day each week.

Escape route

We are committed to the “escape route” process for customers who are dissatisfied with the agreed processing time of Building Warrant and Amendment of Building Warrant applications as described by KPO 1. We will follow procedures set in conjunction with Highlands and Islands Consortium, LABSS and Building Standards Division relative to this discipline. Current performance, positive customer feedback and introduction of Customer Agreements would suggest there will be little opportunity or appetite for the escape route process by local applicants.

Recognised external accreditations

Our service presently holds no recognised external accreditations. Our Council have adopted the ‘How Good is our Council’ approach to self-evaluation which is being developed at a service level. This is an ongoing process led by the Executive Director Development and Infrastructure.

Operational and Financial Efficiency

Team structures e.g. (area splits/specialist teams)

Our small team structure is indicated earlier in this document, area splits have been maintained for the purpose of reasonable inquiry and in particular the completion of Construction Compliance and Notification Plans. Each member of staff possess specialisms, and due to our close knit and open Office working environment these are shared daily with colleagues. Other specialist functions such as engineering assessment is outsourced to our Council’s Engineering team and e.g. Fire Engineering checks by qualified staff from other Local Authority Verifiers.

Time recording system

Our time recording system was developed to assist in providing accurate reporting for costs associated with expenditure on the Verification service. The system is simple, can be easily modified, and has proved a useful tool for various reporting purposes.

Financial monitoring/governance

Financial monitoring is robust and undertaken monthly by the Building Standards Manager on receipt of statements from the Finance Department. The monthly statements clearly identify income and spend patterns and sums can be transferred between cost centres to suit service activity or pressures.

IT systems

Our most effective IT system is the UNI-form Building Standards database used to record all matters concerning Building Warrant and Completion Certificate activity. The system was introduced for all applications received from August 2006, and historic data was captured from January 2000. To support the database we were successful in our funding bid for the Public Access Register which was connected in August 2011 and allows the public remote monitoring of application progress. The integrated document management system offers efficiencies relating to the

accessibility and retention of records. Recent IT upgrades include a move to Office 2010 incorporating Outlook which provides Out of Office alerts to those not directly connected to our Council's servers. Video link equipment has been provided in two service meeting rooms to aid video conferencing opportunities.

eBuilding Standards

eBuildingStandards was launched on 24 August 2016 and has become increasingly popular with our customer base. 65% of Building Warrant applications were received via the eBuildingStandards portal in the period 01 January – 31 March 2017. We have procured and installed the hardware and software required to ensure effective delivery of the system and will continue to investigate further developments such as the national plan sharing and mobile solutions.

Finance systems

The main finance system used by the Council is Integra supported by Capita for electronic and online payment services. Building Standards have recently introduced an online payment facility for Building Standards services.

Internal communication strategies

Internal communication strategies include the staff portal, electronic newsletters, electronic bulletins, and conveyance of information from Corporate Management Team - Planning and Regulatory Services Management Team - Building Standards Team meetings. The Chair and Vice-chair Development and Infrastructure Committee are invited to attend P and RS management meetings and cascade service information back to interested elected members.

Planning and Regulatory Services – Member Officer Working Group

The Planning and Regulatory Services Member Officer Working Group was set up to assist in the development, scrutiny and monitoring of service plans including the Building Standards Balanced Scorecard and Performance Framework. The Member Officer Working Group provides a platform to inform elected members on service specific issues.