



## **Building Standards Newsletter December 2018**

### **Verification Reappointment**

Orkney Islands Council was 1 of only 17 Building Standards Verifiers reappointed for a period of 6 years from 1 May 2017. The 6-year reappointment was based on the local authority demonstrating strong performance against a number of key performance outcomes. A further 12 local authorities were reappointed for 3 years, and the remaining 3 for 1 year.

### **Submission of Building Warrant and Amendment Applications**

We experience a high number of incomplete applications. In order to prevent any avoidable delays in processing your application, please ensure that you submit a complete package of information and fee payment. For example, in the case of a new house we would expect an application form, fee payment, location plan, site plan, foundation plan, floor plan, sections and elevations, technical specification, SAP assessment, structural details and calculations, and in a rural location percolation test results and private wastewater treatment system details.

### **Scottish Water - Drainage Connection**

In light of a recent review, Building Standards will no longer require a Scottish Water Certificate of Compliance for connection to sewer tails, required to service new building plots, prior to accepting completion or temporary occupation submission. This reflects the approach adopted by local authority verifiers across Scotland, but please note that this does not include brownfield sites where additional loading on existing drainage connection is proposed.

### **Contractor-Designed Structural Items**

The Building Standards system in Scotland is pre-emptive. In particular, the structural design and specification of all aspects of the proposed works must be finalised before a building warrant can be approved – with the exception of certain contractor-designed items identified in Annex C of the procedural guidance issued by Scottish Ministers, and summarised below:

- Timber roof trusses,
- Steelwork connections,
- Protective barriers in a house, and

- Glazing in a house.

You may wish to bear the above in mind when specifying proprietary structural solutions, as some manufacturers are unwilling to provide design information before an order is placed. Note a performance specification for any contractor-designed items should be provided prior to warrant approval by the project engineer.

In short, the design of any aspects of the structural design not explicitly identified in Annex C must be finalised prior to warrant approval.

To view the procedural guidance please visit

<https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/advice-and-guidance/2017/06/building-standards-procedural-handbook/documents/e0fd5363-d8e2-4359-b915-6345fb2786f6/e0fd5363-d8e2-4359-b915-6345fb2786f6/govscot%3Adocument>.

## **Customer Journey**

The Building Standards Customer Journey published by The Scottish Government includes valuable information for anyone who is planning to undertake building work or home improvements. The guide which clearly describes all aspects of the Building Standards system; includes roles and responsibilities; and web links to additional sources of supporting information.

To view the customer journey please visit <https://www.gov.scot/publications/building-standards-customer-journey/>.

## **Building Standards – Staff Changes**

Alison Cruikshanks left the council in September and Tracy Dennison has been covering the additional administration hours. Congratulations to Tracy who has been successful in her application for the Assistant Technician (Building Standards) post. This is a new temporary post to administer the increasing number of applications received via the eBuilding Standards portal. Tracy will start her new role early 2019 when we will be recruiting to fill the vacant Administration post.

## **eBuilding Standards**

Since introduction in August 2016 eBuilding Standards has quickly become the preferred option for submission of building warrants and other building standards forms. In the 6 months from April – September 2018 the service received 154 Building Warrants, 23 Amendments, 115 Additional Supporting Document, 17 Completion Certificate and 61 other forms via the portal. That's 370 submissions in total and almost 80% of all building warrants and amendments received in the period.

For electronic submissions it's important to remember to name, and number the drawings clearly and always include a scale bar, this is a procedural requirement. Correct document orientation i.e. portrait or landscape is essential to ensure your application can be processed quickly. Where you have submitted your building warrant electronically remember that additional supporting documents, inspection notices, completion certificate submissions etc. should also be uploaded via the portal.

## **An Offence**

Did you know that by occupying a new build, conversion, or extension without the required Completion or Temporary Occupation certificate you are committing an offence against the Building (Scotland) Act 2003? In doing so you could be subject to enforcement action and a fine. Please ensure that proper certification is in place before occupation, if in doubt ask your building inspector for advice.

## **Performance**

During 2017/18 our average time to grant a Building Warrant or Amendment was 46.12 days, 88% of Construction Compliance and Notification Plans were fully achieved, and 98% of 1st Reports were issued within 20 working days.

## **Building Standards Fees**

Scottish Ministers introduced a new Building Warrant Fee structure from 1st July 2017, that's the first increase in building warrant fees since 1st May 2005. The increase is expected to deliver an additional £3.5 million funding overall, with £2.5 million to support local authority service improvements, and £1.5 million to cover Scottish Government – Building Standards Division running costs. While increases have been applied to all cost of work bands, fixed fees have been raised by 50% for demolition/conversion only warrants to £150, 100% for extension of validity to £100, 200% for Late Building Warrant, and 300% increase for a Late Completion Certificate where no Building Warrant obtained. To encourage higher uptake of the certification process e.g. certificate of construction and certificate of design, higher discounts have been applied.

## **Additional Supporting Documents**

Generally, the initial assessment of your building warrant submission will raise a number of technical observations which must be discharged prior to warrant approval. When preparing your additional supporting information, it's important that you highlight any changes made to the original documents. For changes to text use bold text or a different font colour, for drawings emphasise amendments by use of a revision cloud. These simple steps will assist with our reassessment and reduce the time to grant the building warrant.

## **Construction Compliance and Notification Plan**

Prior to accepting a Completion Certificate submission, we must be satisfied that the works have been completed in accordance with the approved building warrant. The Construction Compliance and Notification Plan (CCNP) issued with building warrant approval identifies the risk-based inspections unique to your development. Where you fail to request the inspections identified in the CCNP, we may have to undertake disruptive or invasive inspection. Evidence shows the most common CCNP omission relates to external drainage. Don't delay, submit your inspection notice or contact your building standards inspector directly. Their details can be found on the CCNP.

## **National Customer Satisfaction Survey**

We have just received the results of the 2018 National Building Standards Customer Satisfaction Survey and achieved 8.2 out of 10 for overall satisfaction of the service provided. That's up on our 2017 result of 7.9 and significantly higher than the national average of 7.0. Thanks to everyone who took the time to complete the questionnaire.

## **Did You Know 2018**

- Building Standards received 326 Building Warrant, 85 Amendment to Warrant and 11 Stage applications.
- 76% of applications have been electronic submissions.
- 421 Building Warrants, Amendment to Warrants and Stages have been approved.

## **Contact Us**

If you have any comments on how the Building Standards Service in Orkney can be improved please do not hesitate to contact us by writing to us at: Building Standards, Council Offices, Kirkwall, Orkney, KW15 1NY. Alternatively, you can email your suggestions to: [building.standards@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:building.standards@orkney.gov.uk) or by calling 01856 873535.