

Document Control

Change History

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Approvals

This document requires the following approvals:

Title	Version Approved	Date of Approval
John-Paul Breslin	4	28/4/2022
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Stirling Council's Building Standards Service operates from the City of Stirling,

Stirling Council Building Standards Customer Service Standard Part One

What is the Purpose of the Customer Service Standard?

Our Customer Service Standard underpins the aims of the National Customer Charter. It sets out the standard of service our customers can expect when using Stirling Council as a Building Standards verifier.

Our Standard explains what you should expect from how we process your building warrant. The Standard aims to:

- Let you know what we do in dealing with your building warrant, how and when we contact you and how you can contact us.
- Tell you about our customer service commitments.
- Tell you the standard we aim to meet, including targets.
- Tell you what to do if we do not meet these standards.

The Standard also explains what we expect from you as an applicant so as to help us to process your warrant as efficiently as possible and ensure that we can make our service standard commitments.

The Standard begins by setting out who we are and the services that we provide

Q What you can expect from us as a Building Standards Service?

Our Priorities:

- As of the 1st of April 2022 the team receive feedback via the new Building Standards National Customer Survey which replaces the annual survey carried out by Pye Tait consulting. This will allow continuous opportunities for feedback from our customers throughout the Building Standards journey and can be instantly accessed and reviewed allowing greater more effective improvement opportunities. Survey can be accessed via this link <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/BuildingStandardsNationalSurvey/?la=Stirling>
- Stirling Council is ambitious about promoting economic development. The work of Building Standards is crucial to supporting economic development. This service standard sets out the processes, commitments and priorities that we will use to support economic development.
- The Community Empowerment Act 2015 has given powers to communities to become active in bringing forward development proposals and taking over Council assets. We expect to receive more and more development proposals being taken forward by community interest groups in the future. We are fully supportive of these community led initiatives and would encourage communities to speak to us as soon as possible so that we can do all that we can to make the regulatory considerations of these proposals as easy as possible for these applicants.
- Similarly, we are sympathetic to applicants facing urgent needs to adapt their home to accommodate disability functions.
- In addition there are national set priorities for Council to deal with external wall insulation.

Each of the above reasons form our overarching service standard:

Overarching Service Standard 1: We will provide an efficient service that provides for speedy determination of building warrants. We will prioritise the handling of economic development proposals, proposals submitted by community interest groups and for disability adaptations and external wall insulation.

Our service standard has been built up to support the principle of efficiency through digital handling of all information'. We are able to manage your building warrant quicker and easier if you submit your warrant through the E-Building Standards portal. The time savings through this method will be realised at every step of the warrant process.

We will provide you with a link to your approval on the day the warrant is approved. This means that you will no longer need to wait for plans to arrive through the post before you commence work.

Overarching Service Standard 2– Making an online submission will speed up the processing and consideration of your building warrant. In making an on-line submission we will be able to meet the timescales set out in Service Standards – Early Assessment of Your Building Warrant (page 8 below).

To assist us with meeting this commitment, when making your warrant submission please answer all the questions asked in the form. Failure to do so will lead to invalidation of your Building Warrant. Similarly if you have not provided the correct fee then we will not be able to validate your building warrant. No work can start on your building warrant until it is approved.

Further information on explaining the Customer journey during the Building Standards process can be found on the link below:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/building-standards-customer-journey/>

Q What you can expect from us in customer contact?

We are committed to providing a quality customer service.

- We will provide as much information on the website as we can to support the most frequently asked questions. This can be found at: <https://www.stirling.gov.uk/planning-building-the-environment/building-standards/>
- We will provide a Gateway Support Service for all general building standards enquiries. During normal office working hours you will be able to speak to an officer and get information of a general nature on the day of your request. Gateway Support can be contacted by email on buildingstandardsadmin@stirling.gov.uk
- If you would like to be kept informed with the progress of your warrant, you can speak with the Surveyor dealing with your warrant. We will contact you if we need to discuss your warrant.
- All Surveyors operate a diary system for time management with the aim of providing a quality customer service. If you wish to speak with the surveyor dealing with your warrant the following service commitment is made:

In each week every Surveyor will be available on 3 days to take your call or answer your email. The Surveyor will return your call/email within 48 hours (of the working week) of you making the call/email, unless the Surveyor is on leave or where other extenuating circumstances apply. Where possible the email response will provide a substantive response to your queries, but where this cannot be provided in this timescale then a timescale will be provided for when you can expect a substantive response.

1 day per week the surveyor will be undertaking site visits and will not generally be able to return your call/email that day.

To enable Surveyors to tackle complex work without distraction, 1 day per week your Surveyor will not be available for calls or to respond to emails, unless directed by their line manager.

In addition the following contact commitments are made:

If you email us or write to us

- We will ensure our response is plain English.
- We will direct you to further information online.

Help Us To Help You;

Providing the right information with your application will help us provide you with a speedy response, further information on submitting a good quality application can be found on the link below:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/making-quality-building-warrant-application-need-know/>

- Provide your Building Warrant reference in all correspondence.
- Provide an email address for contact.
- Usually we will be able to assess warrant information quicker if the package of information addresses all the points made in the vetting letter rather than providing a partial response.
- Submit all information including subsequent changes to meet vetting letter through the Scottish Government **portal**.
- Highlight changes by annotating the plans and including a cover letter.
- Remember to label all plans with clear accurate descriptions.
- If you supply a single point of contact this will help.
- The services of a qualified architect, or similar professional will usually be helpful to you in your submission.

Q What you can expect from us once the Building Standards Service has received my building warrant?

Service Standards - When a building warrant is received, we will;

Acknowledge your warrant application in writing by email.

Check to ensure it contains all the necessary information needed to decide on the proposal.

Check the fee is correct.

Checking validation of a warrant will be complete within 2 working days.

If your warrant is not validated then a letter will be issued that day. If you email us then we will be able to advise you that same day without waiting on the postal system.

Q If the application is valid it will be registered and dated according to the date of the receipt of the warrant?

If the warrant is not valid you will be asked for further information, or the correct fee if it is not correct. We should be in receipt of all information/outstanding fee within 14 days of the date of the notification. If the information/fee remains outstanding beyond a final reminder of 7 days, we will presume that you no longer wish to proceed and we will understand the warrant to be withdrawn. Upon receipt of all the necessary information and fee the warrant will be made valid with that date.

Service Standards - How We Will Communicate With You On Your Building Warrant

Where an email address is provided we will communicate by email. Providing an email and submitting your plans electronically will enable us to expedite your building warrant at every stage of process and communications

Where an application is submitted by an agent we will communicate with that agent. We will also advise the customer with a courtesy email at every stage of the process up to the issuing of a Building Warrant and at the expiry duration of Warrant (3 years). Where you have not provided a customer email with your submission the Gateway team will be in contact requesting these details.

We will provide the name and contact details of the Surveyor who has been assigned to process your warrant.

The case Surveyor will be the first point of contact relating to your warrant.

Service Standards – Handling of Information on Your Building Warrant

The Building Standards Register (Part 1 and Part 2) will be made available for public inspection at Teith House, Kerse Road, Stirling.

Your warrant will be handled through the Council's Uniform/IDOX electronic handling system.

Copies of building warrants will only be available for people with an interest in the warrant. There will be a charge for copies to meet our administrative costs, you can find information on charges following the links below:

<https://www.stirling.gov.uk/planning-building-the-environment/building-standards/building-warrant-fees/>

Your information will not be shared under data protection Act although Freedom of Information Act may impact on what we can make available. Further information on how we handle the publication of information can be viewed at: <https://my.stirling.gov.uk/services/council-and-government/data-protection-and-freedom-of-information/data-protection>

Service Standards – Early Assessment of Your Building Warrant

We aim to make an initial assessment of your warrant within 20 days of validation. Where everything is in order then digitally stamped plans and the Building Warrant will be sent direct to the agent without any further correspondence. We will also send a courtesy email direct to you as a customer.

In most occasions, however, we will require further information or clarity. We aim to provide a first response to your agent by email within 20 days. We have a target of doing so with 95% of cases if you have made your submission electronically. Applications that form priority developments (see overarching service standard 1) will have a target of 15 days.

Works less than £20,000 will usually be able to be assessed less than 20 days.

Our first response letter will set out the technical standards that are outstanding. We will provide as much detail as we can as to what is outstanding, but, as independent verifiers, we can't advise on what you need to do to respond to the outstanding matter. It should be noted that Engineers calculations (structure) will have to be peer reviewed, at cost to the Council, by an external SER Certified Engineer. This may cause an extended approval period for your application and should be considered at an early stage of your proposal. Alternatively, an SER Design Certificate submitted with your application could be an alternative.

Once you have returned the outstanding information we will aim to assess this information and provide you with a response within 10 days within 90% of all cases. It is helpful if you clearly annotate on revised plans the areas that you are addressing. If after consideration of your resubmitted information any matters are still outstanding then we will email you with the points still outstanding

Supporting our drive for early assessment and determination we will refuse building warrants where you have failed to provide any new information that addresses all outstanding matters in the preceding 9 months. We will write to you at 6 months to notify you that this deadline is approaching.

Service Standard – Speedy, Robust Inspections

With your warrant approval we will forward you a 'Construction Compliance Notification Plan'. This plan is intended to assist you, as well as allowing us to ensure verification of construction on site. The Construction Compliance Notification Plan sets out what we require and we explain the circumstances that lead to failure. Failure to adhere to the Notification plan may result in intrusive inspections and a possible delay in Acceptance of your Completion Submission.

You are required under the Building Scotland 2003 Act to give notification 7 days prior to commencement of work. You should notify us of your intended commencement within 7 days to allow to diary manage visiting your site. Where we have an up to date contact we will endeavour to contact you or your contractor prior to visiting your site with at least **2 days notice**.

Please be aware that, for your own benefit, inspection of drain tests is a fundamental requirement. To ensure that we are able to inspect these works please plan ahead and notify us with more than **2 days notice** of commencement of these works. When notifying the department that your drains are ready for witness testing please ensure all of the drainage installation is complete, is pretested, installed suitable pea gravel bedding with all substructure lintels fitted.

Service Standard – Giving You Assurance On Completion of Works

Once you submit a completion certificate then we will within 14 days go out and visit the site. If we are content with the works complete then we will issue a completion certificate within 5 days of site visit. To assist you will endeavour to identify critical completion documentation that will be required at the point approving the warrant. In particular final drain test, EPC Certificate, Sustainability Label, Electrical Installation Certificate/ Electrical Construction Certificate, spillage test, etc.

If the works have not been undertaken in accordance with the approved plans then we will issue correspondence listing points of failure. We may refuse the completion submission where the works are not deemed to satisfy the terms of the approved warrant. This could include works only partially completed or not completed to a satisfactory standard. In such circumstances then an Amendment to the Building Warrant may be required through formal submission.

In the interests of customer awareness we will monitor Building Warrants where completion certificates are not received within the 3 year duration of the building warrant and we will advise customers of the coming of the expiry date.

Performance Targets

Service Commitment– we are committed to early determination of building warrants and will aim to issue your Building Warrant within 65 working days of submission.

Our ability to meet this target will often be limited by the quality of the submission made, whether we are able to issue the warrant without requesting further information and your response to our request for information. In some ways then a more appropriate service commitment is the speed with which we assess the warrant and respond to you with areas that are outstanding.

Service Commitment – We are committed to providing you with a first response on your warrant submission within 20 working days.

As mentioned earlier, in addition to verifying Building Warrants we also provide other Building Standard services.

Non-Verifier Work

Dangerous Buildings

- Respond to 100% within 2 hours of the call being made. Where a building is deemed to be dangerous and the owner cannot take necessary remedial steps then we will work collaboratively with the emergency services to take immediate practical steps to protect the public and the building occupiers. We will advise all owners and affected parties of our actions under section 29 of the Building Scotland 2003 Act, including the cost of protective works that we have required to undertake.

Where a building is dangerous but not immediately dangerous and urgent action is not required we will issue a section 30 Notice under the Building Scotland 2003 Act. The Notice will give you 28 days to start work. An Owner can appeal to the Sheriff within 21 days or receipt of the Notice.

Investigation of Alleged Unauthorised Works

- We will respond to unauthorised works. We will advise you whether there is a breach and the actions we will be taking. Thereafter we will deal direct with the property owner. Where a complainant fails to provide a name then the matter will be treated as low priority. Contacts will be treated confidentially.

Requests for Confirmation of Exemption

- We will respond to 'Letters of Comfort' within 10 working days of enquiry. You will find all charges for Letters of Comfort at <https://www.stirling.gov.uk/planning-building-the-environment/building-standards/building-warrant-fees/>

National Building Standards Customer Charter

Part 2

Purpose:

The Building Standards Customer Charter provides information about the standards of service that all verifiers should meet. This gives customers the reassurance that a consistent, high quality service will be delivered no matter which verifier provides the service.

Our Aims:

To grant Building Warrants and accept Completion Certificates:

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

Our Vision/ Values:

To provide a professional and informative service to all our customers.

Our Commitments:

Nationally all local authority verifiers will:

1. Seek to reduce the time it takes for customers to obtain a building warrant or amendment to a building warrant.
2. Ensure continuous improvement around the robustness of verification assessments to ensure compliance.
3. Meet and seek to exceed customer expectations.
4. Carry out local customer satisfaction research, such as surveys, focus groups etc.
5. Address feedback obtained through local and national customer satisfaction research (including a National Customer Satisfaction Survey) to improve the customer experience.
6. Provide information on local formal complaints procedures, the LABSS Dispute Resolution Process, and the BSD Customer Performance Reporting Service, and refer customers as appropriate.
7. Provide accurate financial data that is evidence-based.
8. Engage and participate in partnership working at local and national level to identify and embed service improvements at a national level.
9. Adhere to a national annual performance report outlining our objectives, targets and performance.
10. Fully adhere to the commitments outlined in this Charter (including information on customer dissatisfaction in relation to building warrant processing timescales, processes and technical interpretation.
11. Use a consistent format for continuous improvement plans.

Our National Targets:

KPO1 Targets	
1.1	95% of first reports (for building warrants and amendments) issued within 20 days – all first reports (including BW's and amendments issued without a first report).
1.2	90% of building warrants and amendments issued within 10 days from receipt of all satisfactory information – all building warrants and amendments (not including BW's and amendments issued without a first report).
KPO2 Targets	
2.1	Targets to be developed as part of future review of KPO2.
KPO3 Targets	
3.1	National customer charter is published prominently on the website and incorporates version control detailing reviews (reviewed at least quarterly).
3.2	95% of BSD requests for information on a BSD 'Verifier Performance Reporting Service for Customers' case responded to by verifier within 5 days.
KPO4 Targets	
4.1	Minimum overall average satisfaction rating of 7.5 out of 10.
KPO5 Targets	
5.1	Building Standards verification fee income to cover indicative service costs (staff costs plus 30%).
KPO6 Targets	
6.1	Details of eBuilding Standards to be published prominently on the verifiers website.
6.2	75% of each key building warrant related process being done electronically. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan checking • Building warrant or amendments (and plans) being issued • Verification during construction • Completion certificates being accepted
• KPO7 Targets	
7.1	Annual performance report published prominently on website with version control (reviewed at least quarterly).
7.2	Annual performance report to include performance data in line with KPO's and associated targets (annually covering previous year eg April 2016 – March 2017).

Information:

National information on the verification performance framework can be found at the Scottish Government website <https://www.gov.scot/policies/building-standards/>