



The Building Standards service aims to ensure that buildings in Argyll and Bute comply with the Building Regulations. We do this by; providing a customer focussed service for the processing of Building Warrant applications, the inspection of construction work relating to Building Warrants in accordance with Construction Compliance and Notification Plans, and the verification of Completion Certificate submissions. In addition, we are responsible for enforcement relating to unauthorised works and dangerous buildings.

Other services offered include: Pre-Warrant discussions, Fast Track applications for minor works, an outreach service for people with specific service needs or who have difficulty reaching our offices, a search and/or copy application process for existing documentation and Section 50 Licensing certificates.

Within Argyll and Bute Building Warrant applications and fees received in 2014/15 suggest that there is still little confidence in the building industry going forward in the short term, however an increase in planning applications received does suggest that the outlook will be brighter.

Customer Service Excellence (CSE)

Our annual audit was on 11th December where we continued to demonstrate how we drive change and improvement relating to customer service. We retained the accreditation with 21 of the original 54 elements re-audited and achieving 18 compliances and 3 compliance plus.

eBuilding Standards Update

Our in house eBS continues, with participating invited agents only a present. In three, out of our four area offices, our staff have now had the required training. It is proposed that the final area office (Bute and Cowal) will join the pilot scheme in August.



New Council Offices for Helensburgh and Lomond Area

The new council offices in Helensburgh on the site of the former Clyde Street School are nearing completion.

Once completed it is proposed that all council services for the area with the exception of Community Services Adult care will be centralised and operate from the new facility. This will make council services much more accessible to the people of the Helensburgh and Lomond area.

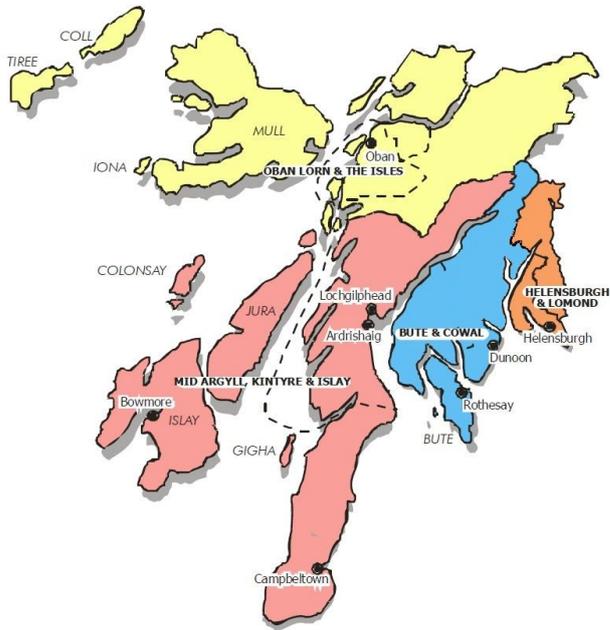
As with every new system that is put in place we are continuously identifying and dealing with any issues that arise and have also made the decision to remove the value of works limit for online submissions.

If this service is of interest please contact your area office as we are now looking for additional agents to register for using the online system.

Scottish Government e-Building Standards Update

The Scottish Government's national online eBuilding Standards system to supplement the successful ePlanning Scotland portal is currently on track. The expansion into Building Standards is planned for summer 2016 and will allow the national on-line submission of Building Warrant applications and Completion Certificates, as well as other related forms via the portal. Unfortunately it will only support the Model application forms and as such our additional application forms such as Confirmations of Completions etc. will still have to be accessed through the council's website.





Compliance

- Construction Compliance and Notification Plans (CCNP's) are now issued with all Building Warrants. The plans specify stages of construction when Building Standards are to be notified to undertake an inspection.
- It is the applicant's responsibility to contact Building Standards to arrange an inspection.
- We record where an applicant fails to adhere to the CCNP
- We record the most common aspects of non-compliance found on site.
- We report quarterly to the BSD on the number of CCNPs completed
- To date, in a lot of cases, Building Standards are still not being notified that works have commenced on site. As a result CCNPs are not being completed.
- **Please ensure that if you are handing over the project to the applicant at approval stage they are made aware of the roles of the applicant or "relevant person".**

Customer Satisfaction

Argyll and Bute Council Building Standards will continue to seek your views on our local service as the views of our regular users are very important and assist us in focusing our service delivery. I would be grateful therefore if you could spend a few minutes completing our [on-line customer satisfaction survey](#).



Outdoor Music Festival Success

Staff from the Oban Building Standards Team recently helped to ensure that a large outdoor music festival went ahead without any problems. More than 6000 people attended the "Skerryvore Decade Festival" which was held in Mossfield Stadium in Oban on Saturday 30th May. The event was a massive success with the town's cafes, restaurants, pubs and hotels all reporting a great weekend's trade from the festival.

As members of the Lorn Events Team Building Standards were consulted at an early stage and provided advice regarding the requirements for sanitary facilities and the general safety of people attending the event.

Building Standards Surveyor, Kenny Jamieson, carried out site visits on the Thursday and Friday and authorised the final "sign off" at 12pm on the day of the event. These visits involved inspection of the temporary stage, lighting rigs and other raised structures while ensuring that adequate toilets, lighting and means of escape were provided.

The success of the event has ensured that door is now open for similar events to be held in the town.



Quarterly Statistics

I can confirm that by proactively moving Building Warrant applications to area offices which have more capacity performance has held up well and I'd like to take this opportunity to publicly thank all staff for their hard work.

Argyll & Bute Council Building Standards Performance Statistics	Jan - Mar 15	
	target	Actual
The percentage of requests for a building warrant responded to within 20 days.	80%	90%
The average time taken to respond to a request for a completion certificate.	3 days	1.4 days
The percentage of building warrants issued (or otherwise determined) within six days.	80%	96.8%
The percentage of completion certificates issued/ accepted (or otherwise determined) within three days.	80%	100%
The percentage of applicants providing feedback that were either satisfied or very satisfied with our service.	84%	100%

Realising our potential together



Photograph Courtesy of Ross Campbell Photography, Copyright 2015

Grand Opening of Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park View Platform 'An Ceann Mor' (large headland)

Building Standards don't only receive warrant applications for houses and commercial buildings.

The Helensburgh and Lomond based team recently processed a warrant application for an unusual structure at Inveruglas which was opened on 13th May amidst a flurry of media attention by the Minister for Rural Affairs, Richard Lochhead.

Local Authority Building Standards Scotland (LABSS) Website Launched

At their annual AGM held in the Lighthouse, Glasgow on 14th May LABSS launched their new website for members and non-members alike. The website is much more user friendly than its predecessor and is highly informative. The website can be accessed at: <http://www.labss.org/>.

User Forums

Our annual joint User Forums with Development Management were held earlier this year in February and the PowerPoint presentation which provided information on the revised Section 6 Technical Standards which come in to force in October this year is now available on our [webpages](#), should you wish to view it again.

Looking Forward

Our key objective for the coming year will be to continue to align our service delivery with the performance framework developed by the Scottish Government and supported by local authorities to improve the quality, compliance, consistency and predictability of verification activities. In addition, the Building Standards service will continue to engage with, support and work with our Clyde Valley Consortium partners to promote consistency and predictability of the verification service across the consortium area.

Works Not Requiring A Building Warrant

Under the current Building (Scotland) Act certain works to existing properties are exempt from Building Warrant approval albeit the work must comply with the Technical Standards. For example, electrical works to houses - detached, semi-detached or terraced **provided** they have no storey at a height over 4.5m.

SELECT in conjunction with Electrical Safety First, have launched a joint advertising and video campaign [Don't Die For DIY](#). The campaign is aimed at highlighting the dangers of attempting electrical work without using a properly qualified electrician.

Did You Know?

- If you provide your e-mail address, we will e-mail any correspondence to speed up the process. Please ensure the e-mail address you provide is current, legible and spelled correctly.
- If you provide a certificate of design **along** with your application form, the fee is reduced by 10%. Please ensure you submit the correct fee!
- If you state on your application form that you will submit a certificate of construction, you will also get a fee reduction, in this instance it is 1%. You must submit the correct certificate on completion. If you don't, we won't accept your submission until we receive the fee that was deducted at the time of application.
- If you do not provide all the information needed to approve your warrant after 3 months, we may refuse it.
- Only the Applicant or the Agent can fill in the Completion Certificate, not the building contractor, unless they are noted as agent on the application form!
- A Completion Certificate will only be considered for a valid Building Warrant.

For more information, please see our [website](#).

Realising our potential together

Argyll and Bute Council Buy With Confidence scheme

Protecting consumers - supporting business

This scheme which continues to gather pace is used by a number of local authorities across the UK to provide consumers with a list of approved traders in their area - local businesses that have given their commitment to fair trading.

Buy With Confidence gives people the reassurance that the members have been vetted by our Trading Standards, are committed to trading fairly and deliver a high level of customer service.

In order to become a BWC member, a business must apply or be recommended to join the scheme and must then pass a set of tailored background checks. Membership of the scheme is not given lightly – amongst other checks, each applicant will have their complaints history reviewed and will receive a visit from Trading Standards.

Good references are required from previous customers and applicants must agree to abide by the scheme's code of conduct, which requires them to follow the letter and spirit of the law.

Only if all the scheme requirements are met will a business be granted membership and their conduct will be continually monitored.

The target sector for the scheme is those working in the home improvement sector.

Further information is available on the council website at:

<http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/approved-trader-scheme>

If businesses are interested in joining the scheme they should call Argyll and Bute Council's Trading Standards team on 01546 605519.

Guidance

We continue to develop our suite of guidance notes publishing them in English and Gaelic. These guidance notes are available in hard copy from local area offices or alternatively [online](#).

Feedback on these documents is always very welcome.

Performance and Progress

Our Balanced Scorecard, which is submitted annually to Scottish Government focuses on three core perspectives with two cross cutting themes as another key element of our service improvement activities:

1. Professional Expertise & Technical Processes
2. Quality Customer Experience
3. Operational and Financial Efficiency

A recent national review of our reporting arrangements has resulted in a revised Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) template, a summary of which forms part of the Balanced Scorecard. The CIP is updated quarterly and submitted to the Scottish Government to show how we are progressing to improve and develop our service provision. Copies of these documents can be viewed [online](#).

News from the Building Standards Division of the Scottish Government

Revised Section 6: Energy standards and guidance

Please remember that as from the 1st October 2015 the new Technical Standards come in to force. These can be viewed and/or download from the Scottish Government's [website](#).

CPD Events

Due to insufficient demand and financial constraints the proposed CPD events to be held in partnership with GCU in December of last year and February of this year were cancelled. I would hope to try and rearrange the events for the autumn of this year.

If you are interested in attending our proposed CPD events or you have any additional ideas for CPD topics please contact [me](#).

Staff Update

It gives me great pleasure to announce that Katherine McKerral, who has been working as part of the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and Islay team has recently been awarded a first class honours degree in Building Surveying. It is heartening to see our young staff progressing, and doubly so in a traditionally male dominated profession.

