

Welcome to another edition of our Newsletter- Keeping you informed of any changes in Building Standards

June 2019

# Building Standards Newsletter

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## Financial Position

The financial outlook for Local Authorities in Scotland is still difficult with year on year savings required, Argyll and Bute Council requires to save a further £5 million in next financial year.

Building Standards through commercialisation continue to generate a balanced budget thus maintaining staffing levels. Through regular checking of our performance we will ensure that any commercialisation will not impact on the service we provide as 'Verifier' for the Argyll and Bute Council area.

To assist development within Argyll and Bute, Argyll and Bute Building Standards have until now utilised the 2012 edition of the national Building Costs Index Scotland (BCIS) to calculate the appropriate Building Warrant fee payable per application.

It is no longer possible to sustain this and Argyll and Bute Building Standards will now calculate the Building Warrant fee payable per the current national BCIS figures. All warrant applications will be affected by this increase which we propose to introduce with immediate effect.

For example in domestic new build (including extensions etc;) this will see us use the figures of £1800/m<sup>2</sup> for calculating ground floor/single floor costings & £900/m<sup>2</sup> for all subsequent floor costings.

## Electronic Stamping of Drawings

Submissions of applications via the Scottish Government Portal, have continued to increase steadily since its launch in August 2016.

However one of the major issues, was the ability to stamp plans electronically. With the promise of a national solution by the Scottish Government failing to materialise and in order to continue to provide our customers with a high standard of service, Argyll and Bute Building Standards developed our own electronic stamping facility which was successfully trialled in Helensburgh and Lomond and with effect from 11<sup>th</sup> June 2019 has now been rolled out across all four area offices.

Please note that the stamped drawings are being sent back as a multiple PDF document(s) and the electronic stamp appears in the centre of each drawing. Feedback on this new functionality would be welcome and should be emailed direct to [bsonlinesubmission@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:bsonlinesubmission@argyll-bute.gov.uk)

There will now be no requirement to submit a hard copy of the 'Agreed' plans prior to approval.

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For more information, please see our website, [www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/building-standards](http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/building-standards) or call our Customer Service Centre on 01546 605518. If you have any comments on how to improve our service to you, please complete our Service Improvement Suggestion form available on our Performance and Customer Care webpage or in the leaflet stands in your local area office.

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## **Staff Update**

Our Head of Service Angus Gilmour is retiring on the 28<sup>th</sup> June 2019. Our new Head of Service will be Fergus Murray, current Head of Economic Development and Strategic Trans who will take over the revised service of Development and Economic Growth.

Billy Dickson Building Standards Surveyor, Bute and Cowal has retired as of the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2019. It is our intention to fill the vacant post.

It goes without saying that we wish them both well and thank them for their years of service.

We will continue to operate as a virtual team, redirecting applications to other area offices who have the capacity ensuring that no applicant is disadvantaged.

## **National Customer Survey**

In last year's National Customer Satisfaction Survey, carried out by the Building Standards Division of the Scottish Government, our rating out of 10 was 8.1 (81%) one of the best in the country with the average rate being 7.

As our service users, we would be grateful to receive any suggestions on how we can further improve on our customer focused service delivery and national figure result.

## **Customer Service Excellence (CSE)**

Our fifth year of rolling audit took place on the 6<sup>th</sup> December 2018 and due in no small part to our regular users comments made to the assessor, either in person or by telephone, we have once again successfully retained full compliance on the 57 criterion. In addition we received a further 3 compliance pluses, now making a total of 15 compliance pluses, the most held in any section or service within the Council. As a result the team and I would like to thank all our service users for their continued support.

## **Customer Satisfaction**

Argyll and Bute Council Building Standards will continue to seek your views on our local service. The views of our regular users are very important to us and assist in focusing our service delivery.

We would be grateful therefore if you could spend a few minutes completing our on-line customer satisfaction survey.

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