

Building Standards Newsletter

May 2013



Argyll & Bute Building Standards realise that the service we provide assists the construction industry to retain and create jobs and as a result we endeavour to provide the quickest and most professional verifier service we can. During the period January – March 2013 Argyll & Bute Building Standards approved warrants to a value of £15.5m. During the last quarter we exceeded all performance related target response times authority wide.

Quarterly Statistics

Argyll & Bute Council Building Standards Performance Statistics	Jan - Mar 13	
	target	Actual
The percentage of requests for a Building Warrant responded to within 20 days.	80%	95.2%
The average time taken to respond to a request for a completion certificate.	3 days	2days
The percentage of building warrants issued (or otherwise determined) within six days.	80%	97.0%
The percentage of completion certificates issued/ accepted (or otherwise determined) within three days.	80%	93.9%

Construction Compliance and Notification Plans

As highlighted in the December newsletter the new Performance Framework developed to improve the quality, compliance, consistency and predictability of verification activities carried out by Scottish Local Authorities, was introduced last year for all Building Warrant applications received from 1st October 2012. The framework consists of 9 Key Performance Outcomes. In order to meet the needs of the new performance framework, in particular, Key Performance

Outcome 2 – Increased quality of compliance during the construction processes, we now issue Construction Compliance and Notification Plans (CCNP) with each Building Warrant approval, to encourage better compliance of the built product. The '[Verification During Construction](#)' handbook has been produced to support the new performance framework. Developed by Local Authority Building Standards Scotland (LABSS), the approach is supported by the Building Standards Division of the Scottish Government. The intention of this plan is to promote quality and consistency of compliance assessment by undertaking timed and proportionate reasonable inquiries using a risk-based approach to inspection and other forms of assessment. The plan will also detail any alternative to site visits deemed appropriate by the Verifier.

The CCNP is issued with the building warrant approval and is very important. It sets out the construction stages that the Verifier has identified for site visits or other alternative methods to check compliance. It clarifies when the applicant or developer should notify the Verifier, and the purpose of those notifications, to allow sufficient time for the Verifier to respond as appropriate. When the applicant uses an agent, the CCNP should be sent by the agent to the applicant or developer for passing to the builder. This is important to make sure the CCNP notifications are made to the Verifier. To this aim you should inform the building standards surveyor at each of the key construction stages indicated on the plan. Should you require further guidance your surveyor will be able to assist at the commencement inspection, and throughout the construction phase. Building Standards surveyors cannot and are not required to supervise or monitor every activity on a building project nor can they be present at all times. The supervision of building work is the responsibility of the building owner or developer who should appoint a building professional to supervise the work to ensure the standard of workmanship is satisfactory and meets the building regulations. Responsibility for compliance with the building regulations lies with the relevant person (usually the owner or developer), who has to certify all the completed work as being in accordance with the approved plans, details and building regulations, by the submission of a Completion Certificate to the Verifier. **Failure to notify the verifier at the key construction stages indicated may necessitate the verifier requiring disruptive surveys to verify the work carried out. This will likely cost the applicant additional expense and delay the issue of the completion certificate.**

Realising our potential together

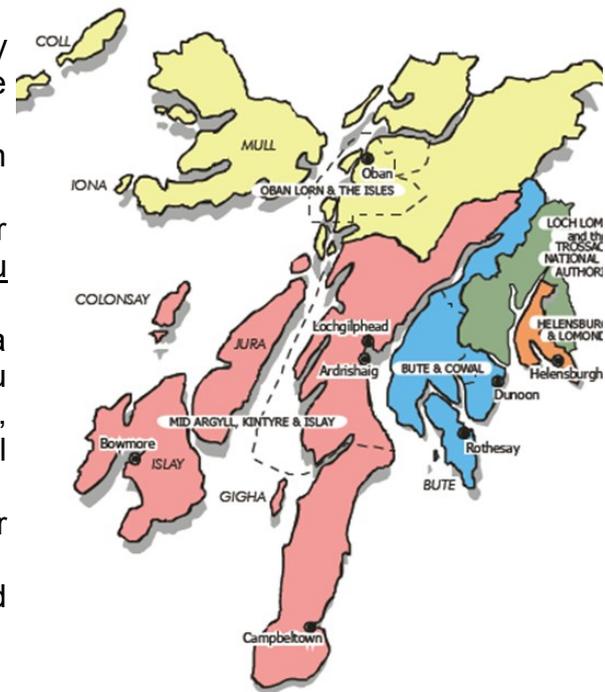
Did You Know?

- 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 and spelled correctly.
- Only the Applicant or the Agent can fill in the Completion Certificate, not the builder!
- 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 get a fee reduction. You must submit the correct certificate on completion. If you don't, we won't accept your completion until we receive the additional fee.
- If you do not provide all the information needed to approve your warrant after 3 months, we may refuse it.
- A Completion Certificate will only be considered for a valid warrant.

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

2013 Changes to Section 6 – Energy

The Scottish Government has published consultation documents for further improvements to Section 6 of the Technical Handbook, to be introduced in January 2014. This consultation presents proposals for the improvement of energy efficiency and reduction in greenhouse gas emissions arising from both the construction of new buildings and where work is carried out to existing buildings. Changes proposed are intended to deliver a 45% reduction on 2007 emissions for new homes (21% on 2010 standards) and a 60% reduction on 2007 emissions for new non-domestic buildings (43% on 2010 standards). Whilst the proposed improvements are below those recommended in the 2007 Sullivan Report, they still represent a significant step change in performance of new buildings. Given the need to both reduce CO2 emissions and promote sustainable economic growth, the proposed standards offer a balanced approach for the construction industry. Full details are available on the BSD website at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/01/4018>, Written responses were invited by 15 April 2013 and I can confirm that Argyll & Bute Building Standards have submitted a response to the consultation broadly in agreement with the proposed changes.



e-Building Standards

Progress: The development of the I.T system and electronic forms has taken longer than we had originally envisaged however they are now nearing readiness and it is now hoped to commence our trial from the Helensburgh office from **June 2013**. The plan is that all Building Warrant applications, and associated amendments with a value of £40,000 or less, including the Completion Certificate submission will be handled as an electronic submission irrespective of which area office the application was lodged in and whether or not it was made in paper form or by electronic means.

To allow our trial to be successful we do need 'volunteer agents' willing to trial the system in partnership with us. Several agents have as a result of last year's user forums already expressed an interest in assisting us and I will be contacting them in the near future to outline how the trial will operate. If you would like to be part of the trial please contact me by [e-mail](#).

Customer Satisfaction

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](#).

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