

Fife Council
Building Standards & Public Safety



Building Standards Verification Annual Performance Report 2025-2026

Verifier:

Fife Council
Protective Services
Building Standards & Public Safety Team

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1. Introduction to Fife Council

The verification performance report is a strategic planning and management tool that provides information about the local authority building standards service, communicates the vision and strategy, and sets out performance against strategic goals and targets.

Building standards verifiers in Scotland are required to utilise the performance report to manage, monitor, review and develop strategies for their business, and should focus on the performance framework's core perspectives and cross-cutting themes.

Fife Council

Fife is the third largest local authority in Scotland with an annual budget exceeding £800 million and around 18,000 full time equivalent employees delivering more than 900 individual services to the people of Fife each year.

Covering an area of around 500 square miles, Fife is home to a population of over 370,000 people (around 7% of the population of Scotland) and is one of Scotland's most vibrant areas for business and tourism.

Centrally located and flanked by the Firth of Forth, the Firth of Tay and the North Sea, Fife has the oldest university in Scotland, is the ancestral home of the Scottish Kings and the home of golf with a varied and attractive landscape that includes forests, hills, lochs and 115 miles of coastline with some of Scotland's finest award winning beaches.

Fife has a mixed rural and urban landscape with the three largest towns (in terms of population) being Kirkcaldy, Dunfermline and Glenrothes accounting for around 40% of the population of Fife.



Major employers and main employment sectors

In 2015, the Office for National Statistics shows 25% of Gross Value Added (GVA) in Fife is derived from public administration, education and health. Fife Council and the NHS being most significant in this sector.

Other sectors such as transport, distribution, hotels and catering (16%), financial and insurance activities and business services (10%) and construction (8%) also make crucial contributions to the Fife economy.

Fife's manufacturing sector (20%) still remains a very important contributor to GVA and its size is still large relative to other areas of Scotland, perhaps offering Fife a competitive advantage should this sector experience a rise in activity.

Examples of Fife businesses include:

- University of St Andrews, Fife College and SRUC Elmwood Campus in the Higher & Further Education sector
- Lloyds Banking Group, Sainsbury's Bank, BSkyB, Paywizard and Dunfermline Building Society in the Financial & Business sector
- Babcock Marine LTD, CR Smith, FMC Technologies, Parsons Peebles, Fifab, Smith Anderson, Oceaneering, Optos Ltd, Havelock, Ingenico, Thornton Thomassetti, Fife Joinery Manufacturing Ltd and Raytheon UK in the Manufacturing/engineering sector
- Fairmont Hotel St Andrews, the Old Course Hotel Golf Resort and Spa, Balbirnie House Hotel and Deep Sea World in the Tourism sector.
- Kettle Produce, Quaker Oats, Carr's Flour Mill and Diageo in the Food & Drink sector.

Building Standards & Public Safety Team

The team has four sections providing the following services:

Building Standards:

- Verification: all associated building warrant services and any related enforcement actions under the Building (Scotland) Act 2003
- Pre-Application and customer advice
- Property Services/Inspections

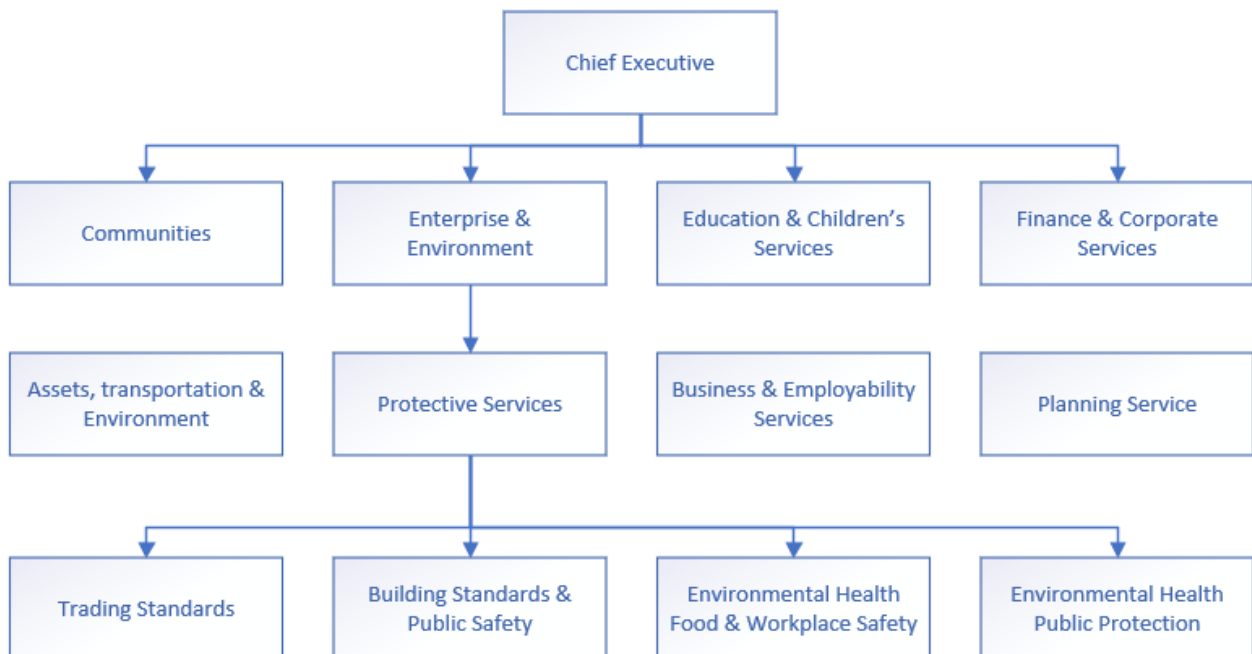
Public Safety

- Dangerous/defective Buildings – Including emergency out of hours
- Licensing Consultation Services: Liquor, HMO, Places of Entertainment and other miscellaneous licensing services
- Safety at Sports Grounds and Raised Structures
- Grants and Scheme of Assistance joint working across the Council and with external partners under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006
- Private sector housing condition responsibilities such as Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMO's)

Operational Support

- Case officer support, including general enquiries & issuing approval documents
- Overseeing projects
- Supporting and developing IT within the team, including case management systems and mobile devices
- Web site development
- Debt recovery

Fife Council Organisational Chart



2. Building Standards Verification Service Information

The purpose of the building standards system is to protect the public interest. The system sets out the essential standards that are required to be met when building work or conversion of a building takes place to meet building regulations.

The building standards system checks that proposed building work or conversion of a building meets standards; inspections are limited to a minimal necessary to ensure that legislation is not avoided. The control of work on site is not down to the system but is a matter for contracts and arrangements in place between a builder and client.

Verifiers, appointed by Scottish Ministers are responsible for the independent checking of applications for building warrants to construct or demolish buildings, to provide services, fittings or equipment in buildings, or for conversions

Fife Council was appointed by Scottish Ministers as the sole verifier for Fife and is responsible for all building warrant (verification) and associated statutory services in Fife.

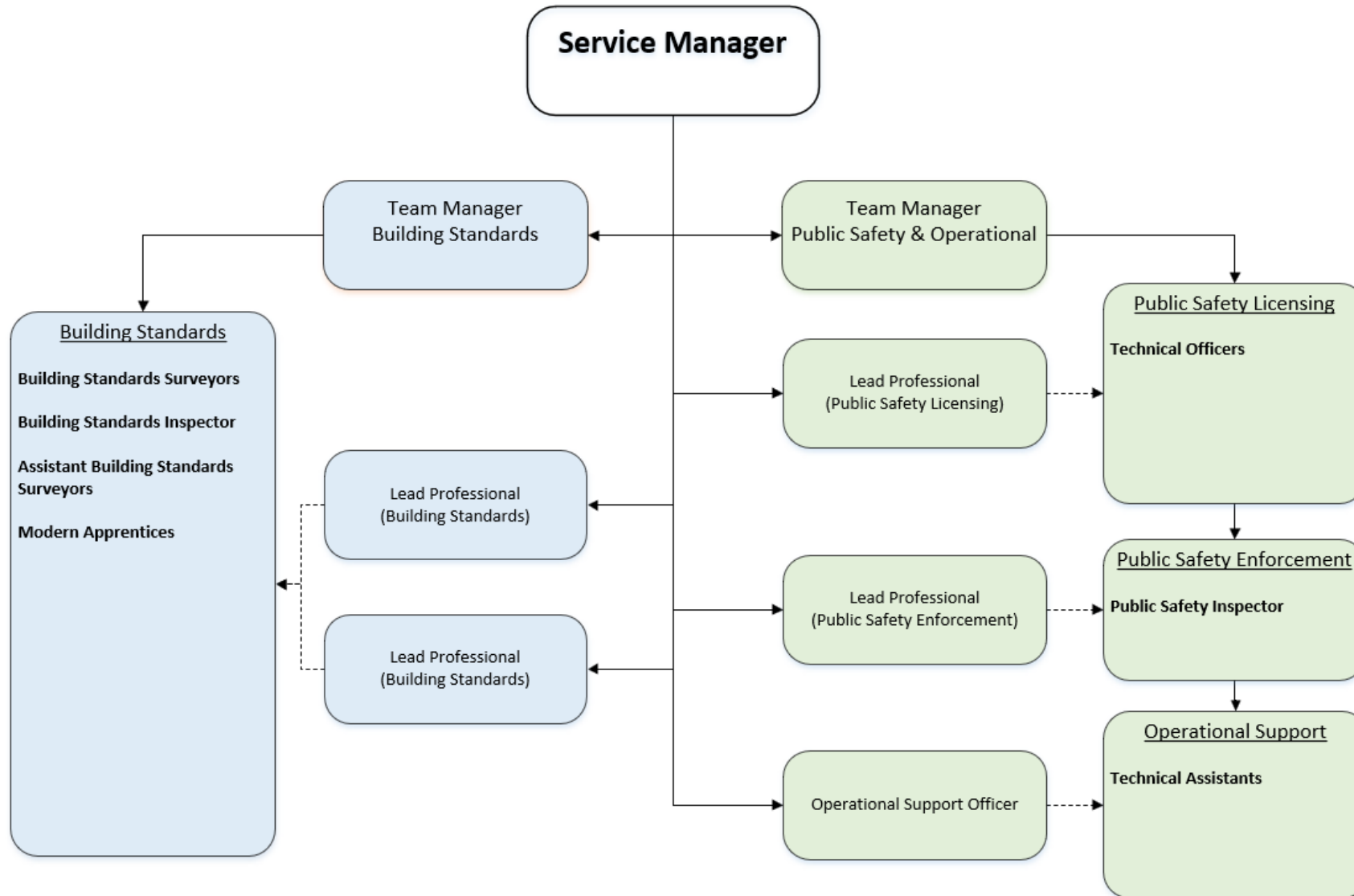
Building Standards & Public Safety within Fife Council

The Building Standards and Public Safety (BS&PS) Team sits within the Enterprise & Environment Directorate as part of Protective Services.

The verification service is based in Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes. All staff have currently chosen a blended work style and work mainly from home with limited office time. This approach provides for the efficiencies of a single office base whilst allowing for local service delivery and engagement with customers.

The Building Standards team's main function and services are the assessment and approval of Building Warrants and the verification of the approved work on site including any associated enforcement, working closely with colleagues within our Service and across the Council.

Building Standards & Public Safety 2025 Structure



3. Strategic Objectives

Corporate Objectives

The Plan for Fife, our Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2017-2027 provides a clear focus for all Fife Council plans and contains our Vision for Fife - A Fairer Fife. By 2027 we want Fife to be a place where all residents live good lives, make informed choices and have a sense of control so that they can reach their full potential and where all children are safe, happy and healthy. We also want Fife to be a place where we make best use of our assets and facilities, while sustaining them for future generations.

Within this overall vision, we have identified four priority themes to direct our work over the next ten years. These are:

1. **Opportunities for All**
Opportunities for All is about ensuring that no-one is left behind. We aim to ensure that every Fifer can access opportunities in education, training, jobs and wider society, and that all Fifers have equal access to the support and advice they might need to support a fulfilling and decent life.
2. **Thriving Places**
Thriving Places are safe, well designed and maintained places that promote wellbeing, where people are proud to be, and where they have access to the services and facilities they need at different stages of their lives.
3. **Inclusive Growth and Jobs**
Growth in the local economy should benefit everyone and shouldn't pass people and places by. We will therefore focus on improving investment, growth and participation by businesses, people and communities, particularly in the mid-Fife area. We aim to support businesses to grow and to make sure that communities benefit from new business investment.
4. **Community Led Services**
Community Led Services means putting communities and service users at the heart of how we design services and building on the strengths and assets we have in our workforce and in our communities in order to deliver valued services.

Service Objectives

Key objectives of the Service are to achieve a safe, healthy, clean, and fair-trading environment for residents, businesses, and visitors. We aim to achieve this through activities which monitor compliance with trading standards, environmental health and building standards laws.

Departmental issues to be addressed in the coming year

The successful team realignments in 2013 and 2019 provided a further plan for 2028 has been developed to re-invest fee income within the verification team and increase staff numbers. This plan has recently been adjusted to include a second Team Manager post to strengthen our focus on quality, training and competency assessments.

Key strategic objectives for the coming year

We are expecting some challenges during 2025-26 as the number of staff leaving, mainly due to retirement, continues to exceed the number we can recruit or train.

We will continue training and development as part of the 'grow your own' approach to recruitment. There is a national shortage of qualified Building Standards staff and we will continue to give opportunities to young people and to offer internal promotion whenever possible.

Professional Expertise and Technical Processes

The current team structure builds on previous changes to provide a best value inspection resource to meet growing compliance workload, manage risk and support performance, expertise and quality developments. The structure includes a Team Manager role to run processes and projects across the whole team; this makes decision making quicker, reduces duplication. This has allowed us to reduce the number of managers and supervisors and we aim to increase the number of case officers.

The recently completed competency assessment covering all of our staff is being evaluated and a training plan is being developed to address any weaknesses as well as preparing the team for new technology and working practices.

A review of our processes and procedures will be undertaken this financial year. These include deemed refusals, expired warrants, occupation without completion certificates or temporary occupation certificates in place are all areas where we are seeking to support customer process compliance.

Quality Customer Experience

The move to hybrid working supports the Council's environmental targets as well as reducing its budget. Our first electric vehicle has been purchased, and we plan to move all case officers to using electric vehicles over the next 3-5 years. This will allow us to respond more quickly to inspection requests, increase the number of compliance interventions as staff numbers increase and also cut our carbon emissions at the same time.

The new national customer survey now gives us real time access to local contributions. We will be developing a process to monitor and review the feedback and the results will also influence the development of policies and processes.

Operational and Financial Efficiency

Our process for scheduling site inspections and giving customers a single point of contact has worked well and is being further enhanced by adding a web form for these requests.

The use of compact activity cameras is being trialled. These devices offer high quality photos and videos that can be reviewed after a site inspection; this allows us to improve the quality and also to expand the type of projects that can be inspected by Assistant Building Standards Surveyors and Building Standards Inspectors.

New laptop/tablet devices for case officers will be trialled this year as part of a project with our IT colleagues. Once suitable devices have been identified, the replacement of current devices will begin.

4. Outcomes and Targets

The national verification performance framework is based on three core perspectives:

- Professional Expertise and Technical Processes;
- Quality Customer Experience; and
- Operational and Financial Efficiency.

here are also three cross-cutting themes, comprising:

- Public Interest;
- Continuous Improvement; and
- Partnership Working.

Summary of Key Performance Outcomes (KPOs)

Professional Expertise and Technical Processes	
KPO1	Minimise time taken to issue a first report or issue a building warrant or amendment to building warrant.
KPO2	Increase quality of compliance assessment during the construction processes
Quality Customer Experience	
KPO3	Commit to the building standards customer charter
KPO4	Understand and respond to the customer experience
Operational and Financial Efficiency	
KPO5	Maintain financial governance
KPO6	Commit to eBuilding Standards
KPO7	Commit to objectives outlined in the annual performance report

Summary of Key Performance Targets

KPO1 Targets	
1.B	95% of first reports (for building warrants and amendments) issued within 20 days – all first reports (including BWs and amendments issued without a first report).
1.C	90% of building warrants and amendments issued within 10 days from receipt of all satisfactory information – all building warrants and amendments (not including BWs and amendments issued without a first report).
KPO2 Targets	
	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 verification service costs (staff costs plus 30%).
KPO6 Targets	
6.1	Details of eBuilding Standards to be published prominently on the verifier's 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 KPOs and associated targets (annually covering previous year e.g. April 2016 – March 2017).

5. Performance Data

This section of the report provides a summary of our performance against all KPOs and performance targets over the previous year.

Professional Expertise and Technical Processes

KPO1.B: Our performance for 2024/25 was 91.8% of first reports were issued within 20 working days .

KPO1.C: Our performance for 2024/25 was 65.5% of building warrants and amendments issued within 10 days from receipt of satisfactory amended information.

KPO2: This is subject to review and future targets will be developed.

Examples of how we support the successful delivery of these KPO's

- Allocate work based on complexity across the team recognizing case officers experience and competency
- The allocation of applications are automated and balanced using Idox Enterprise graphs to deliver valid applications to the case officer for technical assessments within 24 hours
- Have a stepped team structure in place that readily supports career progression and succession planning
- Idox Enterprise pushes and passes the applications real time across the various team members within traffic light indicated stages to support the KPO target timescales
- Case Officers are supported by Lead Professional Surveyors where necessary with applications allocated for development
- Applications are monitored and sampled for quality by Lead Professional Surveyors and this informs team training and CPD activity
- We benchmark with our Building Standards Consortia members and Solace building standards grouping
- We regularly monitor workload and performance and make changes in our structure, specialist services procurement, procedures and protocols to respond to changes demands

Quality Customer Experience

KPO3.1: Our National Customer Charter is published prominently on the website and incorporates version control and is reviewed quarterly.

KPO3.2: We are committed to meeting 95% of BSD requests for information on a BSD 'Verifier Performance Reporting Service for Customers' case responded to by verifier within 5 days – but have had no cases within the last year.

KPO4: Our overall customer satisfaction rating for the 2024-25 National Customer Survey was 9.1 out of 10. This improved on the previous year's score of 8.1

To support us in the delivery of a Quality Customer Experience

- We publish our customer charter prominently on our website
- We develop improvement plan actions on the basis of customer feedback and the National Customer Survey
- We seek to balance the efficiencies that mobile and flexible working brings, the significant proportion of inspection time that team members spend on site verifying the construction phase of building warrant applications with customer/case officer contractability by:
 - Duty Officer service being available during office hours
 - Duty Lead Professional Surveyor being available for more complex issues or customer concerns
 - Managed email accounts to ensure timely response to customers
- Home visits and local office appointments can be arranged where persons wish to meet face to face but have transportation or mobility issues
- Message taking and telephone call-back appointment arrangements are in place
- Assistant surveyors support the workflow of case officers' applications, including customer contact
- Whilst we seek to resolve any issues on the spot, we have corporate complaints procedures in place and promote the LABSS Dispute Resolution Process and Scottish
- Government Verifier Performance Reporting Service for Customers where appropriate
- Pre-application discussions and 'Priority Projects' option for high value developments

Operational and Financial Efficiency

KPO5.1: Our percentage verification fee income / service costs over 2024/25 was 108%.

KPO6.1: Details of e-Building Standards is published prominently on our website.

KPO6.2: Target is 75% of each key building warrant related process being done electronically. During 2024/25 we receive around 98% electronically and all these applications are all processed electronically from receipt to completion including

- Plan checking
- Building warrant or amendments (and plans) being issued to customer
- Verification during construction
- Completion certificates being accepted

KPO7.1: Our Annual Performance Report is published prominently on our website with version control and is reviewed annually .

KPO7.2: Our Annual Performance Report includes performance data in line with KPOs and associated targets.

To Support operational and financial Efficiency

- We have a best value team structure that groups team members around the approval and compliance processes for increased efficiencies
- The Operational Support team delivers efficiency in the administration and flow of work and the Public Safety team deals with statutory and wider corporate services allowing verification case officers to concentrate on verification work
- Mobile & flexible working protocols seek to maximize capacity and allow for efficient application processing and inspection
- Time recording reflects the team verification/statutory structure and avoids unnecessary data entry
- We have invested significantly in Uniform, Enterprise and mobile devices to support eBuilding Standards with further development planned
- To support team communications, we have regular diary meetings and a Technical Policy Group
- Scheduling of appointments has been introduced
- Routine performance and workload management meetings

6. Service Improvements

Extracts from our Protective Services Annual Review Report 2024-25, includes priorities and actions relevant to Building Standards.

Priorities

Priority 1 - To continue to support and progress the Service People Plan/Workforce Strategy to create opportunities for a younger workforce, achieved through a 'Grow your own' approach.

Priority 6 - Implement recommendations following an internal audit of the Public Safety Dangerous Buildings Enforcement Team statutory duties.

Priority 7 - End to end review of all Building Standard & Public Safety services will start in 2024-25. This will be the first in depth process review since the pandemic to consider changes in the way customers interact with the team, new technology available and blended workstyles.

Priority 1 progress

- Two Modern Apprentices (MAs) were recruited in 2024; these are part of the cohort across Scotland in partnership with Scottish Government, Fife College & UHI Inverness College.
- Our 2023 MA progressed to the 2nd year of their HNC.
- Our 2022 MA successfully completed their HNC, with an award for outstanding SVQ submission, and was promoted to a permanent Assistant Building Standards Surveyor post.
- Two Assistant Building Standards Surveyors started to study a degree in Construction & the Built Environment (distance learning) at Robert Gordon University.

Priority 6 progress

- All of the nine recommendations were implemented by 31st March 2024.

Priority 7 progress

- The number of vacancies within the team and reduced capacity limited progress during 2024-25.
- The areas prioritised for review were those with outcomes that could potentially help to manage workflow essential to meet KPO targets and meet customer needs.
- Building warrant compliance processes review is continuing but an early change has been implemented to introduce scheduling of site inspections for case officers:
 - An electric vehicle (EV) was trialled based in Cupar and proved successful.
 - The process is underway to purchase a new electric vehicle for the team with delivery expected quarter 1 2025-26. The longer term plan is to introduce more EVs in order to meet the Scottish Government requirement to increase the number of site inspections but also cut carbon emissions at the same time.
 - Site days for case officers are being coordinated to maximise use of the electric vehicle.
 - A single email address is now used by customers to request an inspection; these are arranged and added to case officer diaries by Assistant Surveyors.
 - Outcomes include a quicker response for customers and efficient planning of inspections.
- The building warrant approval processes review is also continuing, progress so far:
 - A new shared document has been created to provide a single source for all technical standard guidance for case officers and improve consistency.
 - Additional quality assurance checks are being carried out by Technical Assistants rather than Lead Professionals

7. Building Standards – Additional Data

Verifiers provide returns to Scottish Government on their verification performance and workload. The performance data relates to the building standards verification performance framework and the workload data relates to the numbers of building warrant applications; completion certificates; fees; costs; certificates (certification, energy performance; sustainability); enforcement cases.

Application data for financial year 2024/2025:

Building warrants	Number of Applications	3050
and amendments to building warrant	Number of Decisions	3101
Completion certificates	Submissions	3291
	Accepted/Rejected	2917