

Detailed Improvement Plan								
Lead - Max McCall					On track			
Team - Building Standards					Concerns Identified - Controls in place			
Priority -					Concerns Identified - Requires attention			
					Complete			
#	Action	Date	Owner	Timeframe	Update	Date Complete		
1	Cleanse all applications made by D & G Council to ensure finished projects have obtained a completion certificate acceptance.		MM/Property and Architectural Services	Dec-19	List supplied to Council's property and architectural services section. The process of clearing any completed project without a completion certificate has begun. All finished capital/new build projects already have completion certificate acceptances in place. Remaining outstanding projects are minor alterations/refurbishment projects.			
2	Cleanse all applications for high risk buildings to ensure finished projects have obtained a completion certificate acceptance. High risk buildings include Care homes, Hospitals, Nursery Accommodation, Non-Domestic Residential, Public Access assembly.		MM	Mar-20				
3	Explore work sharing arrangement with North Lanarkshire Council with the purpose of reducing backlog of applications and restoring KPO performance in line with BSD targets.		DS/MM	Oct-19	Agreement reached	31/10/19		

4	Commence work sharing arrangement with North Lanarkshire Council with the purpose of reducing backlog of applications and restoring KPO performance in line with BSD targets.		DS/MM	Nov-19	Presently working with IT partners to allow access to D & G's Casework system. Adjust security access rights in casework system, Amend letter templates, set up new users(NL). Set up Enterprise tasks for new users		
5	Explore the possibility/develop online fee payment/refund mechanism for Building Warrant and non-statutory services.		MM/JT	Mar-20	Agreement reached. Council's Finance department presently developing and setting up payment mechanism.		
6	Complete back scanning/digital archive of all paper based case files closed after 1st August 2016		Business Support	Dec-18	Admin support service is currently under review corporately. This item is held pending the outcome of this process.		
7	Re-locate paper based case files registers from Stranraer office to Kirkbank to create "one-stop shop" for all records.and commence digital archiving		MM/DS/Business Support	Feb-20			
8	Following completion of 6 above, Instigate a programme of back scanning of all paper based case files prior to 1st August 2016.			Sep-21			
9	Contact "Capture All" and "McPherson" document archiving companies to explore the possibility of transferring Archive already on compact disk to a modern format compatible with Windows 10.			Jan-20			
10	Complete update/refresh of Building Standards letter templates/documents to a single uniform format. (Some historic templates require polish).		MM	Mar-20	Main templates completed. The remainder comprise documents that are rarely used which are presently being updated as and when the document is required.		

11	Enhance IDOX reporting capabilities with the formation of a comprehensive suite of M.S Access performance and statistical reports. Include refinement of existing reports.		MM/BJ/JT	Ongoing	Priority item to be addressed by upcoming consultancy work scheduled with IDOX		
12	Create a comprehensive suite of performance and statistical graphs in Uniform. Enhance those that exist at present.		MM/BJ/JT	Ongoing	Priority item to be addressed by upcoming consultancy work scheduled with IDOX		
13	Develop and enhance the suite of Uniform Enterprise tasks.		MM/BJ/JT	Ongoing	Priority item to be addressed by upcoming consultancy work scheduled with IDOX		
14	Adopt a standard email signature to be used by all members of the building standards team		MM	Mar-20			
15	Adopt a standard "out of office" email message to be used by all members of the building standards team.		MM	Mar-20			
16	Monitor/sample team emails to ensure 12 & 13 have been adhered to.		MM	Mar-20			
17	Compile a database of contact details of all building contractors in Dumfries and Galloway with particular emphasis on email address and mobile telephone numbers.		TBC	May-20			
18	Develop an inspection "request" protocol for building contractors/applicant to limit reliance on direct phone to officer contact eg dedicated inspection phone number with answering machine, dedicated email inbox. Liaise with BTS to tap into their knowledge/experience.		MM	Jul-20			

19	Explore and consider the issue of inspection reminder leaflets/cards at each inspection. The purpose of which is to limit failed CCNP notifications, finalised address applications, completion documentation etc.		TBC	Jul-20			
20	Explore the possibility of developing an inspection booking system. Discuss with other Local Authorities and also BTS to tap into their expertise of this or similar endeavours.		MM	Jul-20			
21	Update procedures for dealing with dangerous buildings including development of short questionnaire template designed to improve triage of reports. (Limit incidence of false alarms).		MM/TBC	May-20			
22	Update procedures for dealing with unauthorised work to ensure consistency of approach.		MM/TBC	May-20			
23	Create procedure document for Section 50 licencing certificates, safety at sports grounds and licencing consultations.		MM	May-20			
24	Provide refresher training to all staff in relation to 21,22 & 23 above.		MM	Jul-20			
25	Provide/update procedures relating to the creation of case files in Uniform designed to ensure consistency of approach, uniform descriptions and that appropriate fields are populated and to ensure documents can be produced with the limited amount of input correction by the administration		MM	Dec-19			

	team. Provide training to all BS team members.						
26	Re-visit and update the D & G Council's safety at sports ground certificate and associated list of conditions. This is to achieve consistency and to move in line with the recommendations of Local Government Football Review Working Group		MM	Jun-20	Work presently ongoing and to be completed ready for commencement of 2020 football season		
27	Adopt a checklist for safety at sports grounds applications, in line with the recommendations of Local Government Football Review Working Group		MM	Jun-20	Work presently ongoing and to be completed ready for commencement of 2020 football season		
28	Create additional standard letter templates to limit the incidence of BS team members having to create bespoke documents. Saving time and improving consistency. A number potential areas have been identified.		MM	Jun-20			
29	Compile an updated list of letter standard letter templates together with a description of their purpose. Include refresher training to BS team where appropriate.		MM	Jun-20	Subject to item 28 above		
30	Review all current written procedures and enhance with the addition of "flow chart" diagrams where appropriate. This is to aid interpretation and assist new team members.		MM	Ongoing			

31	Review and update all written procedural documents. Post these in the BS "Sharepoint" site.		MM	Ongoing		
32	Cleanse BS "Sharepoint" site and discard outdated documents.		MM	Ongoing		
33	Create an "easy index" designed to assist location of documents in the BS "sharepoint" site		MM/BJ	Jun-20		
34	Prepare a comprehensive suite of procedural documents for use by new "building standards technician" posts to be created within the BS team.		MM	Dec-19		
35	Prepare a list of duties formerly carried out by the admin support team/BS officers that will be transferred to the new Building Standards technician posts.		MM	Dec-19		
36	Formulate and adopt a strict fee checking and monitoring regime to ensure all payments are recorded, and errors are captured/rectified as early as possible in the warrant application process.		MM	Nov-19		15/10/2019
37	Maximise fee income by adopting a strict but fair and consistent check on estimated value. Formulate written guidelines for BS team members and agents. Provide training where necessary.		MM	Dec-19	Current arrangement is satisfactory however guidance needs updated/polished in readiness for employment of "building standards technicians" in 2020	

38	Maximise fee income by adopting a consistent approach to the expiry of building warrants. This should include strict on site monitoring coupled with issue of expiry warning letters. Uniform Enterprise should be developed to provide suitable warning prompts as expiry deadlines approach. Written procedure should be updated and enhanced with the use of flowchart.		MM	Jun-20	Protocols are already in place however can now be reviewed/enhanced taking on board and maximising use of the forthcoming additional resource (employment of building standards technicians in 2020)		
39	Adopt a strict approach to "Deemed refusal" designed to reduce the overall time taken to obtain a building warrant (KPO1-a). Generate a procedure to be rolled out to all BS team members to ensure a consistent approach eg issue of refusal warning letters at key timelines prior to the 8 month deadline.		MM	Jun-20	Protocols are already in place however can now be reviewed/enhanced taking on board and maximising use of the forthcoming additional resource (employment of building standards technicians in 2020)		
40	Review and update the Building Standards website with a view to enhancing customer experience, and offer a "one-stop shop" for all BS advice/information. The enhancements are to be designed to limit unnecessary contact with BS team by traditional contact eg telephone and face to face meetings.		MM/SB	Ongoing			
41	Complete the installation of IDOX "Building Inspector" App		MM/BJ/IDOX	Dec-19	Installation is complete however there is data mapping issue. Software supplier IDOX currently working on a resolution		
42	Arrange training workshop for all BS team members in the use of IDOX Building Inspector App		MM/BJ	Dec-19	See 41 above		

43	Create procedure documents for use of the IDOX "Building Inspector" App		MM/BJ	Dec-19	See 41 above		
44	Revise/Update site inspection procedures to encourage and make best use of the photograph capabilities of the tablet and "IDOX" Building Inspector App.		MM/BJ	Dec-19	See 41 above		
45	Investigate how MS Teams and Skype can assist the BS Team. Request training for key individuals if available.		MM/BJ	Jun-20			
46	Include additional document descriptions in the drop down menu in IDOX document management system to aid identification of key documents eg Building Warrant, Completion certificate & 1st report.		MM/IDOX	Mar-20	Priority item to be addressed by upcoming consultancy work scheduled with IDOX		
47	Develop a "naming" convention for documents in the DMS with a view to ensuring a consistent approach. Present arrangement is haphazard due to time restraints involved.		MM/IDOX	Mar-20	See 46 above		
48	Develop a procedure to ensure a consistent approach to adding/naming/dating emails uploaded into the DMS.		MM/IDOX	Mar-20	See 46 above		
49	Develop a procedure to ensure a consistent approach to adding/naming/dating photographs uploaded into the DMS.		MM/IDOX	Mar-20	See 46 above		
50	Organise team "workshop" to discuss and develop a strategy to limit poor responses to 1st report by agents.		BS Team	Jun-20			

51	Organise a team "workshop" to develop and agree a standardised method of presenting a 1st Report letter. This is to aid consistency and seek to obtain a satisfactory response to the report by the agent and reduce warrant approval times.		BS Team	Jun-20			
52	Develop a list of common schedule items used in completion certificate refusal, and defective items raised following a site inspection. This is to aid consistency, provide easily understood text for the recipient and reduce time spent by the inspection team generating documents.		MM	May-20			
53	Investigate the employment of a "Term" Fire engineering consultant to assess/check complex alternative solutions on behalf of D & G Council to comply with BSD's "Section 34" directive.		MM	Sep-19	Some investigatory work has taken place however, due to the absence of applications in D & G requiring FE input, has been temporarily put on hold until a specific need arises. Furthermore, costs for private FE consultancies have been found to be high. Focus will now shift to exploring if other verifiers with FE expertise are able to assist on an ad-hoc fee sharing basis.		
54	Warrant refusal procedure to be reviewed and re-written, taking on board the requirements of KPO1-a) "Time taken to issue a decision". Implement a fair but proactive policy regarding slow moving applications. Case surveyors to be empowered to issue timeous and appropriate			Jun-20	Protocols are already in place however can now be reviewed/enhanced taking on board and maximising use of the forthcoming additional resource (employment of Building standards technicians in 2020)		

	warning letters on a consistent basis.						
55	Develop and formalise a process for returning invalid applications eg fee challenge/late or partial fee payment, poor quality drawings.		MM	Dec-19	Revised process currently being stress tested		
56	Develop a simplified fee calculator using MS Excel. This is designed to assist admin staff and also the customer. Can also be distributed to agents, posted on the Building Standards Website. The calculator option on the eBuidingStandards website is over-complicated and leads to unnecessary fee errors. Customers do not understand many of the questions being asked.		BJ	Apr-20			
57	Develop a standard performance template to supplement the quarterly KPO report. The template will be designed to provide an "at a glance" snapshot of all key performance measures. The template will be made available to senior management, posted on the BS website each month, used for discussion at monthly team meetings.		MM	Nov-19			

58	Provide training to Case surveyors in use of the graph capabilities in Uniform. Empower case surveyors to monitor their own performance and assist management with monitoring of the performance of the entire team. Highlight "choke points" or similar issues with a view to smooting out workload distribution.		MM/IDOX	Mar-20	Additional graphs required and existing ones refined. This is a priority item to be addressed by upcoming consultancy work scheduled with IDOX		
59	Develop and produce a quality assurance protocol for the BS service.		MM	Jul-20			
60	Explore ISO 9001 accreditation to see if this would be of any benefit the BS service. This, together with CSE accreditation may assist evidencing compliance with the BSD's Operatng and performance framework requirements.		MM	Mar-20			
61	Following proposed strengthening of the staffing structure. Consider re commencing CSE accreditation. This will assist evidencing "customer first" ethos, and arrest declining Customer satisfaction rating KPO 4 of the BSD's performance framework.		MM/SB	Apr-21			
62	Introduce a "whiteboard" in the BS team room to provide a tangible and highly visible indicator of current performance. (Updated daily). Provides an "In your face" unavoidable snapshot of performance. Has double edged benefit whereby		MM	Mar-20	See item 58		

	successes are highlighted as well as performance slippage						
63	Arrange training workshop to discuss and agree a uniform and consistent approach to current and future site inspection practices. In particular, acceptance of alternative evidence, multi plot sampling and drain testing. Written procedures should be updated following workshop.		MM/TC	Mar-20	Opportunity to tap into the experience and ideas of frontline staff currently exposed to issues surrounding CCNP failure. In addition, will also act as a training opportunity for the imminent arrival of the new member of the inspection team in early 2020.		
64	Incorporate quality assurance measures to ensure a fair and consistent approach to site inspection practices are adopted. (See 59, 60 & 63 above).		MM	Jun-20			
65	Develop/enhance current processes and procedures to assist in the accurate recording of all new housing. Given the importance of this statistical information to BS, Dev Planning and Strategic Housing, a "joined-up" approach should be adopted to cater for all. Further development of Uniform to be explored.		MM/BJ	Sep-20			
66	Create a detailed list of duties/responsibilities/work tasks to be assigned to the newly created Building Standards Technician posts.		MM	Mar-20	This will be completed prior to the imminent arrival of the Building Standards Technician posts.		

67	Prepare a revised process document outlining the detailed procedural checks/tasks to be carried out following receipt of a building warrant application. Presently, the duties associated with this task are disjointed/error prone and do not make best use of professional officer's time. The future Building Standards technician posts are earmarked to assume this role.		MM/SH	Mar-20	Procedures currently being formulated in advance the imminent arrival of the Building Standards Technician posts.		
68	Streamline the submission/collation/recording of all supporting documentation lodged/required to accompany a completion certificate. Presently, the arrangement is disjointed and reliant on one individual.		MM	Mar-20	Procedures currently being formulated in advance the imminent arrival of the Building Standards Technician posts.		
69	Introduce checksheets outlining supporting documentation required to be included along with a completion certificate submission. Responsibility for checking/collation/recording of this documentation to lie with BS technicians. This will free up considerable time for the inspection team who presently deal with this task.		MM	Mar-20	Procedures currently being formulated in advance the imminent arrival of the Building Standards Technician posts.		
70	Should supporting documents associated with a completion certificate be found to be incomplete, consider the development of, and issue of letters requesting outstanding supporting documentation immediately, following initial check of documents lodged.		MM	Mar-20	Templates already created and revised process currently being stress tested. Written procedures to be prepared, and training will be given to Building Standards Technicians who will ultimately assume this task when posts are in place		

71	Re-introduce the issue of suitably timed reminder letters to applicants/agents engaged in development creating a new postally addressible property. This is designed to ensure timely application for new address is made with the CAG team and more importantly, the finalised postal address is included on the completion certificate acceptance. UPRN is also recorded against the property in Uniform.		MM	Mar-20	Procedures currently being formulated in advance the imminent arrival of the Building Standards Technician posts.		
72	Arrange a training "workshop" for agents presently lodging paper warrant submissions. The training is designed to assist and encourage agents to utilise the eBuildingStandards submission. Although D & G has a high number of applications lodged through the portal, there is a small core of local agents resistant to change. Although small in number, these agents are relatively prolific and account for almost 20% of applications received. Accordingly, should some of these agents be persuaded to switch to e submissions the overall impact would prove to be significant in terms of application numbers.		MM/SH	Sep-20	Will seek to engage and demonstrate the advantages. Will prepare "easy to follow" guidance documents. Offer one or more training sessions. Offer over the phone assistance should difficulties be encountered.		
73	Explore possibility of imposing administration charges for applicants agents failing to utilise the eBuildingStandards submission portal. This falls into line with corporate policy		MM	Apr-21	See 72 above. There are "Win" "Win" benefits to the Customer, Building Standards service and D & G Council should this be implemented.		

74	Introduce a Building Standards quarterly newsletter to be distributed to agents and posted on the BS website. Include performance.		MM/SB	Oct-19		28/10/2019	
75	Re-introduce local agent's mini forums/surgeries in each of the 4 traditional districts of Wigtown, Stewartry, Nithsdale and Annandale and Eskdale. These are to supplement the combined annual agent's forum held jointly with Planning. Team leader/staff meeting agents in their own locale in a small informal setting. The object is to maintain a face to face local presence and seek to lessen the impact of the loss of traditional local offices.		MM/SB	Jun-20		Subject to strengthening of team numbers and key priorities being achieved ie performance.	
76	Provide training to Case surveyors (With delegated responsibility) to issue certain building standards documents such as the Completion certificate (including multi plot certificates). This would entail emailing the document directly out of the back office system themselves rather than requesting admin support carry out the task. This small task may cut a number of days from the overall time taken to issue a decision.		MM	Mar-20		Process documents currently being prepared. This endeavour is reliant on the data in the Uniform back office system being fully up to date and also the supporting documents, checked and polished. This "polishing" and preparation work will be carried out by the Building Standards technicians with appropriate safeguards in place. On this basis the document can be emailed immediately following normal technical checks by the senior surveyor.	
77	Trial the running of a forum specifically aimed at building contractors. This may be useful to promote initiatives such as inspection booking, dedicated		MM	Aug-20			

	hotline/email inbox. (see items 17 - 20).					
78	Instigate a protocol whereby the admin team routinely contact applicants and agents to obtain an email address/mobile telephone number where one has not been provided on the application form/supporting document. Aim to deliver all correspondence/documentation via email.		MM/JT	Mar-20		
79	Create a letter template to issue to an applicant/agent immediately following a failed submission through the eBuildingStandards portal. Letter to politely explain the error while the matter is still fresh in their minds. Aim to limit the incidence of repeat failed tasks arriving through the portal.		MM	Mar-20		
80	Arrange refresher training for reception staff in telephone call handling. Consider the introduction of a script/checklist tailored to ensure BS/Planning enquiries are handled efficiently from both the customer and team perspective. (Liaise with planning service).		MM/JT	Mar-20	Possibility of employing a dedicated receptionist is presently being explored.	
81	Consider the production of a service document outlining the duties and responsibilities of the admin support team. (Admin resource is provided by the corporate business support team)		MM/DS/Business support team		Admin support service is currently under review corporately. This item is held pending the outcome of this process.	

82	Develop and roll out a quality assurance protocol in relation to admin duties and responsibilities carried out by our business support partner for the Planning and Building Standards service.		MM/DS/Business support team		Admin support service is currently under review corporately. This item is held pending the outcome of this process.		
83	Update and maintain the database of electrical contractors held in "Sharepoint" to ensure the equivalence requirements are up to date and being fully adhered to.		MM	Ongoing	Task earmarked for the impending arrival of the Building Standards Technicians. Procedural documents to be produced and training rolled out when posts are filled.		
84	Update current procedures relating to rural drainage systems incorporating drainage infiltration fields. To ensure:- a) Trial hole dug/witnessed/photographed as part of the plan checking process (Pre- approval) b) Inspection of the completed infiltration system is included in the CCNP document issued with the warrant approval		MM	Nov-19			
85	Introduce a checklist/daily sign off sheet for admin supervisor. This measure is designed to provide a quality check on the registration process in particular, key aspects such as fee recording and accuracy of correspondence.		MM	Nov-19			
86	Introduce an item on the First report, requesting email/mobile phone number of applicant (if not given). A high percentage of agents fail to include this on the Building Warrant application form, thus making post issue contact with applicant difficult.		MM	Nov-19			

Version					MM - Max McCall	Team Leader - Building standards
V1	Nov-19				DS - David Suttie	Planning and Building Standards Manager
					JT - Jessica Taylor	Team Leader - Development Management
					SB - Suzanne Broatch	Building Standards Surveyor
					BJ - Brian Johnston	Building Standards Surveyor
					TC - Tommy Currie	Principal Building Standards Surveyor
					SH - Sharon Hinselwood	Planning Registration Supervisor
					Business Support	Corporate Support Team