
**Local Authority Building Standards Scotland
Digital Delivery Group (LABSS DDG)**

**Analysis Report
of
Data Standards Survey 2023**

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Produced by Local Authority Building Standards Scotland Digital Delivery Group (LABSS DDG)
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Digital Hub incorporated within The Building Standards Hub Pilot

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Title: Analysis of Data Standards Survey 2023

Purpose: This analysis report has been produced to demonstrate the variances between local authority verifiers when recording primary building warrant application data.

Version:	Date:	Notes:
1.0	19.09.2023	Initial draft.
1.1	03.10.2023	Minor additions.

Contents:

1.	Executive Summary:	Page 4.
2.	Introduction: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Background.• Purpose.	Page 7.
3.	Analysis of Returns:	Page 9.
4.	Variances in Recording - Permutations:	Page 21.
5.	Conclusions:	Page 23.

Executive Summary:

Introduction:

1. It has been widely acknowledged that data within back-office systems is being recorded differently across all 32 Scottish Local Authorities.
2. Whilst this is completely understandable as local authority case file recording systems all developed independently from each other, it does mean there is potential that data use is not consistent nationally and as such key performance outcomes (KPOs) and other data driven systems are not being comparably conveyed.
3. LABSS DDG decided that a good starting point to the groups work was to investigate and demonstrate how data was being recorded and used nationally.
4. This exercise is essential to feed into the numerous digital transformation work streams that the group is becoming involved with and this will aid national digital transformation.
5. This paper reports on the outcomes from the recent 'LABSS DDG Data Standards Survey' but does not seek to establish what is correct, or not correct, when recording and reporting on data.
6. The outcomes are presented for consideration nationally as to how a more consistent way of recording and presenting data could be applied. Guidance is sought from the Building Standards Division (BSD) in this regard.

Analysis of Survey Returns:

7. 26 out of a possible 32 survey responses were received. This is an 81.25% return rate.
8. Most local authorities use Idox EDRMS.
9. The one local authority who confirmed they do not currently use Idox EDRMS, also confirmed they are presently user acceptance testing (UAT) the system.
10. Nearly one quarter of local authorities stated that they use the Idox mobile app.
11. The most popular alternatives to using the Idox mobile app are:
 - Direct access to back-office systems using 4G connectivity.
 - Downloading the plans/documents onto a mobile device.

12. Twenty four out of the 26 responding local authorities confirmed they use Idox Enterprise.
13. When calculating the number of days for performance reporting 46.2% of responders use day zero, 53.8% use day one.
14. Nearly three quarters of local authorities responding use Uniform embedded KPO reports to some extent. (Please refer to comments under 'Analysis of Results – Question10')
15. Other reporting tools include Microsoft Access (features highly), Power BI and Crystal.
16. It is noted that there are 11 different permutations in deciding whether a building warrant application is valid, or not. A significant proportion would seek plans, a fee matching the declared value of work and a correctly completed form.
17. From the local authorities responding, the method of calculating the grant/issue date of a building warrant for performance reporting is practically equally split between using the 'Decision Date' and the 'Issued Date'.
18. All local authorities responding calculate the date of the first report issued in relation to a building warrant application by using the '1st Response Date'.
19. All local authorities responding calculate the time to issue a decision after a first/subsequent report in relation to a building warrant application by using the 'Plan Returned Date'.
20. Just over two thirds of local authorities responding calculate the number of building warrant applications received within a performance reporting period by using the 'Valid Date'. Just under one third use the 'Date Application Received'.
21. Just over two thirds of local authorities responding, deduct refunds from the calculated building warrant fee income within a performance reporting period. Just under one third do not.

Variations in Recording - Permutations:

22. Noting the analysis of the individual questions raised in the survey, where consideration is given to the combined effect of the variations around day 0 or 1, the use of Decision Date/Issue Date, the use of Valid Date/Issue Date, and whether refunds are accounted for or not, then the difference in recording becomes quite diverse with ten variations of recording noted.
23. The variations that exist where a verifier establishes what is considered as a valid application further compounds the potential permutations in data recording. This factor was however

omitted from this analysis due to the apparent complexities and number of additional variations that would occur.

Conclusions:

24. The analysis within this report demonstrates that data recording across Scottish local authorities is not comparable, which does mean national data collation and reporting will be inconsistent.
25. Having quality, comparable, and consistent data is not only important when considering present performance reporting, it is also essential to establish data sets when considering potential change to what is reported to support new building standards system initiatives.
26. From the survey analysis, it would be appropriate to consider, with guidance being sought from the BSD, the following:
 - Should the number of days be calculated from day 0 or day 1?
 - What is required to consider a building warrant application is valid?
 - Should a building warrant application be considered as granted/issued when the surveyor confirms it competent, or when it is sent out?
 - Should the number of building warrant applications received within any reporting period be based on those that are valid, or those received?
 - Should refunds be deducted from building warrant fee income within any reporting period, or not?
27. The information obtained from the survey around use of IT systems and data reporting tools is beneficial in that it can be shared and used in LABSS DDG, Digital Hub and BSD Digital Transformation Team engagement discussions with Idox, specifically around:
 - The expansive use of the Idox EDRMS and opportunities in developing the system.
 - The use and development of the Idox mobile app platform and other systems and methods of digital on-site inspection delivery.
 - The expansive use of Idox Enterprise and opportunities in developing the system including common national tasks to suit emerging initiatives.
28. Noting that the purpose of this report is to highlight where data inconsistencies lie, the opportunity that a national approach, in some key areas, could deliver would be beneficial in the shared development it could bring.

Introduction:

Background.

Through the previous work of the 'Uniform Users Group' as well as interactions between local authorities building standards and Uniform administration teams, it has been widely acknowledged that data within back-office systems is being recorded and used differently across all 32 Scottish Local Authorities.

This is however completely understandable as local authority case file recording systems all developed independently from each other and naturally were set up to suit local needs and what types of work each building standards team was involved in doing.

Acknowledging these differences in data recording does mean that there is potential that key performance outcomes (KPOs) and other data-based systems, such as national registers, are not being comparably conveyed throughout Scotland. There is also potential in some instances, that local authorities may be disadvantaging themselves in reflecting their true performance. Conversely, there may also be instances where recording methods are reflecting a more favourable performance.

Looking at data and what it is telling us is important, not only in analysing performance, but also to ensure what is being recorded is accurate, comparable, and reflective. This is particularly true when considering potential changes to data recording or new sets of KPOs.

As a new entity, the LABSS DDG decided that a good starting point to the groups work was to find out and demonstrate how data was being recorded and used as this would be essential to feed into its operation and the numerous digital transformation work streams that it is becoming involved with.

This is particularly so when considering the Building Standards Futures Programme Board strategies that the LABSS DDG touches upon as well as the work being contributed to through the groups partnership working with the Building Standards Division (BSD) Digital Transformation Team.

Purpose.

The purpose of the data standards survey and this report is to find out and to demonstrate the variances that exist between local authority verifiers when recording some primary building warrant application data.

Within this report is an analysis of the returns from the survey. It also establishes a number of permutations that exist in the way recorded data is used and reported upon.



This report does not seek to establish what is correct, or not correct when recording data, but does present the differences in key primary areas for further consideration, either as part of outcome reporting reviews or when considering establishing new outcomes driven from recorded data.

Analysis of Returns:

Of the 32 Building Standards Managers requested to complete the survey, 26 responses were received. This represents an 81.25% return rate.

The questionnaire sought information on how individual local authority verifiers record data and utilise back office associated data driven IT systems. The following paragraphs list those questions and provide an analysis of the responses or list the comments received, as applicable.

Please note, the question numbers indicated relate to the survey and do not include questions that requested a local authority name or contact details (Questions 1, 20 and 21). Where there was a follow up question that had no responses (Questions 15 and 17), these have also not been listed.

Question 2 – Does your local authority use the Idox EDRMS (Document Management System)?

All 26 responders provided an answer to this question, with a summary of the responses being:

- **Yes:** 25 responses. **96.2%** of responders use Idox EDRMS.
- **No:** 1 response. **3.8%** of responders do not use Idox EDRMS.

The majority of local authorities responding use Idox EDRMS.

Question 3 – Comments/please include the name of any alternative system used:

This was a follow up question to Q2.

The local authority who confirmed that they do not currently use Idox EDRMS confirmed that they are currently using Civica Workflow 360 but are however presently user acceptance testing (UAT) Idox EDRMS.

Other comments received are as follows:

'EDRMS has been used for several years within the council across various departments, including Building Standards, Planning, Housing and Street Naming & Numbering.'

'Due to the current eDevelopment portal 'one way' system we also use Viewpoint to issue building warrants which is an extra layer of work to download the approved documents from EDRMS to upload to Viewpoint.'

'Used Idox EDRMS for a number of years.'

Question 4 – Does your local authority use the Idox mobile app?

All 26 responders provided an answer to this question, with a summary of the responses being:

- **Yes:** 6 responses. **23.1%** of responders use Idox Mobile app.
- **No:** 20 responses. **76.9%** of responders do not use Idox Mobile app.

Nearly one quarter of local authorities responding use the Idox mobile app.

Question 5 – Comments/please include the name of any alternative mobile used:

This was a follow up question to Q4.

The following comments and/or details of alternative systems/methods used were received:

'We access Idox as normal through tablets even when on site through Citrix. The tablets have the capability of tethering to our mobiles for 4G and this can provide a live link to the live Idox site without the need for an Idox mobile app.'

'We use Uniform remotely via 4G enabled Surface Pros.'

'We use the Idox Building Inspector app to carry out site visits, view plans etc.'

'We had considered the Idox app but found that there were particular site visit relevant fields unavailable to the app or to be considered for bringing through to the app in future release development. We have a home-made inspection app within Microsoft Power Apps which, while it has been used in its current form, it has not been developed further and only collects inspection notes and photos where relevant - looking at the app it doesn't appear to be used anymore. We issued sim enabled laptops with data sims to see if using the full Uniform application on site was a working option.'

'We have the Idox mobile app but don't use it as there are too many issues with it. We download drawings on to Surface Pro computers for site inspections.'

'We use Surface Pros with SIM enabled for direct access to systems.'

'Google Maps (saved warrant map) generated to create an accessible online map showing location of relevant warrants. Locations extracted from Uniform to create a spreadsheet for updating google maps. OneNote to take photos and record site notes (this is later uploaded to DMS and inspection fields updated within Uniform). OneDrive - uploading and sharing files.'

'No mobile apps.'

'The app was purchased and tested pre-covid however this was not rolled out to staff as current method worked well. Staff download plans to their local drive/desktop to access on site via their MS Surface Pro. Taking notes and updating Uniform at a later date.'

From the comments received, the most popular alternatives to using the Idox mobile app are:

- **Direct access to back-office systems using 4G connectivity.**
- **Downloading the plans/documents onto a mobile device.**

Question 6 – Does your local authority use Idox Enterprise for Uniform?

All 26 responders provided an answer to this question, with a summary of the responses being:

- **Yes:** 24 responses. **92.3%** of responders use Idox Enterprise.
- **No:** 2 responses. **7.7%** of responders do not use Idox Enterprise.

The majority of local authorities responding use Idox Enterprise.

Question 7 – Comments/please include the name of any alternative workflow system used:

This was a follow up question to Q6.

The following comments and/or details of alternative systems used were received:

'We have been developing Idox Enterprise for 3-4 years. It is a useful tool but does require significant resource and consultant input to work effectively for each authority (writing and changing scripts). There remains many improvements we can make in due course.'

'We don't currently use Enterprise, although it is currently used by the Private Sector team in Housing. We are hoping to purchase Enterprise for Building Standards in 2023.'

'We have a suite of 38 enterprise workflow tasks; 4 graphs and workload reports. These are a valuable workflow tool and team/workload management tool allowing for quick and easy transfer of casework in times of AL or extended sickness.'

'We have purchased the IDOX Enterprise module but have not yet fully developed it for use.'

'MS Access.'

'Very useful tool.'

Question 8 – Which method do you use to calculate the number of days for KPO and performance reporting?

All 26 responders provided an answer to this question, with a summary of the responses being:

- **Count from day 0:** 12 responses. **46.2%** of responders count from day 0.
- **Count from day 1:** 14 responses. **53.8%** of responders count from day 1.

From the local authorities responding, the method of calculating the number of days for performance reporting is practically equally split between either from 0 days or 1 day.

Question 9 – Do you use any of the KPO reports embedded in Uniform?

All 26 responders provided an answer to this question, with a summary of the responses being:

- **Yes:** 20 responses. **76.9%** of responders use Uniform embedded KPO reports.
- **No:** 6 responses. **23.1%** of responders do not use Uniform embedded KPO reports.

Nearly three quarters of local authorities responding use Uniform embedded KPO reports to some extent.

Question 10 – Please list any embedded reports that you DO use:

This was a follow up question to Q9.

The following comments/details of embedded reports used were received:

'We use some of the inbuilt KPO reports, however we have our own reports as a check. XXX do not agree with the criteria for some of the dates used for some of the KPO reports e.g. No of certs, EPC's Sustainability etc.'

'NB2 return & Key Performance Outcomes 2018 (KPO1A, 1B, 1C, KPO2).'

'We use the Key Performance Outcomes Statutory Reports under Maintenance --> Building Standards --> Statutory Reports.'

'KPO1A, KPO1B, KPO1C & KPO2.'

'Key Performance Outcomes 2018.'

'We don't use any but currently are undertaking comparison of data from both embedded reports and in-house reports.'

'Statutory 2018 report within Uniform.'

'Key Performance Outcomes 1a, 1b, 1c & 2.'

'Stat Reports in Uniform Options tab.'

'KPO1A, KPO1B, KPO1C, KPO2.'

'Uniform Reports used for some of the figures and cross referenced with Access reports and amended to suit as follows:

KPO1(a) – Use uniform report. Access report to be update to exclude TDECIN REFUSE applications. 1 day per application to be removed to account for anomaly described for KPO1B below.*

KPO1(b) –Use uniform report. Uniform includes the valid date i.e all reports issued on target date result in 21 days which in not correct therefore the results need to be amended to deduct 1 day from each result. This only needs to be done for those on the threshold i.e those on 16, 21 should be marked down to 15, 20.*

KPO1(c) – Use uniform report (check data is complete by reviewing access report) same issue as above and figure to be adjusted (-1) for 7,11 down to 6,10*

**Check APPTYPE is DOM/NDOM etc and not AMEND otherwise uniform will not pick up. Also check that there is a Plan return date for every instance that a 1st report date exists. If blank then officer should populate with relevant return date.*

KPO 2 – Use uniform report but edit as follows – fully achieved assumes all parties did their bit, the others columns do not include figure from fully achieved and so should be updated to include from that column.

FEES:

*Total and amendment fee appears to work from Uniform report
Completion fee to be confirmed as working.*

Use value of works from Access (uniform report now used).

(Value of works higher in report compared to access report – it appears that the report includes value of work for applications where extensions have been granted)

Value of works for amendments working in report.

(check) access report for verifiers fees to have fees for applications to extend (£100) added from separate access report – (SIC KPO5 Verification Fees – extension fees)

Building Warrants:

Uniform reports work for figures:

- *Total number of BW applications (figure in report excludes amendments).*
- *CHECK: Staged applications will not appear if the staged check box has not been selected.*

Completions:

Uniform report has correct figure for CC.

CC Accepted and rejected figures work in Uniform report.

Sustainability Label:

Uniform working for Domestic but not Non-Domestic (check both against access report).

EPC:

Uniform report works. Also run access to check.'

'Statutory reports.'

'Key Performance Outcomes 2018.'

'We do use the embedded reports for KPO's 1a, b and c. For all other embedded reports we cross check them against our existing Crystal reports for accuracy. We do find some of the section 34 embedded reports to be unreliable. We have found some discrepancies within our system set up i.e. the embedded reports count from day 1, but our Enterprise graphs count from day 0.'

'KPO 1 (A), (B) and (C).'

'Key Performance Outcomes 2018.'

'KPO1a, KPO1b, KPO1c & KPO2.'

Question 11 – Which reporting software do you use for all other KPO data?

This was a follow up question to Q10.

The following comments/details of other reporting software used for other KPO data were received:

'KPO 1-3.'

'Integra (Financial). eDevelopment (Portal) and Access reports.'

'Crystal reports.'

'We use both Microsoft Access and Power BI.'

'MS Access.'

'Access and some Enterprise Graphs.'

'Our own in-house Access reports.'

'Access Database.'

'Access.'

'Crystal Reports.'

'As above and MS Access Reports.'

'Microsoft Access.'

'MS Access.'

'MS Access queries are run.'

'Crystal, Access and Enterprise graph's.'

'Uniform BS Module and eBuildingstandards.'

'Microsoft Access where necessary..'

'MS Access and MS Excel.'

'MS Access, Excel, eDevelopment Portal for online submissions.'

'Oracle PL/SQL Reports.'

'Crystal reports.'

'Microsoft Access reporting, moving to Power BI 24/25. KPO2, KPO5, KPO6, Data Overviews Totals of BW's, CC's and Certification, Date Overview Total of Enforcement.'

'Excel.'

'Various internal Microsoft Access Reports. Internal accountant reports for staff costs.'

'Microsoft Power BI.'

'MS Access and currently investigating Power BI.'

Microsoft Access features highly as an alternative reporting system to the embedded Uniform reports. Power BI and Crystal also feature as popular reporting tools.

Question 12 – This question relates to the information used to calculate KPO’s 1a, 1b & 1c: What do you require before a building warrant application is considered valid, for example plans, correct fee paid for value of work stated, application form completed correctly and signed?

All 26 responders provided an answer to this question. With there being several variations to the responses, they are reflected in the following table:

Verifier:	Plans.	Correct fee for value of work stated.	Application form correctly completed and signed.	Application form completed, but with errors.	Claimed value of work assessed for validation.
1					Not stated
2					No
3					Yes

4					Not stated
5					Yes
6					Not stated
7					Not stated
8					Not stated
9					No
10					Not stated
11					Not stated.
12					No
13					Not stated
14					Not stated
15					Not stated
16					Not stated
17					Not stated
18					Not stated
19					Yes
20					Not stated
21					Not stated
22					Not stated
23					Not stated
24					Not stated
25					Yes
26					No

2 verifiers request plans, correctly completed form and fee matching declared value of work with a validation check of estimated value carried out for validation.

3 verifiers request plans, correctly completed form and fee matching declared value of work with no validation check of estimated value carried out for validation.

11 verifiers request plans, correctly completed form and fee matching declared value of work with no validation check declared of estimated value carried out for validation.

1 verifier requests plans, completed form (accepting errors if intent of work is clear) and fee matching declared value of work with no validation check declared of estimated value carried out for validation.

1 verifier requests plans, fee matching declared value of work with no declaration on form requirement. A validation check of estimated value of work is not declared for validation.

1 verifier requests plans, fee matching declared value of work with no declaration on form requirement. A validation check of estimated value of work is carried out for validation.

1 verifier requests correctly completed form and fee matching declared value of work with a validation check of estimated value carried out for validation.

1 verifier requests correctly completed form and fee matching declared value of work with no validation check of estimated value carried out for validation.

3 verifiers request correctly completed form and fee matching declared value of work with no validation check declared of estimated value carried out for validation.

1 verifier considers all applications valid with no declaration on plans, forms, fees or declaration on validation of stated estimated costs.

1 verifier requests plans for validation, with no declaration on fee matching declared value of work, requirement for a form or confirmation of a validation check of estimated value of work.

The above analysis demonstrates the number of variances in what a verifier would seek to validate a building warrant application, however a significant proportion would seek plans, a fee matching the declared value of work and a correctly completed form.

Question 13 – This question relates to the information used to calculate KPO’s 1a, 1b & 1c: When calculating KPO data, which Uniform date field to you use as the application granted/issued date?

All 26 responders provided an answer to this question, with a summary of the responses being:

- **Decision Date (SBCASE.DECIDD):** 14 responses. **53.8%** of responders use the ‘Decision Date’.
- **Issued Date (SBCASE.CASEDT):** 12 responses. **46.2%** of responders use the ‘Issue Date’.

From the local authorities responding, the method of calculating the grant/issue date of a building warrant for performance reporting is practically equally split between using the ‘Decision Date’ and the ‘Issued Date’.

Question 14 – This question relates to the information used to calculate KPO’s 1a, 1b & 1c: When calculating KPO 1b, which field is used to indicate the date of the first report, if one has been sent?

All 26 responders provided an answer to this question, with a summary of the responses being:

- **1st Response Date (SBCASE.RLAMND):** 26 responses. **100%** of responders use the ‘1st Response Date’.

From the local authorities responding, the method of calculating the date of the first report issued in relation to a building warrant application is by using the ‘1st Response Date’.

Question 16 – This question relates to the information used to calculate KPO’s 1a, 1b & 1c: When calculating KPO 1d, the time to issue a decision after a first/subsequent report, which Uniform field do you use as the start/from date i.e., information last received?

All 26 responders provided an answer to this question, with a summary of the responses being:

- **Plan Returned Date (SBCASEDT.RAMEND):** 26 responses. **100%** of responders use the ‘Plan Returned Date’.

From the local authorities responding, the method of calculating the time to issue a decision after a first/subsequent report in relation to a building warrant application is by using the ‘Plan Returned Date’.

Question 18 – This question relates to how the number of applications received and calculating fee income: To report the number of building warrant and amendment applications received within a reporting period, which Uniform field do you use?

All 26 responders provided an answer to this question, with a summary of the responses being:

- **Valid Date (SBCASE.DEPOSD):** 18 responses. **69.2%** of responders use the ‘Decision Date’.
- **Date Application Received (SBCASE.RECPTD):** 8 responses. **30.8%** of responders use the ‘Issue Date’.

From the local authorities responding, just over two thirds of local authorities calculate the number of building warrant applications received within a performance reporting period by using the ‘Valid Date’. Just under one third use the ‘Date Application Received’.

Question 19 – This question relates to how the number of applications received and calculating fee income: Do you deduct refunds from the total fee income reported?

All 26 responders provided an answer to this question, with a summary of the responses being:

- **Yes:** 18 responses. **69.2%** of responders do deduct refunds from the building warrant fee income reported.
- **No:** 8 responses. **30.8%** of responders do not deduct refunds from the building warrant fee income reported.

From the local authorities responding, just over two thirds of local authorities deduct refunds from the calculated building warrant fee income within a performance reporting period. Just under one third do not.

Variations in Recording - Permutations:

The above analysis to the individual survey questions illustrates the differences between how local authorities record and report data and what tools are used for that reporting.

The variation in reporting mechanisms themselves may lead to inconsistencies on how and what is reported, either by way of KPO returns or verifiers own in-house reporting and management tools. This, together with the variations in what data and system data fields are used to drive the reporting can further compound variations between local authorities.

Looking specifically at the questions relating to the main drivers of KPO reporting, there are a number of variations in how local authority verifiers present their information which mean the data presented and used is not comparable.

All 26 responders were consistent in relation to Q14 and Q16 whereby they all use the '1st Response Date' for the date of their first report and the 'Plan Returned Date' as the trigger to establish the time to issue a decision. However, when you start to consider the responses to Q8, Q13, Q18 and Q19, the difference in recording becomes quite diverse with ten variations of recording noted between these three data collection points and time recording protocol alone.

4 local authority verifiers start recording at **day 1**, use the '**Decision Date**' field to record the grant/issue date of a building warrant, whilst using the '**Valid Date**' to calculate the number of building warrant applications received within a reporting period and **take account of refunds** when reporting building warrant fee income.

3 local authority verifiers start recording at **day 0**, use the '**Decision Date**' field to record the grant/issue date of a building warrant, whilst using the '**Valid Date**' to calculate the number of building warrant applications received within a reporting period and **take account of refunds** when reporting building warrant fee income.

1 local authority verifier starts recording at **day 1**, uses the '**Decision Date**' field to record the grant/issue date of a building warrant, whilst using the '**Valid Date**' to calculate the number of building warrant applications received within a reporting period but **do not take account of refunds** when reporting building warrant fee income.

3 local authority verifiers start recording at **day 0**, use the '**Decision Date**' field to record the grant/issue date of a building warrant, whilst using the '**Valid Date**' to calculate the number of building warrant applications received within a reporting period but **do not take account of refunds** when reporting building warrant fee income.

2 local authority verifiers start recording at **day 1**, use the '**Decision Date**' field to record the grant/issue date of a building warrant, whilst using the '**Received Date**' to calculate the number of

building warrant applications received within a reporting period and **do not take account of refunds** when reporting building warrant fee income.

1 local authority verifier starts recording at **day 0**, uses the '**Decision Date**' field to record the grant/issue date of a building warrant, whilst using the '**Received Date**' to calculate the number of building warrant applications received within a reporting period and **do not take account of refunds** when reporting building warrant fee income.

2 local authority verifiers start recording at **day 1**, use the '**Issue Date**' field to record the grant/issue date of a building warrant, whilst using the '**Valid Date**' to calculate the number of building warrant applications received within a reporting period and **take account of refunds** when reporting building warrant fee income.

4 local authority verifiers start recording at **day 0**, use the '**Issue Date**' field to record the grant/issue date of a building warrant, whilst using the '**Valid Date**' to calculate the number of building warrant applications received within a reporting period and **take account of refunds** when reporting building warrant fee income.

5 local authority verifiers start recording at **day 1**, use the '**Issue Date**' field to record the grant/issue date of a building warrant, whilst using the '**Received Date**' to calculate the number of building warrant applications received within a reporting period and **take account of refunds** when reporting building warrant fee income.

1 local authority verifier starts recording on **day 0**, uses the '**Issue Date**' field to record the grant/issue date of a building warrant, whilst using the '**Valid Date**' to calculate the number of building warrant applications received within a reporting period and **does not take account of refunds** when reporting building warrant fee income.

What further compounds the data recording variances relates to the analysis under Q12 and the various permutations that exist in a verifier establishing what is considered as a valid application and then how this leads into those variances noted above in relation to the use of either 'Received Date' or 'Valid Date'. For the purposes of the analysis above, this additional factor has not been reported because of the apparent complexities and number of additional variations that would occur.

Conclusions:

The analysis of returns from the survey and the variations in recording against the specifics within the questionnaire already demonstrate that data recording across Scottish local authorities is not comparable which does mean national data collation and reporting will be inconsistent.

As noted at the start of the report, it is not the intention to state what is correct or not correct when it comes to data management and reporting, but it is appropriate to seek guidance from the Building Standards Division as to what data should be driving the reports and performance outcomes they seek on a quarterly and annual basis.

Having quality, comparable and consistent data is also particularly important when considering change to what is reported to support new initiatives, such as developments in KPO2, KPO5, compliance plan and investment in services.

If it is also intended to review operating and performance frameworks through the work of the Building Standards Futures Programme Board Verification Standards workstream, taking cognisance of the variations in data recording at this time would also be appropriate with a view to establishing a uniform approach to data.

The survey that this report was based on was an initial look into how local authority verifiers capture and use data as well as how data fields in the back-office systems drive reporting. The application of data and use of data fields does however go much further when considering management and reporting on case files, actions, and outcomes. In this regard, further exploration of how other tasks are recorded and driven may also be appropriate to review.

Therefore, to conclude this report in relation to the management and use of data in a national consistent manner, it would be appropriate to raise some points for consideration with guidance being sought from the BSD:

1. When considering performance reporting, should the number of days be calculated from day 0 or day 1 (Question 8)?
2. What is required to consider a building warrant application as valid (Question 12)? Please note difference between a valid application and a received application. Reference Sections 4 and 8 to The Building (Procedure)(Scotland) Regulations 2004.
3. When considering performance reporting, should a building warrant application be considered as granted/issued when the surveyor confirms it competent (Decision Date) or when it is sent out (Issued Date) (Question 13)?
4. When considering performance reporting, should the number of building warrant applications received within any period be based on those that are valid (Valid Date), or those received (Date Application Received) (Question 18)?

5. When considering performance reporting, should refunds be deducted from building warrant fee income within any reporting period (Question 19)?

The information sought within questions 2 to 7 within the survey has provided useful information around use of IT systems and data reporting tools that can be shared and used in engagement discussions with Idox, specifically around:

1. The expansive use of the Idox EDRMS and opportunities in developing the system.
2. The use and development of the Idox mobile app platform and other systems and methods of digital on-site inspection delivery.
3. The expansive use of Idox Enterprise and opportunities in developing the system including common national tasks to suit any revised processes associated with potential reviews of performance and operating frameworks and any associated development arising from the compliance plan initiative.

Whilst it is the purpose of this report to highlight where some data recording inconsistencies lie, it is worth noting that should national data recording become the same, in some key areas, across all 32 local authority verifiers, then the opportunity to develop more practical benefits can be realised in areas such as:

- Idox derived reports that could be used by all verifiers.
- Letter/document templates.
- Enterprise tasks.