



# **Terms of Reference**

**for the**

**Scottish Building Standards Hub (SBSH)**

Produced by the Scottish Building Standards Hub.

(Based upon original terms of reference document produced by the Building Standards Division through the Delivery Model Development Group during the currency of the Building Standards Hub Pilot Programme.)

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Document Version Control.

Title: Terms of Reference for the Scottish Building Standards Hub (SBSH)

Purpose: This document outlines the business plan for the Scottish Building Standards Hub (SBSH).

Version:	Date:	Notes:
1.0	03.12.2024	Initial draft.

## Vision:

The vision is for the Scottish Building Standards Hub (SBSH) (the Hub) to play a key role in **supporting transformation and quality in building standards** services across Scotland.

The SBSH is an operational Hub that strives to support the delivery and further development of the building standards system in Scotland by working with verifiers, certifiers, and the wider construction sector.

The Hub does not have any political, legislative or verification role within the building standards system but recognising the key role the Hub has in sustaining and supporting the delivery of verification services throughout Scotland, Scottish Ministers have agreed that the Hub should be funded through building warrant fees.

## Introduction:

Following the fire at Grenfell Tower in 2017 a [Ministerial Working Group](#) was set up to review building and fire safety regulatory frameworks. The Group commissioned two review panels for building standards; [Compliance and Enforcement](#) and [Fire Safety](#) that subsequently published their own recommendations.

Recommendations by the Review Panel on Compliance and Enforcement concluded that, whilst the core elements of the current building standards system should be maintained, some reshaping of the system was necessary to ensure that it addresses identified weaknesses. The verification delivery model was identified as one area that required some reshaping. Both Review panels identified the potential for a 'national or central hub' that would provide expertise in specialist and safety critical areas of design of complex buildings.

The Building Standards Futures Programme Board is providing guidance and direction on the development and implementation of the [Compliance and Enforcement](#) and [Fire Safety](#) Review Panels recommendations.

The Board is strategically advising and directing a broad programme of work aimed at improving the performance, expertise, resilience and sustainability of the Scottish building standards system and services across Scotland.

## Scottish Building Standards Hub (SBSH):

The Hub is hosted in Fife Council. Staff and related HR matters are governed by the host authority (Fife Council).

## **Governance, Performance Setting and Performance Monitoring:**

As detailed in the Strategic Business Case for the SBSH, an Advisory Board will provide the governance and oversight of the Hub. The Board will be representative of key stakeholders in the building standards system and will consist of around 10 to 12 members. Members of the Board will select a Chair and Vice Chair who will serve for three years following which reselection will be undertaken. The limit may be altered through agreement of the Board.

The Board will report to the Minister through Scottish Government officials supported by annual and other reporting. Its remit will cover the strategic and operational elements of the Hub's work including business planning, delivery, finances, relationships, and risks. It will also be responsible for ensuring the SBSH meets and delivers its aims, this includes the responsibility for performance setting and performance monitoring to ensure the SBSH is meeting the interests of its stakeholders.

## **Operational and Performance Reporting:**

Operational and performance reporting will include preparing quarterly operational reports showing progress on the implementation of the Business Plan. This will include reporting on the development and implementation of plans to address any issues highlighted by operational monitoring.

The Hub will also prepare and present to the Advisory Board an Annual Report on Hub activity. This will form part of its rolling Strategic and Operational Business Plan.

The Hub will comply with Fife Council policies and procedures on IT, procurement, human resources, data protection, freedom of information, and other corporate related instructions.

Reporting will cover impact on measures to support the national building standards system (Annex A) as well as specific Hub measures (Annex B).

## **Range of Services and Activities:**

The SBSH will offer a range of services and activities that will support local authorities, Scottish Government, and the wider construction industry. It will develop, enhance, and extend a range of building standards system services previously provided by LABSS such as:

- Scottish Type Approval System (STAS).
- Information Papers.
- Dispute Resolution.

The Hub will also:

- Develop and convene expert groups to provide specialist advice and support on fire safety and structural matters. (FireHub and StructHub)
- Provide advice/peer review on specialist matters relating to the environment and energy.
- Provide advice/peer review on specialist matters relating to fire.
- Provide advice/peer review on technical/procedural/regulatory matters relating to verifier and other building standards service functions.
- Facilitate and support resource sharing in relation to building warrant application assessment.
- Operate and support regional partnerships through LABSS Consortia Technical Working Group and the Digital Delivery Group.
- Operate and support digital and transformational matters.
- Support local authorities and the Scottish Government in the delivery of the Futures Board work streams and future activities.
- Support the delivery of learning and development through the facilitation of the Competency Assessment Scheme (CAS) system and targeted training.

The full range of services and activities delivered by the SBSH are detailed within Annex C.

## **Certification:**

To support Certification Scheme Providers through development and maintenance of relationships between certifiers and verifiers in delivering the building standards system. Including participating in a regular forum to discuss verification and certification use in practice. (Certification Scheme Providers Meetings)

## **Learning and Development:**

The Hub will support the delivery of training and education material, either directly or organised with an external provider. It will support the development of a digitalised Competency Assessment System (CAS) and run a digital learning and management system containing digitised training material. It will maintain and operate an independent website to promote building standards advice, information, recent activity, and support the building standards system services it delivers.

## **Complaints:**

Any complaints received regarding the SBSH will be dealt with in accordance with 'Fife Council Complaints Handling Procedure (Version 3 / valid from May 2023)' which reflects Fife Council's, and the SBSH's, commitment to valuing complaints. It seeks to resolve customer dissatisfaction as close as possible to the point of service delivery and to conduct thorough, impartial, and fair investigations of customer complaints so that, where appropriate, evidence-based decisions are made on the facts of the case.

## Annex A: National Measures.

Table 1: National Outputs and Measures Supported by the SBSH.				
Objectives	National Outcomes	National Measures (or Verification Indicators)	Outputs for SBSH	Indicators for SBSH
<b>Drive Efficiencies</b>	All users of the building standards system will receive an efficient, consistent, and predictable service supporting the delivery of compliant safe buildings.	Verifier position in relation to meeting national Key Performance Outcomes.	Promotion and delivery of a wide range of building standards system services.	SBSH position in relation to meeting its performance outcomes and contextual reporting.
<b>Ensure Investment in Skills and Technology</b>	Building standards staff with appropriate qualifications and levels of competence. A building standards service using new technology and innovation to deliver an efficient service.	Number of staff and vacancies. Level of investment in training. Level of investment in technology. Use of new processes/technologies.	Number of learning and development modules developed. Training and CPD provided or arranged by the SBSH. Support to workforce strategy, LABSS Ambassadors Networks and other national training initiatives.	Number of training modules and other digital learning developed. Training and CPD delivered. National initiatives supported.
<b>Increased Capacity to Deliver Across All Types of Work</b>	All local authorities will have access to appropriate technical expertise on safety critical areas.	Number of times specialist advice sought. Customer satisfaction with service. Use of workload sharing and other workload support systems/services.	Advice on specialist services and general building standards related enquiries. Guidance provided	Number of requests for advice and/or peer review in relation to specialist and general advice. Number of workload sharing introductions made

	Equality of service delivery.		supporting workload sharing and delivering service to brokering introductions between authorities.	between authorities.
<b>Increased Consistency</b>	All local authority services will interpret applications in a consistent manner in terms of process and information requirements.	Satisfaction with service and consistent robust regulation of built structures striving for increased compliance.	Information papers produced and disseminated. Provision of dispute resolution service.	Number of papers produced. Number of DRS cases.
<b>Increased Resilience</b>	The building standards service across Scotland has the capacity to provide a continuous, consistent and reliable service.	All authorities having structures/service in place to meet their obligations under performance and operating frameworks, including planning for investment in workforce and training.	Advice and peer review in general and specialist areas. Provision of hubs of expertise in specialist areas. Wide range of building standards system services. Operational partnerships. Provision of learning and development opportunities.	SBSH position in relation to meeting its performance outcomes and contextual reporting.

## Annex B: SBSH Measures.

### Building Standards System Services:

#### Scottish Type Approval Scheme:

- Total number of valid STAS Certificates.
- Number of new STAS applications.
- Average time taken to respond to STAS applications from receipt of valid application.
- Average time to issue STAS certificate from receipt of last piece of competent information.
- Number of STAS enquiries.
- Average time taken to respond to STAS enquiries.
- Key reported outcomes from STAS customers.

#### Information Papers:

- Total number of live information papers.
- Number of new information papers produced.
- Number of information papers revised.
- Key reported outcomes from information paper customers.

#### Dispute Resolution Scheme:

- Number of disputes received.
- Number of disputes considered and resolved at a regional level.
- Number of disputes referred to and resolved at Consortia Technical Working Group (CTWG) level.
- Average time taken to establish the outcome from a dispute resolution case reviewed at national level.
- Key reported outcomes from dispute resolution customers.

### Scottish Building Standards Hubs of Expertise and Advice:

#### Fire Engineering Expert Hub:

- Number of panels held. (Scheduled for 4 annually)
- Number of projects considered by the fire engineering expert hub.
- Number of matters of national interest considered by the fire engineering expert hub.
- Average time taken to respond to projects referred to the Fire Engineering Expert Hub.

Average time taken to respond to projects referred to the Fire Engineering Expert Hub.

#### Structural Engineering Expert Hub:

- Number of panels held. (Scheduled for 4 annually)
- Number of projects considered by the Structural Engineering Expert Hub.
- Number of matters of national interest considered by the Structural Engineering Expert Hub.
- Average time taken to respond to projects referred to the Structural Engineering Expert Hub.
- Average time taken to respond to matters of national interest referred to the Structural Engineering Expert Hub.



## **Scottish Building Standards Hub – Fire Expert Advice:**

- Number of SBSH Fire Expert enquires/peer reviews.
- Average time taken to respond to a SBSH Fire Expert enquiry/peer review.

## **Scottish Building Standards Hub – Energy/Environment Expert Advice:**

- Number of SBSH Energy/Environment Expert enquires/peer reviews.
- Average time taken to respond to a SBSH Energy/Environment Expert enquiry/peer review.

## **Building Standards Hub - General Technical/Procedural Advice:**

- Number of SBSH Technical Expert enquires/peer reviews.
- Average time taken to respond to a SBSH Technical Expert enquiry.

## **Operational Partnerships:**

### **Consortia Technical Working Group (CTWG):**

- Number of CTWG meetings supported by the SBSH. (Scheduled for 4 annually)
- Number of projects/matters considered by the CTWG.
- Number of stakeholders engaged with through the CTWG.

### **Digital Delivery Group (DDG):**

- Number of DDG meetings supported by the SBSH. (Scheduled for 4 annually)
- Number of projects/matters considered by the Digital Hub/DDG.
- Number of stakeholders engaged with through the Digital Hub/DDG.

## **Workload Sharing:**

- Number of workload sharing introductions brokered.

## **Learning and Development:**

- Number of live digital training modules developed.
- Number of SBSH direct training events delivered.
- Number of SBSH organised, externally presented training events delivered.
- Number of SBSH delivered lectures.

## Annex C: SBSH Services/Activities.

<b>Table 2: SBSH Services and Activities.</b>	
<b>Building Standards System Services.</b>	
<b>Service:</b>	<b>Details:</b>
<a href="#">The Scottish Type Approval Scheme (STAS).</a>	STAS is a national approval scheme that allows customers to have their building design, or system design pre-approved, which then quickens the building warrant application process as only site-specific elements require to be checked. This also aids verifiers as they spend considerably less time and resource assessing applications accompanied by a STAS certificate.
<a href="#">Information Papers.</a>	Information papers promote clarity and national consistency on the subject matter covered. They benefit both local authority verifiers and the building standards customer through the guidance they offer.
<a href="#">The Dispute Resolution Process.</a>	The Dispute Resolution Process (DRP) is a customer complaint mechanism and is embedded in the Performance Framework. The DRP is a facility open to an applicant where they disagree with a technical, procedural, or regulatory interpretation that a local authority verifier is adopting in the consideration of a building warrant submission, building project or proposed development through a preliminary enquiry.
<b>Centres of Expertise and Operational Partnerships:</b>	
<b>Service:</b>	<b>Details:</b>
<a href="#">Fire engineering expert hub. (FireHub)</a>	FireHub is a panel of experts from both industry and public sector who look at matters of national interest with a view to establishing a consistent position or opinion.
<a href="#">Structural engineering expert hub. (StructHub)</a>	StructHub is a panel of experts from both industry and public sector who look at matters of national interest with a view to establishing a consistent position or opinion.
<a href="#">Specialist advice on fire safety design.</a>	The SBSH's fire expert provides a national centralised support role for verifiers on matters related to fire. In addition, advice sought for the most complex of fire engineered design can be arranged with wider industry partners through the FireHub.
<a href="#">Specialist advice on environmental and energy design.</a>	The SBSH's environment/energy expert provides a national centralised support role for verifiers on matters related to the environment and energy.
<a href="#">General technical advice on design.</a>	The SBSH's technical support surveyors provide a national centralised support role for verifiers on technical,

	procedural and regulatory matters related to the building standards.
<a href="#">Support to LABSS Consortia Technical Working Group.</a>	The SBSH supports the operation of LABSS Consortium Technical Working Group (CTWG) and provides technical assistance. The CTWG is the established means to co-ordinate national outcomes through technical and procedural interpretational matters.
<a href="#">The Digital Hub and support to LABSS Digital Delivery Group.</a>	The SBSH supports the operation of LABSS Digital Delivery Group (DDG) via the 'Digital Hub'. The Digital Hub supports the BSD digital transformation strategy and contributes to national digital transformational matters.
<a href="#">Workload sharing.</a>	The SBSH facilitates workload sharing between local authority verifiers in the assessment of building warrant applications by brokering introductions and developing workload sharing guidance.
<b>Learning and Development:</b>	
<b>Service:</b>	<b>Details:</b>
<a href="#">Online learning.</a>	SBSH operated and managed web-based learning management system containing digitised learning and training material specifically for building standards practitioners who are LABSS registered members.
<a href="#">Digitised Competency Assessment System. (Skills Builder)</a>	SBSH operated and managed web-based skills and competency recording system that allows manager validation. System is specific for building standards practitioners who are LABSS registered members and require to record validation of their skills/competence.
<a href="#">Training events, courses, and continual professional development. (CPD)</a>	SBSH supports the provision of CPD and training either provided directly or in conjunction with industry partners and stakeholders. This includes in person activities, seminars, online events, hands on training, etc.
<a href="#">Workforce Strategy, formal education, and Ambassadors Networks.</a>	SBSH supports national workforce development and strategies, including LABSS ambassador's networks, modern and graduate apprenticeship schemes and delivering lectures. This includes liaison with education providers, professional and trade bodies, and research establishments.