

SBSH Advisory Board Meeting 8

Note of Meeting: 21st September 2026

1.0		Welcome/Apologies:	Actions:
	1.1	Welcome and Introduction: GM welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
	1.2	Attendance: Gary Mees (GM) – Gary Mees Architectural Technology representing Construction Industry. (Chair) Laura Shanks (LS) –Building Standards Team Manager City of Edinburgh Council representing LABSS. (Vice Chair) John-Paul Breslin (JPB) – Building Standards Team leader Stirling Council representing LABSS Nigel Kerr (NK) – Head of Protective Services Fife Council representing Fife Council. Stuart Parker (SP) – Managing Director Scotland of Morgan Sindall representing the Construction Industry. Alan McAulay (AMcA) – SBSH Director (Technical/Operations/Services). James Whiteford (JW) – SBSH Director (Business/Strategy/Transformation). Russell Watson – SBSH Learning & Development Manager Susan Paterson – SBSH Admin & Technical Support (Minute) Apologies: Stephen Garvin (SG) – Head of Building Standards Division representing BSD. Mark Lawler (ML) – Director MJL Consulting Engineers Ltd. representing Certifiers. Robert Nichol (RN) – Chief Officer Environment and Economy CoSLA representing CoSLA. Craig Hatton (CH) – Chief Executive North Ayrshire Council. Representing SOLACE.	
	1.3	Intimations/Conflicts of Interest Noting who was present at the meeting, JW confirmed that as BSD was not represented at the meeting the Board did not have a quorum to make decisions. The BSD, being one of the specified member organisations needed to form a quorum.	
	1.4	Note of Previous Meeting: Agreed.	
2.0		Previous Actions:	
	2.1	Action 5.1:	

		Review the balance of Board members. See 'SBSH Proposed New Advisory Board Appointments V1.0 09.07.2026'. GM confirmed that the paper relating to this action and proposal was previously circulated to the Board for consideration. Whilst noting a quorum was not present, those Board members present were satisfied that those named in the paper would be suitable persons to be approached and invited to sit on the SBSH Advisory Board. JW intimated that ML prior to the meeting had confirmed his support for these candidates via email. As a quorum was not present, GM requested that the SBSH approach those absent Board members to seek ratification of this proposal and approach. Post meeting note, this approach has been made.	JW
3.0		Update:	
	3.1	Activity: Board members were referred to the Operational Report for a full update, but to reflect on key points, the following verbal updates were provided. <u>Business/Strategy/Transformation update:</u> SBSH Periodic Operational Report Q1 2026/27: The circulated new style report condenses all the required information into one report. Roadshows/Events: SBSH delivered successful in-person Roadshows in Ayr, Aberdeen and Edinburgh, all of which were well attended by verifiers. An online Roadshow took place on 24th September, attracting 144 building standards verifiers. The on-line event captured anyone who could not attend the in-person events. It provided an overview of SBSH services and support available to verifiers. Planning is progressing for the Industry Stakeholders Event on 29th October at CoSLA offices in Edinburgh. The event will provide key customers and stakeholders with an update on SBSH services, technical support activities and common enquiry themes.	

		Recruitment: Recruitment activity continues, with interviews for the Lead Technical Support Surveyor post held on 14/15th September. A preferred candidate has been identified from within the existing team. Interviews for the vacant Technical Support Officer post are scheduled for next week, with the aim of appointing two suitable candidates from that round of interviews to bring the team up to full capacity. Mobile App: The Mobile App continues to be actively promoted and has seen a steady increase in user uptake. Development work is ongoing, with enhancements being made. A user questionnaire has been introduced to gather feedback and help inform future improvements and development priorities. National Time Recording Solution: The National Time Recording Solution is being implemented to support the Compliance Plan approach. A recent demonstration was delivered by Idox to all local authorities. To date, 21 local authorities have requested support with implementation and configuration within their systems. Although project costs have exceeded the budget provided by BSD, SBSH will meet the funding shortfall to ensure delivery of the solution. <u>Technical/Services/Operations update:</u> CTWG Meeting: Next meeting 30th September. Workload Sharing: Discussions continue at the request of verifiers. The Q1 position was noted, and Q2 presents a similar picture, with generally two to three verifiers seeking assistance at any given time. We continue to support these requests where possible; however, verifier capacity remains limited. As a result, some verifiers may need to consider alternative means of support, such as agency workers. We are	
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		continuing to engage with managers to identify where capacity exists and where additional support may be available. Structural Engineering Expert Hub (Structural Hub): A local authority Building Standards structural engineers discussion group has been established, with participation from Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Dundee and South Ayrshire Councils. The group will provide a forum for peer discussion among verifiers with structural engineering expertise and may also support wider programme objectives. Development of the national Structural Hub is progressing, with formal invitations expected to be issued within the next few weeks. A discussion with BSD is scheduled later this week to ensure the Structural Hub complements, rather than duplicates, existing national forums such as the Cross Sector Building Safety Forum. STAS: Efforts to increase STAS application numbers are showing positive results, with new applications received from St Modwen Homes and Avant Homes. A further 100 house types have recently been approved across CALA and Miller Homes developments. Engagement has also taken place with Homes for Scotland, with further discussions planned to promote STAS uptake among SME members and support wider objectives relating to More Homes Scotland and the Affordable Housing Supply Programme. Changes/New Strategic Goals and Aims: The first newsletter was well received, and the second edition was published in early July. Performance and outcomes from the second edition will be reported through the Q2 update. The third newsletter is planned for publication before the end of October. Key outcomes from the CTWG group will be included in the next newsletter, which is expected to be published before the end of the month. Publication will be highlighted to the group in due course.	
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		SBSH has accepted invitations to participate in the Accessible Housing & Building Standards Working Group, the Building Standards Structural Safety and Eurocodes Review Panel, and the national survey on Historic Unauthorised Building Works, Prescription and Regularisation. Engagement continues with BSD regarding the implications of Martyn's Law (The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025) for verifiers. Stakeholder Event: As noted, a stakeholder event is scheduled for 29th October at the COSLA offices in Edinburgh. The event will comprise three technical sessions covering: • An overview of SBSH services. • Common technical enquiries and case studies. • The provision of expert advice, including case studies that promote consistent approaches to common issues. The event is intended to provide practical value to a broad range of operational stakeholders. <u>Learning and Development update:</u> Competency assessments and the LABSS peer review process continue on a business-as-usual basis, with ongoing support to the Competency Steering Group and BSD research project. Hannah Patching has joined the team and is analysing CAS data to identify national training needs and skills gaps. 30 managers have completed a formal management qualification. Over 50 surveyors have completed accredited fire engineering training, with a further 16 due to enrol; around 160 surveyors have attended one-day fire engineering sessions. Monthly CPD sessions continue to attract 150 to 200 attendees. Upcoming training includes fire door certification and inspection, a Dangerous Buildings Workshop (4th November), enforcement training, and passive fire protection training.	
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	3.2	Periodic Operational Report Q1 2026/27: <u>Performance Outcome Reporting:</u> The Board were referred to the Operational Report and questions were invited/answered. <u>Budgetary Position Report:</u> The Board were referred to the Operational Report, but in addition, the following was focussed on. Year end accounting has been finalised for 2025/26 and actual carry forward into 2026/27 is around £130,000.00 higher than budgeted. This will be reflected in future Operational Reports. The reason for this higher sum is the result of salary and overhead savings, due to timescales in recruiting the Lead TSS, and the vacancy left in one of the TSS posts. It was hoped that CoSLA would have confirmed the SBSH funding arrangements for the next four years at this time, however following September's Settlement and Distribution Leaders Group meeting there was an additional ask for more information on the SBSH's 'value for money' to be brought back to their October meeting. Disappointment was expressed by the SBSH, especially given the apparent level of information provided for the September meeting. Originally, a decision of future funding was promised before Christmas 2025. Anecdotal information has also been received that heads of finance are focussing on the funding mechanism for the SBSH as coming from the local authority financial settlement rather than acknowledging the recent building warrant fee increases which	

	have compensated and benefitted local authorities as well as paid for the SBSH and the BSD audit process. Fife Council also expressed concern on the position as it puts Fife Council at potential financial risk. The chair asked at what point a flat rated financial settlement would affect the SBSH, who confirmed that salaries and overheads would outstrip funding before 2030/31. The SBSH and Fife Council also agreed to share in internal document which was shared with Fife Councils Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services which details what added benefits that the SBSH brings to the building standards system would be lost should a flat funding rate be applied as opposed to a four-year progressive funding enhancement. Post meeting note, this document has been shared. JW confirmed, given the questions being raised regarding the value of the SBSH, it was the SBSHs intention to seek the services of a consultant to carry out research into the SBSH value in terms of services, support, financial saving and economic impact, etc. This is something that was intended to be done internally at some point, but external research and reporting will be independent and more transparent. <u>Time Activity Report:</u> The Board were referred to the Operational Report and questions were invited/answered. <u>Business Risk Report:</u> Risk G8 – SBSH 2027/28 Funding and Onwards: As the SBSH future funding settlement has not been formalised, funding is still a risk. The contingency has been enacted, in that the matter has now been escalated within Fife Council. Risk to be kept live. Risk S6 – Recruitment of Lead Technical Support Surveyor: As noted, the SBSH has taken the decision to go ahead and recruit the LTSS to support operational working and workload pressures. This decision was made easier to make as the successful candidate is internal. Risk to be removed. Risk S7 – Recruit to Vacated Technical Support Surveyor Post:	JW JW
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		As noted, interviews for this post will be next week. Similar to that noted above, for workload reasons and operational reasons, the intention is to fill this vacancy. Risk to be left live until recruitment process concluded.	
4.0		AOCB:	
	4.1	No AOCB.	
	4.2	Next Meeting: Meeting 9 – 14 th December 2026 (Q2 26/27 reporting) MS Teams	
5.0		Actions:	
	5.1	SBSH approach those absent Board members to seek ratification of proposed new Board members. Done.	JW
	5.2	The SBSH and Fife Council to share internal document which was shared with Fife Councils Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services which details what added benefits that the SBSH brings to the building standards system would be lost should a flat funding rate be applied as opposed to a four-year progressive funding enhancement. Done.	JW
	5.3	SBSH to seek research consultant to look at the 'value' the hub brings to the building standards system and delivery model.	JW