

*Councillor Miranda Radley*

Convener of Communities, Housing and Public Protection Committee.

Sent by email only.

21<sup>st</sup> March 2024

Dear Humza,

## **RAAC in Residential Properties - Aberdeen**

I am writing to you on behalf of Aberdeen City Council to provide an update on the issues we are facing with Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) in residential properties in Aberdeen.

### **Background**

As you may be aware, we have identified RAAC in approximately 500 houses across the city. Of these properties, around 360 are owned by the City Council and 140 are in private ownership. Based on our technical engineering assessments, we have determined that there is a need for urgent action to rehome the residents of these properties and address the safety risks posed by RAAC.

### **Council Tenanted Properties**

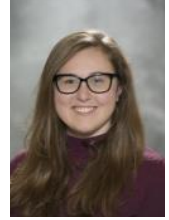
At this stage, we have developed a program to rehome over 300 families who are tenants of the council. This positive engagement has commenced and each family will be individually supported to determine their needs and the best options available to them.

To manage this we have identified an initial budget of £3 million to meet the range of initial costs that come from this. This will be funded from our Housing Revenue Account and this funding will be freed up by delaying capital improvements to our housing stock.

### **Private Owners/Properties**

We are also trying to support homeowners, landlords and private tenants as best we can. However, as private owners are individually responsible for their home we feel the Council are restricted in this area due to the extent of our powers and the levels of financial support that may be required. We are fully aware of our requirements around best value, the use of General Fund resources (as this may well fall outwith what is chargeable to the Housing Revenue Account) along with our requirement to work within our budget.

Following engagement with residents in the affected properties, issues have been raised with Council Officers around the buy-back of properties, shared repair scheme, impact on mortgage and Council Tax payments and wider concerns around the loss of community and community regeneration.



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## **Future of the Site**

We are currently exploring options for the long-term future of the site and the range of options available to the Council. These options will include, amongst other things, the possibility of remedial works and demolition. This detailed appraisal will be presented to the Council within six months. I would advise that we will not know the cost of any intervention until this exercise is complete, however, we do envisage this will run into tens of millions of pounds.

In order to get the best value for the council, a number of the Council's major capital projects this term have been significantly influenced by the external funding which they may attract. Whilst I recognise that the Scottish Government has only recently set its budget, and that it faces its own financial challenges, it would be hugely appreciated if any possible financial support for the future of this site could be outlined to the Council prior to a decision being taken on the site's future.

We recognise that this is a national issue and we believe that there is an urgent need for a wider government overview of policy and precedent for local authorities or other registered social landlords across Scotland who are likely to be facing similar issues.

For example, we are concerned that RAAC could escalate into liabilities over other latent construction defects within former Council housing stock creating a wider exposure to risk and the precedent this may set for the whole of Scotland. We are also acutely aware of the need for consistent messaging to all property owners and occupiers affected in meeting this serious health and safety risk.

The Minister for Housing has helpfully provided support during recent dialogue on the immediate priorities regarding rehoming of our tenants and I thank him for the continued dialogue being offered. I have also attached the letter I have recently sent to, and the response I have since received from, the Prime Minister.

I welcome that you are supporting us and that you appreciate there is an ongoing need to discuss policy guidance from the Scottish Government to help us address this issue and ensure the safety and wellbeing of our residents. Further to this, I would greatly welcome any comments you may have on what financial support might be available to the Council as we work through the options appraisal and the decisions around the future of the site.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,



**Councillor Miranda Radley**