

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Services
DATE	20 February 2024
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Update on Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) in School Buildings
REPORT NUMBER	RES/24/053
DIRECTOR	Steve Whyte
CHIEF OFFICER	Stephen Booth
REPORT AUTHOR	Andrew Jones
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.1

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report is intended to provide assurance to members relating to the presence of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) in school buildings. It includes details of the outcome of building inspections, along with an overview of the strategies and procedures which have been put in place to manage and maintain the affected buildings. It also provides an update on progress with longer term planning for the removal of the RAAC from the buildings.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Notes the contents of this report;
- 2.2 Instructs the Chief Officer, Corporate Landlord to carry out a detailed options appraisal for the long term future of Northfield Academy, with a view to providing a solution to address the presence of RAAC within the building, and to include an update on progress within the next annual update to the School Estate Plan in September 2024.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 At its meeting of 11 September 2023, Council instructed the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to report to the Education and Children's Services Committee on the outcome of inspections and identified risks in relation to the presence of RAAC in schools. This report seeks to fulfil that instruction.
- 3.2 In response to information held on historic property records, Independent Structural Engineers were appointed by Aberdeen City Council in Summer 2023 to undertake inspections of schools within Aberdeen to identify RAAC panels, assess their condition and advise on recommendations for any required remedial works and management strategies. The inspection scope and

procedure is based on guidance by The Institution of Structural Engineers (IStructE) - Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) Investigation and Assessment - Further Guidance - April 2023.

- 3.3 A combination of visual and intrusive surveys was undertaken within the school estate. Findings identified RAAC to be present at three secondary school buildings: Northfield Academy, St Machar Academy, and Hazlehead Academy. None of the city's primary schools and no other secondary schools were found to have RAAC present within them.
- 3.4 For each of the three school buildings where RAAC was identified, the independent structural engineers provided a detailed management strategy report setting out their recommendations on any immediate remedial measures required, and any procedures which should be put in place for the longer term management of the RAAC within these buildings. A summary of the engineers' findings and recommendations for each school are provided below.

St Machar Academy

- 3.5 Following detailed inspection and testing throughout the buildings at St Machar Academy, the presence of RAAC was confirmed in one small area, within a roof access stairwell. Whilst no immediate concerns with regard to this RAAC were identified, following advice from the specialist engineers and as a precautionary measure, a temporary structure was constructed within the affected area of the building, to ensure that the area can continue to be used safely.
- 3.6 Longer term, plans for the complete removal of the small amount of RAAC in this building are to be incorporated into a forthcoming roof replacement project, within the Council's condition and suitability programme. This work is expected to be carried out during financial year 2025/26. In the meantime the affected area of the building will be regularly monitored. The details of the monitoring programme are provided at paragraph 3.13 below.

Hazlehead Academy

- 3.7 Following detailed inspection and testing throughout the buildings at Hazlehead Academy, the presence of RAAC was confirmed in several areas of the site. Following advice from the engineers, remedial works were undertaken within an outbuilding at the school, where there was evidence of historic damage to some of the roofing panels. No immediate concerns with regard to RAAC in the other areas of the school site have been identified, and the specialist engineers advised that no further remedial works were required to be undertaken.
- 3.8 Longer term, the affected areas of the building will continue to be monitored regularly, as explained at paragraph 3.13 below, until the planned replacement building for Hazelhead Academy has been completed and the existing building is demolished. If the regular monitoring within the existing building identifies a change in the condition of any RAAC panels, or if any additional risks are identified which would require their removal prior to the new school building opening, then the appropriate action will be taken to ensure the safety of building users.

Northfield Academy

- 3.9 Following detailed inspection and testing throughout the building at Northfield Academy, the presence of RAAC was confirmed in several areas of the building. No immediate concerns with regard to this RAAC were identified, and the specialist engineers advised that no remedial works were required to be undertaken.
- 3.10 Due to the extent of RAAC roof panels throughout the building at Northfield Academy, removal of these and replacement of the roof deck with an alternative material is estimated to cost approximately £900,000, which is not currently budgeted for, and would likely cause significant disruption to the running of the school whilst works are carried out. Further work is therefore required to fully assess the options for Northfield Academy in the long term, to provide a suitable solution for dealing with the RAAC within this building.
- 3.11 It is therefore proposed that officers are instructed to carry out a detailed options appraisal for the long term future of Northfield Academy, with a view to providing a solution to address the presence of RAAC within the building, and to include an update on progress within the next annual update to the School Estate Plan, due to be presented to the Committee in September 2024.
- 3.12 In the meantime, the affected areas of the Northfield Academy building will be monitored regularly, as explained at paragraph 3.13 below. If the regular monitoring within the building identifies a change in the condition of any RAAC panels, or if any additional risks are identified which would require their removal, then the appropriate action will be taken to ensure the safety of building users.

Monitoring and Maintenance Programme

- 3.13 For each of the above school sites, a programme of regular monitoring of the areas of the buildings containing RAAC has been put into place. This consists of an annual visual inspection of the RAAC panels by a structural engineer to assess their condition. In addition, further visual inspections will be arranged following any severe weather events, to ensure that the panels have not been damaged by storms or heavy rain or snowfall. Engineers will then provide officers with a report on any observed changes to the condition of RAAC panels, and any remedial action required to be undertaken.
- 3.14 To minimise any deterioration in the condition of the affected roofs caused by poor drainage, a programme of three monthly roof and gutter cleaning for these buildings has also been implemented.
- 3.15 A RAAC Management Strategy document has been created for each of the affected sites, and copies of these are provided at Appendix A. These documents include details of the above monitoring and maintenance arrangements, along with advice and guidance for key members of staff at each school site. The documents will help to ensure that there is an awareness amongst staff of the presence and location of RAAC within their building, and of the procedures to be followed if any changes to the condition of roof

structures are observed. An updated risk assessment on the management of RAAC is also included within the Management Strategy document.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The cost of the scheduled monitoring and maintenance programmes which have been put in place for the schools affected by RAAC, as described at Paragraph 3.13 and 3.14 above, is estimated at £9,000 per year. Any additional roof inspections required (for example after extreme weather events) are estimated to cost up to £500 per inspection. These costs will be met from existing maintenance budgets.
- 4.2 The planned roof replacement project at St Machar Academy, which will incorporate the removal of the identified RAAC panels within that building, is included within the Council's Condition and Suitability programme, and the cost of that project will be met from the approved budget for that programme.
- 4.3 Should it become necessary, the cost of removal of the RAAC panels at Northfield Academy, and replacement with an alternative roofing material, is estimated at £900,000. This does not include the cost of providing alternative accommodation for pupils whilst the work is carried out, should this be necessary.
- 4.4 Any costs related to the proposed options appraisal work for Northfield Academy will be met from existing budgets.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Plans to remove RAAC panels and replace them with an alternative roofing material will contribute positively to improving the environmental performance and climate resilience of the affected school buildings.

7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	No significant risks identified			
Compliance	Risk of non-compliance with the	Arrangements are in place for the instruction of the	L	Yes

	required inspection and maintenance regime as recommended by structural engineers	required annual inspections and three monthly gutter cleaning to be triggered automatically at the appropriate frequency. Following any extreme weather events, automated alerts will be sent electronically to the appropriate officers to ensure additional inspections are instructed.		
Operational	Risk of injury to building occupants if RAAC panels were to fail. Interruption to service delivery	Regular inspection of affected areas of building. Increased frequency of maintenance. Awareness raising amongst staff on site and clarification or reporting procedures for any concerns.	L	Yes
Financial	Risk of additional / unplanned cost of repair / replacement if condition of RAAC panels deteriorates	Re-prioritisation of the Council's Condition and Suitability Programme to free up necessary resources for any works required	L	Yes
Reputational	No significant risks identified			
Environment / Climate	Increase in frequency of storms / extreme weather events could lead to deterioration of the condition of RAAC roof panels	Arrangements in place for additional inspections to be triggered following extreme weather events, ensuring appropriate action can be taken if condition deteriorates	M	Yes

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2023-2024</u>	
Impact of Report	
<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26</u>	
Regional and City Strategies	The proposals within this report supports the approved Property and Estates Strategy strategic outcomes in particular 'Assets will be fit for purpose, in appropriate condition and with appropriate utilisation' and 'Assets will be environmentally sustainable'.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	No assessment required. I confirm this has been discussed and agreed with Stephen Booth, Chief Officer Corporate Landlord on 17 January 2024
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Other	No additional impact assessments have been completed for this report.

10. APPENDICES

- 10.1 Appendix A: RAAC Management Plans for St Machar Academy, Northfield Academy and Hazlehead Academy

11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

Name	Andrew Jones
Title	Service Manager
Email Address	ajones@aberdeencity.gov.uk
Tel	045101