

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Communities Housing and Public Protection
DATE	28 March 2024
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) Update
REPORT NUMBER	RES/24/103
DIRECTOR	Andy MacDonald
CHIEF OFFICER	Stephen Booth/Jacqui McKenzie/John Wilson
REPORT AUTHOR	Stephen Booth
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.1

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 At the meeting of the Urgent Business Committee (UBC) on 29th February 2024 RES/24/086 a report was considered in relation to the presence of RAAC roofing within properties at Balnagask.
- 1.2 In light of the range of recommendations within that report officers consider there is benefit in sharing with the Committee regular updates on activities undertaken, progress with engagement and a highlighting of key issues arising from engagements. Due to the fluid nature of the work a verbal presentation will be provided to accompany this report.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee:

- 2.1 Note the content of this report; and
- 2.2 Instruct that a verbal update as indicated in paragraph 3.2 should be provided to each meeting of the Committee and that such an update should be included as a standing agenda item until the Committee otherwise instructs.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

Background

- 3.1 At a meeting of the Urgent Business Committee on 29th February consideration was given to a wide range of issues in relation to concerns over the presence

of RAAC within properties at Balnagask in Torry. [Link to UBC Report](#) The approved recommendations within the report are noted below.

- 2.1 *Note the independent structural engineer reports (refer to Appendices C&D), appended to this report, that recommend a thorough re-evaluation of the occupancy condition for the properties identified with RAAC and instructs the Chief Officer – Early Intervention and Community Empowerment to begin engaging with council tenants impacted to understand their individual needs to enable them to be rehomed through the implementation of a short-term management strategy to facilitate this.*
- 2.2 *Approve budget virements within the Housing Capital budgets for 2024/25, as detailed within section 4, Financial implications of the report, to create an initial budget of £3m to address the matters raised in this report, to cover all associated costs including but not limited to, additional staffing costs, specialist consultant fees, contractors costs for access and works, rehoming costs, temporary accommodation, school transport, utilities dis-connections/connections and security costs for the wider site.*
- 2.3 *In relation to recommendation 2.1 above, delegate authority to the Chief Officer - Early Intervention and Community Empowerment to rehome council tenants residing at the RAAC identified properties to alternative housing with the following provisions:*
 - a) *Home Loss Payments and Disturbance Payments will be applicable to eligible tenants when they move permanently;*
 - b) *Void properties across the city will initially be reserved where appropriate and considered for offer to tenants who currently reside at the identified properties;*
 - c) *The creation of an additional specific ‘RAAC Impact’ housing list to ensure priority is provided to tenants residing at identified properties, allowing for urgent rehoming;*
 - d) *All affected tenants will be placed on this list and assessed by need, individual building risk and failing this further prioritised by the length of their current tenancy;*
 - e) *Allocation will be based on the tenants current housing need, where stock provision allows, rather than their existing property type and size;*
 - f) *All current applications for re-homing within the identified properties will be transferred onto the new ‘RAAC Impact’ housing list as noted within point (c) above;*
 - g) *That tenants will be provided with temporary accommodation if they no longer wish to remain in their property, as an interim arrangement, before re-homing;*

- 2.4 *Instruct the Interim Chief Education Officer to provide school transport for pupils, on an interim basis, should a need arise through approval of recommendation 2.3;*
- 2.5 *Instruct the Chief Officer – Capital to suspend any planned Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital programme works at the affected Council properties in Balnagask.*
- 2.6 *Instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord not to progress any new buy-back scheme applications within any RAAC affected properties, at this time using Corporate Landlord – Delegated Powers 6.*
- 2.7 *Instruct the Chief Officer – Early Intervention and Community Empowerment to ensure that any current council owned void properties within the Balnagask area that are identified as having RAAC in their construction, and any that become void in the future, will remain void and designated as Unable to be Relet (UTBR).*
- 2.8 *Note the prioritisation of this work will impact on allocations of housing for those on all of our council housing lists.*
- 2.9 *Note that circa 28% of the properties identified with RAAC in the Balnagask area are privately owned. Refer to Appendix A.*
- 2.10 *Instructs the Chief Officer – Early Intervention and Community Empowerment to 1) ensure that private owners and tenants who reside within any privately owned properties in the Balnagask area of Aberdeen which have RAAC in their construction, are provided with support and information (at request) to assist them in assessing their housing options, and 2) add existing owner occupiers and private tenants to the proposed 'RAAC Impact' housing list should a need for access to council homes be identified through the process of exploring available support and housing options for them in the city.*
- 2.11 *Note that further detail regarding the full range of assistance that can be provided to owners and private tenants will be detailed in the further report noted in item 3.27.*
- 2.12 *Note that an options appraisal is being prepared to consider the future options for the properties affected by RAAC, and instructs the Chief Officer – Capital to present the preferred option to members in a further report within the next 6 months.*
- 2.13 *Note ongoing engagement between Council Officers and all relevant Regulatory and Professional Bodies, Working Groups, other Local Authorities and Government representatives with the purpose of identifying best practice and potential funding solutions.*
- 2.14 *Instruct the Chief Officer – Early Intervention and Community Empowerment to engage with the Scottish Housing Regulator 1)*

advising of the impact of the identification of RAAC within our housing stock, the steps required to manage it and the direct and indirect impacts it will have on our wider housing performance standards, and 2) requesting that this is taken into account during regulation and consideration of the Council's performance.

- 3.2 A verbal update referencing some key topics such as property data, engagement and key themes will be presented to the committee. This will summarise the progress to date following the rehoming decision.

Ongoing Communication

- 3.3 Throughout the process officers have endeavored to keep Council tenants, owners and private tenants and other stakeholders including other representatives and the Scottish Housing Regulator informed. This has been a specific request from elected members. In addition, officers have also kept UK Members of Parliament (MPs), Scottish Government (MSPs) and their representatives informed.
- 3.4 Following the meeting of the UBC all residents received a hand-delivered letter from the Council within a matter of hours of the decision being made. It was considered important that affected parties heard from the council prior to anything from other media outlets. In addition, a formal press statement was issued. The press was also given access to two Chief Officers to answer questions on the technical aspects of the UBC report and detail the decisions on rehoming.
- 3.5 Keeping those affected informed has been a primary objective such that a dedicated section has been developed on the Council website which contains relevant information to provide advice and support. The webpage can be accessed at the following address;

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/raac-council-housing

- 3.6 This is amended and updated as necessary to reflect further questions raised through consultation. Officers do acknowledge the huge challenge in being able to provide ongoing information to all affected individuals and will continue to consider the range of options open to improve this.
- 3.7 In response to enquiries following the letters issued, a further information leaflet has been prepared for private owners. Refer to Appendix A.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report. The financial impact of the presence of RAAC and the actions to manage the consequences will be reported to a future meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report. Ongoing consideration is however being given to the range of legal implications arising from the subject matter of this report.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

7. RISK

7.1 The primary risk for RAAC panels at Balnagask is whether or not a RAAC panel within the roof of the property will fail. The areas of risk including those identified by engineering reports were noted within the UBC report.

7.2 Taking account of the above, the assessment of risk contained within the table below is considered to be consistent with the Council's Risk Appetite Statement.

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	Failure of a RAAC panel.	Continue to carry out further surveys to manage risk. Current findings have found that the void properties surveyed will require remedial action. To mitigate the expected similar outcome in occupied properties, affected tenants should be rehomed.	M	Yes
Compliance	Failure of a RAAC panel. Legal process and	This is a health and safety issue. As above, affected tenants should be rehomed. A short-term management strategy should be applied to properties containing RAAC panels until such time as the property is vacated. Legal advice is being taken at all parts of the process. Officers will write to the Scottish Housing Regulator	M	Yes

	housing regulator	advising them of the impact of the identification of RAAC within our housing stock and the subsequent steps required to manage it, will have on our wider housing performance standards. Officers will also seek to engage with the Scottish Housing Regulator on our proposed approach and will keep them informed around all decisions (as appropriate).		
Operational	Failure of a RAAC panel.	This is a health and safety issue. As above, affected tenants should be rehomed. A short-term management strategy should be applied to properties containing RAAC panels until such time as the property is vacated.	L	Yes
	Wider pressure on housing stock.	Housing team to manage and monitor and report to the Housing Board where there is significant change.	M	Yes
Financial	The current financial burden to mitigate the RAAC impact is currently unknown and still to be quantified.	Work with housing, legal, finance and external advisor teams to understand and address the RAAC impacts and inform the Outline Business Case to inform potential future remedial options.	M	No
Reputational	Failure of a RAAC panel.	This is a health and safety issue. As above, affected tenants should be rehomed. A short-term management strategy should be applied to properties containing RAAC panels until such time as the property is vacated.	L	Yes
	Failure to engage effectively	Implement communication and engagement plan.	L	Yes

	with tenants and owners			
Environment / Climate	Targeting Net Zero	Mitigating climate risks by ensuring consideration is given to targeting net zero requirements within the forthcoming Outline Business Case.	L	Yes

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2023-2024</u>	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement <u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u>	The issues arising with the identification of RAAC in our housing stock requires us to work collaboratively across clusters to ensure the housing stock is safe and meets the varying needs of our citizens. The goal is to ensure that our current housing stock is fit for the future and brought up to the highest standards where possible.
<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26</u>	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	The actions outlined within report will help mitigate the immediate impact on affected tenants ensuring that they are prioritised for rehoming and are supported financially throughout the process but within the capped limits set by current legislation.
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	Taking early intervention action as outlined within this report will help mitigate any negative impact on people's physical and mental wellbeing.
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	A future report will make recommendations on the viability of the affected housing stock along with any wider implication this may have on the place.
Regional and City Strategies	This report is an initial report in a series of reports to mitigate the occurrence of RAAC in Council housing stock at Balnagask. Future reports and actions will take account of the Regional and City.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
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Integrated Impact Assessment	Previous Integrated Impact Assessment relating to the UBC report submitted on 29 February 2024 has been reviewed and no changes required
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Other	None

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 [Link to Urgent Business Committee Report](#)

11. APPENDICES

Appendix A: RAAC Leaflet Private Owner Update

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