

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Communities, Housing and Public Protection
<b>DATE</b>	13 January 2026
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Update Report on Non-Traditional Housing Stock (including City Centre Multis)
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	F&C/26/009
<b>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR</b>	Eleanor Sheppard
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Stephen Booth
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Ian Perry
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	1.1.1

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The report is provided in response to a previous committee instruction to provide an update on the non-traditional housing stock including city centre multi storey buildings. The report provides members with further information on these property types, works done to date and an indication of the next steps required.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

In relation to the non-traditional low-rise stock

- 2.1 Note the work undertaken with condition surveys for non-traditional properties and instruct the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord to develop a programme of structural inspections of non-traditional constructed properties on a prioritised basis;
- 2.2 Instruct the Chief Officer - Capital to procure technical and economic reports on the long-term investment options (all as noted in 3.5 of this report) for each type of non-traditional building and to include the findings of these in the 30 year business plan.

In relation to the city centre multi storey properties:

- 2.3 Instruct the Chief Officer - Capital to instruct full condition surveys of the city centre multi storey buildings covered by this report; and thereafter to review the previous options appraisal to reflect these updated surveys, and changes and proposed changes to regulation, along with investment requirements over differing timeframes for each group of buildings, all as noted in this report; and to provide updates through the 30 year business plan;

- 2.4 Instruct the Chief Officers – Capital, Strategic Place Planning and City Development and Regeneration to engage with Historic Environment Scotland with regard to the technical, economic and habitability issues associated with the listed city centre blocks, so as to identify any potential technical solutions and/or funding sources in relation to investment required in the buildings;
- 2.5 Due to the fragmented nature of the ownership in the buildings, instruct the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord and Chief Officer - Housing to investigate any funding options for private owners, but also the implications of offering a 'buy-back' or sell to rent scheme for city centre multi-storey buildings, reporting on this to committee in August 2026;
- 2.6 Instruct the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord and Chief Officer - Housing to undertake further engagement with owners once further costings and options information is available; and
- 2.7 Instruct the Chief Officer - Housing, following consultation with the Chief Officer - Capital, to manage the scheme decisions required to allow the surveys and reports noted in recommendations to be undertaken, and to share these reports, once available, with those private owners having a shared interest in these properties.

### **3. CURRENT SITUATION**

- 3.1 There are two outstanding committee instructions in relation to non-traditional stock within the Council housing portfolio. These relate to low rise non-traditional stock and city centre multi storeys.
- 3.2 At the meeting of this Committee on 17 January 2023, it was agreed to instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to review the HRA's non-traditional housing stock to identify properties that will be unable to meet future environmental or other standards, and to identify a budget to undertake these inspections.
- 3.3 At the meeting of this Committee on 21 November 2024, it was agreed to instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to revisit the costs, risks, and deliverable timescales for all options in an updated Business Case, and to report this to a future meeting of this Committee, and to reflect the future risks and financial requirements for these buildings in the Housing Revenue Account.
- 3.4 There have been delays in bringing both these reports back whilst resources were focussed on other housing issues. During this time there have been wider developments as highlighted in this report which will require previous work to be re-considered in both areas.
- 3.5 Further to the HRA budget report in December 2025, the following instruction was given by Council, which is of relevance to this report: -

*(xii) to delegate authority to the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord following consultation with the Chief Officer - Finance, Chief Officer - Capital, Chief Officer - Housing and Conveners of the Communities, Housing and Public Protection and Finance and Resources Committees to vire monies within the Housing Capital Plan to support any works that may be required to review the non-traditional housing stock and city centre multi storeys, retrospectively reporting any virement to the next available meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee as part of the Quarterly Financial Performance reports;*

## **Non-Traditional Stock**

- 3.6 Non-traditional construction in residential properties refers to buildings that use materials or methods that deviate from traditional construction norms. Common types of non-traditional construction include timber-framed properties, prefabricated buildings, steel-framed, and load bearing concrete panel construction (Large Panel System). The Council have 19 different types of properties which are classed as being of non-traditional construction, in addition to multi-storey buildings which are also of non-traditional construction.
- 3.7 Properties built using non-traditional methods may require specialised maintenance and have different insurance requirements; all of which may affect resale value and marketability. In a historical context the rise of non-traditional construction was driven by the need for rapid housing solutions during times of housing shortage, particularly after World War II.
- 3.8 Aberdeen City Council originally owned 5,210 properties of non-traditional construction (low rise). Due to the Right to Buy, that figure has reduced to 1,989 (approx. 8.5% of the HRA stock). Details of the types of non-traditional stock and the numbers by type; information on numbers sold and the spread of stock across the Council's letting areas is shown in Appendix A. The table below gives a high level overview.

	Number	Sold	ACC Owned	Locations
1924 Timber Framed	57	24	33	2
Aberdeen Corporation Poured Concrete	121	82	39	3
Aberdeen Corporation Timber	76	60	16	1
Aberdeen In Situ Concrete	228	120	108	1
BISF	243	135	108	1
Blackburn	200	112	88	2
Cruden	21	17	4	1
Dunedin	1606	1002	604	7
Dutch Pre Cast	24	17	7	1
Halls Precast	332	124	208	4
Marshall's Timber	43	19	24	5
Skean Dhu	167	114	53	1
Tee-Beam	236	100	136	3
Timber Local Design	11	10	1	1
Weir Jura	50	40	10	1

Weir Timber	100	61	39	1
Weir Timber Frame	137	98	39	2
Whitson Fairhurst	50	24	26	1
Wimpey No Fines	1508	1062	446	4
	5210	3221	1989	

- 3.9 During 2024 and into 2025, a stock conditions survey of approximately 15% of the Council's low-rise non-traditional stock was undertaken to support the development of the Council's new asset management model and to implement previous committee instruction. The information from these surveys has been 'layered over' the rest of the council stock. These surveys were based on the requirements of the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS), using external surveyor support, and included a full SHQS survey (visual review of all internal and external elements of the property) including visual surveys of the key external components such as wall and roof finishes. The knowledge gained from these surveys of council owned properties has influenced the current capital plan for replacement of key component part where the council is the owner.
- 3.10 This work was highlighted to the committee as there was a perception that these properties, whilst considered to have a more limited lifespan than traditional properties and additional investment work may be required. During the course of these inspections, no major issues were highlighted concerning the fabric of these properties by the surveys, though a small number showed areas of cracked render. Some of the construction types do however have a more limited life expectancy of some component parts, such as the delamination of infill panels. The type of repairs, with modern materials to some property types, also requires more consideration.
- 3.11 Energy performance indicators (based on SAP 2012 (SAP is the standard assessment procedure used to current calculate energy performance)) show that approximately 12.5% are EPC D, 1% are EPC E with the remainder being EPC C. A number of factors in a property affect this rating including the position of each property in a terrace, rooms in roof-spaces, upper floors properties etc. Significant changes to how energy performance is assessed are coming into force through 2026 with a move away from a SAP calculation to a different way to calculate energy performance known as the Home Energy Model. Works are in place to look at the impact this will have on all council stock and how properties will be re-assessed. This will influence future capital requirements and be reflected in the next iteration of the 30 year business plan..
- 3.12 Whilst regular intrusive structural inspections have been carried out to the Council's non-traditional multi storey stock, there has been no requirement for such a programme to be in place for low rise non-traditional stock. These properties range in age from approximately 45 to 100 years old. It is proposed that these properties should now be subject to more intrusive regular inspections to ensure that their structure continues to be in an acceptable condition and identification of any areas where these structural elements may require timely intervention, or a more significant intervention is required.
- 3.13 Committee members are asked to note that:

- all houses have a finite serviceable life. Non-traditional properties will deteriorate at different rates from traditionally, and other non-traditionally, constructed properties
- non-traditionally constructed properties will have different challenges from traditionally constructed properties when it comes to improving their thermal performance
- some non-traditionally constructed properties deteriorate at faster rates than other non-traditionally constructed properties, with particular parts of the construction being more vulnerable than others
- a significant proportion of the non-traditional properties have been purchased through the Right to Buy by private owners. This will often create a boundary condition between a property that is Council owned and privately owned properties. This will impact not only flatted accommodation but terraced and semi-detached properties. The full implications associated with the repair obligations of these boundaries are currently unknown and should be thoroughly investigated and reported upon.

3.14 The Principal Architect, Capital, has proposed that a 5 year programme of intrusive surveys and technical and economic reports be implemented with an initial focus on developing plans for:

- each of the 19 low-rise, non-traditionally constructed property types (including those of load bearing concrete panel construction (Large Panel System)); and
- with the initial, high level programme for these to be reported in the next housing bi-annual report.

3.15 While this report notes that all properties have a finite life there is no indication from visual inspections that there is any safety issues which relates to their method of construction.

3.16 As with the findings of future planned inspections on our multi-storey stock, the findings of the proposed survey on the non-traditional low-rise stock will be utilised to further improve the outcomes of the Housing Asset Management Plan. Funding for this survey work will be managed through the existing Capital Plan with investment requirements brought forward through annual budget setting.

3.17 Given that many of the property types noted are houses with gardens etc, the occupier demand profile remains good.

### **Update on City Centre Multi-storey Buildings**

3.18 A number of previous reports have been brought to committee on City Centre multi-storey buildings in relation to the Grade A listing of five of them, an option appraisal on potential development and the outcome of consultation with residents.

3.19 An option appraisal in 2023 (link attached - [May 2023 Option Appraisal Report](#)) identified 5 options for the buildings and cost range at this time, on a per unit basis, over a 30 year lifespan as follows:

1. do minimum (£270k to £350k)

2. medium level of investment (£300k to £380k)
3. high level of investment (£330k to £430k)
4. very high level of investment (£380k to 480k)
5. demolition and replacement (£420k to £480k)

3.20 A consultation exercise was undertaken in relation to these options with owners and tenants which was presented to committee in 2024. A link is attached. [November 2024 - consultation Report](#). The report identified a strong preference for 'do minimum' options from both owners and tenants, primarily influenced by affordability and concerns around the potential disruption.

3.21 The Committee are reminded that 5 of the properties are listed by Historic Environment Scotland, these being properties at Glicomstoun Land, Porthill Court, Seamount Court, Virginia Court and Marischal Court.

A link to the information leaflet on the listing prepared by Aberdeen City Council is attached [here](#)

3.22 Bringing further information to Committee and updating cost information has been delayed due to the level of officer input required across the Council in managing other building issues. During this time, regular repair and maintenance works on the buildings have continued. There have, in the interim, also been a number of other relevant factors which will affect the business case and works going forward.

3.23 During this time the normal levels of repair and maintenance have been undertaken to the buildings and engagement owners of other similar properties has been undertaken to discuss common issues.

3.24 In response to the Housing (Cladding Remediation) (Scotland) Act 2024, the Council has been successful in obtaining funding to undertake Single Building Assessments (SBA) on 27 multi-storey buildings in the city. These SBAs will relate to buildings that have been re-clad, which excludes the city centre multis. This is considered to be the first phase of works and a budget of £1.5 million is available. The SBA is a Scottish Government standardised evaluation of the fire safety of a building's external wall systems, and also internal fire safety, aimed at identifying risks and assessing compliance with the updated guidance on fire safety, within high-rises, that has been provided by the Grenfell Inquiry and Scottish Government. The learning from these initial surveys, which will be undertaken during 2026, will have an impact on the requirements of the subject properties.

3.25 The future investment requirements for the buildings will also be influenced by the Social Housing Net Zero Standard (SHNZS). This standard is expected to be launched during 2026.

3.26 In recent years the Council insurance premiums for all multi storey buildings have seen significant percentage increases. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some private owners are struggling to get reasonable insurance premiums in relation to the buildings.

- 3.27 As noted in previous reports, there are differing levels of private ownership within the city centre multis, albeit all buildings have some level of private ownership. All investment in repairs and upgrades to the properties requires scheme decisions, with repairs requiring a majority and improvements requiring all owners' consent. The fragmentation of ownership will make future investment decisions difficult to implement.
- 3.28 Previous business cases looked at the properties over a long term basis (30 years) and it is clear from the consultation undertaken that there is limited appetite from owners and some tenants for significant works to be undertaken, nor are these considered affordable for private owners. The significant level of investment identified in 3.16 should be considered against market values for individual homes which are in the region of £50,000 per property, and in the context that there is a very limited mortgage market for such properties.
- 3.29 There is currently a scheme decision out to consultation at Gilcomstoun Land in relation to structural repairs. This is currently live and involves a detailed survey to determine works and an estimate of required repairs that could be up to £23,000 per home. These repair works will need to be progressed but it is likely that the detailed survey will be undertaken and that there will then be a further engagement with owners to consider the priority of work and how costs can be addressed. The detailed work at Gilcomstoun Land will also influence required solutions at other properties.
- 3.30 It is proposed, in light of the impact of the matters noted above along with the significant uncertainty there has been around construction costs, particularly with high rise buildings, that updated detailed condition surveys are undertaken to all of the city centre multis noted in this report to reflect the various changes there have been in recent years. It is further recommended the previous business case be revisited to consider the levels of repair and investment required over different periods of time to give a wider range of investment options to extend the buildings' life and comfort to residents. Officers would propose engaging with Historic Environment Scotland on this work to help explore funding and alternative technical solutions.
- 3.31 It is proposed that this additional work is instructed on an individual building by building basis, rather than as a group, as the condition of each property varies, as do the listing requirements, energy options, fire safety considerations and ownership.
- 3.32 An outcome from previous work indicates that in all scenarios significant investment is likely to be required which may be beyond the means of current owners. Officers seek instruction to engage with owners, once further cost information is available as per 3.26, to consider what funding options may apply.
- 3.33 In order to deliver investment or other forms of redevelopment, scheme decisions will be required. It may be that it is in the Council's interest to have ownership control over the future of the buildings. It is recommended that officers be instructed to consider the implications of re-opening the buy-back scheme, restricting this to these city centre multi-storey buildings at this time.

Officers could also consider (similar to some other local authorities) a buy-back scheme whereby owners selling to the council could then become tenants and stay within their own home. It is proposed that proposals on this be developed and brought back to Committee in August 2026.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Funding for continued investment in these properties will require to be included in the HRA Business Plan going forward and will come from both capital improvement projects and revenue repair and maintenance costs.
- 4.2 Where the need for communal repairs is identified through the surveying of the tenement blocks within the non-traditional stock, owners will be responsible for paying their share of costs.
- 4.3 The life-cycle cost of communal repairs of non-traditional constructed properties has, in some instances, been found to significantly out-strip the market value of these properties, and has been found to be challenging to be affordable by both the private owners and the Council's HRA. This will be considered in future reports.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Council has statutory responsibilities in relation to the management and maintenance of its housing stock under the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, including duties to ensure that properties it owns are maintained to a reasonable standard and remain fit for occupation. The further inspection and survey work proposed in this report will assist in evidencing the condition of the buildings and in informing future investment and prioritisation decisions within the Council's Housing Asset Management framework.
- 5.2 A number of the properties referenced are in mixed ownership. Where works relate to common parts, the Council must comply with the relevant title conditions and, where applicable, the statutory framework for tenement management under the Tenements (Scotland) Act 2004, including the operation of the Tenement Management Scheme (TMS). The legal classification of proposed works as repairs or improvements will be a material consideration in determining the applicable decision-making thresholds and delivery route.
- 5.3 Where necessary works are identified but are delayed or frustrated by fragmented ownership, affordability or lack of owner engagement, the Council has statutory powers which may be relevant in defined circumstances. These include powers under the Building (Scotland) Act 2003 to require works to be carried out to address defective buildings and, where statutory criteria are met, to undertake works and recover costs. In addition, provisions under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 may, in limited circumstances, allow the Council to meet a missing share of common repair costs to enable works to proceed, subject to appropriate governance and recovery arrangements. The suitability and



proportionality of such mechanisms would require to be assessed on a case-by-case basis, informed by the findings of the proposed surveys and inspections.

- 5.4 There is currently no active buy-back or sell-to-rent scheme in place. Any future proposal to introduce or recommission such a scheme should include consideration of Best Value, valuation methodology, equality and human rights impacts, and the interaction with alternative statutory repair and recovery mechanisms (if implemented). Property acquisition should not be assumed as the default delivery route and would require to be justified as a proportionate response to the issues identified. Any such proposals would require to be reported to Committee for decision.
- 5.5 The disclosure of survey findings, options appraisals or long-term investment scenarios may have implications for the marketability and value of privately owned properties. This risk will require to be managed through careful sequencing of engagement and communications with owners and does not of itself predetermine future enforcement, investment, or acquisition decisions.

## 6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report at this time.

## 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?
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	Quality of housing may reduce without effective maintenance, repairs, and capital improvement	Implementation of recommendations in this report.	M	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Compliance</b>	Failure to provide quality housing will breach requirements of legislation and the	Implementation of recommendations in this report.	M	<b>Yes</b>

	Scottish Housing Regulator.			
<b>Operational</b>	Provision of housing is a priority for residents of Aberdeen City. Failure to ensure there is an adequate supply of good quality housing may result in people seeking to be housed elsewhere.	Implementation of recommendations in this report.	M	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Financial</b>	Failure to improve the quality of Council homes may impact on the Council's ability to let these homes, which will result in a significant loss of rental income.	Implementation of recommendations in this report.	L	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Reputational</b>	Failure to improve the quality of Council homes may harm the Council's reputation if the properties need repairs.	Implementation of recommendations in this report.	M	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	Improvement to homes has a positive impact on carbon reduction. Failure to effectively implement the proposals may result in increased carbon emissions.	Implementation of recommendations in this report.	L	<b>Yes</b>

<b><u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2025-26</u></b>	
<b>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</b>  <b><u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u></b>	<b>Impact of Report</b>  <b>Homes for the Future</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate whether the Council's housing stock can be upgraded to help meet our Net-Zero targets.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u></b>	
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	Ensuring the adequate supply of housing across all tenures and homes are the right size, type, and location
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by at least 61% by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of our changing climate.
Community Empowerment Stretch Outcomes	<b>No Impact</b>
<b>Regional and City Strategies</b>	The further work identified in this report will impact on the Housing Asset Management model and the HRA 30 year business plan.

## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>Integrated Impact Assessment</b>	No assessment required. I confirm this has been discussed and agreed with Stephen Booth, Chief Officer Corporate Landlord on 18 December 2025.
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	Not required.
<b>Other</b>	N/A

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 N/A

## 11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix A provides information on the types of non-traditional housing within the Council's housing stock

## 12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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