

ITEM No ...4.....

REPORT TO: NEIGHBOURHOOD REGENERATION, HOUSING AND ESTATE
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – 13 MAY 2024

REPORT ON: REINFORCED AERATED AUTOCLAVED CONCRETE (RAAC) IN HOMES
IN DUNDEE

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES AND CITY
DEVELOPMENT

REPORT NO: 129-2024

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide information to Committee on the existence of reinforced aerated autoclaved concrete (RAAC) in Council and Ex-Council housing in Dundee, and the implications of this for the Council.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Committee note the contents of the report and approve the proposed actions of officers to continue dealing with the issues raised as detailed in Section 7.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The financial implications arising from this report are:
- a the cost of an ongoing inspection regime is estimated to be £70,000 per annum;
 - b tender reports for works arising from RAAC remediation will be presented at future Committees, the costs of which are not yet known; and
 - c these costs will be met from the Housing Revenue Account.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Following inspection by the City Engineer it has been determined that RAAC is present in a total of 81 blocks of flats and 293 cottages across Dundee. Of these, 2 blocks of flats and 121 cottages are privately owned. The Council are preparing communications for these owners regarding what next steps they should take.
- 4.2 The remaining 79 blocks of flats are council tenanted or are mixed tenure, and 172 cottages are council tenanted. Within the 79 blocks of flats 354 flats are council tenanted (12 flats are currently void) and 218 flats are privately owned. Where a council property, located on the top floor of a block of flats, or a cottage is empty or becomes empty, it will be held as void until any necessary works are complete. The Council are preparing communications for these tenants and owners regarding what next steps the Council will take.
- 4.3 Generally, the RAAC in tenanted and mixed-tenure properties has been confirmed to be in a satisfactory condition and therefore any intervention can be planned to coincide with capital programmes to avoid disruption, other than some short-term improvements based on current RAAC guidance from the Institution of Structural Engineers. The exceptions to this are 4 properties where City Development are working to produce designs for works to the affected roofs, with the intention of bringing the projects to site once successful communications have concluded.

- 4.4 Engagement at a national level is ongoing with Dundee City Council officer representation on the Scottish Government's RAAC Cross-Sector Working Group (Housing Sub-group).
- 4.5 There are 5 developments in the City where RAAC has been confirmed to be present. The Council and mixed tenure property locations involved are listed at Appendix 1.

5. COSTS OF MANAGEMENT AND REMEDIATION

- 5.1 The cost associated with management and remediation requires to be fully clarified with residents of affected properties. RAAC is not an inherently defective material (unlike some non-traditional housing types), it is susceptible to a shortened lifespan which can be exacerbated by poor installation, poor detailing, lack of maintenance, or water ingress.
- 5.2 In fully tenanted properties, any costs will be borne by the Housing Revenue Account. In mixed tenure blocks, the Council will recharge owners for their share of the costs.
- 5.3 In fully owned properties, owners will have to meet their financial obligations themselves and any works will have to be completed over a timescale agreed upon with advice from a Structural Engineer.
- 5.4 Current guidance from the Institution of Structural Engineers is that RAAC roofs should be inspected periodically for signs of deterioration. Based on existing condition, the majority inspections will be annual, with the City Engineer identifying 6 individual properties across the estate which are recommended for 6-monthly inspection due to early signs of damage.

The cost of this ongoing inspection regime is estimated to be circa £70k annually.

6. LEGAL ADVICE

- 6.1 RAAC is not considered an inherently defective material, the Council has no liability towards those owners who purchased their council properties under the 'Right to Buy' scheme, or any subsequent owners.
- 6.2 The Tenements (Scotland) Act 2004 provides a legal basis for the Council to inspect and organise 'maintenance' such as may be required by the presence of RAAC.

7. PROPOSED APPROACH

- 7.1 The Housing Service has brought together a multi-disciplinary working group to agree a technical approach to tackling all aspects of RAAC in existing housing and communications around the matter.
- 7.2 The working group has taken cognisance of what is considered best practice demonstrated by other Local Authorities including Aberdeen City and West Lothian Councils and has prepared communications strategies for both tenants and owner occupiers which include:
- Letters to tenants of cottages and owners and tenants of mixed tenure blocks from the Housing Service detailing what steps are being taken and where further information can be sourced. Issue of these letters has been arranged.
 - Letters to owners of cottages and owners in fully owned blocks will come from Building Standards detailing what steps they should take, where further information can be sourced and what owners' obligations are. As above, issue of these letters has been arranged.

- Appendix 2 shows an example of information which will be displayed on the Council website with a 'frequently asked questions' type page, accessed from the homepage and the Housing landing page.
- The same information will also be displayed on the OneDundee information carousel for colleagues who are currently tenants or owners of former Council properties. As above, this information will be released to coincide with the issue of letters to tenants and owners.

7.3 The Housing Asset Management Unit is liaising with City Development to ensure that the four properties requiring urgent works are designed, procured, and tendered ensuring minimal delays:

- In two of the four properties, where partial roof replacement is required, tender documents have been prepared and tenders will be invited once communication with occupiers has commenced. It is anticipated the tender process will take 12 weeks to appointment of a contractor.
- In the remaining two of the four properties, the extent of the deterioration is being assessed by technical colleagues to inform preparation of tender documents.

7.4 The RAAC working group will write a procedure for any proposed works to a Housing asset with a RAAC roof which will include next steps for a RAAC roof that shows signs of deterioration prior to any planned maintenance works. There will be a requirement for engineering oversight for any non-routine repairs.

7.5 The Housing Asset Management Unit, in conjunction with the RAAC working group will formulate a programme for the remainder of the properties to be dealt with per best advice in conjunction with capital retrofit projects.

8. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 This report has been subject to the pre-IIA Screening Tool and does not make any recommendations for change to strategy, policy, procedures, services or funding and so has not been subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment. An appropriate Senior Manager has reviewed and agreed with this assessment.

9. CONSULTATIONS

9.1 The Council Leadership Team and the Dundee Federation of Tenants Associations were consulted in the preparation of this report.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None.

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Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

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25 April 2024

Developments In The City Where RAAC Has Been Confirmed To Be Present

- **Craigie Drive** - Flats: Craigiebarn Road, Gardyne Place, Brington Place, Southampton Place, Belsize Road, Craigie Drive, Margaret Crescent.
- **Craigiebank Circle** - Flats: Carlochie Place, Greendykes Road
- **Kirk Street** - Flats: Atholl Street, Yeaman's Lane, Kirk Street
- **Menzieshill** - Flats: Cart Place, Cottages: Cart Place, Charleston Drive, Dickson Avenue, Orrin Place
- **Whitfield** - Flats: Murrayfield Terrace, Cottages: Whitfield Gardens, Whitfield Avenue, Cottages: Murrayfield Gardens, Cottages: Whitfield Avenue, Whitfield Rise, Whitfield Terrace

RAAC QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

- **What is RAAC?**

Reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) is a lightweight material that was used in the construction of buildings including some houses from the 1950s to the 1990s. It was mainly used in flat roofing, but also on some occasions in floors and walls. It was quicker to produce, easier to install, and cheaper than standard concrete, but has now been found to be less sturdy than traditional materials.

- **What has the council done about RAAC?**

When problems with ageing Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) were first reported nationally in 2023, Dundee City Council began a detailed investigation. A number of stages were completed as part of the process including initial research into the age and building style of the city's housing stock, expert structural inspection and development of an intervention strategy to remediate the affected properties should the RAAC show evidence of decline.

- **What did the inspections find?**

Hundreds of inspections were carried out across the city and RAAC was found in 81 blocks of flats and 293 cottages in council wards including East End, North East and Lochee. Of these, 79 blocks of flats have council tenants or are mixed tenure, and 172 cottages have council tenants. Within the 79 blocks, 354 flats are rented by council tenants and 218 are privately owned. The remaining two blocks of flats and 121 cottages are privately owned and are therefore the sole responsibility of the owners. Many of the buildings inspected do not present an immediate safety issue and as a result they will be subject to further regular detailed inspections to monitor their condition.

- **What do I do if my home was one of those that has RAAC?**

We are sending out letters to owners, tenants in cottages or fully tenanted blocks of flats and tenants and owners in mixed-tenure blocks of flats to update you on the situation and in the small number of cases where it is required work to design, procure and tender repairs is on-going.

- **Who is going to pay if my home needs repairs or RAAC replaced?**

This depends on whether you are a council tenant, live in a block where there are council tenants or you are an owner occupier. In fully tenanted properties, the costs will be met by the council, while in mixed tenure blocks, the council will be entitled to recharge owners for their share of the costs. At more than 200 properties in private ownership or where there are no council tenants in a block, the council has no ongoing maintenance responsibilities and no liability towards owners who bought their former council properties under the 'Right to Buy' scheme, or any subsequent owners.

- **How much will it cost?**

These costs have yet to be determined.

- **What happens next?**

Where work is required that is being procured and will be carried out as soon as possible, but most of the buildings inspected do not present an immediate safety issue and as a result they will be subject to further regular detailed inspections to monitor their condition.