

16th October 2023**REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR GREEN GROWTH, INVESTMENT AND
ASSETS****COUNCIL RESPONSE TO CONCERNS OVER REINFORCED AUTOCLAVED
AERATED CONCRETE IN BUILDINGS****Purpose of the Report**

1. To note the Council's response to concerns over reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) in schools and other Council buildings.

Information

2. In late 2018 the Local Government Association and the Department of Education (DfE) contacted all school building owners to draw attention to a failure involving a flat roof constructed using RAAC planks.
3. This was followed in May 2019 by the Standing Committee on Structural Safety (SCOSS) of the Institute of Structural Engineers issuing a document titled 'Failure of RAAC planks' alerting all building owners to the potential impact of the presence of RAAC in buildings constructed between 1960 and 1980. In response to this the Council commissioned Arc partnership to undertake an assessment of all its building stock constructed in the period as outlined in more detail below. The date range was subsequently extended, and the Council sought further assessments of buildings brought within the scope. No RAAC has been identified as part of this process..
4. On 31 August 2023 the DfE amended its advice to schools in the light of building failure evidence effectively upgrading the risks of building failure from the presence of RAAC which led to the partial and complete closure of a number of schools across the country where RAAC had been identified. In the light of this it is necessary to outline the Council's approach taken to date and how it is intended that this issue is managed going forward.
5. In 2019 Government Issued an alert regarding RAAC planks, setting out concerns over this particular building material and also provided a date range where it was thought this construction type was used. In response to this the Council commissioned Arc Partnership to undertake a review of all Council maintained properties and maintained schools, which were constructed during the date range in question (1960 – 1980). Desktop investigation allowed the presence of RAAC to be ruled out across most Council buildings with visits required to a handful of sites to confirm non present.

6. More recent guidance revised the dates that the RAAC planks were used in construction (1930-1980) and in response to this Arc Partnership were further instructed to review buildings built within the period not previously considered. Arc have completed the desktop assessment and have undertaken physical inspections of any sites deemed necessary. This task nears its completion with the final report awaited and to date no RAAC has been found.
7. In parallel to this DfE commissioned surveys of four maintained schools. Three of these surveys have been completed with no RAAC found. At Carnarvon Primary in Bingham an initial visit has been undertaken with no RAAC found, however some areas were not accessible to the surveyors at the time of the survey, and they are due back to complete the survey.
8. The DfE have also provided a portal for the Council to make a declaration for each Council maintained school pertaining to the presence or not of RAAC planks. The Council has completed the declaration for all schools based on the earlier investigations and will update if required following the current investigations.
9. The Council's work has only covered the maintained schools estate. The Council is aware that the DfE has been working with Academies and Voluntary aided schools and have identified nine schools to physically survey of which four surveys have been completed and five are to be completed. The Council has been informed that these surveys to date have identified RAAC at one academy school in the county, Holy Trinity Catholic Voluntary Academy, Boundary Road, Newark which is run by Our Lady of Lourdes Multi Academy Trust (MAT). This affects 7 of the classrooms, the kitchen and the hall. Initially most of this was previously classed as low/medium risk, and it has only become a significant issue since the recent change in DfE position. The MAT is working closely with their DfE case officer to manage the situation and have been offered continuing support from the Council.
10. The Council will continue to monitor the results of any outstanding surveys and support both maintained and Academy schools where required.
11. In the light of the assessment work undertaken to date, both desktop and on site, without any RAAC being identified in the Council maintained schools and service properties, it is not intended that at this stage an extended programme of specific survey work be undertaken. The Council's estate is managed and maintained by a combination of Council officers and Arc partnerships, using commissioned contractors as necessary. The building stock is widely understood with technical experts and contractors active across the estate on a daily basis undertaking projects and maintenance work. It is therefore considered that the Council can continue to monitor for any evidence of RAAC through these business-as-usual activities.
12. The Council has services operating from buildings that are owned and managed by third parties and it is intended that all such building owners will be contacted for confirmation that there is no RAAC to ensure our staff and service users continue to operate from safe accommodation.

Other Options Considered

13. The Council could seek to commission a programme of physical site surveys across all of its building stock to check for the presence of RAAC. In the light of the results of assessments to date with no RAAC identified, the corporate knowledge of the built estate and the business-as-usual activities which give ongoing inspection of the building stock it is not considered that this is a necessary step. Should any RAAC be identified in future this position will be reviewed.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

14. The recommendations provide assurance both that no RAAC has been identified within the estate to date, and that measures are in place to identify and manage the issue in future.

Statutory and Policy Implications

15. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

16. Assessment work undertaken to date has been funded through existing budgets. As no RAAC has been identified there is no financial implication in its management and continued forward monitoring will be undertaken as business as usual from within existing budgets.

17. RECOMMENDATION

- 1) That the Council's approach to the identification of RAAC in its building stock and that no RAAC has been identified is noted
- 2) That proposals for the future management of this issue be endorsed.

Wayne Bexton

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For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments (EP 18/09/2023)

18. The Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Asset Management is the appropriate person to consider and approve this report.

Financial Comments (GB 21/09/2023)

19. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

- Failure of RAAC planks - Standing Committee on Structural Safety (SCOSS) of the Institute of Structural Engineers May 2019

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All

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