

FOI Request 202300373770 – For Release

“Please provide me with the agenda, minutes and supporting papers for the 14th August 2023 meeting of the Cross-Sector working group on RAAC”.

Documents provided

- Agenda for 14 August 2023 meeting of the Cross Sector Working Group on RAAC
- Draft Terms of Reference for the Cross Sector Working Group
- Minutes of the 14 August 2023 meeting of the Cross Sector Working Group

REINFORCED AUTOCLAVED AERATED CONCRETE

Cross Sector Working Group Meeting 1

14 August 2023 11 am – 12.30pm

AGENDA

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Terms of Reference
3. Background to the RAAC Cross Sector Working Group and its purpose
4. RAAC risks and available guidance
5. Work currently underway
 - a. Health
 - b. Schools
 - c. Higher education
 - d. SFRS estate
 - e. Police estate
 - f. Local authorities
 - g. Public bodies
 - h. Care homes
 - i. Housing
 - j. Prisons
 - k. Courts
 - l. Government Estate
6. Coordination and data collection
7. Any other business
8. Date of next meeting

REINFORCED AUTOCLAVED AERATED CONCRETE

Cross Sector Working Group Meeting 1

TERMS OF REFERENCE AND REMIT

Introduction

This Cross-Sector Working Group is convened to assist in the dissemination of information on the risks arising from the presence of reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) in buildings. It will also support the gathering of information from public bodies on the prevalence of this material and any risks and response identified by inspection. The Group will assist in understanding the overall position of RAAC in Scotland and allow for Government policy development in this area.

RAAC was used as a construction material in a variety of buildings over a period from the 1960s to the 1980s. Whilst problems with RAAC have been known about for many years it is only since failures of school roofs in England around 5 years ago that concerns have grown. There has been guidance produced by the IStructE and others on the investigation and remediation of RAAC. It is important to note that just because RAAC exists in a building, this does not mean that it is a risk.

Reporting on this issue has been undertaken or is underway across a number of public sector organisations. Briefing on the issue was provided to the Ministerial Working Group on Building and Fire Safety. Following a submission to Minister in July 2023, officials have been tasked with building a picture of the awareness and response to RAAC in Scotland, particularly in relation to the public sector estate.

Overarching Remit

The Group provides an opportunity for all parties to share current information on their awareness and action on RAAC as an issue and identify opportunities to work collaboratively do develop or continue their response to this known risk.

Initial action should identify the completeness of the membership of the group to support reporting on a national response and on how existing lines of communication are maintained and further developed to support this.

The Group's remit includes sharing information on the response of individual organisations to address the operational resilience of their building estate and how the functions it supports are maintained.

The group should discuss and agree responses to questions arising from current or planned investigation work including, where relevant, seeking input from the broader UK community and key actors responsible for relevant legislation and published advice.

Scottish Government officials will oversee the Group and maintain linkages with ongoing sectoral activity and work elsewhere in the UK. Scottish Ministers will be kept informed of the Group's work to provide the necessary level of awareness and accountability.

The Cross Sector Working Group will report to the Ministerial Working Group on Building and Fire Safety.

The Cross Sector Working Group does not remove the responsibility from building owners and employers for the health and safety of buildings and workplaces. The health and safety in buildings is a matter that is regulated by the Health and Safety Executive under the appropriate legislation. Enforcement action on defective and dangerous buildings is undertaken by local authorities in Scotland. The work of the Group does not replace either of these responsibilities.

Group Remit and Responsibilities

1. Objectives

- To identify appropriate contacts and lines of communication to give assurance of overall coverage of the Scottish public sector estate.
- To ensure that the key actors in the private sector are also aware of this issue and where to go for advice.
- To signpost and share information which supports effective assessment and reporting on RAAC as a potential building defect. This will include ongoing information from Scottish Government engagement with UK Government Officials on this topic. To agree any limits or protocols on information exchange.
- To provide a forum for sharing of information on good practice and action taken or proposed to manage any identified risks in public sector buildings.
- To enable summary reporting on the national response on this issue to Ministers through the Ministerial Working Group on Building and Fire Safety.
- To provide assurance that any ongoing discussions on RAAC can take place with an understanding of its prevalence within the built environment.

2. Responsibilities

- To facilitate exchange of information and develop a clear understanding of both the awareness of RAAC as an issue and the ongoing response by member organisations across Scotland.
- To support joint working and information exchange between government, local authorities, other public sector bodies and representatives from the private sector in response to RAAC as an identified risk.

- To provide effective communication of issues and related solutions, advice and strategies useful to support building owners in an effective response to RAAC as a risk.
- To contribute towards and facilitate central data collection on RAAC in Scotland.

3. Composition

The Group shall consist of representatives from Scottish Government, local government, other public bodies and the private sector/construction industry organisations who have responsibility for the management of safety in buildings they own or operate.

4. Meetings

The forum shall be chaired by the Head of Building Standards Division of The Scottish Government.

Meetings are expected to take place on a quarterly basis. However, additional meetings may be required if emerging issues require a faster response.

5. Hosting

Meetings will normally be hosted virtually by Building Standards Division.

Building Standards Division
August 2023

REINFORCED AUTOCLAVED AERATED CONCRETE
Cross Sector Working Group Meeting 1
14 August 2023, 11 am – 12.30 pm
Note of Meeting

1. Welcome and Introductions

Scottish Government	
Stephen Garvin	Building Standards Division (Chair)
[Redacted]	Building Standards Division
[Redacted]	Building Standards Division
[Redacted]	Building Standards Division
[Redacted]	SFC Sponsor Team
[Redacted]	SFC Sponsor Team
[Redacted]	School Funding, Infrastructure and Organisation
[Redacted]	Finance and Learner Funding Unit
[Redacted]	Police Division
[Redacted]	Police Division
[Redacted]	Estate Strategy and Planning
[Redacted]	Estate Strategy and Planning
[Redacted]	NHS Strategic Capital Investment
[Redacted]	Safer Communities, Fire and Rescue Unit
[Redacted]	University Funding
Michael Cameron	Chief Executive Scottish Housing Regulator
[Redacted]	Housing Standards and Quality
External Stakeholders	
Ailsa Macfarlane	Built Environment Forum Scotland
Alan Stark	Scottish Property Federation
Andrew Kennedy	East Ayrshire Council / Heads of Planning Scotland
Gillian Beattie	Police Scotland
Philip Collard	Police Scotland
Justin Tito	Police Scotland
Callum Chomczuk	Chartered Institute Housing
Crawford McGhie	City of Edinburgh Council
Ian Dawson	Fife Council
James Fowlie	COSLA
Jon Kerr	West Dunbartonshire Council / ALACHO
Alex Lane	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Iain Morris	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Claire Owens	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Rose Jenkins	University of Dundee and SAUDE
Rufus Logan	Scottish Funding Council
Scott McKenzie	North Ayrshire Council / LABSS
Simon Montgomery	Historic Environment Scotland
Steven Anderson	Scottish Futures Trust
Stuart Brown	NHS Scotland Assure

Attendees introduced themselves briefly.

The Chair gave a short introduction on Reinforced Aerated Autoclaved Concrete as a product and the current issues arising from its previous use in buildings.

2. Terms of Reference

This group has been convened to assist in dissemination of information on the risk posed by RAAC, the gathering and sharing of information on its prevalence and responses by building owners.

Information gathered will be collated to gain an overall illustration of the position in Scotland, focussing primarily on the public sector. Information gathering will build in the work already undertaken across a number of sectors.

A draft 'Terms of Reference' (ToR) document was circulated for comment and development from attendees. An updated version will then be circulated.

Scottish Government Officials proposed a virtual meeting of this group should be held every three months, but will vary to suit activity and matters to report. It was agreed that in the initial period that meetings will be held on a monthly basis.

Action Point - Attendees to provide feedback on the ToR, by 31 August.

3. Background to the RAAC Cross Sector Working Group and its purpose

Officials set out some background to the RAAC cross sector working group, as follows:

- UK guidance on RAAC risks was first published around 20 years ago.
- RAAC was a material manufactured and used in Scotland, the UK and elsewhere. The issue under discussion is with reinforced plank systems, not standard masonry products.
- Officials have briefed the Ministerial Working Group on Building and Fire Safety (MWG) on this issue.
- RAAC papers were presented to the MWG in December 2022 and in June 2023. This led to a commitment to take a more proactive approach to coordination, including gathering and sharing of information.
- The current exercise is to gather and share information, in response to the First Minister's commitment to understand the extent of the issue nationally (First Minister's Questions, 29 June 2023).
- Current and planned work supported by this group will provide that information.
- Officials are also seeking a more formal engagement with UKG and industry actors to give assurance that we are all aware of ongoing work across the UK and the role of current legislation.

4. RAAC risks and available guidance

An overview of the guidance on RAAC was provided. This included Information Papers and reports from the Building Research Establishment in 1996 and 2002. Following the collapse of RAAC planks in two schools in England (2017) an overview of the published guidance from 2019 to the present including detailed information on identification, assessment and mitigation of risks from the Standing Committee on Structural Safety, the Institution of Structural Engineers (IstructE), Office of

Government Property, Department for Education (DfE) and the Local Government Association. The LGA are strongly advising all responsible bodies to respond to the DfE survey as soon as possible.

A number of RAAC risks and defects were highlighted including end bearing of roof and floor planks, misplaced and corroded reinforcement, prolonged water ingress increasing panel weight, reducing material strength and various increasing risks from excessive deflection. Some of the risks around cracking and spalling and cut panels were also highlighted. The IStructE guidance recommends a RAG (Red, Amber, Green) risk rating proportionate approach ranging from Red (Critical Risk) requiring urgent remedial action such as taking out of use, exclusion zones or temporary propping to Green requiring only occasional inspection and assessment (every 3 years) depending on the condition unless there is further deterioration or signs of water ingress etc. Awareness raising, signage and loading restrictions may also be applied. Additional tables are provided to assist with the risk assessment including the support/end bearing conditions and the deflection and cracking conditions (with and without evidence water ingress present).

Research work has been commissioned by NHS England to Loughborough University and we understand that the HSE are commissioning work to gather data on RAAC and develop an assessment tool to measure the risks associated with RAAC planks. We will monitor the research and consider the findings and recommendations when published.

Action Point - Officials to send out links to all available guidance in a note.

5. Work currently underway

A. Health

- Officials have worked with NHS assure, on a list of properties to be surveyed. This information was also issued to the BBC under FOI.
- This noted 254 properties with high/medium likelihood of RAAC being present. NHS Scotland Assure will be surveying all high likelihood properties.
- NHS Scotland Assure provided a short presentation of work to date.
- Work to date has led to the appointment this month of a firm to undertake detailed surveys of relevant buildings.

B. Schools

- Schools have received a lot of the media attention due to RAAC.
- Scottish Government officials have been working collaboratively with Education services.
- Issued a template to 32 local authorities to get a complete picture on where RAAC is present in school estate Scotland and looking to have a complete initial picture this month.

C. Higher education

- For colleges the current work is in line with the schools approach; looking to gather information and report back on 45 institutions across Scotland.
- Questionnaires have gone out seeking response of awareness of RAAC.

- For universities – several reports across the sector of varying degrees, many have not yet ‘lifted the lid’ on the issues at the moment with different organisations taking different approaches.
- Lack of knowledge of informed consultants raised. How can this group assist in building capacity to avoid competing for the same engineers.

D. SFRS estate

- Survey of 396 buildings identified 15 with RAAC (desktop review). One has been refurbished, 14 buildings remain. Discovered RAAC in pitched roofs and wall panels, as well as flat roofs.
- Actions taken based upon risks included quarterly inspections on all risk properties. This work applied 2023 IStructE guidance, commissioned resurvey against new guidance on end bearing.

E. Police estate

- Desktop review followed by visual and intrusive inspection – RAAC identified as present in 3 locations. 2 buildings vacated and the other has remedial action.
- Recognise comments on lack of expertise and did experience conflicting advice. Used 3 companies –now have preferred consultant on that basis.

F. Local authorities

- It was noted that Local Authorities are already working with the Scottish Government on the schools estate.
- Housing and schools cover a significant proportion of the LA estate.
- Some LAs have undertaken desktop and some physical inspection which has identified a small number of buildings with RAAC.
- Local authorities recognise the benefit of coordination and a more consistent approach to reporting.

G. Public bodies

- Officials noted the plan to engage shortly with all public bodies – this exercise is intended to ‘fill the gaps’ between the main sector interests and work already underway. Starting with a definitive list of Scottish Public bodies and their key contacts.

H. Care homes

- No report – sector representative not present.

I. Housing

- Housing has challenges when engaging across the sector, in particular, engaging with owner occupiers and small individual landlords.
- Work is at the discovery stage for social housing.
- It was suggested that the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations be invited to group.

Action Point - Suggest engaging with Scottish Federation of Housing for social housing representative.

J. Prisons - No report – sector representative not present.

K. Courts - No report – sector representative not present.

L. Government Estate

- Officials noted a similar experience as for health buildings.
- Condition surveys were carried out in 2018-21, but it did not make reference to RAAC, which indicates a lack of awareness from consultants.
- A concern over the lack of consultants in this area was expressed as was noted by others; it would be useful to investigate this area further.
- Most buildings in the estate came from the UK Government pre-devolution, there is question of whether or not RAAC was seen as a risk material under the UK Government regime.
- It was noted that a significant portion of the Government estate is rented.
- Officials have appointed a consultant to scope out the survey approach and a likelihood approach.

6. Coordination and data collection

Officials noted the plan to create a small, dedicated team to manage the coordination and data centralisation. It should also assist in developing any themed activities around information and communication. The new team will be short-lived, anticipated to run for 6 to 12 months.

7. Any other business

Scope of WG activity –

An attendee asked if the CSWG could look ahead to skills and capacity for future remediation work. Or the coordination of remediation with ongoing works in affected organisations within maintenance and development schedules. Officials noted that the focus would be mainly on capacity within industry around assessment.

An attendee noted, on the ToR, whether those looking at responses can share good practice and case studies. Again official asked attendees to feedback on ToR in the next couple of weeks.

Engagement exercise –

On the scope of the engagement exercise, an example was made of the opportunity to engage with GP and NHS services delivered by third parties who may rent properties.

Publication of information from the group –

Noting the intent to publish information, Officials will develop a proposal to host information on a new MWG webpage, including publication of papers and minutes. Noting that minutes will follow the Chatham House rule. An attendee noted the need to review and redact and any commercial information present in information exchanged.

8. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 20 September 10:00 – 12:00.

Building Standards Division
The Scottish Government