

All correspondence received and sent by the Scottish Government about RAAC in homes in Aberdeen, including internally, minutes and briefings from any meetings about this topic, between November 1 2023 and the date of this FOI (05/03/24)

1. Meeting between officials & Scottish Housing Regulator – 10/11/23

Meeting to discuss RAAC in social housing
Scottish Government & Scottish Housing Regulator Officials
10 November 2023
Online – Teams

Attendees:

Michael Cameron – Chief Executive, SHR
 [redacted] – Director of Regulation, SHR
 [redacted] – Assistant Director of Regulation, SHR
 [redacted] – SG RAAC Co-ordination Team
 [redacted] – SG Housing Standards and Quality Team

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) have now completed their initial data gathering exercise and have shared the full detail with SG officials on the understanding the data returns are treated in a confidential manner.

Annexes are provided with a summary of the findings (Annex A) and the full data tables (Annex B)

It was noted that there was only one data return outstanding at the time of meeting – Glasgow City Council (shown as ‘null’ in the table below). (This information was received shortly after the meeting and was subsequently included in the data tables provided to officials)

SHR gave an overview of the headline findings, as per the table below

Row Labels	Count of Landlord name
No RAAC identified	91
Under investigation	62
Yes (RAAC confirmed)	12
Grand Total	165

Sum of the number of homes identified with RAAC - Total

1150

Sum of the number of homes currently under investigation that may have RAAC present - Total

29572

All correspondence received and sent by the Scottish Government about RAAC in homes in Aberdeen, including internally, minutes and briefings from any meetings about this topic, between November 1 2023 and the date of this FOI (05/03/24) They noted that the next element that they are considering is how to engage with each of the landlords who have identified RAAC, and what further reporting is necessary. They are considering the level of engagement that would be appropriate and proportionate. If formal engagement plans are necessary these would be published and fully accessible to the public.

SHR anticipate that the circa 30,000 homes under investigation are likely to come down quickly as landlords complete their investigations, although it would be expected that the total number of homes with confirmed RAAC may increase as a result of these ongoing investigations.

It was noted that although taken without context, 30,000 homes still requiring investigation appears to be a large number of homes, these are homes that require a visual inspection, may not in fact contain RAAC and even if RAAC is present it may well be in good condition when inspected. The overall remaining number of homes requiring investigation represents only a small amount of the total 625,000 social homes in Scotland.

They noted that many landlords have taken a conservative approach to their desktop surveys and the physical surveys required, erring on the side of caution in many cases and going ahead and investigating despite there being a low likelihood of RAAC being present.

SHR will update their data tables as new information is provided to them by social landlords, which means the reported numbers will change as time goes on.

SG officials explained their reporting process to Ministers through the weekly SitRep. SHR officials have agreed to provide their latest number by close each Tuesday afternoon, so that the latest numbers can be reported to Ministers in the SitRep

SHR officials noted that they are considering more proactive work and a structured process to ensure that the overview stays accurate recognising the different pace on which landlords will be conducting further work.

SG officials asked if there were any significant concerns noted as a result of the data return, or any concerns that had been raised in terms of ability to carry out the required surveys. SHR officials confirmed that there were no immediate concerns as a result of the data return. It was, however, noted that there were some high returns from certain landlords e.g. Aberdeen City with 500 homes identified with RAAC, Hillcrest Homes with 3,541 homes under investigation.

It was noted that Wheatley Homes, Scotland's largest social landlord, have reported no RAAC identified and therefore no homes requiring investigation. It was noted that they had been ahead of many other landlords on investigations into RAAC, even before the recent interest in the issue. They have provided details on their methodology to SHR officials, which has given additional assurance on their processes.

All correspondence received and sent by the Scottish Government about RAAC in homes in Aberdeen, including internally, minutes and briefings from any meetings about this topic, between November 1 2023 and the date of this FOI (05/03/24) There were discussions on SHR's plans to publish details of their returns. It was noted that the intent is to publish as much detail as possible. However, it was further noted that there was also a need to balance this against the need for individual landlords to communicate with their tenants on the presence (or potential presence) of RAAC in an organised manner and that this should be considered before publishing landlord by landlord tables.

SG officials noted that the overall cross-sector approach was to publish as much detail as possible and that individual landlords should be encouraged to communicate this themselves as much as possible.

It was noted that there is a meeting of the Cross-Sector Working Group (Housing Sub-Group) on the afternoon of Wednesday 15 November and that this represents a good opportunity for SHR to begin to communicate their findings.

SHR will consider their communication plans prior to further discussion with SG officials during week commencing 13 November, ahead of publication of the information collected.

It was agreed, in order to be consistent with other sectors, that SHR would lead on the dissemination of information in relation to this RAAC data collection and that SG officials would support as necessary.

There was a short discussion on the makeup of the Housing Working Group on RAAC, and it was agreed that this would be best as a high level strategic forum featuring sector bodies such as SHR, SFHA, ALACHO, etc. and that it would not be appropriate for all individual landlords to be part of the group. However, it was considered that the invitation should be extended to key landlords, especially those who have experience to share in dealing with RAAC. It was noted that Clackmannanshire Council will attend the session on 15 November to share their experience of decanting residents due to potential unsafe RAAC in Tillicoultry.

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SHR DATA COLLECTION – SUMMARY TABLES **ANNEX A**

Table 1 - Landlords who have declared they have identified RAAC

Redacted – incomplete data – regulation 12(4)(d) (please see para 18)

Total – 12 landlords with RAAC present

Table 2 - Landlords who have declared they have RAAC under investigation (but not yet identified RAAC)

Redacted – incomplete data – regulation 12(4)(d) (please see para 18)

Total – 62 landlords currently investigating RAAC

Full RAAC dataset from SHR (up to date as of 14 November) **ANNEX B**

Redacted – incomplete data – regulation 12(4)(d) – (please see para 18)

2. Letter from the Minister for Local Government Empowerment & Planning to the Minister for Housing – 05/12/23



Minister for Local
Government Empowe

All correspondence received and sent by the Scottish Government about RAAC in homes in Aberdeen, including internally, minutes and briefings from any meetings about this topic, between November 1 2023 and the date of this FOI (05/03/24)

3. Meeting between officials and Minister for Housing – 07/11/23

Minister for Housing meeting with officials to discuss RAAC in social housing
7 November
Online - Teams

Attendees:

Paul McLennan, MSP, Minister for Housing

[redacted] – Private Secretary to the Minister for Housing

[redacted] – Head of Technical Unit, Building Standards Division, SG

[redacted] – Senior Policy Manager, Housing Standards & Quality, SG

Officials took the Housing Minister through the latest updates on RAAC in social housing.

- The presence of RAAC has already been publicised by a number of local authorities. Information on Angus, North Lanarkshire, Clackmannanshire, City of Edinburgh and City of Aberdeen is already in the public domain.
- The Housing Minister noted that there were particular concerns around Aberdeen City Council and that he has been in contact with [redacted] from the local authority. They have discussed the issues with RAAC, as well as the housing situation in the city more broadly. There are concerns that the buildings with RAAC were already considered to be in need of some repair and that the local authority will need to carefully consider their approach to these.
- Officials now have an additional high level summary from the Scottish Housing Regulator on their data return which shows:
 - Based on 136 returns and 36 still outstanding:
 - Is RAAC present in your homes?
No – 80
Under investigation – 49
Yes – 7
 - Sum of the number of homes identified with RAAC – 851
 - Sum of the number of homes currently under investigation that may have RAAC present – 24,178
- At present, officials are not yet aware of the specific registered social landlords who have identified RAAC (other than those previously publicised) or those who are currently investigating. This information will be shared with SG officials when SHR have completed their collation of data.
- There will likely be media interest in the headline number of 24,178 under investigation, although this represents a small percentage of the total social homes in Scotland (625,000). Only some of these properties will contain RAAC and an even smaller percentage will contain RAAC in poor condition.

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- Reactive media lines will be prepared ahead of the publication of details of SHR's initial data collection.
- 36 landlords are still to submit their return to the Regulator, so the final numbers for RAAC identified and RAAC under investigation will rise further in the near future.
- As yet, SG officials are only aware of one instance of RAAC having been identified in poor enough condition to require decanting of residents – in the previously discussed three blocks in Tillicoultry, Clackmannanshire, impacting on 30 properties.
- Officials are meeting with their counterparts at the Scottish Housing Regulator on Friday 10 November for a further update on the data collection, and to understand their plans for publication at an appropriate time in the future.
- Further to this, there is a meeting of the Cross Sector Working Group (Sub-group on housing) on 15 November, which will include an update on SHR's data collection, as well as further information on Homes for Scotland's intelligence gathering on RAAC in private housing and an update from Clackmannanshire Council on their learning from the decanted properties in Tillicoultry
- SHR officials are leading on communication with individual social landlords and SG officials are keeping in touch with SHR officials to stay up to date with developments on RAAC in social housing. This is to ensure that there is a single point of contact and that landlords are not required to make multiple notifications when they have updates on the situation.

The Housing Minister indicated he was content with this approach in terms of communication with individual landlords.

He noted that if there were any particular challenges in collecting data from individual landlords, he would be happy to discuss the matter with the relevant organisations e.g. the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA)

Action officials to keep Minister updated on landlords' returns and whether it would be helpful to discuss further with relevant landlord organisations.

The Minister has requested a note of officials' meeting with the Scottish Housing Regulator on Friday 10 November and the RAAC in Housing Working Group on 15 November.

Action officials – Provide the Housing Minister with note of meetings on 10 November with SHR and 15 November with stakeholders.

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4. Email from SG official to Scottish Housing Regulator – 28/11/03

Hi [reacted]

Thank you very much for sharing this, and apologies for the very delayed reply! It is really useful to see the detail of the conversation around RAAC. Clearly this is going to be an ongoing discussion with Aberdeen, so do let me know if there is anything more comes up on this subject.

Kind Regards

[redacted]

From: [redacted]

Sent: Thursday, November 23, 2023 1:45 PM

To: [redacted]

Subject: RE: RAAC Query

Hi [redacted]

Just by way of an update, we had a catch-up meeting with Aberdeen City this morning to cover off a number of strategic issues.

[redacted] highlighted the emerging issues with RAAC in the concrete slab roofs in the c.500 homes at Balnagask in Torry.

- They have written to 504 addresses and held drop-in sessions for tenants and 140 owner occupiers (around 20 of which are in the private rented sector)
- The properties involved are predominantly 3-bed which is the size of property that is in high demand in the city so that gives them a potential issue going forward if these are taken out of supply (even if only temporarily) depending on the extent of the problem and the solution identified
- They have managed to get access to around 30 properties that are currently vacant to inspect but are of the view that they need access to all properties to do a proper survey
- Of these 30 inspections, they only had real concern about one of them which was based more around a construction flaw rather than the condition of the RAAC
- They are currently examining the challenges of what they need to do next
- They have recommended to owner occupiers that they obtain their own independent advice
- They are also looking at other property types across the city to determine whether these may also have issues
- They are unclear about how they go about further engagement with tenants/owners moving forward as there is no guidance from Government (their words, not mine)

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- Stephen asked about resourcing and whether we had any funding available to support them. I advised that there was no information/position on that at the minute.

[redacted] – incomplete information – regulation 12(4)(d)

Thanks

[redacted]

From: [redacted]

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 2:40 PM

To: [redacted]

Cc: [redacted]

Subject: RE: RAAC Query

Hi everyone

Thanks to those who were at the discussion around this today. As mentioned, I have attached the data return from the Scottish Housing Regulator on RAAC in social housing, which will give an early indication of local authorities or housing associations who may come to us with similar requests. As we discussed, so far we are only aware of Clacks and Aberdeen City with particular concerns.

NOTE – this information is not yet in the public domain, pending SHR conversations with individual landlords. SHR plan to release the headlines and names of landlords who have identified RAAC, but will not be sharing the detailed breakdown by landlord. It has been shared in confidence by the Regulator, so I would appreciate if you could ensure the table is not shared widely.

Further to this, we will keep you up to date with developments on this front. The overall numbers will be updated regularly through the Sit Rep, so I had noted down that RAAC coordination colleagues were to add [redacted] and [redacted] to the distribution list.

Finally, we will keep [redacted] up to date of there are any new developments on Clacks or Aberdeen. It would be useful if you could send us a note of who covers each area, so we can flag any other concerns to the correct person.

Kind Regards

[redacted]

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5. Email chain following Minister for Local Government Empowerment & Planning visit to Aberdeen on 20/01/23



MLGEP TO MfH -
EiR.pdf

- information out with scope

Hi all,

Sending on the attached correspondence received today from the Aberdeen Cllrs – I'd like to highlight the second last paragraph regarding RAAC as this may be included in the note.

Many thanks,

[redacted]

From: [redacted]

Sent: Monday, November 27, 2023 3:40 PM

To: Minister for Local Government Empowerment & Planning [redacted]

Cc: [redacted]

Subject: RE: Note from Mr FitzPatrick to Minister for Housing

Hi [redacted],

I discussed with housing colleagues and the consensus was this sits with Building Standards. I passed over this request earlier today and I am waiting for conformation they can complete.

Kind Regards

[redacted]

From: [redacted] Minister for Local Government Empowerment & Planning

Sent: Monday, November 27, 2023 2:09 PM

To: Minister for Local Government Empowerment & Planning [redacted]

Cc: [redacted]

Subject: RE: Note from Mr FitzPatrick to Minister for Housing

Hi there,

Further to my email below I am widening the copy list to include some further officials. The basis of this note is for Mr FitzPatrick to inform the Housing Minister of the work Aberdeen have done on the RAAC situation and getting ahead of the curve.

I'd be grateful if officials can please look into this with and perhaps this may involve reaching out to Aberdeen Council to get some further information.

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If I can please have confirmation this has been picked up and if we could get a first draft of the note by COP Thursday. Happy to discuss, again [redacted] who is CC'd in was the supporting official on the day.

Many thanks,

[redacted]

From: [redacted] Minister for Local Government Empowerment & Planning

Sent: Wednesday, November 22, 2023 11:36 AM

To: [redacted]

Cc: Minister for Local Government Empowerment & Planning [redacted]

Subject: Note from Mr FitzPatrick to Minister for Housing

Good morning,

Thanks [redacted] for the quick call this morning.

Following our visit to Aberdeen on Monday Mr FitzPatrick is looking for a note to be drafted to the housing minister, Paul McLennan regarding Aberdeen Council's response to RAAC in buildings. Within a discussion with some the cllrs they expressed that Aberdeen were ahead of the curve with dealing with the RAAC situation and able to identify situations before any real issues happened.

Mr FitzPatrick thinks it would be useful to express to the Housing Minister to work with Aberdeen Council to find out more on how they are dealing with this work.

I have copied in [redacted] who attending the visit on Monday for this short discussion on other areas affected by RAAC however, was not present when the Cllrs drove us by the 500 houses in the Torry which are potentially affected with RAAC.

Please let me know if there are any issues at all and I'm happy to help.

Many thanks,

[redacted]

6. Letter from the Minister for Local Government Empowerment & Planning to the Minister for Housing – 09/01/24



Letter from Minister
for Housing to Ministr

- All correspondence received and sent by the Scottish Government about RAAC in homes in Aberdeen, including internally, minutes and briefings from any meetings about this topic, between November 1 2023 and the date of this FOI (05/03/24)
7. Email from UK Government on BBC News article – 29/02/24

Hi [redacted],

I hope you're well. Just saw this story on BBC: [Hundreds to be rehomed in Aberdeen over RAAC fears - BBC News](#).

I understand from our conversations last year, and the Regulator's publications, that the Aberdeen Council have been aware of the presence of RAAC in a small number of houses since October last year.

Can you advise on what's changed to lead to the rehoming? What are the timescales of the rehoming – is this an immediate decant, or a long-term plan to replace the buildings? My reading of the article is the latter.

Are the rough figures of RAAC in c.1k of total 600k+ social housing dwellings still accurate, or is prevalence understood to be higher because of further investigations by the Regulator?

Very grateful for any quick intel you can share this afternoon, and very happy to chat through if helpful.

Best,
[redacted]

8. Email from Aberdeen City Council – Balnagask RAAC Communications – 29/02/24

Good evening Gents

As we discussed earlier today Aberdeen City Council had an Urgent Business Committee which was heard in private this morning in relation to previously identified RAAC within some off our residential estate.

This was held in private to allow engagement directly with those impacted to be contacted by the Council prior to them hearing anything publicly.

As agreed, I now enclose our media statement earlier to ensure that you can see our factual position.

I have attached a link to the statement below, for information, that has been published on our website. I have also attached the letters issued and a link to the FAQs on our website.

Media Statement - [Support for tenants within RAAC affected properties | Aberdeen City Council](#)

FAQs - <https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/housing/raac-council-housing>

All correspondence received and sent by the Scottish Government about RAAC in homes in Aberdeen, including internally, minutes and briefings from any meetings about this topic, between November 1 2023 and the date of this FOI (05/03/24) We are in the process of finalising the full list of recommendations from the Committee and I hope to share this along with the Committee Report and all appendices (including engineers reports) over the next few days.

I can also confirm that we met with the Housing Regulator yesterday to advise them of the position.

I look forward to discussing this with you further

Regards
[redacted]



Feb Private Tenant Letter 1.pdf



Feb Owner Letter.pdf



Feb Landlord Letter.pdf



Feb Tenants Letter.pdf

9. Note of meeting – Minister for Housing & Officials – 29/02/24

Aberdeen City Council RAAC Announcement on 29 February 2024
Meeting Note – 29 February 2024
16:00 – 16:30

In Attendance

Shirley Ann Somerville MSP – Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice

Paul McLennan MSP – Minister for Housing

Emily-Louise Purdie – Special Advisor

[redacted] – Private Office

[redacted] – Private Office

Stephen Garvin – Deputy Director Building Standards Division

[redacted] – Head of Fuel Poverty and Housing Standards Unit, Better Homes Division

[redacted] – Housing Standards and Quality Team, Better Homes Division

Ministers were concerned to learn of the announcement in the media that Aberdeen City Council (ACC) was to rehome over 500 households in the Balnagask area that were identified as having RAAC. The news was a surprise and they asked officials to give them the latest position and whether any communication was received by Scottish Government (SG) ahead of the announcement by ACC.

Officials explained that no communication was provided by ACC prior to the announcement and they too were disappointed to learn of this development through the media stories that were published earlier in the afternoon. This is even more disappointing as ACC officials are represented on a number of SG cross-sector working groups, with the latest meeting where ACC officials were in attendance as of yesterday (28 February). Officials had reached out to ACC colleagues to get more information but had not been able to reach anyone yet. However, officials had made contact with Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) colleagues who advised that ACC had informed them on 28 February of the potential announcement. However, SHR

All correspondence received and sent by the Scottish Government about RAAC in homes in Aberdeen, including internally, minutes and briefings from any meetings about this topic, between November 1 2023 and the date of this FOI (05/03/24) colleagues had not passed on the information to SG colleagues. This too was disappointing as SG and SHR had agreed communication channels for keeping each other apprised of any information that is received by either in relation to RAAC management by building owners.

Officials' discussion with SHR had established that the announcement is not an emergency decant of residents. No one is being moved yet as ACC will undertake a process of further engagement and identify best options for people affected. ACC officials received an independent structural engineers' report on the presence of RAAC in a representative sample of the properties on February 22. The survey recommended that council tenants be relocated to alternative accommodation within the city as soon as possible, with the findings considered by ACC Urgent Business Committee earlier today which accepted those recommendations. Today's announcement by ACC is part of their overall plan for the management of RAAC in properties that were previously identified as potentially having RAAC and is the result of further surveys that had taken place.

Ministers noted their disappointment with these developments and how the reporting has caused unnecessary anxiety for all concerned.

Actions:

1. Ministers asked officials to reiterate to councils and SHR the need to keep SG informed of development so that any public messaging by the SG can give assurances and accurate information on what is happening in a particular area.
2. Ministers asked officials to work with Special Advisor and Communication colleagues to develop appropriate media lines urgently for this evening.
3. Ministers asked if they could receive a copy of the Urgent Business Committee Report which had the independent engineers structure report.
4. Ministers asked officials to liaise with ACC to understand further the process for rehoming residents and whether they were informed before today's public announcement.

[redacted]
Better Homes Division
1 March 2024

All correspondence received and sent by the Scottish Government about RAAC in homes in Aberdeen, including internally, minutes and briefings from any meetings about this topic, between November 1 2023 and the date of this FOI (05/03/24)
10. Note from Officials to Deputy First Minister & Cabinet Secretary for Finance – 01/03/24

Deputy First Minister

Engagement with Aberdeen City Council on RAAC in homes

Key Points

At official level there is regular and routine engagement with Local Authority interests, including Aberdeen City Council, primarily through the Cross Sector Working Group (Housing and RAAC Management sub-groups).

In addition, SG officials attend meetings of the Scottish Heads of Property Services (SHoPS) for the purposes of information sharing.

Meeting with Minister for Local Government, Empowerment and Planning and Aberdeen City Council (20 November 2023)

At a meeting with Mr FitzPatrick in November, Aberdeen City Council leaders raised the issue of RAAC – noting the identification of more than 500 homes in Torry containing RAAC – the highest number of any social landlord.

In a subsequent letter to Mr McLennan, Mr FitzPatrick noted that the Council had requested further discussions around financial support from the Scottish Government in order to allow them to deal swiftly with this issue.

The reply from Mr McLennan noted the call for a national fund to support home-owners to manage RAAC associated work, but also noted budgetary restraints and that no new funds were available to allocate to local authorities for remediation of RAAC in housing.

The reply further noted that home-owners were responsible for maintenance costs in their own homes and for their share of work on any common elements of a shared building and that it was ultimately for local authorities to determine what support is available for home-owners who need to carry out repairs to their homes taking into account local circumstances and priorities.

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Meeting with ACC – 29 February 2024

A meeting was held with Aberdeen City Council following the decision of the Council to rehome those affected by the presence of RAAC in the Balnagask area of Aberdeen.

Key points

An urgent business paper submitted to ACC morning of 29 February recommending that Council tenant be relocated to alternative accommodation within the city as soon as possible.

504 properties in the Balnagask area were identified as having RAAC, 364 (64 of which are unoccupied) are council owned properties, the remainder being a mix of owner occupier and private tenancies.

50 intrusive surveys have been carried out in council properties, which has indicated that they are 'high risk' in accordance with the Institution of Structural Engineers guidance. **This does not require an immediate decant of the properties** (which would have been the case if noted as 'critical').

The number of residents to be evacuated is unknown but estimated to include around 170 children. Social care are helping to identify those categorised as vulnerable.

Council has written to all residents (29 February) explaining the situation and arranging appointments over next 3-4 weeks residents to understand their needs with a view to rehoming.

A full plan on dealing with the effected properties will be brought to the Council within 6 months.

ACC has set aside £3m to support the programme, which is likely to cover costs associated with technical reports, any homelessness costs, school transport costs and security of properties.

ACC are looking to bring a number of currently vacant properties back in to use to support rehoming – there are currently c2,000 across the Council area – however a number of these need a significant amount of work.

Background information

An official from Aberdeen City Council (albeit representing the Scottish Heads of Property Services – SHoPS) attended a meeting with SG officials and others in the afternoon of 28 February of the RAAC Management Sub-group (of the Cross Sector Working Group).

While reference was made to preparing a paper to take to a Committee meeting the following day, no reference was made to its contents.

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1 March 2024

Follow up meeting

Consideration of communications – both between ACC and SG as well as from the Council to media/tenants etc – noting that the ‘story’ was being portrayed as an evacuation.

Noted that owners more likely to be critical than tenants. No one asking to be moved immediately (more the opposite).

ACC have briefed local MPs/MSPs, so far only SNP (Kevin Stewart, Audrey Nicoll, Steven Flynn) and arranging dates with others.

Council press release

[Support for tenants within RAAC affected properties | Aberdeen City Council](#)

Building Standards Division
1 March 2024

11. Scottish Cabinet Analysis of News & Current Events (SCANCE) Note – 04/03/24

Redacted – regulation 10(4)(e) – internal communications

12. Meeting between Minister for Housing and Aberdeen City Council – 01/03/24

Aberdeen City Council RAAC Announcement on 29 February 2024
Meeting Note – 1 March 2024
Meeting between Minister for Housing and Aberdeen City Council
16:00 – 16:30

In Attendance

Paul McLennan MSP – Minister for Housing

Emily-Louise Purdie – Special Advisor

[redacted] – Private Office

Stephen Garvin – Deputy Director Building Standards Division

[redacted] – Head of Fuel Poverty and Housing Standards Unit, Better Homes Division

[redacted] – Housing Standards and Quality Team, Better Homes Division

Councillor Christian Allard – Co-leader, Aberdeen City Council

Councillor Ian Yuill – Co-leader, Aberdeen City Council

[redacted] – Customer Service Development Manager, Aberdeen City Council

[redacted] – Director of Customer Services, Aberdeen City Council

[redacted] – Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord, Aberdeen City Council

[redacted] – Finance Director, Aberdeen City Council

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ACC committed to share the full presentation that was given to the Council's Emergency Business Committee, which will allow Ministers and SG officials to see the full detail of the plans. ACC officials provided an overview of the situation.

ACC provided background and information on current plans covering two broad areas – the technical aspects and the plans for the people involved – the tenants who will be moving from their homes.

This plan covers 504 properties – 140 privately owned (including 20 private tenants), 360 council owned (including 60 void properties). In total, around 300 families on tenancies in the area will be re-homed as part of this plan.

This is the 3rd round of correspondence that occupants have received on this issue over the last 5 months. Firstly, occupants were informed when visual inspections were taking place. Secondly, there was notification that intrusive inspections would be required inside occupied homes. Thirdly, on 29 February, council tenants, private tenants, landlords and owner-occupiers received letters setting out the latest developments, based on their tenure/ownership status.

ACC received their final structural engineers report on 22 February 2024 based on a sample of 50 intrusive surveys, which has assessed the properties as 'high-risk' and that occupants should be moved as soon as possible. On Wednesday, ACC officials met with the Scottish Housing Regulator to inform them that these plans would go before the Council's Emergency Business Committee for approval.

In relation to owner-occupiers, previous letters to them have advised them to seek their own advice on this matter, and owners had been provided with contact details for suitable structural engineers. However, it has been recognised that this has been a challenge for many home-owners, so ACC's reports will be made available to home-owners to assist with their understanding. ACC has also committed to making its contractor engineers (Fairhurst) available where home owners can't find an engineer, however, the cost of the survey would be borne by the homeowner. Each intrusive survey and all the preliminary works could cost up to £2,500 per property. ACC acknowledged that owners may not be able to afford such costs which is why it will make available its own findings so that owners can decide their next steps.

Clarification was given by ACC that there are no properties that have been assessed in the 'amber' or 'green' categories, as per the IStructE guidance, and the properties have been assessed as high-risk due to issues with the load bearing support. Only one has been identified in critical condition due to deterioration of RAAC. This is in

All correspondence received and sent by the Scottish Government about RAAC in homes in Aberdeen, including internally, minutes and briefings from any meetings about this topic, between November 1 2023 and the date of this FOI (05/03/24) an unoccupied property. ACC also clarified that generally roofs are in good condition and that this has not been a factor in the high-risk categorisation. ACC advised that engineers would like to continue with further surveys, but that may be challenging.

A £3million initial budget has been provided, to cover the survey work in local authority owned properties, homelessness payments, security measures on site as occupants move on, and costs involved in supporting residents to move to their new homes. This is to come from funding previously committed to capital spend on upgrade work such as bathroom and kitchen replacements.

ACC officials covered the people aspect of the re-homing plan. The local authority recognise that this is not a building issue, it is a people issue and that sensitive handling of this is required as they move forward with their plan. They are taking forward a person and family centred approach, with support across areas such as health and education. There is a need to understand the appropriate support for each individual family and ACC recognises there won't be a single solution.

Letters have been hand delivered to all occupants, with an initial in-home appointment scheduled for council tenants to speak with a team of dedicated housing officers. This is due to take place over the next 4 weeks or so. Those who do not wish to stay due to the safety concerns will be offered initial temporary accommodation.

The approach that ACC take to re-homing will assess the family needs in terms of type and size of properties, following clarification of their housing needs. Void properties have been ring-fenced and a dedicated separate housing list is being maintained for these tenants. This is being supported by a program to bring void properties back into use. However, officials noted that this will be challenging given the housing stock involved – there are many front door properties in the current area, and these are generally not available for properties that have been ring-fenced for the re-homing programme, which will bring its own challenges.

The Minister for Housing highlighted a number of areas of importance and where he would appreciate further information. Firstly, the possible impact on educational needs of children, and that this should be considered as part of the re-homing plans. Secondly, the approach that is being taken in relation to home-owners. Finally, more information on when people will begin to decant from their homes.

ACC officials indicated the broad timings of the project. 1-to-1 engagement has started now and will last around 4 weeks. The next steps will be driven by the people involved – some people have said that they are not moving, but a proportion of the new properties are available now for when people are ready to move. The schedule will need to flex as things progress.

ACC recognise that schooling considerations are vital and that these considerations were written into the committee paper. The schooling needs of the family will be considered as part of the plan to move tenants and will include consideration to the stage of schooling of the children, transport needs and local school role numbers.

All correspondence received and sent by the Scottish Government about RAAC in homes in Aberdeen, including internally, minutes and briefings from any meetings about this topic, between November 1 2023 and the date of this FOI (05/03/24) ACC clarified that private tenants are being treated the same as social tenants. It is not proposed to re-home owner-occupiers at this stage, unless they want to move through the homeless route. It was noted that the issue of owner-occupiers is challenging and that ACC have limited scope to assist due to resourcing and legislative challenges.

The Minister for Housing asked for information on the options appraisal for the long term plan for the site.

ACC noted that there are no temporary measures available for the central load bearing issues identified that are not also intrusive. The affected properties are around 60 years old. So, the options may include a full re-roof or demolition, but they are not pre-judging the final recommendations report. Even the lesser option of re-roof will take a number of years across all properties, so this is why they have taken the decision to re-home. Further engagement with owners will come when they have made a full assessment of these options and at this stage expect that options appraisals could take up to 6 months.

The Minister for Housing asked that he and officials are brought in at an early stage of the appraisal process to ensure that we can fully understand and explore what these options look like.

The Minister for Housing noted that there is likely to be a topical question on this in parliament next week and that it is important that we make sure that comms teams from SG and ACC are in contact to ensure that information is shared as appropriate. He also requested a further meeting next week for a further situation update.

Councillor Allard set out the plans for communication with elected officials – ward councillors have been kept fully up to date and the local MP and MSPs have met with ACC on 1 March 2024 and received a full brief. There are further plans to meet with them again in the weeks to come.

Councillor Allard also noted the communication that has already taken place between SG and ACC on this matter. ACC officials have been engaged with SG's cross-sector working group, the working group's housing sub-group and the Minister for Local Government Empowerment and Planning recently visited the buildings affected by RAAC in November during his visit to Aberdeen. Aberdeen City Council and the Scottish Government have been in close contact with all the way through this process. Councillor Allard extended an invite to the Minister for Housing to meet with him in Aberdeen in the near future.

Actions:

1. ACC officials to share the detailed presentation they shared with the Council Emergency Business Committee with Ministers and SG officials.
2. ACC officials to share their detailed structural surveys with SG officials.
3. SG and ACC comms teams to be put in touch to ensure that information for handling enquiries is shared across both teams.

All correspondence received and sent by the Scottish Government about RAAC in homes in Aberdeen, including internally, minutes and briefings from any meetings about this topic, between November 1 2023 and the date of this FOI (05/03/24)

[redacted]

Better Homes Division

4 March 2024

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13. RAAC FMQ Briefing – 04/03/24

Redacted - Redacted – regulation 10(4)(e) – internal communications

14. Email chain following BBC News article on RAAC in Aberdeen 29/02/24

Hi [redacted] – no additional briefing is required for the Minister’s meeting with the Housing Convener at ACC. However, for ease, I’ve copied below the background to the situation below.

Background:

- Aberdeen City Council have announced that 364 properties affected by RAAC are to be vacated.
- 504 properties in the Balnagask area were identified as having RAAC, 364 (64 of which are unoccupied) are council owner properties, the remainder being a mix of owner occupier and private tenancies.
- 50 intrusive surveys have been carried out in council properties, which has indicated that they are ‘high risk’ in accordance with the Institute of Structural Engineers guidance. **This does not require an immediate decant of the properties.**
- While the number of people affected is unknown, around 170 children are known to reside across the 300 properties. ACC is working with social care to identify any vulnerable persons.
- ACC has written to residents today setting out the situation and arranging appointments over next 3-4 weeks residents to understand their needs with a view to rehoming.
- If people want moved now, they will be, however homelessness legislation would apply here. If any resident wants a roof inspection ACC will arrange for this.
- An urgent business paper was taken to Council on 29 February;
- Aberdeen City Council did not inform officials prior to this announcement being made despite Aberdeen City Council representatives sitting on the SG-led Cross Sector Working Group, and its various sub-groups, including one which met on 28 February;
- This is not an emergency decant, but part of a planned RAAC remediation plan;
- A full plan on dealing with the effected properties will be brought to the Council within 6 months;
- Residents affected will be permanently rehomed within the Council area;
- ACC has set aside £3m to support the programme, which is likely to cover costs associated with technical reports, any homelessness costs, school transport costs and security of properties;
- ACC are looking to bring a number of currently vacant properties back in to use to support rehoming – there are currently c2,000 across the Council area – however a number of these need a significant amount of work;
- Currently able to undertake 4 intrusive surveys a week;
- ACC will provide copies of the comms sent to tenant shortly, with papers submitted to Committee provided early next week;

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- An MP/MSP briefing session was held with SNP members ACC on 1 March. Dates are being sought for member of other parties;
- Scottish Government officials met with ACC officials on 29 February and 1 March;
- The Minister for Housing met the co-leaders of Aberdeen City Council on 1 March.

Thanks

[redacted]

From: [redacted]

Sent: 29 February 2024 17:07

To: Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice [redacted]>

Cc: Minister for Housing Emilie-Louise Purdie; Communications Social Justice; Director for Local Government and Housing

Subject: RE: IMMEDIATE: RAAC - Aberdeen

Hi [redacted]

With apologies for the delay, please see below background on the RAAC situation in Aberdeen City Council, following a call with officials from ACC.

Background:

- Aberdeen City Council have announced that 364 properties affected by RAAC are to be vacated.
- 504 properties in the Balnagask area were identified as having RAAC, 364 (64 of which are unoccupied) are council owner properties, the remainder being a mix of owner occupier and private tenancies.
- 50 intrusive surveys have been carried out in council properties, which has indicated that they are 'high risk' in accordance with the Institute of Structural Engineers guidance. **This does not require an immediate decant of the properties.**
- While the number of people affected is unknown, around 170 children are known to reside across the 300 properties. ACC is working with social care to identify any vulnerable persons.
- ACC has written to residents today setting out the situation and arranging appointments over next 3-4 weeks residents to understand their needs with a view to rehoming.
- If people want moved now, they will be, however homelessness legislation would apply here. If any resident wants a roof inspection ACC will arrange for this.
- An urgent business paper was taken to Council today;
- Aberdeen City Council did not inform officials prior to this announcement being made despite Aberdeen City Council representatives sitting on the SG-led Cross Sector Working Group, and its various sub-groups, including one which met yesterday (28 Feb);

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- This is not an emergency decant, but part of a planned RAAC remediation plan;
- A full plan on dealing with the effected properties will be brought to the Council within 6 months;
- Residents affected will be permanently rehomed within the Council area;
- ACC has set aside £3m to support the programme, which is likely to cover costs associated with technical reports, any homelessness costs, school transport costs and security of properties;
- ACC are looking to bring a number of currently vacant properties back in to use to support rehoming – there are currently c2,000 across the Council area – however a number of these need a significant amount of work;
- Currently able to undertake 4 intrusive surveys a week;
- ACC will provide copies of the comms sent to tenant shortly, with papers submitted to Committee provided early next week;
- An MP/MSP briefing session will be held by ACC tomorrow morning (1 March).

Thanks

[redacted]

From: Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice

Sent: Thursday, February 29, 2024 3:12 PM

To: Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice; Stephen Garvin [redacted]

Cc: Minister for Housing; Emilie-Louise Purdie; Communications Social Justice; Director for Local Government and Housing

Subject: RE: IMMEDIATE: RAAC - Aberdeen

Hi all,

I'd be grateful for urgent advice please on the article below. This will need to include if and when Aberdeen Council contacted us about this, how many people are impacted and what are the contingency plans for them.

We will also need lines urgently in response to this please.

[Hundreds of homes with RAAC concrete to be evacuated in Aberdeen | UK News | Sky News](#)

We will need a meeting this afternoon to discuss. I am putting in a call for 16:00 today. Grateful if you can confirm who should attend please.

I'd also like to flag that Alex Cole-Hamilton has just asked for an urgent statement on this in the chamber.

Many thanks,

[redacted]

EiR 202400402631

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Deputy Private Secretary | Office of Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice

St Andrews House, Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG

Email: CabSecSJ@gov.scot

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15. Meeting between SG officials and Scottish Housing Regulator – 29/02/24

Meeting to discuss the latest updates on Aberdeen City Council's announcement on 29 February 2024 in relation to RAAC

In Attendance

[REDACTED] – Assistant Director – Regulation, Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)

[REDACTED] – Housing Standards and Quality Team, Better Homes Division

[REDACTED] provided an update on the information that SHR have so far received in relation to Aberdeen City Council's (ACC) re-homing program for tenants living in properties where RAAC has been identified.

SHR were informed by ACC officials on Wednesday (28 February) that they would be seeking approval from their urgent business committee to put in place a planned program of re-homing for all council tenants in homes where RAAC has been assessed in 'high-risk' condition. It was noted that although the properties are classed as 'high-risk', according to the IStructE framework for assessment, they have not been assessed as critical risk so occupiers are not required to be decanted urgently. However, the local authority are planning to re-home all of the tenants to allow them to complete further investigations and make an assessment on the long-term options for remediation on the site.

ACC have taken SHR through their re-homing plan and decant arrangements for tenants. SHR have noted that the plan includes a housing team who are in place to support tenants through the process and to assess their individual household needs for onward accommodation. Re-allocation will be within the local authority's existing housing stock.

SHR also noted that although they do not have a regulatory interest in relation to the privately owned homes in the area which have been assessed as having RAAC, ACC have shared a brief overview of their plans for these homes. There are no plans to move owner-occupiers at this stage, and that an assessment of the options for private owners will be considered as part of their longer term assessment and planning for the site.

SG requested that SHR keep SG officials up to date if they become aware of any further developments in relation to ACC's re-homing plan, and that we would be in touch again to discuss future engagement with ACC in more detail.

[REDACTED]

Better Homes Division

1 March 2024

All correspondence received and sent by the Scottish Government about RAAC in homes in Aberdeen, including internally, minutes and briefings from any meetings about this topic, between November 1 2023 and the date of this FOI (05/03/24)

16. Notes of meeting between SG officials and Scottish Housing Regulator – 01/03/24

Meeting with SHR

[redacted]
Stephen Garvin
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]

Key points raised

- Press requests today - will send over latest numbers and note the request to RSLs for responses by 5 March.
- SHR was notified on Wednesday 28 February – advised that properties were high risk.
- Received assurance around action re decants and support for tenants. Options/support extended to owners (primarily on ground of moral obligation).
- Potential backlash in terms of proposals depending on alternative accommodation provided.
- Considers that Aberdeen have been open about plans – which appear effective and reasonable, taking into account tenant safety.
- SHR speaks regularly to ACC, ongoing engagement primarily around homelessness – noting potential wider implications for homelessness agenda (capacity and availability issue).
- SHR likely to have a line in their engagement plan noting identification of RAAC and noting what action plans in place.
- SG – unfortunate that there was no notice/non communication. Would wish to avoid in future.
- SHR offer to provide a list – on Monday – of current numbers and outstanding replies. Notes North Lanarkshire Council significant numbers outstanding (also Dundee and Stirling). Note will include numbers still under investigation.
- [redacted] – request for co-ordination of meetings (between SHR, SG and relevant Council(s)).

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- Noted that HSE also considers RAAC. Unclear what remit might be in terms of housing.
- Will pursue further engagement through CSWG Housing Sub-group.

Current data

- 109 landlords no RAAC
- 45 investigating
- 11 with RAAC
- 985 properties with RAAC
- 23,971 still to be investigated.

RAAC Co-ordination Team
Building Standards Division
1 March 2024