

Finance and Resources Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 19 September 2024

Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete Update

Executive/routine
Wards

Executive
All

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That Finance and Resources Committee:
 - 1.1.1 Notes the updates provided in this report in relation to all the operational properties where Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete has been identified; and
 - 1.1.2 Agrees that a temporary Blackhall Library facility is provided at Davidson's Mains Primary School.

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Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete Update

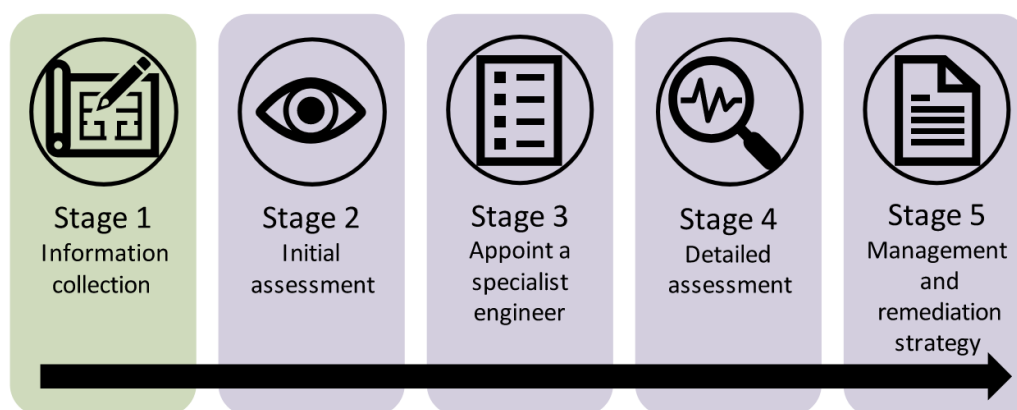
2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report provides an update on the presence of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) within the Council's operational estate.
- 2.2 Works are progressing in several buildings to replace roofs where RAAC was present and in other properties mitigation measures have been put in place so that they can remain operational.
- 2.3 Due to extent and poor condition of RAAC in Blackhall Library, the building had to be closed. It is proposed to provide a temporary library facility at Davidson's Mains Primary School and to engage with the local community over the next six months on the options and location for a permanent library solution.
- 2.4 Mitigation measures have been completed on the RAAC at the joint campus incorporating Fox Covert and Fox Covert St Andrews RC Primary Schools allowing the buildings to remain operational. However, the extent of the RAAC at this location requires long term options for replacement to be considered. A feasibility exercise is progressing, and further reports will be presented to Committee as necessary.

3. Background

- 3.1 RAAC is a form of lightweight concrete plank commonly used in roofs, walls, cladding, floors and eaves from the 1960s to 1980s with local authorities using them in a variety of buildings including many schools.
- 3.2 The Council followed a prioritisation process for surveying the operational estate which initially focused on the learning estate and then progressed to all operational properties (including libraries, community centres, leisure centres and swimming pools (Edinburgh Leisure), care homes, offices, depots, young people's centres etc).
- 3.3 The process for each building surveyed followed the advice shown in the diagram below which is taken from the Department of Education 'Reinforced Autoclaved

Aerated Concrete (RAAC) Estates Guidance' published in December 2022.



- 3.4 A [report](#) to Committee on 25 January 2024 provided details of all the operational properties where RAAC had been identified and a capital budget of £14.9m to address the costs of the initial project requirements was established by the 2024 budget setting process.
- 3.5 This report provides an update of the current position in every building where RAAC has been identified.

4. Main report

- 4.1 For those properties where RAAC has been identified, the solutions in terms of works required and cost, both in the short and longer term, are different. For example, there are mitigation measures that can be taken in the short term, but these might be unsustainable in the longer term. The following information provides an update on the RAAC in each property.

Blackhall Library

- 4.2 The detailed assessment of RAAC in this building concluded that, due to the poor condition of many panels, the level of mitigation required was not conducive to maintaining service delivery at this location.
- 4.3 The options to replace the RAAC in the longer term are complex due to the extent of work required, the potential costs and the wider condition of the building. An options appraisal has developed initial proposals for permanent solutions as follows:
- 4.3.1 Replacing all the RAAC;
 - 4.3.2 Replacement of all the RAAC and retrofit of the building to reduce energy use;
 - 4.3.3 A new library on the existing site; and
 - 4.3.4 A new library on the Davidson's Mains Primary School site.

- 4.4 Because there is the opportunity for the replacement library to be in a different location, it is proposed that detailed community engagement to discuss and consider these options is progressed over the next six months. Following this period of engagement, it will take a considerable amount of time to procure and implement the preferred option. Therefore, in the meantime, it is proposed that a temporary library is provided as a stand-alone facility.
- 4.5 Following consideration of possible locations for the temporary facility it was determined that the most suitable would be the area to the front of Davidson's Mains Primary School where temporary units for the school have previously been located. From an overall project perspective, the delivery of the temporary accommodation should be progressed as quickly as possible.
- 4.6 Quotes have therefore been received from modular building contractors for the provision of a temporary library facility. The best value option is for the facility to be purchased rather than rented. This option allows the most flexibility in terms of the time taken to deliver the permanent solution as the one-off cost is known compared to rental fees which increase the longer it takes to deliver the permanent replacement library. The cost of the temporary facility will be in the region of £1m and can be funded from the RAAC capital budget allocated in the 2024 budget setting process.

Trinity Primary School

- 4.7 The works to replace the classroom roofs which contained RAAC is complete with the classrooms coming back into use by the school following the September weekend.
- 4.8 The second phase will require the replacement of the kitchen roof and is due to be completed by the end of 2024.

Cramond Primary School

- 4.9 The anticipated construction completion date for the works at Cramond Primary School is 11 October 2024. This will allow the school to reoccupy the classrooms after the October holidays and for the temporary units to be removed.

Lorne Primary School

- 4.10 Following mitigation works last year, all areas of the school remain operational. The RAAC is in good condition. However, in the medium to longer-term, options to replace the roof, as part of a wider investment plan for the area (aligned to housing growth or net zero infrastructure requirements) will be considered.

Trinity Academy Swimming Pool

- 4.11 The swimming pool block has been demolished as part of the preparatory works for the building of new teaching blocks at Trinity Academy.

Fox Covert/St Andrew's RC Primary Schools

- 4.12 Following structural works, the gym and dining hall re-opened to pupils and staff in January 2024 meaning that all educational and circulation areas are operational. Asbestos removal works were undertaken in the kitchen over the summer to allow inspection of the RAAC panels. At the time of writing this work was currently underway, however it is unlikely that the kitchen can be brought back in to use. As reported in January, the extent of RAAC at Fox Covert is challenging and given other strategic factors, further detailed appraisal and analysis work is underway to determine the best long-term solution. Further updates will be provided to Committee when available.

Colinton Primary School and Pentland Primary Schools

- 4.13 The areas of these schools where RAAC was identified are of identical original design. Works to replace the RAAC at both locations commenced at the beginning of September. The estimated programme of works at each location is 52 weeks with an expected contract completion date by the end of August 2025.

Currie High School

- 4.14 Since the last update in January, survey works are now complete in all areas. The older gym block, the art classroom block and the assembly hall will remain closed until the school moves to the new Currie High School in 2025.

Former Annex at Darroch

- 4.15 RAAC was identified in a small extension of a former technical block. The block is not required for operational purposes. The main school building does not contain RAAC and remains fully operational.

Peffermill Depot

- 4.16 As previously reported, a small area of RAAC has been identified which has been isolated without any operational impact. Longer term the depot is due to be demolished as part of a wider regeneration programme.

Jack Kane Leisure Centre

- 4.17 Edinburgh Leisure have identified a very small area that has been isolated without any operational impact.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Works will continue to be progressed to fully remove RAAC from the operational estate. For some of the buildings where RAAC has been identified, options appraisals require to be carried out to determine the best overall approach. Where necessary further reports will be prepared for consideration by Committee.

6. Financial impact

Revenue

- 6.1 The Forecast revenue expenditure across RAAC sites for 2024/25 is currently projected at £655,000. This includes allowances for the ongoing hire of scaffolding and propping at Currie High School, the asbestos removal at Fox Covert/St Andrew RC Primary School as well as ongoing inspection requirements in line with the structural engineer's recommendations.
- 6.2 The full amount of the projected expenditure indicated above is reflected in the month three revenue monitoring report included elsewhere on today's agenda.

Capital

- 6.3 The capital costs for all the ongoing works and the proposed temporary Blackhall Library facility can be contained within the £14.9m budget allocated during the 2024 budget setting process.
- 6.4 Further significant capital allocations will be required for the longer-term solutions required for the permanent Blackhall Library and Fox Covert/St Andrews RC primary schools. The exact requirements will not be known until appropriate engagement and feasibility work has been completed and budget allocations will therefore be considered as part of future budget setting processes.

7. Equality and Poverty Impact

- 7.1 There are no specific equality or poverty implications associated with the replacement of RAAC in the buildings where it has been identified. Every effort has been made to ensure disruption to service delivery is minimised.

8. Climate and Nature Emergency Implications

- 8.1 As a public body, the Council has statutory duties relating to climate emissions and biodiversity. The Council

“must, in exercising its functions, act in the way best calculated to contribute to the delivery of emissions reduction targets”

(Climate Change (Emissions Reductions Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019), and

“in exercising any functions, to further the conservation of biodiversity so far as it is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions”

(Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004)

- 8.2 The City of Edinburgh Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and committed to work towards a target of net zero emissions by 2030 for both city and

corporate emissions and embedded this as a core priority of the Council Business Plan 2023-27. The Council also declared a Nature Emergency in 2023.

Environmental Impacts

- 8.3 The works carried out as part of the RAAC replacement programme will be delivered in line with all the energy requirements of current building standards legislation.

9. Risk, policy, compliance, governance and community impact

- 9.1 As the RAAC programme moved into the works delivery phase the projects have been overseen by the Asset Management Works Board. There are scheduled operational meetings and project meetings with the services affected are arranged as necessary. All risk, policy and compliance issues are considered through these governance arrangements.
- 9.2 Stakeholders and service users are kept up to date with direct communications or website updates.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 [Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete](#) – Report to Finance and Resources Committee 25 January 2024.

11. Appendices

None.