

## Building Safety: RAAC Update

### Purpose of Report

For information.

### Summary

This report aims to update members on developments concerning Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) in the local authority-maintained school estate.

**LGA Plan Theme:** Supporting local people and places

### Recommendations

**That the Board note and comment on the development of the LGA's work on RAAC in the local authority-maintained school estate.**

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## Building Safety: RAAC Update

### Background

1. Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) is a lightweight form of concrete, used in roof, floor, cladding and wall construction in the UK, from the 1950s to the 1990s.
2. RAAC is of particular concern because it is 'life expired' and can collapse without warning. It can be (and has been) found in all types of public buildings, including schools, and has already resulted in the collapse of two school roofs. It is possible it has been used in housing, but we are not aware of any current issues in the housing stock.
3. Since January 2023, we have been proceeding with our strategy to raise awareness of the dangers of RAAC in collaboration with the Department for Education (DfE).

### Update

#### Remediation

4. We have continued our work with the DfE to ensure local authority uptake of DfE's survey registering the prevalence of RAAC across the school estate. We worked with some authorities which experienced difficulties in completing the survey and we believe we are now nearing the close of this project as registrations near finalisation.
5. Where it had previously focused on school buildings, central government is now looking to expand RAAC identification and remediation to the wider public estate.
6. As previously indicated to the Board, the Office of Government Property (OGP) has indicated it will be convening a working group in which there will be a designated representative from each Government department who is responsible for the identification and remediation of RAAC in buildings owned by that department. This group will also be attended by key stakeholders including the LGA.

#### Upcoming Condition of Schools Data Release

7. On the 23 May 2023, Secretary of State for Schools Nick Gibb announced that the DfE will make its full dataset on the condition of schools – including prevalence of RAAC – publicly available by the start of the Parliamentary summer recess, which begins on the 20 July 2023.
8. This is an important development that will allow us access to key information that was not previously available such as the prevalence of RAAC in the school estate, and its regional distribution. This data and information will enable us to focus and inform our programmes of support to identify and remediate RAAC more effectively.

9. However, from this, we are expecting increased media attention around the issue of RAAC and in response are therefore looking to better understand the experiences and perspectives of local authorities in identifying and addressing the presence of any RAAC in their estates. To do this, we are hoping to gather intelligence from local authorities on their RAAC related work.
10. The key areas of interest for this are:
  - 10.1. What work is being done by local authorities to identify and remediate RAAC?
  - 10.2. What obstacles and issues are being faced in doing so?
  - 10.3. What are the financial implications? How much is it going to cost and where will this funding come from?
  - 10.4. What could the government be doing to better support local authorities to identify and remediate RAAC?
11. In the first instance, we are reaching out to local authorities directly to engage conversations about these issues. We have also put out a message as part of Mark Lloyd's Friday bulletin to Chief Executives inviting local authorities to approach us to discuss these issues.
12. This work also fits within our wider strategy of raising awareness of RAAC; by engaging local authorities in advanced of this data release we hope to ensure that they are adequately aware and informed on the dangers of RAAC.

## Implications for Wales

13. Education is a devolved responsibility of the Welsh Assembly.

## Financial Implications

14. There will be costs to councils in remediating RAAC. It is not yet clear what the scale of the RAAC issue is, whether there might be geographical concentrations, and as a result what the implications to councils might be. The DfE data release will provide both an indication of the level of RAAC in the schools estate, and therefore what the costs facing councils are collectively and individually.

## Equalities implications

15. There are not anticipated to be any specific equalities implications arising from the identification of RAAC in councils' estates.

## Next steps

16. Officers will continue to support the sector around identifying and remediating RAAC in councils' buildings, and working with government to ensure councils receive the assistance they need.