

## **Annex A – Agenda for 21<sup>st</sup> September Cross Sector Working Group**

### **REINFORCED AUTOCLAVED AERATED CONCRETE**

#### **Cross Sector Working Group Meeting 4**

**21 September 2023**

**14:00 – 15:30**

#### **AGENDA**

The meeting purpose is to discuss the recent announcement on RAAC by the UK Government and implications for our work in Scotland.

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Feedback from meeting with UKG Cross Government Working Group, including RAAC guidance
3. Feedback from Ministerial Meeting on RAAC
4. QA and survey terminology
5. RAAC competence and capacity building
6. Sector Updates
7. Any other business
8. Date of next meeting - TBC

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## Annex B – Note of Meeting

### REINFORCED AUTOCLAVED AERATED CONCRETE

#### Cross Sector Working Group Meeting 4

21 September 2023

2pm – 3:30pm (*meeting started at 2:10pm due to fire alarm*)

#### Note of Meeting

##### 1. Welcome and Introductions

See Annex 1 for attendees

##### 2. Feedback from meeting with UKG Cross Government Working Group

Officials provided feedback from the UK Government Cross Government Working Group. This is an officials-only meeting across UK Government Departments, as well as representatives from Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland Governments and local government. **The main topic was the Institution of Structural Engineers Guidance on RAAC.** It was noted that the current version of IStructE guidance (April 2023) followed on from previous work including a BRE Report into RAAC from 2002, the CROSS Alert in 2019 and the IStructE guidance from 2022. The 2022 version covered investigation and assessment whereas the April 2023 version has further information on end bearing and risk rating.

IStructE was informed of further RAAC concerns from April – June 2023 due to end bearing failures included a school in Hatfield and the Queen Victoria school. IStructE received DfE reports on the RAAC in these schools on 7 September. The IStructE RAAC panel have concluded that the April 2023 guidance is still valid and the findings vindicate the IStructE guidance. They will write to UKG's Group to set out this opinion formally.

IStructE are in discussion with the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors on how to raise awareness of RAAC, how to identify it and how to deal with it. It was noted that research at Loughborough University is due to be completed imminently. Concerns were raised about a potential gap between end of that research and new research starting. The group expressed interest in discussion on any further research. IStructE were looking at innovation in surveying techniques and ways of making buildings safe. IStructE noted the need for further training of engineers and surveyors.

UKG expressed that they would create a RAAC register, but it will be limited to Government Estate and public bodies. They have completed initial data gathering and are doing deep dives with different department and bodies to see how robust the data is.

Next meeting of the UKG Group will be attended by the Construction Leadership Council.

A comment was made that it would be useful to get more information on the minimally invasive techniques which was looked at originally especially when considering Asbestos. It was noted that IStructE are already making plans and that there is the potential to look beyond the construction industry for non-destructive options.

HSE met with SG and the Welsh government. HSE have updated the RAAC information on their website on RAAC, removing reference to “liable to collapse with little or no notice” and to the lifetime of RAAC.

### **3. Feedback from Ministerial Meeting on RAAC**

The meeting noted that ministers are generally happy with the work that has been carried out across sectors. They are aware that there is further work to do especially in Local Authorities outside of schools and housing.

The meeting noted that ministers have asked about assurance around data and survey terminology as different sectors are using different language to reference the same processes. Some advice to ministers is being worked on.

### **4. RAAC – quality and survey terminology**

Presentation on RAAC guidance and stages of action (*shared alongside minutes*)

It was noted that the risk rating can move from amber to red very quickly when you start visual inspection. There was discussion about how schools were assessing risk and they advised that any area where RAAC is present is immediately assessed as medium risk until it is reviewed.

The importance of getting the right professionals for the right stage was noted.

It was also noted that while there seems to be some variations to approach across sectors the outcomes at each stage seem to be broadly the same.

Feedback on the presentation was requested.

**AP4.1:** Feedback from members on the presentation by the next meeting.

### **5. RAAC competence and capacity building**

The Chair invited comments on competence and capacity issues particularly the availability of surveyors, engineers and contractors to take on short term work and medium-term remediation.

It was noted that the issue around capacity seems to be less pressing than initially thought. Messaging from consulting is that capacity isn't yet the issue

and that there is more of an issue in getting access to properties and obtaining asbestos information.

There was a comment that, further to agenda item 5, it is not until the presence of RAAC is confirmed that an engineer with specific knowledge is needed and that at the initial stages it is qualified surveyors which are easier to account for. With specific reference to schools, of two and a half thousand schools only 41 have issues therefore the resourcing is less challenging and this approach has been helpful in managing resource.

A further comment was made that there are a number of organisations now marketing themselves as RAAC specialists. Even on the IStructE website the RAAC experts are self-declared so there is a level of risk and it is important to vet the experts being entrusted to carry out work.

It was noted that it would be useful to get feedback on what else we need to do in this area and hoping to ask IStructE to attend a meeting quite soon to talk about plans around training etc.

**AP4.2:** IStructE to be invited to future meetings.

## **6. Sector Updates**

### **Higher Education**

Officials noted there were 16 universities and colleges where RAAC has been identified or it is a high likelihood. They are still awaiting some returns so this may change. Currently this equates to around 40 buildings, 17 of which are closed or partly closed. There was a request from colleges about SFC using convening power to ensure consistency of approach.

### **Health**

Officials and NHS Assure advised that they have published an official list on NHS Assure website. An NHS Scotland RAAC Steering Group has been set up with the first meeting set for Wednesday

Of the 400 visual surveys required around 100 have been completed as of 20 September; 254 are high or medium risk. Progressing into central belt up and looking at options on how to increase the pace. Officials noted that they did an information event last week which was overwhelmingly positive and well received. The lead consultant was reassuring on RAAC risks. They plan on running another one in a week.

There is currently some thought going into things over and above assessing such as guidance. Also considering the need to take action on properties that are leased by boards or that are used but not owned by NHS.

### **Police Scotland**

RAAC in the police estate was mentioned in the criminal justice committee last week.

## **Schools**

Officials reported that the primary focus has been on completing a picture of the scale of RAAC and the number of buildings with RAAC identified is unchanged at 41. 39 buildings still need an assessment. Officials noted they are working with COSLA to understand timescales which largely look to be in the next week or so with potential for some spilling over into October.

Also discussed Forres Academy closure. There were several days of school closures but Forres Academy partly reopened on the date of the meeting and planned to fully reopen the following day. As a result officials are encouraging schools to consider how to best contingency plan and keep continuity in the result of a school closure

Officials have also engaged with 91 independent school – 7 of which have identified RAAC.

## **Early Learning and Childcare**

There are 8 ELC funded buildings existing within school estate that have identified RAAC.

Officials noted that there are 945 private voluntary funded childcare providers and liability sits with them but officials will provide them the guidance given to the public sector. No central information gathering but the information will be made available and discussions are ongoing around how much support and information can be shared.

## **SFRS estate**

Officials advised that they are midway through the programme of refreshed surveys. Refreshing graphics of the roofs was noted as being particularly helpful. On track to complete by the end of October.

## **Courts**

Officials noted that there are 10 buildings with high risk, in 2 of which work has been complete to a level that the courts are content with. There is further invasive work being undertaken in Airdrie and the others are being progressed this week.

## **Housing**

Officials noted meeting with the housing regulator on the proposed data collection exercise.

### **Private homebuilding sector**

The private homebuilding sector they advised that they had received feedback from some members that suggests there's not an issue with RAAC.

### **Public bodies**

The SG Chief Surveyor has written to public bodies for data gathering purposes and this work is in progress.

### **7. Any other business**

N/A

### **8. Date of next meeting**

27 September 2023 10am – 10:50am

## Annex 1

|   |
|---|
| Scottish Government                           |
| Scottish Courts                               |
| Scottish Property Federation                  |
| Moray Council                                 |
| Scottish Heads of Property Services           |
| Historic Environment Scotland                 |
| Homes for Scotland                            |
| Scottish Fire and Rescue Service              |
| Falkirk Council                               |
| Bield Housing and Care                        |
| Fife Council                                  |
| NHS Scotland Assure                           |
| Police Scotland                               |
| Built Environment Forum Scotland              |
| Chartered Institute of Housing                |
| Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland |
| North Ayrshire Council / LABSS                |
| Scottish Funding Council                      |
| Fire Scotland                                 |

# Quality Assurance and Terminology



# Existing Guidance

## **Standing Committee on Structural Safety Alert (2019)**

- Steps to take (essentially criteria) in identifying RAAC (before case by case assessment)
- Cites 'preliminary inspection procedure' from 1996 BRE Paper
- Steps to take where RAAC identified, includes some mitigation/remediation suggestions – building owners
- Appointment of chartered building professionals to conduct identification and inspection work if suspected RAAC present
- Steps to take for chartered professionals

# Existing Guidance

## **DfE RAAC identification guidance (August 2023).**

Prior version (December 2022) more detailed

Identification stage (2 parts):

- Initial identification – individual with responsibility for the building, may need professional advice. Criteria for identification, including construction drawings
- Appoint specialist consultant if RAAC suspected or uncertainty remains, to confirm presence of RAAC

Actions stage if RAAC suspected or confirmed:

- Sector specific (Report to DfE who commission assessment survey)

# Existing Guidance

## **Institution of Structural Engineers (IStructE) advice (website)**

### **Identification –**

- Not all buildings built between 1950 to mid-90s will have RAAC. Important to establish if they are present in your building
- Identification can be undertaken by an experienced estate/maintenance manager/ or building owner
- Refers to DfE guide for managers of educational buildings
- If unsure then contact structural engineer or surveyor to identify if RAAC is present. They do not need to be an expert in RAAC to do this

# Existing Guidance

## **Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) Investigation and Assessment – Further Guidance (IStructE, April 2023)**

- Not for early screening, apply where RAAC is confirmed
- For case-by-case RAAC investigation and assessment
- Scope and form of surveys
- Risk factors
- Assessment and determination of risk
- Remediation approaches
- Management strategies including monitoring and future remediation

# **Discovery, Assessment & Management**

**'Stages of action'**

# Stage 1 – discovery – desk-based study

- Documents check - original build, subsequent works. Photographs from inspections. Input from those with knowledge of the building.
- If no evidence of RAAC on building records, no construction within period RAAC in use and building does not fit the risk profile of RAAC (no other relevant criteria), mark no further action? Record for future reference.
- Study undertaken by chartered engineer, surveyor or suitably qualified in-house construction professional.
- QA - extent of information available (see also stage 2)
- QA - from chartered professional, with duty of care for their advice.
- QA - building owner duty of care for the safety of building, satisfied that the person undertaking the study working within competence.

## Stage 2 – Discovery – Verify through visual inspection

- Site visit – if no RAAC identified, record evidence and mark no further action. If RAAC identified / unsure, move to detailed survey (Stage 3)
- Inspection by chartered engineer, surveyor or other suitably qualified in-house construction professional (declared competence)
- QA - from chartered professional, with duty of care for their advice.
- QA - building owner duty of care for the safety of building, satisfied that the person undertaking the study working within competence
- QA - remaining uncertainty prompts detailed survey to confirm RAAC present or not

## Stage 3 – Assessment - identify risk and response

- Assessment undertaken by chartered structural engineer
- All information gathered to date made available, further desk study or visual inspection if needed. Plan of works prepared, including access requirements and amount of sampling
- Follow IStructE guidance 'RAAC - Investigation and Assessment – Further Guidance' (April 2023)
- Full report of findings, risks and conclusions to building owner
- QA - chartered professional, specialist, with duty of care for their advice
- QA - application of agreed guidance on survey, risk assessment and reporting on actions needed



# Stage 4 – Implement Risk Management

- Implement actions to manage risk set out in report:
  - Immediate / short-term e.g. propping or building area closures
  - Longer term actions e.g. monitoring, physical mitigation, removal of risk through replacement
- Prepare and implement action plan for monitoring as required
- Stage 4 undertaken by:
- Building owner, appointed contractors to undertake works, Individual suitably qualified for supervision of works or monitoring
- QA - implementation of recommendations from assessment report
- QA – duty of care of parties engaged to deliver mitigation or monitoring works

# Consistency in reporting

Ministers seeking consistency in presentation of information on the extent of RAAC in buildings and the stage in risk assessment and management.

- Suggest use the language of the 4 stages of action:
  - Discovery – desk-based study
  - Discovery – verification through visual inspection
  - Assessment – detailed survey, identification of risks and response
  - Implementation – risk management, mitigation or monitoring

# Discussion