



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Shirley-Anne Sommerville  
MSP,  
Cabinet Secretary for  
Social Justice

Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

By email only

Email: [localgov.committee@parliament.scot](mailto:localgov.committee@parliament.scot)

6 December 2023

Dear Shirley-Anne,

### **Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete**

Thank you for your evidence to the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee last month. Further to that session, the Committee would like to follow-up on a few issues with you.

Firstly, the Committee would welcome an update on what progress is being made in identifying buildings, including residential buildings, with RAAC elements.

Secondly, the Committee recognises that the costs to local authorities in mitigating, remediating and monitoring buildings with RAAC is significant. At the Committee's meeting, West Lothian Council noted that costs to it alone were £53 million so far. What progress is being made in conversations with COSLA as to how local authorities might be supported.

Thirdly, the Committee would welcome an update on the work of the RAAC cross-sector working group. Specifically, it would find it helpful to understand progress in relation to:

- The assessment of RAAC safety and what constitutes an acceptable level of risk to building users;
- Creating capacity to respond to the challenges presented by RAAC in the construction sector, with particular regard to training for surveyors, architects and other building industry professionals;
- Understanding the interaction between RAAC and other materials.

A key point highlighted during the evidence session was the importance of research, particularly into cost effective mitigation and remediation measures. It was suggested

to the Committee that upfront investment in research will reduce long-term costs associated with remediating buildings or monitoring buildings with RAAC. Has the Scottish Government given any further reflection to committing further funds to support research into RAAC?

The Committee would also welcome an update on the Scottish Government's approach to buying out homeowners living in ex-local authority or housing association homes where it is established that their properties contain RAAC and the risks cannot be easily or affordably mitigated or remediated.

On the specifics of RAAC, the Committee would also welcome an update on progress in negotiations with the UK Government on funding to support the monitoring and remediation of buildings with RAAC.

More generally, the Committee would welcome the Scottish Government's reflections on the concerns that were raised about the procurement systems used for public buildings and social housing stock, including ongoing maintenance, and the suggestion that there is too much focus on delivering quantity as opposed to quality buildings and on short-term maintenance fixes rather than long-term solutions. Similar issues have been raised in the course of the Committee's work on external cladding.

Finally, and again a more general point, was the suggestion in the meeting that it would be helpful to there to be a register of all buildings, which includes information on construction methods and the materials used. This would mirror the approach taken in Denmark and support was expressed for it in the meeting. This could provide a response in part to some of the issues arising in relation to the Committee's other housing work including its work on external cladding.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Ariane Burgess  
Convener, Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee