

# Report

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Report to:	<b>Community Services Committee</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>17 June 2014</b>
Report by:	<b>Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)</b>

Subject:	<b>Radon Measurement Programme in Scotland</b>
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## 1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ♦ advise the Committee, that following publication of updated Scottish Radon maps, a Radon gas testing programme has been undertaken on a small number of houses in South Lanarkshire

## 2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the results from Public Health England (PHE) for its Radon gas testing on properties in South Lanarkshire be noted.

## 3. Background

- 3.1. Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas. Prolonged exposure to high levels of Radon is linked to an increased risk of lung cancer, particularly for those individuals who smoke.
- 3.2. The Health Protection Agency (HPA) and the British Geological Survey (BGS) developed new techniques to combine radon measurements with geological data to produce fine resolution radon maps. This enabled an "indicative" 1 km resolution atlas to be published which replaced older maps, published in 2009, that showed average radon potential in each 5-km national grid square in Scotland and was based on radon measurements only. The Scottish Government then commissioned Public Health England (PHE) to identify and reduce high levels of radon in homes.
- 3.3. 277 houses in South Lanarkshire were identified as being in an area where the Radon levels could be above the Action Level and were eligible for a free radon test. The majority of properties identified were in East Kilbride and Carluke; some other properties were identified in Braidwood, Kirkmuirhill, Lesmahagow, Crossford and Thorntonhall.
- 3.4. Letters inviting householders to apply for the free test were sent out along with a leaflet explaining about the national survey by PHE in the week commencing 19 August 2013. Copies of the letter and leaflet are attached at Appendix 1.

#### **4. Current Position**

- 4.1. Home test kits were requested by 114 properties in South Lanarkshire. The home test kits supplied by PHE would be used to calculate if properties are above the action level, below the target level or fall between the two levels.
- 4.2. PHE provided details of the results received from the testing to Environmental Services as they were received. Environmental Services then updated other internal departments namely Housing and Technical Resources and Planning and Building Standards who had an interest in the results. PHE reported the results of the testing directly to each household.
- 4.3. PHE has supplied a total of 90 results and all were found to be below the target level and no action was required by the householder to reduce the levels of radon found. Reminders were sent to the 24 properties that had not returned their test kits and PHE has indicated that they do not anticipate that they will receive any further test kits to be analysed.
- 4.4. Radon present in properties even below the target level can increase the risk of developing lung cancer in current smokers. The guidance supplied by PHE is very clear on these risks and Environmental Services hopes that this monitoring exercise may encourage some individuals who smoke, to stop. The risk of developing lung cancer is considerably reduced for ex-smokers.

#### **5. Employee Implications**

- 5.1. There are no employee implications as the results are below the target level. If results had indicated that action was required, the follow up would be undertaken by existing Environmental Services staff as part of their public health duties.

#### **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1. There are no financial implications in the report.

#### **7. Other Implications**

- 7.1. There are no sustainable development or risk implications.

#### **8. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements**

- 8.1 This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy and, therefore, no impact assessment is required.
- 8.2 The radon gas testing programme involved consultation with Scottish Government, PHE, and internal Council services as noted within the report.

**Colin McDowall**

**Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)**

3 June 2014

#### **Link(s) to Council Objectives/Values**

- ◆ Improve and maintain health
- ◆ Improve the quality of the physical environment
- ◆ Strengthen partnership working

**Previous References**

- None

**List of Background Papers**

- None

**Contact for Further Information**

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:- Craig Brown, Environmental Services Manager

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