

Report

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Report to:	Housing and Technical Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	1 April 2009
Report by:	Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources)

Subject:	Progress Report on the Management of Asbestos within Council Houses and Related Common Areas
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ♦ update the Committee with the progress being made on the management of asbestos within Council houses and related common areas.

2. Recommendation(s)

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

- (1) that the progress made to date on the management of asbestos within Council houses and related common areas be noted
- (2) that the procedures for informing residents of Housing Capital works to blocks of flats be adapted for occasions where the work required to remove asbestos is extensive
- (3) that grants of up to a maximum of 25% of the total cost of removing the asbestos be made available to owners in cases where the work is deemed to be of a capital nature
- (4) that, in blocks where there are no Council tenants, and no approval given for surveys or works to be undertaken, the Council discontinue as factors with immediate effect

3. Background

- 3.1. Members will be aware from the Committee report of 12 November 2008, that in relation to Council houses, Housing and Technical Resources is responsible for the management of asbestos in common areas of these properties such as closes, bin shelters and sheltered housing common rooms, but is also responsible to employees undertaking construction or maintenance works within the actual houses.
- 3.2. The previous report highlighted a number of key activities which were being undertaken to ensure that the Resource continued to comply with its responsibilities in this key area.
- 3.3. This report will provide an update on these activities and outline the next phase of work in relation to Asbestos Management.
- 3.4. It is worthwhile reminding Elected Members that the work being undertaken by the Resource in this area is compulsory and is applicable to both public and private sector landlords and factors of common housing areas.

4. Progress made to date

- 4.1. As detailed in the previous report the two main activities required to ensure full implementation of the Asbestos Management Plan were the training of Housing Area Services repairs operatives and inspection staff and the electronic integration of the Council's Asbestos Register with the Housing Repairs System. Both of these actions have now been successfully undertaken and have resulted in the employees concerned not only having a far greater understanding of the issues in relation to asbestos management but also having relevant information readily available to pass on to contractors prior to work being undertaken.
- 4.2. The survey work currently being undertaken in relation to dealing with asbestos as part of the Kitchen and Bathroom renewal programme is continuing, and current projections are that the properties in the final stages of this programme will not create such challenging issues in relation to asbestos as previously experienced.
- 4.3. The Council's Asbestos Register continues to be updated based on the findings from the surveys being undertaken.

5. Next steps and associated proposals

- 5.1. The next large scale area of work to be undertaken relates to extending the number of surveys of common closes beyond those areas which have already been dealt with as part of the Kitchen and Bathroom installation programme, thereby completing the Council's database and intelligence in this area.
- 5.2. The remaining surveys will be undertaken by the Council's appointed specialist asbestos consultant, ALcontrol. Surveys will be done on a sample basis and all tenants and owners in the blocks concerned will receive a copy of the survey findings.
- 5.3. Following good practice, prior to surveys being undertaken, in blocks of flats where owners reside, we will inform them of the purpose and necessity of the surveys together with estimated costs for their proportion of the survey.
- 5.4. Where remedial works are required the Resource will use, in general, the same procedures currently used for Housing Capital projects and call public meetings where works are of a high value or of a complex nature.
- 5.5. It is further proposed that the same procedures used for the provision of grant assistance to owners for current Housing Capital works are utilised for works in this area, i.e. that they be deemed to be of a capital nature based on the extent and value of the work required. One major difference between the current consultation procedures used for Housing Capital works and those to be used in relation to dealing with asbestos is that, where consequential remedial works are required, the Council must undertake these works to allow it to continue to act as the factor, i.e. the Council could not continue to act as factor in a block where works to deal with known asbestos were outstanding.

5.6. In blocks where the Council is in the majority there will clearly be no issue in relation to obtaining authority to carry out the work. In blocks where work is required and the Council is not in the majority but has tenants in the block, the Council will use powers available through the property deeds of condition to ensure the work is undertaken. In fully owned blocks where owners refuse to have the work undertaken, the Council cannot continue to act as factor as we would be unable to authorise any maintenance work to any of the common areas within the block and it is proposed that, if such circumstances arise, the Council formally withdraws from the provision of a factoring service.

6. Employee Implications

6.1. There are no additional employee implications related to this work.

7. Financial Implications

7.1. A budget of £500,000 has been included in the HRA Capital Programme for 2009/10 to pay for both on-going surveys and related remedial works.

8. Other Implications

8.1. None

9. Equalities Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

9.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and, therefore, no impact assessment is required.

9.2. There is no requirement to undertake any consultation in relation to the content of this report.

Jim Hayton

Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources)

9 March 2009

Link(s) to Council Objectives and Values

◆ Improve the quality, access and availability of housing

Previous References

◆ Housing and Technical Resources Committee 12 November 2008

List of Background Papers

◆ South Lanarkshire Council Policy for Management of Asbestos 1998

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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