

Impact of Radon Gas on Social Housing Tenants

Date: 20 June 2024

Report of: Head of Democratic Services

Report to: Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing & Communities)

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

In July 2023 the Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing & Communities) received a referral to scrutiny from Cllr Wayne Dixon. Cllr Dixon requested that members consider carrying out detailed scrutiny of issues relating to the impact of radon gas on the health of Leeds residents.

All referrals are subject to a member-led process of examination and review, in line with the principles set out in the Vision for Scrutiny within [Article 6 of the Council's Constitution](#) and the procedures outlined in sections G&H of the [Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules](#).

At the meeting on 20 July 2023 further information was requested from officers and the Executive Member. Members of the Scrutiny Board subsequently received a further written briefing on the measures being taken to assess the level of risk from radon gas in Leeds.

On the basis of the advice received the Scrutiny Board agreed it was satisfied with the proposal that the Council should conduct physical testing and members recommended that an update on the progress of phase 1 testing should be provided to the successor Scrutiny Board early in 2024/25.

Members are asked to consider the appended update from the Head of Property Management, which details the outcome of testing to take and to determine whether any further scrutiny is required.

Recommendations

- a) The Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing & Communities) is asked to determine what - if any - further scrutiny activity is required in relation to the update on the testing programme.
- b) If further scrutiny is requested by the Board the work programme will be amended accordingly.

What is this report about?

- 1 In [July 2023](#) a referral was received from Cllr Wayne Dixon, which was considered in accordance with sections G and H of the [Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules](#).

- 2 Cllr Dixon asked that the Scrutiny Board consider the potential risk of radon case to residents in Leeds, particularly those living in social housing in Middleton Park, Belle Isle, Morley and Rothwell.
- 3 Officers from Housing, Property Management and Public Health attended the Scrutiny Board meeting on 20 July 2023, along with Cllr Lennox in her capacity as Executive Member.
- 4 An initial response to the concerns raised by Cllr Dixon was provided. This included detail relating to the Advanced Postcode List Radon Gas Risk Assessment.
- 5 Members were advised that the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) had stated that the risk from radon gas is low in Leeds. However, the Council had decided that further physical testing should take place to provide assurance about the local level of risk and to determine any actions required to manage that risk. At the time of the update the methodology proposed by the Council for the testing programme had been endorsed by UKHSA.
- 6 Members requested a further detailed written briefing on the work being undertaken to establish the extent of the risk in Leeds and subsequently recommended that the successor board should receive an update on the outcome of the initial phase of testing.
- 7 The appended briefing from the Head of Property Management provides an update (within section 2) on the outcome of the initial phase of testing. Given health concerns raised in the original referral to Scrutiny, the report also provides an update from Public Health about the variance to cancer mortality rates in potentially radon affected areas in the last twelve months.

What impact will this proposal have?

- 8 If members determine that further scrutiny of this matter is required the work programme will be amended accordingly.

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

- Health and Wellbeing
 Inclusive Growth
 Zero Carbon

- 9 Issues associated with all three pillars will be discussed as is appropriate within the context of the Board’s deliberations.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

- 10 The Vision for Scrutiny states that the relevant scrutiny board should seek the advice of the Scrutiny Officer, relevant Director(s) and Executive Board member(s) about available resources before agreeing to items of work.
- 11 An invitation has been extended to the relevant officers and Executive Board Member to contribute to the Board’s discussion.

What are the resource implications?

- 12 Should there be a request for further scrutiny the Scrutiny Board is advised to consider any potential impact on its current work programme, including the level of resources required to support additional work items.

What are the legal implications?

- 13 This report has no specific legal implications.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

14 In line with the requirements of the Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules, members of the Board are asked to determine whether further scrutiny is required in relation to the issues outlined in the appended briefing.

What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?

15 Should there be requests for further scrutiny the Board's work programme will be amended accordingly.

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Briefing from the Head of Property Management

Background papers

- None