

Bolsover District Council

Executive

14 April 2014

Asbestos Management within BDC Housing Stock

Report of the Emergency and Responsive Maintenance Manager

This report is public

Purpose of the Report

- To provide feedback to Executive regarding the Management of asbestos within the Council's housing stock.
- Explain why the Council does not immediately remove all asbestos type materials once they have been identified.

1. Report Details

- 1.1. The decision was taken in 2009 to carry out and complete 100% Asbestos Management surveys for all the Council's Domestic properties. This work was linked to our mandatory requirements to carry out asbestos surveys of all non domestic and communal areas. Currently we have completed surveys of some 25% of our properties (with a further five per cent undertaken each year) the results of which are included in an asbestos database detailing all the asbestos surveys undertaken. From the information gathered we have determined that Asbestos within our domestic properties is uncommon, is generally in good condition and consequently poses a low risk.
- 1.2. Once Asbestos has been identified in a property it is a legal requirement that it be re-inspected every year to ensure it remains safe and has not deteriorated in any way. Any asbestos that has deteriorated, been damaged or could be a danger to the tenant and other parties is removed as a matter of urgency. Asbestos containing materials such as gutters, soffits and rainwater goods are not removed as a matter of course but monitored annually and removed if they pose a risk as a result of deterioration or damage. These items tend to be out of reach / contact from people which may cause damage and as such is again deemed a low risk.
- 1.3. As a general principle it is considered that to remove undamaged asbestos is likely to pose greater risks than a policy of actively managing any asbestos which is identified. This is particularly the case where the asbestos is located within the property and tenants are in occupation. Where a property is void the Council does generally take action to remove any asbestos identified as it is more realistic to implement appropriate removal strategies safely when a house is unfurnished and not occupied.

- 1.4. While there is no legal obligation to inform tenants of any asbestos containing materials within their homes, the Council has taken a decision to increase awareness and reduce the potential risk. Accordingly a booklet called “Asbestos in your home” was posted to all tenants last year. The response from tenants was positive and coupled with the ongoing yearly surveys and repeated re-surveys has reduced the risk of asbestos contamination further.

2. Conclusions and Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1 In conclusion asbestos is identified in the home, managed, monitored and if deemed a risk due to being damaged removed as a matter of course.
- 2.2 The decision only to remove damaged Asbestos containing materials, to label and manage any identified Asbestos within communal areas and the decision to increase tenant’s awareness of any asbestos within their home was the result of consultation with the Councils Health & safety Officer and compliance with the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012.

3 Consultation and Equality Impact

- 3.1 The issue of asbestos has been raised with tenants where appropriate and all tenants have been provided with information identifying the risks. Any concerns raised are considered through the Council’s established processes and policies concerning tenant consultation.
- 3.2 The policies and practices that the Council has adopted apply to all tenants

4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 Under the Council’s current policy only that asbestos which has been identified as very low risk remains in situation and once identified it is monitored on an annual basis. This policy is in line with recognised best practice. The only reasonable alternative is that a decision is taken to remove all asbestos at the earliest opportunity. That approach has been rejected as disturbing the asbestos would pose a greater level of risk to our tenants.

Implications

5.1 Finance and Risk Implications

This report is for information only and there are therefore no additional financial or risk implications arising as a result of the report. Executive should note that the Council’s policies and practices in respect of asbestos are designed to minimise the risk to tenants.

5.2 Legal Implications including Data Protection

The Council’s policies and practices in relation to the handling of asbestos are in line with both our legal requirements and with recognised best practice.

5.3 **Human Resources Implications**

No direct implications.

6 **Recommendations**

6.1 That Executive notes the report.

7 **Decision Information**

Is the decision a Key Decision? (A Key Decision is one which results in income or expenditure to the Council of £50,000 or more or which has a significant impact on two or more District wards)	No
District Wards Affected	All.
Links to Corporate Plan priorities or Policy Framework	Customer Focussed Services

8 **Document Information**

Appendix No	Title
Background Papers (These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Cabinet (NEDDC) or Executive (BDC) you must provide copies of the background papers)	
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