

REPORT TO: DEVELOPMENT QUALITY COMMITTEE – 25 AUGUST 2003

REPORT ON: DANGEROUS BUILDINGS – PUBLIC SAFETY POLICY

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION

REPORT NO: 537-2003

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Committee of proposals to introduce a proactive risk assessment based approach to deal with the problems of falling masonry from buildings in areas within the City Centre on a trial basis.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that:

- 1 the committee notes the content of this report and the proposals for identifying and dealing with 'High Risk' properties within the city centre area on a trial basis; and
- 2 in instances where owners fail to undertake the inspections and remedial works, remits the Director of Planning and Transportation in consultation with the Depute Chief Executive (Support Services) and the Depute Chief Executive (Finance), to arrange for detailed inspections and repairs to be carried out by the City Engineer.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The costs associated with carrying out the initial photographic surveys and risk assessments for this trial will be contained within the existing Planning and Transportation department's revenue budget.

4 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Properties not properly maintained and are located in the inner city location present a significant risk to the surrounding community. This initiative will assist in achieving the Council's Local Agenda 21 Objectives.

5 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no equal opportunity implications.

6 BACKGROUND

- 6.1 Reference is made to Article IV of the minute of the Planning and Transportation committee of 30 June 2003, which identified the problems associated with derelict land and buildings and associated concerns relating to public safety. The committee authorised a more proactive approach in dealing with such instances and endorsed the adoption of a zero tolerance policy.

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- 6.2 To compliment such a policy, the City Engineer has reviewed the method in which the council deals with the dangers posed from falling masonry particularly within the city centre environment.
- 6.3 Historically, the council has pursued a 'reactive' approach to such incidents, relying on reports of falling masonry from the police, owners or the general public. When such incidents occur the property concerned is inspected and where time permits the owners are advised of the necessity to carry out remedial works to make their property safe. In the case of emergencies, the City Engineer uses powers under Section 13 of the Building (Scotland) Act 1974 to carry out the necessary works to make the buildings safe and costs are subsequently recovered from the owners.
- 6.4 All instances of falling masonry have an inherent danger of causing injury or death to members of the public. The risk of such tragic consequences increases significantly in areas of high footfall such as within the city centre area. To date it is fortunate that no such incidents have occurred in Dundee although there a number of well publicised cases in other towns and cities. It is therefore concluded that the council adopts a more proactive approach to dealing with the dangers posed from falling masonry.
- 6.5 In the first instance it is proposed to carry out a desk top risk assessment on the condition of all properties within the city centre area identified on the attached plan. This assessment will be based on a photographic survey of the frontages of all buildings within the defined area. A number of weighted factors including building type, condition, materials, location etc will be used to allocate a Public Safety Rating value (PSR). The PSR gives a basis for comparison of the potential risk these properties present to the general public in terms of falling masonry.
- 6.6 Properties which are allocated a 'High Risk' PSR will be visually inspected from ground level to confirm their condition and letters will be issued to owners advising them of the building condition and requesting that they carry out more detailed inspections and repair works within a prescribed timescale. If the owners fail to respond it is proposed that the City Engineer will undertake the detailed survey together with any other safety works necessary and all costs with this will then be re-charged to the owners.
- 6.7 The owners of properties which are considered to be in the 'Medium Risk' category will be informed in writing of the potential dangers their property presents to the general public. Such properties will be recorded on a database and monitored on a periodic basis. Should their PSR increase at any stage into the high risk category, they will be dealt with as outlined above.
- 6.8 The costs associated with the initial photographic survey and desk top risk assessment will be contained within the Planning and Transportation department's existing revenue budget.
- 6.9 This trial initiative will be reviewed after a period of approximately one year and a report brought back to a future committee. Should this prove to be successful, particularly in terms of the positive action of owners in attending to the condition of their buildings, then consideration should be given to extending the initiative into other parts of the city with high levels of footfall.

7 CONSULTATIONS

- 7.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Depute Chief Executive (Finance), and Assistant Chief Executive (Community Planning) have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report.

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 None.

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4 August 2003


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■ INDICATES RISK ASSESSMENT SURVEY LOCATIONS

revision	City Engineer		Planning Supervisor	
Drawn	Checked	Drq.Nr.	Scale	Date
MP			NTS	
Project	PUBLIC SAFETY			
Drawing Title	RISK ASSESSMENT SURVEY			


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