



Subject:	Dilapidation
Date:	11 th June 2024
Reporting Officer:	Kate Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control
Contact Officer:	Stephen Hewitt, Building Control Manager

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted? Yes No

Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.

Insert number

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in? Yes No

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
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1.1	To consider the response from the DoF to recent correspondence from the Committee regarding dilapidation.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the contents of the responses received from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Department for Communities and Department of Finance as well as ongoing work within the Council which will be reported to a future Committee
3.0	<p>Main Report</p> <p>At the People and Communities Committee meeting on the 9 April 2024, the Committee agreed to write to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) urgently seeking the Minister to bring forward a Dilapidation Bill.</p> <p>In addition, the Committee agreed to write to the Department for Communities (DfC) and the Department of Finance (DoF) seeking the allocation of a package of funding to assist councils to more effectively tackle the problems associated with Dilapidation.</p> <p>Letters from the Committee were issued to all three recipients on 17 May 2024 (Appendices 1, 3 and 5).</p> <p>DAERA responded on the 21 May 2024 (Appendix 2) recognising that the existing legislation used by councils in respect of dilapidation is dated and geographically fragmented. The response sets out that a draft bill has been prepared which aims to consolidate and enhance existing legislation and improve the cost recovery ability of councils. Subject to the agreement of the Executive, the Minister intends to introduce the Bill to the Assembly after summer recess this year. It is anticipated that the Bill would provide councils with a modern and fit-for-purpose regime, including clear powers to tackle dilapidated and dangerous buildings and neglected sites.</p> <p>DfC responded on the 31 May 2024 setting out that the Department does not currently have any funding programme which would assist Councils to be more effective in tackling the problems associated with dilapidation. Whilst the Department has previously operated the Urban Development Grant Scheme, it is not currently open for applications.</p> <p>Further, the response sets out that the Executive has an agreed 2024/25 budget, and the Minister will allocated this funding against existing commitments and Ministerial priorities.</p> <p>DoF responded on the 29 May 2024 setting out that the issue of dilapidated buildings is an area where the Minister has specific interest as the Minister responsible for rating matters. The response sets out that bringing dilapidated buildings back into use can play a key role in growing the overall taxbase and can have a restraining effect on the overall poundage levels within the system.</p> <p>The response sets out the rating system for dilapidated buildings that are still usable and those that are truly derelict. Further, the response sets out that the Back in Business scheme has been restored at the Assembly which will incentivise the use of long-term vacant retail space.</p> <p>The response states that whilst there is a 50% rating liability on properties that are dilapidated but still usable as a unit, there is no such approach for those properties that are truly derelict as they are removed from the rating system entirely. The Minister is of the opinion that refurbishment of such property is probably a matter better addressed through carefully thought-out proposals for capital spend directed at regeneration, and that any business case brought forward at Executive level to advance proposals of this nature would be considered.</p>

	<p>At the Committee meeting of the 9 April 2024, reference was also made to work ongoing within the council, being led by the City Solicitor and the Director of Planning and Building Control. Officers are currently bringing together all information previously collected on the issue of dilapidation around the city to inform options for any future action. A report will be brought forward to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at a future date.</p>
	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>There are currently no financial or resource implications as a result of this report.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>There are no equality of good relations implications of the report.</p>
4.0	Appendices
	<p>Appendix 1 letter to DAERA 13 May 2024 Appendix 2 letter from DAERA 21 May 2024 Appendix 3 letter to DfC 13 May 2024 Appendix 4 letter from DfC 31 May 2024 Appendix 5 letter to DoF 13 May 2024 Appendix 6 letter from DoF 29 May 2024</p>