
To: Infrastructure, Land and Environment Policy Board

On: 29 August 2018

Report by: Director of Communities, Housing and Planning Services

Heading: Reducing Exposure to Lead in Drinking Water Project

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Drinking Water Regulator for Scotland contacted all Councils in 2017 regarding an initiative to reduce potential exposure to lead within drinking water, which is harmful to health. The first phase of this initiative sought to provide information, via Council websites on the risks to health from lead pipes being present within drinking water supply pipes and to ensure that there is no risk of children being exposed to lead in drinking water within Council owned education facilities.
- 1.2 Over recent months, samples of drinking water have been collected from every school, nursery and pre-school facility in the Council owned estate. The samples have been submitted to Glasgow Scientific Services for professional analysis for lead. None of the results exceeded the current maximum prescribed concentration value. The results of this work have been reported to the Drinking Water Quality Regulator for Scotland.
- 1.3 The Drinking Water Quality Regulator for Scotland has now advised that as part of Phase 2 of this initiative they have commissioned Scottish Water to undertake a sampling programme for lead across all privately-owned facilities where school or nursery activity takes place. This programme is currently in the planning stages and is expected to start during the coming months. Should any water quality failures be identified in these properties, this will be raised with the relevant Council for further investigation and enforcement of remedial action.
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2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Infrastructure, Land and Environment Policy Board notes that:

- 2.1 Drinking water samples have been collected and tested from all Council owned education facilities with no elevated levels of lead being identified.
 - 2.2 A further programme of testing will now be carried out by Scottish Water across all privately-run facilities where school or nursery activity takes place.
 - 2.3 The Council website has been updated to provide information on the health risks of lead pipes being present within drinking water supply pipework.
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3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Lead is a toxic substance which accumulates within the body over a lifetime through exposure to lead sources in the environment. Sources include lead-based paint, contaminated soil, dust, petrol, drinking water, food and related products. The World Health Organisation has estimated that 50% of lead exposure is arising from drinking water and their guidance is that lead piping should be removed from the drinking water supply route.
- 3.2 Over the last 30 years, legislation has progressively reduced the limit for lead in drinking water to 10µg/l (micrograms per litre). Over the same period however, concerns have developed within Scotland's health professional community that even this limit may be too high and there is an increasing view that every effort should be made to reduce lead levels in drinking water as far as is practicably possible.
- 3.3 The Scottish Government and Drinking Water Quality Regulator for Scotland endorse this policy and as part of an overall initiative to minimise lead exposure through drinking water, wrote to all Scottish Council Chief Executives in March 2017 seeking their support.
- 3.4 Councils were asked to update their website with information on the health risks associated with lead pipes being present within drinking water supply pipework and to include a link to further information on lead exposure held on the NHS Inform website. This information and link has been published on the Council website (<http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/leadinwater>).
- 3.5 The Drinking Water Quality Regulator has also sought assurance from each Council that actions have been taken to remove lead pipes and tanks from drinking water supplies within school and nursery premises which are publicly owned. This information is being sought to provide assurance and certainty to Ministers within the Scottish Parliament that these premises have all had lead pipes removed or replaced.

- 3.6 Over recent months a drinking water sampling programme has been undertaken by Officers within Communities & Public Protection across all Council property which has school and nursery provision. The samples were tested to establish whether they contain lead levels either near to, or above the maximum prescribed concentration value of 10µg/l. The programme included taking samples from within PPP school premises. Each sample has been submitted to Glasgow Scientific Services for analysis and the results confirm that none of these exceed or are near to the maximum prescribed concentration value.
- 3.7 The results of this sampling programme have been passed to the Drinking Water Quality Regulator for their information and to provide assurance that children within schools and nurseries within Renfrewshire Council owned properties are not exposed to elevated levels of lead from drinking water.
- 3.8 The Drinking Water Quality Regulator has now advised that as part of Phase 2 of the project, Scottish Water has been commissioned to carry out similar tests at all privately owned premises where school or nursery activity takes place. This programme will include all relevant premises in Scotland and is expected to start over the coming months.
- 3.9 Where any water quality failures are identified, Scottish Water will liaise with the relevant Council and Consultant in Public Health Medicine to develop a failure response plan and for further investigation/enforcement of remedial actions through the provisions contained within the Public Water Supplies (Scotland) Regulations 2014. This will ensure that the drinking water supply for the affected premises is made suitable and safe for use.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – None
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – None
3. **Community Planning** –

Renfrewshire is well – Minimising the exposure to lead in drinking water for children and young adults within education and childcare facilities will improve their health and wellbeing

4. **Legal** - None
5. **Property/Assets** - None
6. **Information Technology** - None

7. **Equality & Human Rights** - The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website
 8. **Health & Safety** – None
 9. **Procurement** – None
 10. **Risk** – None
 11. **Privacy Impact** – None
 12. **Cosla Policy Position** – None
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List of Background Papers

- (a) Background Paper 1 – Letter dated 8 March 2017 from the Drinking Water Quality Regulator for Scotland to Chief Executive

The foregoing background papers will be retained within Communities, Housing and Planning Services for inspection by the public for the prescribed period of four years from the date of the meeting. The contact officer within the service is the Communities and Regulatory Manager.

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