ABSTRACT: The report advises on the scale of impact of severe winter weather from late November 2010 to January 2011 on Council buildings and the extent to which preventative measures can be cost effectively applied.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report.

2. INTRODUCTION

Angus Council buildings are frequently damaged as a consequence of severe weather and this is mainly, but not always, limited to the impact of winter weather.

The particularly severe winter weather which occurred between late November 2010 to January 2011 resulted in levels of damage that were greater than in previous years but nonetheless at a level which is not significant compared with the costs for maintaining road and pedestrian access.

This report advises on the outcome of a review into the scale and nature of the resulting immediate damage in 2010/11.

Further building fabric deterioration will have occurred due to the severe weather and will only make its presence known over time and hence affect current and future repair and maintenance programmes. Such additional repairs will be dealt with separately through the ongoing planned and unplanned maintenance processes.

3. BACKGROUND

The Head of Property has been monitoring the impact of severe weather damage on Council buildings and assessing whether there is scope for cost effective preventative measures to be undertaken on a spend-to-save basis to limit the scale of damage in future years.

The costs of repairs following the severe weather currently total £59,300 and little if any of this cost is recoverable from the Council’s insurer due to the current policy excesses of £5,000 for general properties and £25,000 for schools. The cost of repairs following the severe weather in 2009/2010 totalled some £30,000.

It is extremely unlikely that there would be any reduction in the Council’s insurance premium as a result of any preventative measures being taken by the Council.

Table 1 provides details of the types of remedial repair undertaken and the number of incidents involved.
Table 1 Remedial repairs costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repair Type</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
<th>Incidents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burst pipe and pipe leaks</td>
<td>£ 6,464</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceiling</td>
<td>£ 4,350</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flooring</td>
<td>£ 4,300</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frost damage</td>
<td>£ 12,000</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glazing</td>
<td>£ 80</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhones, guttering and downpipes</td>
<td>£ 10,649</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boiler faults</td>
<td>£ 100</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intruder alarm system</td>
<td>£ 295</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaking window cill</td>
<td>£ 20</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting</td>
<td>£ 75</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painterworks</td>
<td>£ 600</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roof leaks</td>
<td>£ 20,390</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£ 59,323</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:

- Frost damage includes incidents of frozen pipes and five heating systems/boilers failing due to frozen pipes
- Burst pipe and pipe leaks includes 2 incidents where a boiler was offline and air handling units providing heating were off-line.

It can be seen that the majority of incidents fall into four distinct categories, however some overlap various categories, and preventative measures are somewhat limited.

**Burst pipe and pipe leaks**

Council buildings are not designed to cope with extended periods where the external temperature drops to around minus 15 °C or worse.

In these circumstances the building controls will initiate the frost protection regimes required to protect the building, systems and contents under normal circumstances but the boilers are not sized to cope with the additional demands of such extremes and it is therefore to be expected that vulnerable parts of water systems will be significantly at risk of both freezing and pipe bursts due to lower than desirable internal temperatures.

Elements of systems at the ends of buildings are particularly vulnerable and the impact of wind chill in these conditions would have an acute effect.

The cost of increasing the size of boilers to accommodate such external temperatures would be expensive and is not considered warranted due to the low frequency of such events. Undertaking such works could have significant implications where boiler houses have insufficient spare space.

It would be possible to install additional valves to isolate more vulnerable parts of water and heating systems but it would be necessary for these to be operated manually before such extremes occurred. This would depend upon sufficient early warnings being received to allow such action to be undertaken in normal occupation hours to obviate the need for employee/contractor travelling in severe weather.

Twelve of the incidents occurred in public conveniences, most of which are rural and not heated. Such incidents occur every year and the costs are not significant. Isolating water supplies would reduce the likelihood of further bursts but the cost of employees/contractors undertaking this exercise before and after each period of severe weather would probably exceed the cost of repairs.

**Frost damage including frozen pipes**

Five heating systems/boilers were affected by frost damage i.e. frozen pipes causing safety shutdowns and action has been taken, where possible to provide insulation to protect these pipes.
and to adjust control arrangements to cause the boilers to run harder to ensure sufficient residual heat prevents freezing. Consideration is also being given to the fitting of automatic dampers on boiler house fresh air grills. There will be, of course, minor additional energy costs associated with this strategy.

The impact on public services was generally minimal except for Lochside Leisure Centre where roof mounted heater batteries were burst and replacement units, due to their age, had to be fabricated and installed. This caused a loss of service provision and options are being examined to fit motorised dampers and control adjustments to prevent future instances.

**Rrones; guttering and downpipes**

The very heavy snowfall and the subsequent thawing resulted in damage due to the heavy weight of the snow and the impact of avalanches from roofs when thawing occurred.

The cost of providing snow boards, their erection and removal, to accommodate such external temperatures would be expensive and is not warranted due to the low frequency of such events.

**Roof leaks**

The very heavy snowfall and the subsequent thawing also contributes to roof leak incidents due to the blocking of rhones, gutters and downpipes causing thawing water to enter buildings through the roof.

Roof leaks lead to the need to affect repairs to electrical installations, carpets, painter work, ceilings and other surfaces.

Little can be done to prevent such incidents.

4. **CONCLUSION**

The Head of Property has concluded that the opportunity to undertake cost effective preventative measures to limit the likelihood of such severe weather incidents happening in the future is extremely limited. The key appropriate measures are already being undertaken as advised in this report.

5. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The costs of preventative measures being undertaken in 2010/11 are minimal and will be met from the unplanned maintenance provisions within the respective departmental Property Maintenance budgets for 2010/11. It is intended that preventative measures for Lochside Leisure Centre, and for any other properties, with similar needs, will be funded from contingency provisions within the Property Renewal and Repair Fund provisions for 2011/12.

The cost of the repairs arising from the severe weather currently totals £59,323 and this will be met from the unplanned maintenance provisions within the respective departmental Property Maintenance budgets for 2010/11 with supplementary funding being provided from the Council's insurance account. The additional costs of the building fabric deterioration cannot be determined at this time but these costs will require to be accommodated within the overall Property Maintenance provision.

Costs recovered through the Council’s insurer will reduce this sum but the extent of such recovery is anticipated to be minimal.

The Head of Property continues to report that the unplanned maintenance current commitment is above profile and it is anticipated that the actual spend at the end of the financial year will result in a managed overspend. However, it is emphasised that in line with previous financial year outcomes all overspends are progressed on a managed basis and absorbed within the cash limited budgets available to Council departments.
6. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

Any implications, as a consequence of discharging recommendations detailed in this report, will be managed in accordance with the standing procedures and processes established by the Property Division.

7. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

The issues dealt with in this report have been the subject of consideration from an equalities perspective. An equalities impact assessment is not required.

8. CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, Head of Law and Administration, and the Head of Finance have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

9. CONCLUSION

The Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report.

Colin McMahon
DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

Note: No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information), were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.

Property/JP