

To: HOUSING & PROPERTY SERVICES (Capital Programme & Repairs) SUB-COMMITTEE		Subject: External Capital Refurbishment Programmes and Protected Birds
From: DIRECTOR OF HOUSING AND PROPERTY SERVICES		
Date: 27 October 1999	Ref: GSW/PLM/MO'D/	

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Committee approval to adopt a policy regarding swift nest-site conservation on external refurbishment programmes.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council have been progressively carrying out major capital works regarding re-roofing, re-rendering, refurbishment and demolition of its properties since its formation in 1996.
- 2.2 A number of properties are being colonised by swifts, which are a protected species under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the implications being that the Council are unable to disturb these properties during the swifts nesting season, which is May to September.
- 2.3 Further implications are that when major capital works take place, the existing nesting sites of protected birds are totally destroyed and further use of these sites is prevented. However, there is no obligation within the Act for the nesting sites to be retained.

3 PRESENT SITUATION

- 3.1 Swift nest site conservation has been accepted by Glasgow City Council, Edinburgh City Council, Norwich City Council and, is on the agenda for other Councils in Britain. It is also practised in other countries in Europe.
- 3.2 Modern building methods and materials are denying swifts access to their traditional nest sites, therefore, major external refurbishment projects such as re-roofing and re-rendering as well as new buildings are responsible for the problem. There are, however, various design details which can be incorporated into building specification without compromising building standards and which permit swifts to nest.
- 3.3 The "Concern for Swifts (Scotland)" have offered to provide Swift Nest Boxes at no cost implication to the Council, to be fitted at suitable swift nest sites where major capital works are in progress.
- 3.4 The additional cost to secure the swift nest boxes by the Contractor is estimated to be £25.00 per box.
- 3.5 Swift nest site protection is a part of Edinburgh City Council's Biodiversity Action Plan and nest boxes are being installed there, and it is likely to be put on North Lanarkshire Council's Local Biodiversity Action Plans.

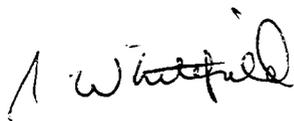
4 RECOMMENDATION

4.1 The committee is asked to:-

- i) adopt a policy of protecting swifts in new housing and refurbishment programmes.
- ii) agree to meet the cost of securing the swift nest boxes provided by "Concern for Swifts (Scotland.)"

5 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

5.1 Available within the Housing & Property Services Department.



G Whitefield
Director of Housing & Property Services