

Edinburgh council to survey high rise blocks all over the city

The City of Edinburgh Council is to undertake a £1.8 million survey of high rises across the city as part of its plans to make council homes net zero by 2030.

A contract worth £1,882,207 has been awarded to project management firm Faithful and Gould to carry out a “detailed investigation” of 36 multi-storey blocks, which will look to identify any structural defects.

Findings from the wide-ranging review will be reported back in 2023, and will give an overall picture of the condition of the buildings as the council prepares to invest in upgrades for social housing with the aim of improving energy efficiency and meeting climate targets.

Around 3,000 of the city’s 20,000 council homes are in 44 high rises throughout Edinburgh, which were all built between 1952 and 1976.

A report to the finance and resources committee, which approved the contract on Thursday, said they were built using a range of “complex” construction methods and now require “detailed investigation and surveys to assess the condition of the structure”.

It added: “These need to be carried out by structural

engineers with extensive specific experience of these construction types.

“Many of these multi-storey blocks were specialised and innovative construction methods at the time of build and now present a range of technical and financial challenges to both maintain and improve them.”

Eight flats – May Court, Gunnet Court, Craigmillar Court, Peffermill Court, Citadel Court, Persevere Court, Saunders Street and Westfield Court – have already had full structural and condition surveys and will therefore not be included in the review, which is set to commence in April.

The council says one of the “key drivers” behind the project is to ensure all multi-storeys have been “fully assessed in terms of structure, mechanical and electrical services and fabric condition”.

It adds: “This will help to ensure that the correct long-term investment decisions are applied to each block in terms of meeting statutory compliance linked to the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) and to align with the Council’s wider ambitions to be net zero carbon by 2030.

“This includes provision for structural engineering services, mechanical and electrical engineering services, architectural services, quantity and building surveying services and project management services. All of which can be brought together under one project team.”

Faithful and Gould has appointed engineers Will Rudd Davidson as sub-consultants to undertake the “core structural engineering function” of the survey.

A report notes the Edinburgh-based firm has worked extensively throughout the city and “have a very good understanding of the council’s multi-storey blocks due to previous structural engineering commissions”.

It adds: "This knowledge of the council's multi-storey blocks and the complexities and challenges they pose has greatly reduced both time and costs to this commission."

The City of Edinburgh Council will borrow the £1.88 million needed to fund the review, paid back in yearly £107k instalments over a 30 year period.

by Donald Turvill, Local Democracy Reporter

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