

Midlothian Council pays over £316,000 for scaffolding

Scaffolding put up outside Midlothian council headquarters after a piece of masonry fell from it two years ago has cost the local authority over £316,000.

The temporary building support was installed in January 2023 at Midlothian House, on Buccleuch Street, Dalkeith, in response to the incident but further investigations found more problem.

Councillors only agreed a solution to the structural problems two months ago after a series of options were put to them behind closed doors.

A council spokesperson said the decision to carry out repairs later this year will see the building close temporarily and include a refurbishment of the ground floor to move the library into the building.

They said: "We've informed staff repairs are to be carried out on Midlothian House and the ground floor will be refurbished to incorporate the library as part of an open plan 'one stop' hub for council services.

"Midlothian House will close during the retrofit, which is due to begin in August. Further details will be available around final costs after the budget is set."

A Freedom of Information response has revealed the cost of installing the scaffolding and maintaining has been over

£316, 553.

And it revealed that while the scaffolding was initially put up to deal with the falling masonry other issues were discovered which led to lengthy investigations.

It said: "Engineers were engaged to review the building facade and highlighted a number of areas on all three facades of the building where the movement of the block was of concern.

"Further specialist advice was sought where it became clear that the repair would involve significant works involving removal of cladding and the internal infill walling between floor slabs as wall tiles were found to be failing, missing or now insufficiently tied into the inner leaf."

It went on to say that changes to building standards since the building was constructed in 1991 meant further work would be needed.

It said the council instructed officers to "consider a number of options in respect of the future of Midlothian House and implication for the wider office and town centre estate."

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter