

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Repairs to smoke control provision at Castleview House, Moncrieffe House, Little France House, Moredun House, Forteviot House and Marytree House**

#### **Why is the Council taking action now to progress the repairs?**

We've identified that the existing automated opening vents (AOVs), which manage smoke control in the event of a fire, are inoperable and subject to vandalism. This was highlighted by our in-house teams and the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service as requiring immediate attention. We have a duty to ensure the fire safety systems are operational to protect the residents and owners within the block.

We sent you a newsletter in September 2021 with an update on the AOV works and since then we have taken steps, as the majority owner, to engage with a contractor to provide costs to replace the AOV units. This work will require scaffolding to be erected and the intention is to replace the common windows and the infill panels below within the blocks to ensure the effective use of access equipment and to ensure these meet current regulations. We will also repair the roofs over the bin stores to ensure they remain wind and watertight in the future.

#### **How long will the work take and how much will it cost?**

We intend to appoint the contractors as soon as possible. Details of timescales will be shared with tenants and owners in due course. The work is expected to take a up to 40 weeks for all six blocks, so works are planned to be completed by the end of 2022, with each block taking approximately 12 weeks to complete once the contractor is on site.

The estimated costs of the work will be sent to each owner in advance of the work starting. The final costs will be calculated at the end of the project.

#### **How are decisions made regarding repairs?**

Decisions regarding common repairs in a block are governed by the block's tenement management scheme (TMS), as established by the Tenements (Scotland) Act 2004. The TMS comprises all owners in a block, both Council and private. One vote is given to each flat in the block, and a majority vote results in a scheme decision. Any owner may object to the scheme decision within 28 days, after which the decision becomes legally binding. A vote form will be included with your cost estimate and asks you to vote for or against the recommended repairs, and this vote will result in a scheme decision.

We do understand that this can seem a little confusing and are more than happy to discuss and guide any owner through this process. You may also find the information provided on [www.gov.scot/publications/common-repair-common-sense-guide-to-managing-tenements](http://www.gov.scot/publications/common-repair-common-sense-guide-to-managing-tenements) and also <http://underoneroof.scot/>

#### **How does this affect council tenants?**

The Council will represent all council-owned flats for the duration of this project and fund the

respective portion of the costs. Council tenants will be kept up to date with newsletters but are not required for the voting process.

### **What is my route of appeal?**

Once the scheme decision has been issued, you have 28 days in which to lodge an appeal with the Court. The procedure for this is laid out in Section 5 of the Tenements (Scotland) Act 2004 - [www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2004/11/section/5](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2004/11/section/5)

## **The Tender Process**

### **What is a Tender Process?**

When the Council puts out a tender it means that it is asking suitable businesses or suppliers and, in this case, works contractors, to submit a quotation to carry out the works as required by their specification. This results in a contractor being selected to construct the works on the basis of best value for money, a balance of price and quality for doing the work.

### **Can anyone else tender for the work?**

No, it's important that we only use contractors that meet the required standards to carry out the work. These standards include having the required knowledge and experience to successfully complete the work, having the required workforce and management structure, being financially secure and importantly being able to meet all health, safety and environmental standards. The Council publicly advertised for contractors wishing to carry out this type of work, assessed them against the required standards and then prepared a list of appropriate contractors to use for this type of work. This list of pre-assessed contractors is known as a framework and is used to tender the work for this programme.

### **Why and what are the benefits?**

The Council and all Local Governments are governed by law to ensure that all public procurement is based on value for money, defined as "the best mix of quality and effectiveness for the least outlay over the period of use of the goods or service bought". This means that the Council is seeking to obtain the lowest cost and best quality of works for your properties by inviting a number of pre-approved contractors to bid for the works. Pre-approved contractors have gone through robust checks and met defined criteria to be able to be added to the Councils suppliers list.

## **The Construction Process**

### **Who will be my point of contact on site?**

The contractors on your block will have a liaison officer who will be your first port of call for all issues relating to construction. The contractor will introduce themselves at the start of the construction and will be available if you need to speak to them. They will pass on all relevant information to our case officers.

### **How will I be kept updated during the project?**

The Council will be in contact regularly with newsletters and updates will be available on our website at [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/improvinghomes](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/improvinghomes)

### **Will I need to vacate my property?**

We do not foresee the need for anyone to vacate their property and we aim for residents to be

able to remain in their properties for the duration of the works. Only in the case of health and safety concerns might residents be required to vacate the premises.

### **What disruption will there be?**

Like all building sites there will be some noise and traffic. The contractors will keep you informed of what disruption may be expected, including their working hours and who to contact with questions or complaints.

### **How will COVID-19 rules be enforced onsite?**

The contractor will comply with Scottish Government guidelines and we will do all that we can to protect residents and the workforce. Tenants and owners will be updated when we are aware of the guidelines which will be in place during construction.

### **Will my utilities/satellite TV be disrupted?**

No.

### **Will any of the materials used be similar to those in Grenfell Tower?**

Absolutely not. The new panel and render system that will be used in our repairs is completely different to that used in Grenfell Tower. The material we will be using complies with current legislation and has been independently tested and approved. We will also be making sure that the material being used fully complies with the requirement of the Council's building control department. Our team is dedicated to ensuring high quality repairs for the blocks we work on and we hold our contractors to strict safety standards.

### **What guarantees will the works have?**

Like all works guarantees are provided for both the initial period after the works as well as extended product guarantees. Any defects within the first 12 months after completion will be covered by the installer and be repaired free of charge (excluding vandalism).

After this period, the new windows and moving parts have a minimum 10 Year guarantees and the insulation and render panel has a life expectancy of at least 30 years. It must be pointed out that as with all guarantees these will come with conditions which will have to be met to ensure the validity of said guarantee. The contractor will supply these details upon completion of works.

### **Do I need to tell my insurance company about the construction?**

Yes, you should inform your insurance company when construction begins on your block and make them aware of the presence of scaffolding around your property.

### **Are the Council charging a Management Fee?**

There is a 15% Management Fee included in the cost estimate. The breakdown of the fee is as follows:

1. Data gathering /review of Title Deeds for liability and cost apportionment; legal consultation where required.
2. Owner and landlord engagement, voting and notification of scheme decision. Internal panel approvals.
3. Surveys, report writing and cost estimates for work.

4. Building warrant preparation, submission (including SER certification) and management.
5. Structural surveys of blocks by structural engineer, review findings.
6. Prepare tender documents, procure, evaluate & award.
7. Contract administration including health & safety, site supervision.
8. Engage with owners and tenants through-out works.
9. Agree contractor final accounts, apportion costs and charge out to owners.

### **When will I be expected to pay for the work?**

Once the work is completed owners will be individually invoiced by the Council. The invoices will be sent out after the final account has been agreed between the Council and the contractor and usually within 6 months of completion of works. Once owners receive their invoice for the works, they may wish to discuss options for payment with the Council. To do this please contact us by email [ESRS@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:ESRS@edinburgh.gov.uk) or by phone 0131 529 6778.

### **I am worried about how I will pay for the work. Where can I get help and advice?**

We understand that owners will be concerned about the cost of the repairs and how they will pay for this. Other options, as well as the funding detailed above, that may be available to you include:

- using savings or other assets
- seeking financial advice before taking out a loan, or
- consider a payment plan with the Council – be aware of the terms of the debt repayment plan and compare this to an external loan arrangement

Owners can arrange a payment plan with the Council's Debt Recovery Team after the bill has been issued. Further details of this are available to owners. For more information on this please contact [accountsreceivable@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:accountsreceivable@edinburgh.gov.uk) or call 0131 469 5011 and select option 1.

If you think you will struggle to pay for repairs, you should get impartial financial advice as soon as possible.

**The Council is unable to provide financial advice directly**, however, we have listed agencies below that can provide advice and guidance for owners.

### **Organisations Providing Further Advice**

**The Money Advice Service** - for free and impartial money advice.  
0800 138 7777 or [www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk](http://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk)

### **The City of Edinburgh Council Advice Shop**

**Email:** [advice.shop@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:advice.shop@edinburgh.gov.uk)

**Tel:** 0131 200 2360

**Fax:** 0131 529 4828

**Visit:** [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/advice-shop](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/advice-shop)

### **Citizens Advice Scotland**

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money)

**Scottish Welfare Fund Team** – Helping families in Scotland on low incomes.

**Email:** [welfarefundteam@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:welfarefundteam@edinburgh.gov.uk)

**Tel:** 0131 529 5299

**Age UK**

[www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/money-legal/debt-savings](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/money-legal/debt-savings)

**Care and Repair Scotland**

Tel: 0141 221 9879

Fax: 0141 221 9885

[www.careandrepairsotland.co.uk](http://www.careandrepairsotland.co.uk)

**Homeowners' Support Fund** - run by the Scottish Government and made up of two schemes.

- Mortgage to Shared Equity
- Mortgage to Rent

These schemes help homeowners who find it difficult to pay their mortgage – or loans secured against their property – to stay in their homes.

[www.mygov.scot/home-owners-support-fund](http://www.mygov.scot/home-owners-support-fund)

**Under One Roof** - impartial advice on repairs and maintenance for flat owners in Scotland.

[www.underoneroof.scot](http://www.underoneroof.scot)

**Breathing Space** – Confidential phonenumber for anyone feeling low, anxious or depressed.

Tel: 0800 838 587

[www.breathingspace.scot](http://www.breathingspace.scot)

**Clear Your Head** - ways to help mental health and wellbeing.

<http://clearyourhead.scot>

**Social Security Scotland** – You may be eligible for support from Social Security Scotland.

<http://mygov.scot/benefits>

**Department of Work and Pensions** – Information on other entitlements.

<http://www.gov.uk>