

Motherwell Civic Centre has a health check

North Lanarkshire Council is responsible for the care and maintenance of millions of pounds worth of property from community centres, swimming pools, libraries and schools. So that problems with all of this stock do not occur, the council has engaged CRGP Limited for many years to conduct condition surveys and report in order of priority the need to carry out repairs.

Recently Douglas Graham, a senior Building Surveyor with CRGP conducted a condition survey at Motherwell Civic Centre. The building was built in the 1960s and although some refurbishment work has been carried out the fabric is beginning to show some signs of wear.

“Our task was to establish what the North Lanarkshire Council may need to spend its money on in the next five years,” says Douglas. “We examine the roof, walls, windows, doors, floors, toilets and engage a consultant to check the electrics. If we come across anything that requires immediate attention or may be a health and safety issue we advise that this work be carried out without delay.”

Other peripheral issues such as fire risk or disabled access will feature in the report if legislation demands new measures be implemented. The whole report is placed on the housing and property services database so that cost calculations may be done and a plan of works prepared.

Motherwell Civic Centre consists of three buildings grouped together and with a clipboard and a long checklist where does Douglas begin, does he climb a ladder on to the roof?

“Fortunately health and safety does not permit me to go scrambling up ladders and across roofs and in the case of Motherwell Civic Centre there is an inspection door through which I popped my head and took a variety of pictures. By examining these I could establish whether work was needed soon or say in four years’ time,” he said.

The first thing that Douglas does in any condition survey is to interview the client and establish whether there are any problems. He will then work to a pattern that he has devised, usually starting at the top of a building and working down. After the roof has been checked he will examine the loft space and then the outside of the building.

There are dozens of offices in Motherwell Civic Centre and each is given close scrutiny. A report simply describes their condition as good, fair or poor but behind each of those descriptive heads is a more in-depth account. This accurately identifies defects such as cracks in plaster or damage to wall panelling and indicates their location such as north-east corner. Floors and their coverings, doors and their hardware and windows and their mechanisms are all examined and their condition logged.

Gradually a complete picture is created of the state of the council’s property.

The condition surveys that CRGP prepare are thorough and no area is ignored. Their purpose is valuable for prudent and sensible council’s such as North Lanarkshire who are keen to ensure that taxpayer’s money is spent wisely and that their property stock is continually maintained.

