



# Communal Heating Scrutiny

April 2021

Officer Report



## 1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report sets out an overview of the Islington communal heating service, the communal boilers and the homes that they supply. Data on breakdowns, age of boilers, recent and ongoing difficulties is detailed along with future plans and aspirations. Some background information on the contract is also included to put current status into context.
- 1.2 The council has responsibility for maintaining its communal heating systems serving circa 4700 homes across the borough and employs contractors to deliver this service. Our previous contractors, Mitie Property Services, did not perform to our satisfaction and were taken over by the Mears Group in October 2018, forming a new company – Mears Property Services (MPS). The Council enjoys a good and productive working relationship with the Mears Group, who deliver a substantial part of our main capital programme. The Islington team worked hard with MPS to resolve the contractual problems inherited from the previous incumbent, mainly around insufficient resourcing levels and knowledge of our boiler plant rooms. Unfortunately problems were not getting resolved, despite formal contractual escalation processes being implemented, and six months' notice was served in November 2019 to terminate the contract. We have learned lessons from this episode, particularly around the procurement process itself.
- 1.3 The council procured a new provider, with GEM Environmental Services formally taking over responsibility for the maintenance of the communal heating service from May 2020.
- 1.4 Prior to commencement of their formal contract, GEM agreed to assist with the maintenance of communal boilers from October 2019 until the contract was officially in place. This was extremely valuable to Islington as it helped cover the period of greatest risk (over the Christmas and new year holiday period) and more or less all the winter months. Since the autumn of 2019, GEM have proved to be a valuable partner, taking a proactive and helpful approach. Since formally taking over the contract, they have worked closely with the in-house engineering team to ensure any legacy issues from the previous provider have been effectively managed. They have done extensive work and dealt with substantial challenges linked to connecting communal heating plant rooms to the Bunhill2 Energy Centre. This work is out of the scope of the GEM contract with the council for which they were appointed. Work to the Bunhill2 network has necessitated a substantial increase in resources and management time from GEM with little notice and meant that much of the work planned for them on boiler plant has not taken priority. Connection to the Bunhill2 Energy Centre has and continues to be a council priority. To address this issue further steps have been taken to appoint additional specialists and contractors to assist on the Bunhill2 project.
- 1.5 Despite the focus on the Bunhill2 project, GEM have managed to service all of the Islington boiler plant rooms as directed by the contract, and achieve 100% compliancy in terms of gas safety notices. (Second tab of spreadsheet.)

## **2. REPAIRS DATA:**

- 2.1 In April 2018 a decision was made to manage the new communal heating contract on a new IT system called One Serve. One Serve is an industry-leading service software package which allows details of works undertaken to be collected and shared, updated and monitored allowing for improved business processes and a good customer experience. There was also an expectation that the new IT system would undergo a period of observation to identify any improvements which could be made to further improve the service.
- 2.2 As an Appendix to this report, an excel spreadsheet from One Serve has been generated to provide asset information on boiler plant in the communal heating plant rooms and repair callouts. The table is self-explanatory and will provide a greater understanding of the communal heating systems throughout the borough.
- 2.3 Islington currently has 57 plant rooms, providing a communal heating service to approximately 4700 homes. Most of the plant rooms provide heating and hot water. In most cases hot water is provided to individual storage tanks within dwellings. This system is described as "individual" in column I of the enclosed spreadsheet. Although this is sometimes considered old technology, the design ensures that residents have some supply of hot water even if the main boiler breaks down. Heat Interface Units (HIUs) have recently become more popular for communal heating systems as they can provide hot water on demand at mains pressure and they provide greater efficiency over traditional systems. However, unless there is suitable space in the plant rooms for communal hot water storage, HIUs will not include stored hot water so, although very efficient, they can result in almost instant loss of hot water in the event of boiler breakdown.
- 2.4 Information on the age of the boilers and infrastructure (pipework and radiators) is also set out in the spreadsheet. Due to the format in which information is collected, specific detail on breakdowns is difficult to represent accurately. On the first tab of the spreadsheet details of significant breakdowns that have caused an outage for five days or more since April 2018 are included, (five days being the trigger point for the council paying residents compensation). It should be noted that there have been relatively few occasions where this situation has arisen.
- 2.5 The total number of responsive call outs that have been received is also provided in the second tab of the spreadsheet. In contrast to major breakdowns this appears surprisingly high. There are many thousands of callout orders and significant time and resource would be required to interrogate the detailed narrative on each call out in order to determine the exact nature of the problem. Further work to the One Serve system will be required to enable capture of more specific information from data fields. From past experience we are aware when a communal plant fails communications are received from many residents as would be expected. Each call will be recorded in the data provided as a further possible callout.

In addition to system failures a portion of call outs will also be received from individual flats where the problem is local to just one flat, and in some cases just one radiator (eg. a curtain draped around the thermostatic radiator valve can stop the radiator from warming up). So caution must be exercised when interpreting this data. Increased calls generally occur at the end of the communal heating season when communal heating is switched off for the summer months and residents can interpret this as a fault with the communal heating system.

### **3 COMPARISON WITH WITNESS EVIDENCE FROM LONDON BOROUGH OF HACKNEY**

- 3.1 Information and evidence presented to Housing Scrutiny Committee from LB Hackney referred to 32 out of their total of their 68 boiler plants supplying just 361 properties. This is an average of just 11 properties per boiler plant. In other words, nearly half their boiler plants are serving approximately 11 properties each. Where situations like this arise, a communal boiler plant is not economically viable as the capital costs associated with the plant are disproportionately high when broken down per property.
- 3.2 In Islington we have only 13 boiler plants that serve 20 units or less, 10 boiler plants which serve between 50 and 100 units and 14 boiler plants which serve 100 or more units.

Garrett McEntee

Technical Services Manager

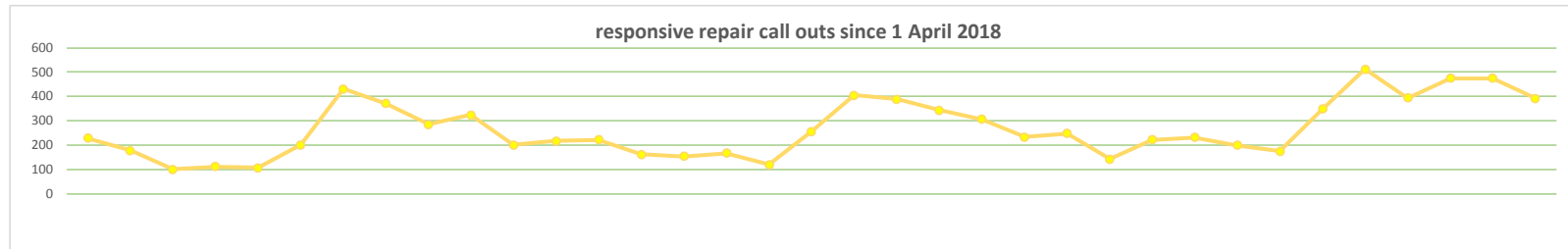
April 2021

**COMMUNAL HEATING - BOILER SYSTEM INFORMATION APRIL 2021**

Boiler house	Blocks served	Compliance		Communal Service provided	Hot water source	No of dwellings	No of Leaseholders	GEM Dilapidation surveys				- data collated		Communal heating maintained by others	Blocks served by Bunhill Network and proposed GreenScies Network	Blocks with Heat Meters	Proposed Major / Capital Works	observations
		Annual service date	No of boilers					Estimated pipework and radiator installation date	Estimated Boiler Installation date	Contractor Condition Assessment	Plant Survey date	No of boiler house breakdowns (4+ days) since 1 April 2018	Breakdown dates					
1 ADAMS PLACE COMMUNAL BOILER	Adams Place	21/12/2020	4	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	42	11	2013/14	2013	Fair/good	07/07/2020	2	16 Sept 2019 (5 days) 22 Oct 2019 (5 days)					
2 AUBERT COURT BOILER HOUSE	Aubert Court	06/10/2020	3	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	98	26	10+ years	15+ years	Fair	06/06/2020	0			Heat Meter			
3 BARNABAS HOUSE BOILER	Barnabas House	02/10/2020	4	heating & hot water	Centralised/Communal	36	19	10+ years	10 years	Fair	12/03/2020	1	3 Oct 2020 (7 days)	Bunhill Network		Works in Progress	Connection works to the Bunhill network	
4 BERESFORD LODGE COMMUNAL BOILER	Beresford Lodge	10/09/2020	4	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	16	2	10+ years	10+ years	Fair/Poor	30/06/2020	0				Proposed	Recommend replacement brought forward on forward plan	
5 BEVIN COURT BOILER HOUSE	Bevin Court, Holford House	22/12/2020	3	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	130	37	10+ years	2004 - 2009	Fair	16/07/2020	0				Feasibility in progress	Planned system replacement.	
6 BRAITHWAITE HOUSE BOILER HOUSE	Braithwaite House	07/10/2020	2	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	108	22	2012/2013	2013	Good	23/07/2020	0						
7 BRUNSWICK ESTATE BOILER HOUSE	Brunswick Close, Emberton Court, Mulberry Court, Wycliff Court	05/03/2020	4	heating only	n/a	243	36	10+ years	2018	Fair	20/03/2020	0		Proposed inclusion on potential GreenScies Network				
8 BUXTON ROAD BOILER HOUSE	Ashbrook Road, Holland Walk, Burton Road, Scholefield Road, Mowatt Close	04/12/2020	3	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	337	146	2012/13	2008	Fair	05/06/2020	4	14 Aug 2018 (6 days) 20 March 2019 (6 days) 23 April 2019 (4 days) 14 Oct 2019 (4 days)					
9 1-20 CALSHOT STREET COMMUNAL BOILER	1-20 Calshot Street	17/09/2020	2	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	20	0	10+ years	10+ years	Fair	02/06/2020	0						
10 21-40 CALSHOT STREET COMMUNAL BOILER	21-40 Calshot Street	17/09/2020	2	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	19	3	10+ years	10+ years	Fair	02/06/2020	0						
11 41-60 CALSHOT STREET COMMUNAL BOILER	41-60 Calshot Street	17/09/2020	2	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	19	4	10+ years	10+ years	Fair	02/06/2020	0						
12 61-93 CALSHOT STREET COMMUNAL BOILER	61-93 Calshot Street	17/09/2020	2	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	32	0	10+ years	10+ years	Fair	02/06/2020	0						
13 COATBRIDGE HOUSE COMMUNAL BOILER	Coatbridge, Airdrie Close	08/10/2020	2	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	21	19	10+ years	2003	Fair	10/06/2020	0				Feasibility in progress	Undergoing feasibility study for potential major heating replacement.	
14 COATBRIDGE NORTH BOILER HOUSE	Coatbridge House	09/10/2020	2	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	90	13	10+ years	2003	Fair	19/06/2020	0				Feasibility in progress	Undergoing feasibility study for potential major heating replacement.	
15 1-20 COLEMAN MANSIONS COMMUNAL BOILER	1-20 Coleman Mansions	16/11/2020	1	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	20	6	2012/2013	2012	Fair	19/06/2020	0		Connected to the Cape energy Centre (Biomass & CHP)				The primary heat source for the site is the Cape Energy Centre.
16 21-40 COLEMAN MANSIONS COMMUNAL BOILER	21-40 Coleman Mansions	16/11/2020	1	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	20	9	2012/2013	2012	Fair	19/06/2020	0		Connected to the Cape energy Centre (Biomass & CHP)				The primary heat source for the site is the Cape Energy Centre.
17 2 DALMENY AVENUE	2 Dalmeny Avenue, Bramber House, John Barnes Library	scheduled for w/c 3 May	3	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	16	0	2019/20	2019/20	VGood								
18 DAREN COURT COMMUNAL BOILER	Daren Court	30/11/2020	8	heating & hot water	Centralised/Communal	90	7	2009	2009	Fair	09/07/2020	0						
19 DELHI OUTRAM COMMUNAL BOILER	Brydon Walk, Wheeler Gardens, Outram Place, Bingham Street, Haverlock Street, Copenhagen Street, Delhi Street, Campbell Walk, Vibart Walk, Lawrence Place.	10/11/2020	16	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	247	106	10+ years	2016	Fair	16/06/2020	0			Heat Meter	Work Recently Completed	Replacement of Heat Metering	
20 DOVER COURT ESTATE BOILER HOUSE	Romford House	scheduled for w/c 3 May	3	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	70	0	2019/20	2019/20	VGood								
21 DUNCOMBE ROAD COMMUNAL BOILER	St Johns Way, Duncombe Road, Mulhern Road, Ashbrook Road	22/09/2020	16	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	234	105	10+ years	15+ years	Fair/Poor	05/06/2020	0				Proposed	Recommend replacement brought forward on forward plan	
22 EARLSFERRY WAY BOILER HOUSE	Earlsferry Way	23/09/2020	3	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	89	34	10+ years	20+ years	Fair/Poor	02/06/2020	0				Feasibility in progress	Undergoing feasibility study for potential major heating replacement.	
23 FINSBURY ESTATE BOILER HOUSE	Michael Cliffe House, Patrick Coman House	20/01/2021	6	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	328	44	2015/2016	2015	Good	24/03/2020	0		Proposed inclusion on potential GreenScies Network				
24 GOODINGE BOILER HOUSE	Goodinge Road, Belle Isle, Mary Telby	scheduled for w/c 3 May	3	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	23	4	2019/20	2019/20	VGood								
25 HALF MOON CRESCENT BOILER HOUSE	Halfmoon Crescent	22/01/2021	3	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	32	17	10+ years	10+ years	Fair	20/03/2020	1	7 Dec 2018 (5 days)			Feasibility in progress		
26 HATHERSAGE COURT	Hathersage Court	12/05/2020	4	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	69	15	2020	2019/2020	V. Good						Recently Complete	Site currently nearing the end of it's 12 month defect liability period.	

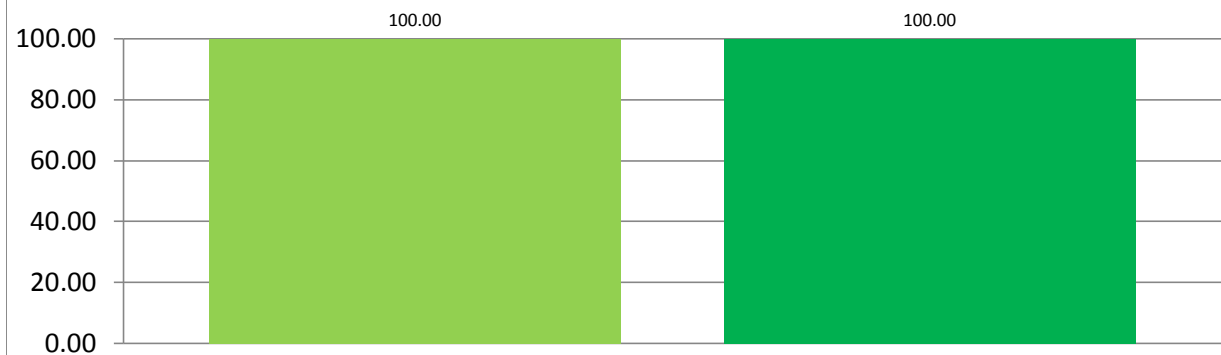
COMMUNAL HEATING - BOILER SYSTEM INFORMATION APRIL 2021																		
Boiler house	Blocks served	Compliance		Communal Service provided	Hot water source	No of dwellings	No of Leaseholders	Estimated pipework and radiator installation date	GEM Dilapidation surveys			- data collated		Communal heating maintained by others	Blocks served by Bunhill Network and proposed GreenSkies Network	Blocks with Heat Meters	Proposed Major / Capital Works	observations
		Annual service date	No of boilers						Estimated Boiler Installation date	Contractor Condition Assessment	Plant Survey date	No of boiler house breakdowns (4+ days) since 1 April 2018	Breakdown dates					
27	1-15 HALTON MANSIONS COMMUNAL BOILER	1-15 Halton Mansions	23/04/2020	3	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	16	3	2013/2014	2014	Fair	16/06/2020	1	23 Sept 2020 (7 days)				
28	17-39 HALTON MANSIONS COMMUNAL BOILER	17-39 Halton Mansions	23/04/2020	3	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	24	4	2013/2014	2014	Fair	16/06/2020	0					
29	57-72 HALTON MANSIONS COMMUNAL BOILER	57-72 Halton Mansions	23/04/2020	3	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	16	5	2013/2014	2014	Fair	16/06/2020	0					
30	73-96 HALTON MANSIONS COMMUNAL BOILER	73-96 Halton Mansions	23/04/2020	3	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	16	5	2013/2014	2014	Fair	16/06/2020	0					
31	97-112 HALTON MANSIONS COMMUNAL BOILER	97-112 Halton Mansions	23/04/2020	3	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	16	4	2013/2014	2014	Fair	16/06/2020	0					
32	HAZELVILLE ROAD COMMUNAL BOILER	Hazelville Road, Westacott Close, Partington Close, St Johns Way	15/09/2020	4	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	337		10+ years	2019	Good	19/06/2020	0					
33	HENFIELD CLOSE COMMUNAL BOILER	Henfield Close	17/12/2020	6	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	75	31	2013/2014	2014	Good	23/03/2020	0					
34	HERONGATE HOUSE COMMUNAL BOILER	Herongate House	09/10/2020	3	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	34	0	10+ years	2007	Fair	30/06/2020	0					
35	JESSOP COURT COMMUNAL BOILER	Jessop Court	30/11/2020	3	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	41	15	10+ years	10+ years	Fair	16/06/2020	0					
36	LOCKHART CLOSE COMMUNAL BOILER	Lockhart Close	17/10/2020	3	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	32	12	2012/2013	2012	Good	07/07/2020	1	9 Dec 2020 (4 days)				
37	1-20 LYON HOUSE COMMUNAL BOILER	Lyon Street	09/11/2020	3	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	20	0	2015	2015	Good	25/06/2020	0					
38	MACCLESFIELD HOUSE COMMUNAL BOILER	Macclesfield House	22/01/2021	2	heating & hot water	Centralised/Communal	65	15	10+ years	2020	Vgood		2	23 Oct 2019 (5 days) 14 June 2020 (4 days)	Bunhill Network	Work in progress	Connection to Bunhill. Boiler plant recently replaced due to boiler failure and boiler spares being obsolete.	
39	NEWBERY HOUSE COMMUNAL BOILER	Newbery House	14/10/2020	4	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	54	35	10+ years	2010	Fair/Poor	02/06/2020	0				Planned system replacement. Currently undergoing review following challenge from lease-holders	
40	PARTRIDGE COURT COMMUNAL BOILER	Partridge Court	07/10/2020	2	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	13	3	10+ years	20+ years	Fair	21/07/2020	0					
41	24-58 PAUNTLEY STREET COMMUNAL BOILER	Pauntley Street	10/12/2020	3	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	42	17	2013/2014	2014	Good	23/03/2020	0					
42	41 PONDER STREET BOILER HOUSE	Centurian Close	26/06/2020	2	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	8	36	2019/20	2019/20	VGood							
43	PRESIDENT HOUSE	Kings Square Central Street, EC1V	N/A		Block served by Rahere House boilers	heating & hot water	Centralised/Communal	94	36	10+ years	2020	Vgood				Bunhill Network	Commissioning	Sub Plant -room. Equipment replaced as part of Bunhill DHN improvements
44	QUAKER COURT COMMUNAL BOILER	Quaker Court	08/10/2020	3	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	16	37	10+ years	10+ years	Fair	23/07/2020	0					
45	RAHERE HSE BOILER HOUSE	Kings Square Central Street, EC1V	21/01/2021	3	heating & hot water	Centralised/Communal	97	13	10+ years	2020	Vgood		0			Bunhill Network	Work in Progress	Plant-room replaced in 2020 following major flood.
46	STEADMAN COURT	Steadman Court, Redbrick Estate, Old Street, EC1V	24/01/2021	4	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	53	21	2018/2019	1999	Fair/good	28/08/2020	0			Bunhill Network	Work in progress	Connection to Bunhill. Plant-room equipment replaced (excluding boilers) in 2018/19.
47	RIVERSDENE COMMUNAL BOILER	Riversdene	26/03/2020	2	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	35	5	10+ years	2008	Fair	30/06/2020	0					
48	SALTDENE COMMUNAL BOILER	Regina Road	25/09/2020	3	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	42	7	10+ years	2008	Fair	05/06/2020	1	22 March 2019 (4 days)				
49	SANDERS WAY COMMUNAL BOILER	Bretton House, Sanders Way	23/09/2020	3	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	146	31	2018/2019	2004	Fair/good	19/06/2020	0				Works Complete	Plant room equipment (not boilers) replaced as part of recent upgrade
50	SPA GREEN ESTATE COMMUNAL BOILER	Sadler House, Tunbridge House, Wells House	29/09/2020	3	heating & hot water	Centralised/Communal	132	43	10+ years	2004	Fair/Poor	24/03/2020	0			Proposed inclusion on potential GreenSkies Network	Proposed	Boiler plant parts recently identified as potentially obsolete. Plant replacement may be required.
51	ST LUKES ESTATE COMMUNAL BOILER	Godfrey House, Paterson Court, Newland Court	19/01/2021	4	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	226	84	10+ years	2012	Good	20/03/2020	1	22 Dec 2020 (7 Days)	Bunhill Network	Feasibility in progress	Design change to plantroom required to connect to Bunhill network	
52	STAFFORD CRIPPS ESTATE COMMUNAL BOILER	Parmour Court, Cotswold Court, Sapperton Court	23/01/2021	5	heating & hot water	Centralised/Communal	180	45	2008/2009	2013	Fair/good	17/03/2020	2	24 Dec 2018 (4 days) 21 March 2019 (6 days)	Bunhill Network	Feasibility in progress	Design change to plantroom required to connect to Bunhill network	
53	VICKERY/BARTHOLOMEW COMMUNAL BOILER	Bartholomew Court, Redbrick Estate, Old Street, EC1V	24/01/2021	7	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	60	32	2018/2019	2019	Vgood	21/07/2020	0		Bunhill Network	Commissioning		
54	STRANRAER HOUSE COMMUNAL BOILER	Stranraer Way	09/11/2020	2	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	72	21	10+ years	2003	Fair	19/06/2020	0				Feasibility in progress	Undergoing feasibility study for potential major heating replacement.
55	TURNPIKE HOUSE BOILER HOUSE	Turnpike House	21/01/2021	4	heating only	n/a	163	26	10+ years	2018-19	Fair	17/03/2020	0		Bunhill Network	Work in progress	Turnpike boiler parts recently identified as potentially obsolete. Replacement may now be required.	
56	WOODSTOCK HOUSE COMMUNAL BOILER	Woodstock House	23/10/2020	2	heating & hot water	Centralised/Communal	27	12	10+ years	10+ years	Fair/Poor	30/06/2020	0				Feasibility in progress	Planned system replacement. Currently undergoing procurement process and being reviewed for potential renewable energy alternative.
57	COWDENBEATH PATH	Harry Weston Estate - 11 blocks	CO-OP responsible.	3	heating & hot water	Decentralised/individual	124	76	40+ years	2014	Fair/Good	15/01/2020			Maintained by Co Op		Feasibility in progress	Whole site maintained by the Co-Op however, LBI approached and asked to procure new heating system. Currently undergoing procurement process and being reviewed for potential renewable energy alternative subject to L/H agreement.

Apr-18	May-18	Jun-18	Jul-18	Aug-18	Sep-18	Oct-18	Nov-18	Dec-18	Jan-19	Feb-19	Mar-19	Apr-19	May-19	Jun-19	Jul-19	Aug-19	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21
Mitie												MPS												GEM										
228	178	99	111	107	201	431	371	285	324	200	217	222	162	154	166	119	256	404	388	343	306	232	248	142	221	231	198	175	348	512	394	474	475	392



## COMMUNAL HEATING GAS COMPLIANCY (GAS SAFETY NOTICES)

30/04/2021	NON-COMPLIANT SITES	SITES	PERCENTAGE COMPLIANCY	
<b>HOUSING</b>	0	56	100.00	%
<b>COMMUNITY CENTRES</b>	0	33	100.00	%
	<b>0</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>%</b>



Dashboard Updated on 30 April 2021 by Ryan Zimmerman

