

Equalities Impact Assessment: Full Assessment

Before completing this form, you should have completed an Equalities Screening Tool and had sign off from your Head of Service and the Fairness and Equality Team.

This Equality Impact Assessment should be completed where the Screening Tool identifies a potentially negative impact on one or more specific groups, but it can also be used to highlight positive impacts.

Summary of proposal

Name of proposal	Communal Heating, Ventilation and Boosted Water Services Repairs & Maintenance Contract
Reference number (if applicable)	2324-0209 - Procurement Reference Number
Service Area	Capital Programme (M&E), Homes & Neighbourhoods
Date assessment completed	21/05/2024

Before completing the EQIA please read the guidance and FAQs. For further help and advice please contact equalities@islington.gov.uk.

1. Please provide a summary of the proposal.

Intro and Summary:

As part of our role as a social housing landlord, Islington Council operates and maintains communal heating systems, which serve heating and hot water to homes within our buildings and on our housing estates boroughwide. In addition, the council also operate and maintain council ventilation and boosted water services. The council have a statutory obligation to maintain these services under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985.

The council employ a qualified building services company to repair and maintain these communal systems. The current contract is due to expire May 2025 and the council will be re-procuring these services with the aim of entering a new contract.

While the contract will be renewed, the scope of the service provided to residents in terms of undertaking all necessary maintenance and repairs will remain the same. All existing sites will remain within the scope of the contract. To provide better outcomes the council has decided the new contract will move away from the current arrangement, where one provider is responsible for all sites. The aim is to have multiple contractors, so we are not solely reliant on one provider.

Contract renewals are an opportunity to improve on the current contract. We are working with a specialist Mechanical and Electrical Engineering consultant to produce new specifications and assist with the procurement. The aim is to ultimately receive better contractor performance and the goal is for the council to have a new and up to date contract which can deliver better outcomes for users of the service.

We don't foresee any savings in terms of the contract cost to deliver this service. The procurement process will determine the market value.

Background Information:

The current JCT measured Term contract was intended to proactively endorse value for money, mitigate risk, simplify management, making the contract auditable friendly and clearly define response time aimed at reducing residents' complaints and meet residents' expectation levels to benefit all stakeholders, including service users ward councillors and council staff.

The current partner, GEM, has struggled to meet the requirements of the contract and provide key outputs in line with contract requirements. Contract performance is measured using Key Point Indicators (KPIs) such as percentage of completed services and achieving response times to repair orders. Following the departure of previous contractors Mitie and Mears and the poor outcomes from the current contractor there is a need for improvement. and to procure a contractor in a way where work can be monitored more closely by the internal technical team. This will help to obtain a better service for residents and for the council.

As such, the council is intending to not extend the current communal heating contract. Therefore, the council would like to start the re-procurement it's communal heating repairs and maintenance contract with the support of an external consultant.

As highlighted above the council seeks to move away from the current maintenance contract arrangement where one provider is responsible for all plant and equipment

maintenance requirements. The proposal is to divide the borough into two sections – North and South. Providers will not have exclusivity. A provider can bid for two sections but will only be called on for their second section in the event where additional support is required in this area.

The proposal is therefore to procure two smaller communal heating maintenance packages of work and a separate communal ventilation contract with separate contracts between the council and these specialist providers instead of the current arrangement where all requirements are managed by a single maintenance provider who charges an uplift for management and attendance of specialist sub-contractors.

It is anticipated that smaller work packages will deliver a more focused service for residents and better outcomes. Communal ventilation, which is currently part of the communal heating contract, will become a specialised standalone work package. This along with the emerging requirement to maintain more plant like Heat Interphase Units located within individual dwellings will generate additional internal management requirements which are a critical part of a successful service delivery.

A specialist consultant (ECS Consultants Ltd) with expertise in low carbon heating solutions, Building Management Systems, has been appointed to assist the council draft a bespoke specification for the above contracts for the inclusion in tender documents in a procurement process.

By using a specialist mechanical consultant with expertise in these new areas we are more likely to deliver better outcomes for residents in terms of a better service provided by the contractor.

This Contract is aimed at dealing with both service and maintenance and responsive repairs i.e., day to day minor repairs that need to be dealt with. Therefore the following is included:

- Maintenance and Capital works repairs contract for Communal Heating, Communal Ventilation, Boosted Water and associated communal plant equipment.
- To maintain key equipment in plant rooms and properties making savings in preventing loss of energy, inconvenience to customers and reduce the number of complaints generated in loss of service.
- The Contractor may carry out renewal and installation work where necessary.

The new maintenance contractors will be responsible for heating and hot water communal plant and will be expected to act proactively on heating / hot water plant failure alarms which are part of the Building Management System (BMS).

The appointed Contractor is expected to provide a high-quality service at the client's properties and for residents in those properties. This includes satisfactorily completing orders within the specified time periods, good customer liaison, efficient and accurate paperwork, prompt submission of accounts, and immediately responding to any complaints received.

To secure better outcomes we will look to include provision the following:

- Use of Key Performance Indicators to measure contractor performance.
- Provision for compensation payments to be recovered from contractors when the council is obliged to pay residents for loss of heating & hot water service.
- A clear strategy for managing inadequate contractor performance or resource allocation to the contract.

2. What impact will this change have on different groups of people?

Summary

- External impact mainly.
- Islington Council residents who live in homes served by these communal heating, ventilation and boosted water services.
- We envisage this new contract will have an overall positive impact on the residents that use this service.

Background Information:

We envisage this new contract will have an overall positive impact on both internal and external stakeholders as the current contractor is failing to meet service expectations. The council do however, anticipate from experience that appointing of one or more new contractors can result in service failures, such as longer waiting times for repairs particularly at the early stages of the contract and while new contractors familiarise themselves with Islington stock. Time will be required to establish processes and procedures with Islington Council. The council will work with the new providers to help them clearly understand the stock and new procedures as early as contractually possible.

Where appropriate successful contractors will take over the service and maintenance duties following an agreed handover period from the current term contractor. This will be managed with the support of our in-house mechanical/electrical inspectors following agreed SFG20 compliance guidelines.

Impact on LB Team – The proposal is for a collaborative relationship with new contractors, working for the benefit of tenants and service users. It is intended that there will be fewer complaints from tenants, more reliable heating systems and ability to better manage costs.

Residents and Service users – improved mechanisms to address poor performance and communications with residents in planned maintenance and reactive breakdown, overall improved response times in reactive situations, eg breakdown. The aim of the new contract will be to establish more reliable service provided by the contractors and more robust heating systems with less impact to the resident when suffering breakdowns.

Local communities – ECS Consultants Ltd, the specialist contractor, have opened a new London Office and a full-time job has been created because of this appointment with Islington. Also, an apprenticeship has also been safeguarded by this project.

Our Framework provider (Fusion 21) works with contractors that have a direct impact on the end users of public services. Suppliers in the Framework have considerable experience in undertaking projects in social housing. ECS Consultants Ltd will agree the actual social value outcomes to be delivered with the Islington Council and using a template provided in our contract agreement and formulate this into a Social Value Delivery Plan at the start the call-off contract, a copy of which will be provided to Fusion21 prior to works commencing as part of the call-off process.

3. What impact will this change have on people with protected characteristics and/or from disadvantaged groups?

3A. What data have you used to assess impacts?

Brief Assessment

Islington Council has a clear vision to make our borough a fairer place where everyone, whatever their background, has the same opportunity to reach their potential and enjoy a good quality of life.

Islington Council will have people with protected characteristics living within the housing stock. There are no reasons why someone with any protected characteristics would not live within an Islington council home that is covered by this service. The council has a duty to ensure this contract can meet the needs and minimise any potential disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.

Data Source

GLA estimates Islington currently has about 236,000 residents (2020). This data has helped assess impact on people with protected characteristics.

3B: Assess the impacts on people with protected characteristics and from disadvantaged groups in the table below.

Please first select whether the potential impact is positive, neutral, or negative and then provide details of the impacts and any mitigations or positive actions you will put in place.

Please use the following definitions as a guide:

Neutral – The proposal has no impact on people with the identified protected characteristics.

Positive – The proposal has a beneficial and desirable impact on people with the identified protected characteristics.

Negative – The proposal has a negative and undesirable impact on people with the identified protected characteristics.

Characteristic or group	Positive/Neutral/Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
Age	Positive and Negative	<p>Positive Response: Priority Response times given for breakdowns & call for no heating or hot water (where vulnerable residents affected): Elderly person over 70 years of age and people with children under 2 years of age</p> <p>Negative response: While any new contractors familiarise themselves with Islington and establish new processes and procedures with the client, service failures may be felt hardest by vulnerable residents within 'Age' group.</p>	By having agreed response times and ensuring the contractors are given the correct information on which properties home vulnerable residents with priorities and ensuring the contractor correctly resource the contract.

Characteristic or group	Positive/Neutral/Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
Disability (include carers)	Positive and Negative	<p>Positive Response: Priority Response times given for breakdowns & call for No Heating or hot water (where vulnerable residents affected): Disabled tenants</p> <p>Having the option within the contract to provided specialist equipment where required, such as adapted heating controls.</p> <p>Negative response: While any new contractors familiarise themselves with Islington and establish new processes and procedures with the client, service failures may be felt hardest by vulnerable residents within 'Disabled' group.</p>	<p>By having agreed response times and ensuring the contractors are given the correct information on which properties home vulnerable residents with priorities and ensuring the contractor correctly resource the contract.</p> <p>Ensure contract can adjust scope / specification where alternative equipment is needed.</p>

Characteristic or group	Positive/Neutral/Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
Race or ethnicity	Neutral		
Religion or belief (include no faith)	Neutral		

Characteristic or group	Positive/Neutral/Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
Gender and gender reassignment (male, female, or non-binary)	Neutral		
Maternity or pregnancy	Positive and Negative	<p>Positive Response: Priority Response times given for breakdowns & call for no heating or hot water (where vulnerable residents affected): Maternity, pregnancy or with a child under 2 years of age.</p> <p>Negative response: While any new contractors familiarise themselves with Islington and establish new processes and procedures with the client, service failures may be felt hardest by vulnerable residents within 'maternity / pregnancy' group.</p>	By having agreed response times and ensuring the contractors are given the correct information on which properties home vulnerable residents with priorities and ensuring the contractor correctly resource the contract.

Characteristic or group	Positive/Neutral/Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
	Choose an item.		
Sex and sexual orientation	Neutral		

Characteristic or group	Positive/Neutral/Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
Marriage or civil partnership	Neutral		
Other Age (e.g. elderly) (e.g. people living in poverty, looked after children, people who are homeless or refugees)	Positive and Negative	Covered above in 'Age'	Covered above in 'Age'

4. How do you plan to mitigate negative impacts?

- By having agreed response times and ensuring the contractors are given the correct information on which properties home vulnerable residents with priorities and ensuring the contractor correctly resource the contract.
- Ensure contract can adjust scope / specification where alternative equipment is needed.
- Pass to the contractor compensation costs, and housing ombudsman fines the council incur for extended breakdowns or poor contractor performance.

5. Please provide details of your consultation and/or engagement plans.

All residents covered by this contract will be advised that the new contract is to be procured.

Leaseholders will be consulted on costs.

Working with our procurement team to look at how we can include residents within the procurement.

A resident working group will be set up to feed into the procurement process.

6. Once the proposal has been implemented, how will impacts be monitored and reviewed?

Please provide details in the table below.

Action	Responsible team or officer	Deadline
priority response times for vulnerable people	As part of the contract monitoring of performance	On-going throughout contract.
N/A		
N/A		
N/A		

Please send the completed EQIA to equalities@islington.gov.uk for quality checking by the Fairness and Equality Team. All Equality Impact Assessments must be attached with any report to a decision-making board and should be made publicly available on request.

This Equality Impact Assessment has been completed in accordance with the guidance and using appropriate evidence.

Member	Name	Signed	Date
Staff member completing this form	Adam Howlett	<i>Adam Howlett</i>	15/05/2024
Fairness and Equality Team	Hezi Yaacov-Hai	<i>Hezi Yaacov-Hai</i>	28/05/2024
Director or Head of Service	Matt West	<i>Matt West</i>	03/06/2024