

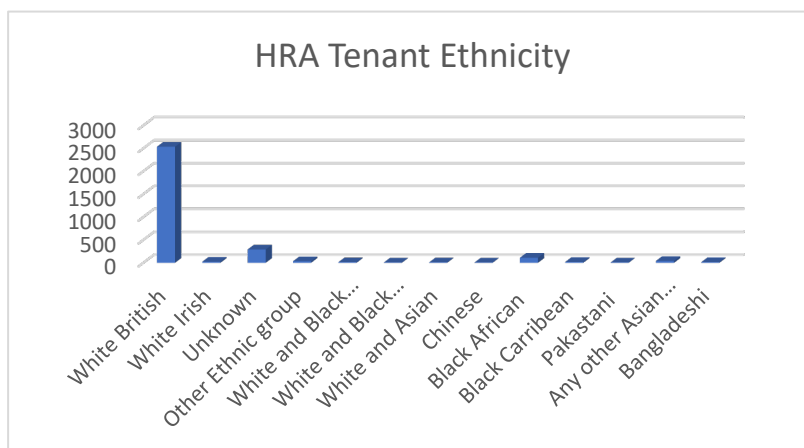
Diversity impact assessment

TITLE Retender of Responsive Repairs and Capital Works Contract (HRA Housing Services)
DATE 21 st November 2022
LEAD OFFICER. Adam Spokes - Senior Development and Property Services Manager
<p>1 Summary description of the proposed change What is the change to policy / service / new project that is being proposed? How does it compare with the current situation?</p> <p>The project is a competitive tender exercise led by HRA Housing Services to source a future supplier of the repairs and maintenance contract.</p> <p>Potential suppliers will be required to express interest, pass a prequalification questionnaire, demonstrate that they can meet particular standards and then competitively bid for business worth around £111.36m per annum. The contract will be in place for 144 months inclusive of extensions. The contract will provide a fully encompassing repairs and maintenance service to the councils housing stock. The contracts are proposed to commence on 1 September 2024 and depending on the extension agreements, could conclude on 31 August 2036.</p> <p>The current repairs contract was awarded to Mears Ltd for a period of five years from 01 September 2014, concluded in August 2019. As a result of good performance, this contract was extended until August 2024. The current contract includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repairs to all Council owned dwellings and communal areas. • Out of Hours service. • Annual gas servicing of appliances owned within the council's stock. • Void works to empty dwellings. • Capital works such as renewal of kitchens and bathrooms. • A small proportion of compliance work streams.
<p>2 Summary of evidence used to support this assessment Eg: Feedback from consultation, performance information, service user. Eg: Comparison of service user profile with Medway Community Profile</p>

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Customer profile

The HRA has a responsibility as a local authority landlord to ensure that the properties that the council own are maintained, safe and compliant. The council own 3002 properties and has 198 leasehold properties. There are 3103 General Need lead tenants.



Known vulnerability characteristics of General Need tenant profile

Literacy Issues	0.83%
Hearing Impairment	2.85%
Visual Impairment	1.51%
Tenants aged over 70 years	26.16%
Unseen Disability	5.25%
Mental Health Issues	1.39%

Performance Monitoring

The new contract will require the supplier to keep track of and report on a series of performance metrics (e.g., customer satisfaction with the repairs service, response times, rate of repairs carried out within defined timescales).

These will be used by Housing Services to review the usage of the contract, identify issues (including those that impact populations with protected characteristics) and work with the supplier and Council services to resolve them.

The repairs service has made significant improvements in performance in recent years and some aspects are in top quartile when benchmarked against others. Gas servicing is consistently at 100% and performance for emergency, urgent and routine repairs are regularly in the high 90 percent. The service has also improved its data capturing, procurement processes as well as putting measures in place to ensure statutory compliance is maintained.

As at year end 2020/21, a summary of results is as follows:

- Satisfaction with the last repair = 98.5% - top quartile
- Average days taken to complete repairs = 7.04 days – top quartile
- % of repairs completed at the first visit = 99.9% - top quartile
- % of repair appointments kept = 99.237% - top quartile

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(Source: Housemark -All providers with a stock size 2,500 to 5,000).

Complaints

Monthly repairs complaints analysis is conducted to monitor service level provision and proactively identify areas for improvement. Service provision is also monitored at Quality Management Service meetings.

HRA Services will involve tenants in the tender process at the interview stage. Tenants will be represented on the panel and will be involved in the decision-making process.

Several consultation events will be held in a variety of formats to ensure accessibility and inclusivity. Consultation materials will be offered in a variety of formats, translation services will be offered at consultation events.

Medway Council Housing Repairs Complaints (Stage 1 and 2, inc Mears)

2022-23

	Q1	Q2
Received S1+S2+ Mears	17	28
Upheld	12.5	23

Consultation

Tenants and leaseholders have been consulted about the next contract and have strongly expressed a wish to have a separate contract for the HRA service that provides value for money but also a high-quality service, which they are prepared to pay for.

3 What is the likely impact of the proposed change?

Is it likely to:

Adversely impact on one or more of the protected characteristic groups

Advance equality of opportunity for one or more of the protected characteristic groups

Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't

(insert Yes when there is an impact or No when there isn't)

Protected characteristic groups (Equality Act 2010)	Adverse impact	Advance equality	Foster good relations
Age	No	Yes	Yes
Disability	No	Yes	Yes
Gender reassignment	No	No	No
Marriage/civil partnership	No	No	No
Pregnancy/maternity	No	No	No
Race	No	No	Yes
Religion/belief	No	No	No
Sex	No	No	No
Sexual orientation	No	No	No
Other (eg low income groups)	No	Yes	Yes

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4 Summary of the likely impacts

Who will be affected?

How will they be affected?

Race

If English is not a first language to some parts of the community, then the communications relating to the repairs retender may not be understood. Additional work will be carried out to improve monitoring and feedback from under presented groups by council staff and the successful repairs service provider.

Vulnerability

Tenant profile data will be used to model services around individual customer needs. It is anticipated that the model will better match customer needs with the 'best-fit' service provider. It is anticipated that there is stronger likelihood that customers' needs are met.

Religion

We do not have any data on the religion or beliefs of residents accessing the repairs service and so we cannot draw any conclusions as to whether any faith groups are disproportionately affected. We will ask providers to collate data and update documentation accordingly.

Equalities

Equalities matters will be prioritised as part of the regular monthly contract and performance review meetings and, as a minimum, will cover diversity/equality, social value, safeguarding alerts and complaints.

General impact

The procurement and effective mobilisation/delivery of repairs, voids, planned maintenance and compliance contracts is crucial to maintaining standards in HRA provided accommodation.

Having a safe and decent home to live in is important for maintaining the health and general wellbeing of all residents, but particularly those that are vulnerable.

Ensuring resident engagement and support for a new contract will be essential to ensuring that tenants buy in to any potential new arrangement.

5 What actions can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impacts, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations?

What alternative ways can the Council provide the service?

Are there alternative providers? Can demand for services be managed differently?

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Contract delivery

If the contract does not commence on 1st Sept 2024, this could have a detrimental impact on service provision.

Failure to comply with legal requirements and statutory responsibilities in terms of either contract procurement or contract delivery of the service could lead to poor PR for the Council or even death of a tenant.

Tenants with disabilities or language barriers may face additional difficulty should contract delivery fail.

An ineffective or poorly managed contract may lead to poor levels of customer satisfaction.

Effective project management is in place to manage transition of service if required from current contractor.

A clear timetable for procurement is in place at outset of the tender process so Legal advice can be sought with ample time.

Timescales reflect statutory obligations and will be discussed and reviewed at tenant consultation meetings.

Reporting of Repairs

In the event of a new contractor being appointed their ICT software may not be compatible immediately to allow the contractor interface to be in place from the start of the contract. This could lead to the inability for customers to report and monitor repairs online.

Impact on service delivery

A poorly operating contractor can have detrimental effects on customer satisfaction. This contract is key to maintaining good satisfaction with the HRA service overall and much work has been undertaken in recent years to improve the image of the service.

Effective project management is in place to manage transition of service if required from current contractor. If tender is awarded to new contractor robust weekly meetings will take place to manage new contractor through daily monitoring reports.

Tenant profile data will be used to model services around individual customer needs. Contracts will consider how technology could be utilised to improve the customer experience as well as achieving operational efficiencies and financial savings.

Consultation

HRA residents will be consulted and engaged with throughout the process in line with the social housing white paper requirements. Tenants will be represented on the panel and will be involved in the decision-making process. Tenants will be involved in the co-production and scrutiny of the tender process.

Several consultation events will be held in a variety of formats to ensure accessibility and inclusivity. Consultation materials will be offered in a variety of formats, translation services will be offered at consultation events.

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A full section 20 Leaseholder consultation will take place as part of this procurement activity.

Health and Safety compliancy

As a housing provider, the council has a range of responsibilities which helps to keep tenants' and leaseholders' homes safe – this includes completing regular safety checks. Failure to communicate compliancy and health and safety information to tenants in an appropriate format could result in tenant or contractor death or injury.

A dedicated Compliance Performance Monitoring Officer post is in place to reduce risk and monitor statutory obligations. Compliancy data information will be provided to tenants in a range of styles, languages and in formats (visual, face to face, text, braille, audio) appropriate to the tenant profile.

Performance monitoring post procurement

To ensure the needs of the requirement are met and continuously fulfilled post award, the following KPIs will be included in the tender and will form part of any subsequent contract. These KPI's will be more specific come tender award stage.

There will be a minimum of monthly contractor monitoring meetings in place at which residents will be present.

Social Value

The proposed Contractors may seek to develop social value initiatives by making apprenticeships, training, and work placement opportunities more accessible to Medway residents. Additionally, other social value initiatives including mental health and wellbeing, could be developed.

Budget Implications

The latest HRA Business Plan review identified that the financial costs for maintaining the housing stock are sustainable for the next 30 years, ensuring the Council meets its statutory repairs and maintenance responsibilities.

Training

The legislative requirements of the White Paper for Social Housing (chapter 5) requires that housing staff have professional training and development to ensure residents receive a high standard of customer service and are treated with courtesy and respect. As a representative of the Council, the contractor will be required to demonstrate training in areas such as customer service, stigma, safeguarding and complaints. This will advance equality for tenants with protected characteristics and those who do not.

Communication

Details of the tender process will be clearly communicated to tenants and HRA staff.

Information that is published and online regarding the repairs service may require review and updating. This information will be provided in a variety of formats.

Key contact information for the repairs service, such as the repairs phone number will remain unchanged.

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6 Action plan

Actions to mitigate adverse impact, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations and/or obtain new evidence

Action	Lead	Deadline or review date
The council is to ensure that consultation information is provided in a variety of formats, including Easy Read, Braille or Audio if required.	Tenant Engagement Team/RLO	March 23
The Council will provide additional support to vulnerable tenants when delivering repairs retender information.	Tenant Engagement Team/RLO	March 23
Tenants are involved in the scrutiny and co-production of the tender process.	Tenant Engagement Team/RLO	April 23
Equalities matters will be prioritised as part of the regular monthly contract and performance review meetings and, as a minimum, will cover diversity/equality, social value, safeguarding alerts and complaints.	Tenant Engagement Team, RLO & Contracts Manager	Ongoing and continuation of new contract – monthly
That the specification requires the new contractor to adhere to the legislative requirements of the White Paper for Social Housing.	Snr Development & Property Services Manager & Contracts Manager	April 23
Contractors demonstrate a commitment to the professional training of staff to ensure that tenants are treated with courtesy and respect.	Snr Development & Property Services Manager & Contracts Manager	July 23 and ongoing annually
Monthly repairs complaints analysis is conducted to monitor service level provision and proactively identify areas for improvement.	Contracts Manager	Ongoing and continuation of new contract – monthly

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7 Recommendation

The recommendation by the lead officer should be stated below. This may be: to proceed with the change, implementing the Action Plan if appropriate, consider alternatives, gather further evidence

If the recommendation is to proceed with the change and there are no actions that can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impact, it is important to state why.

The recommendation is to proceed with the Repairs Retender and the mitigating actions in this DIA.

8 Authorisation

The authorising officer is consenting that the recommendation can be implemented, sufficient evidence has been obtained and appropriate mitigation is planned, the Action Plan will be incorporated into the relevant Service Plan and monitored

Assistant Director

Dee O'Rourke

Date of authorisation

12/12/22