



Neuadd y Sir / County Hall, Llandrindod, Powys, LD1 5LG

QUESTIONS AT ANY TIME TO CABINET PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

Response by the Portfolio Holder:

Thank you for your recent question, raising queries about work to properties owned by the Council.

Access to homes

Housing Services is continuing to carry out repairs during the 'fire-break' lockdown. The Council is following the advice given to all local authorities by the Welsh Government: " Tradespeople will be able to carry out repairs and maintenance work inside people's homes during the two-week 'fire-break' lockdown in Wales". Work can be carried out in people's homes: "as long as it is managed in a safe way and both the worker and household members are well and have no symptoms of coronavirus".

The decision on what works a contractor feels able to safely and legally provide, rests with the contractor. Our advice is that contractors follow the guidelines issued by the Welsh Government alongside their own health and safety working procedures. If contractors decide not to work for reasons related to the 'fire-break', then we will accept that as a legitimate reason for deferring work.

Tenants have the right to refuse access to contractors at any time, unless there are serious risks to their health and safety and/or those living close to them. All our contractors are expected to respect the wishes of our tenants and advise us accordingly if any tenant does not feel able to allow access. This is so that alternative arrangements can be agreed for access at a time more suited to the requirements of the tenant, where appropriate.

Contractors

Housing Services uses external contractors for the majority of work to municipal housing stock. This includes day-to-day repairs and maintenance undertaken by HoWPS, and programmed and improvement works, which is provided by a range of contractors. When sourcing work from external providers, Housing Services is required to undertake competitive tendering in a way that complies with national procurement rules and regulations. These currently do not permit the Council to exclude or favour contractors during the tendering process based on their nationality, and to do so would be unlawful – for higher value contracts, European-wide tendering is required. However, when contracts are being prepared, Housing Services and the Council's procurement and communications teams organise local 'Meet the Buyer events' across Powys and work closely with Business Wales to ensure local contractors are given adequate notice and information to enable and encourage them to apply for the opportunities. Local contractors are always encouraged to express their interest. Larger tenders often involve the use of Lotting,

which enables the council to break the works up into smaller tender packages, further encouraging local applications. The tender process is well advertised, including where appropriate using the 'Sell2Wales' web portal. Tender awards are required to follow national guidance.

All advertised contracts include questions around Community Benefits and require contractors to provide additional benefits to Powys and the area where works are to be carried out. This may incorporate working with the local supply chain and fair sub-contractor payment terms, employment and training, and reducing the environmental impact, including waste management, supporting localism, reducing travel and other initiatives which will have a positive impact on the Powys Pound.