

# EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT - CCC585401944

Which service and directorate are you submitting this for (this may not be your service and directorate):

Directorate	Service	Team
Finance and Resources	Property, Facilities Management and Building Compliance	Facilities Management

**Your name:** Sarah Wilkinson

**Your job title:** Carbon and Energy Manager

**Your directorate, service and team:**

Directorate	Service	Team
Place and Sustainability	Energy Services	Carbon and Energy Team

**Your phone:** 01223729157

**Your email:** sarah.wilkinson@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

**Proposal being assessed:** Procurement of water and wastewater services for Council sites

**Business plan proposal number:** n/a

**Key service delivery objectives and outcomes:** Ambition 1: Net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2045, and our communities and natural environment are supported to adapt and thrive as the climate changes. Monitoring and reducing the Council's water consumption will have a small but positive effect on monitoring and reducing the Council's scope 3 (indirect) carbon emissions. The Council approved its updated Climate Change and Environment Strategy in February 2022, which includes a strategic priority of water management, water availability/security and flood risk. This recognises that we are in a water scarce region and includes a commitment in our action plan to minimise water waste. Cambridgeshire County Council is responsible for water and wastewater (i.e. sewerage and drainage) bills at approximately 100 sites, including offices, libraries, community centres and farms. The Council spends approximately £150k to £280k on these services per year, and in total uses approximately 100,000 to 200,000 cubic metres of water per year across all sites. The wide range in costs is due to changes in usage.

**What is the proposal:** This report considers options for procurement of mains water and wastewater services for the Council's sites (those assets where the Council is liable for water and/or sewerage bills) for 27 October 2024 onwards, after our current contract expires. The recommendation is to utilise the new ESPO framework (no. 1008\_23, ref 1181) for water, wastewater and ancillary services to enter into a contract for those services effective from the date after the Council's current contract expires. This is about the billing retailer and will have no direct effect on physical water supplies.

**What information did you use to assess who would be affected by this proposal?:** The

water retail market for non-household premises in England was opened to competition in April 2017; meaning that businesses, charities and public sector organisations are now able to shop around and switch retail service provider for their water and wastewater services – similar to the electricity and gas markets. There are currently 19 different licensed retailers serving non-household customers with premises in England. These are a mixture of water company subsidiaries and new entrant independent companies. These retailers now provide all meter reading, billing, account management and customer service functions to all non-household premises. ‘Wholesale’ regional water companies still maintain the physical supply, treatment and networks infrastructure (and continue to provide retail services to household customers). In July 2019, the Commercial and Investment Committee agreed for Cambridgeshire County Council to progress with a water services procurement in early 2020. The Council participated in an aggregated secondary competition under the Crown Commercial Services (CCS) Water, Wastewater and Ancillary Services (RM3790) framework in 2020. Castle Water Ltd were the successful supplier, and the Council entered into a contract with Castle Water to supply all Council premises with water and wastewater services for a period of two years commencing 1st August 2020. However, the Council experienced a number of issues with poor customer service from Castle Water during that period. In March 2022, Strategy and Resources Committee agreed to enter into a contract with Wave (under the ESPO framework that was available at that time) to supply water and sewerage retail services to all sites where Cambridgeshire County Council is liable for the bills, with effect from August 2022. That contract is due to expire on 26 October 2024. There are no extension options available within the current contract. Since August 2022, the Council has received water and wastewater retail services from Wave. This includes a dedicated account manager and regular reports on metering and billing issues, with support to resolve any queries. Bills are consolidated across the Council’s property portfolio, with site level consumption data also provided. Also looked at current water billing information and site list. The Council have carried out some market engagement during 2023 and 2024, to gather information on the offer from ESPO/Wave and other potential options.

**Are there any gaps in the information you used to assess who would be affected by this proposal?:** No

**Does the proposal cover:** All staff countywide

**Which particular employee groups/service user groups will be affected by this proposal?:** Property team and energy team will be the main teams affected - this could change who we need to contact regarding any water billing or metering issues. This contract will determine which company the Council needs to contact for any queries and issues relating to new mains water/wastewater connections, water metering / meter reading or water/wastewater billing matters. Building users should not notice any change. There are no public health implications of this decision because this contract is for a retailer and does not affect the physical supply of water or wastewater services. However, a good retailer may be able to aid in pushing the wholesaler to resolving any supply issues should they occur.

**Does the proposal relate to the equality objectives set by the Council's EDI Strategy?:**No

**Will people with particular protected characteristics or people experiencing socio-economic inequalities be over/under represented in affected groups:** About in line with the population

**Does the proposal relate to services that have been identified as being important to people with particular protected characteristics/who are experiencing socio-economic inequalities?:** No

**Does the proposal relate to an area with known inequalities?:** Don't know

**What is the significance of the impact on affected persons?:** There will be no impact on any people.

**Category of the work being planned:** Procurement

**Is it foreseeable that people from any protected characteristic group(s) or people experiencing socio-economic inequalities will be impacted by the implementation of this proposal (including during the change management process)?:** No

**Age:** The proposal has no impact on actual physical water supplies. It is solely about which water retailer the Council is in contract with.

**Disability:** The proposal has no impact on actual physical water supplies. It is solely about which water retailer the Council is in contract with.

**Gender reassignment:**

The proposal has no impact on actual physical water supplies. It is solely about which water retailer the Council is in contract with.

**Marriage and civil partnership:** The proposal has no impact on actual physical water supplies. It is solely about which water retailer the Council is in contract with.

**Pregnancy and maternity:** The proposal has no impact on actual physical water supplies. It is solely about which water retailer the Council is in contract with.

**Race:** The proposal has no impact on actual physical water supplies. It is solely about which water retailer the Council is in contract with.

**Religion or belief (including no belief):** The proposal has no impact on actual physical water supplies. It is solely about which water retailer the Council is in contract with.

**Sex:** The proposal has no impact on actual physical water supplies. It is solely about which water retailer the Council is in contract with.

**Sexual orientation:** The proposal has no impact on actual physical water supplies. It is solely about which water retailer the Council is in contract with.

**Socio-economic inequalities:** The proposal has no impact on actual physical water supplies. It is solely about which water retailer the Council is in contract with.

**Head of service:** Sheryl French

**Head of service email:** sheryl.french@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

**Confirmation:** I confirm that this HoS is correct