


Housing Executive Construction Industry Event

Questions & Answers

Please see below responses to the questions that were raised during the Construction Industry event at the Dunsilly Hotel, earlier this year.

Question	Response
The cost of an apprentice has jumped massively and will jump again next month. While we all agree we need apprentices the costs too high with little support. Any ideas on help?	The Housing Executive will raise the concerns with relevant government department and provide feedback as required.
Upskilling staff costs money. Could the NIHE fund the training or find funds from government? It is the existing workforce that can do these jobs. Contractors investment is the time paid.	As a public body, the Housing Executive cannot avail of any public funds from government, however the concerns will be raised with the relevant government department. Contractors should liaise with industry organisations for other options. Where NIHE are upskilling their own staff we would consider opening this to our partners on a cost recovery basis.
If the NIHE are seeking Net Zero, when will the ISO 500001 be a requirement for Tendering? We currently have ISO9001, 18001, 45001.	We currently do not have a timescale as to if and when ISO 500001 will become a tendering requirement.
When are the NIHE aiming to begin a programme for new build housing again and what are the obstacles to this?	<p>The pilot scheme of six homes in North Belfast, is exploring how modern methods of construction can be used in the social housing sector. The Housing Executive is keen to be in the position to build again to increase supply in the housing sector.</p> <p>This would require a change in government housing policy in NI and the ability of the Housing Executive to have access to funding, most likely through borrowing.</p> <p>The Housing Executive has been working with the DFC through the Revitalisation programme exploring options</p>
How do NIHE intend to address rising construction price increases for new and current contracts for both new build and maintenance contracts?	NIHE have already reduced the fixed term period from 2 years to 1 years before an inflationary uplift is provided on a contract. We are also reviewing other indices to ascertain if they would be applicable.

<p>What will the budget and target numbers be for new build social housing for 2024/25?</p>	<p>The Social Housing Development Programme (SHDP) Budget for 2024/25 has now been confirmed and is currently being reviewed in order to assess a new starts target figure.</p>
<p>Instead of separate work programmes - would you consider changing ECMs to a whole house fabric approach? Do all of the fabric maintenance / improvement rather than separate smaller projects?</p>	<p>Due to the current funding arrangement, it would not be possible to move to a whole house approach, however there are some schemes that are tendered on a separate basis that take this approach when funding is available.</p>
<p>What are you doing internally in terms of structure/staffing levels to deal with this increased workload?</p>	<p>NIHE continually review staff structures in all departments to ensure they are adequate to meet the needs of the business.</p>
<p>How should NIHE communities benefit as a result of investment through the various maintenance clauses?</p>	<p>NIHE are developing Social Value Strategy for Supplies & Services and Work Contracts.</p>
<p>How do you go about getting new energy efficient products in front of the NIHE?</p>	<p>We have a weblink where you can fill out some information about any new energy efficient products, under the heading "Products and Proposals that are not on the market" which can be found in the link: https://www.nihe.gov.uk/working-with-us/procurement/doing-business-with-the-housing-executive.</p>
<p>With difficulties within the industry in terms of costs and retaining / training staff, are projections of spend realistic? Currently contracts are too onerous to Contractor Client and Tenants.</p>	<p>The projected programme that was delivered at the event was based on tackling the backlog of repairs and the money available to the organisation. The organisation is continually looking at streamlining its approach to delivery and advise contractors to avail of the one to meeting to discuss with the procurement team.</p>
<p>Leaseholders are often an issue, in terms of refusing work or the costs associated it often stalls work, are there any solutions? Buy back or stop selling?</p>	<p>The Housing Executive is currently exploring various options to address a number of Leasehold issues with respect to planned schemes.</p>
<p>Struggle to get info for contact for Housing Forum from. NIHE staff we need a full list of all 13 and the emails , contacts details.</p>	<p>Please contact the specific Contract / Project Manager for your contract for the details.</p>
<p>Does the procurement department plan to ever use third party procurement organisations such as Fusion21?</p>	<p>NIHE has previously utilised a number of frameworks provided by third party organisations when it was considered this was the most appropriate procurement strategy.</p>

 <p>How can a supply chain manufacturer engage with the HCN as there maybe social value proposals that can be offered.</p>	<p>Please email Procurement@nihe.gov.uk</p>
<p>Why does it take 6months plus for the assessment of the majority of tenders?</p>	<p>As a public body, NIHE has stringent governance arrange that must be adhered with. However, the evaluation of the majority of tenders are concluded within a period of 3-5 months from the tender submission date. However, in exceptional circumstances NIHE may need to request tenderers to extend the validity period to beyond 6 months to allow for unforeseen circumstances. Procurement are currently reviewing internal processes to streamline.</p>
<p>What is taking so long to get the framework out after the failed CT055 contract?</p>	<p>NIHE has awarded a number of interim tenders that covered the scope of works within CT055. CT0120 Bathroom and Kitchen Replacements was awarded with a contract term of 30 months and CT0121 Doors and Windows with a contract month term of 24 months. In addition NIHE also awarded a contract CT0105 for planned maintenance specifically in Lisburn & Castlereagh area and have recently awarded CT0136 for Bathroom and Kitchen replacements in Mid and East Antrim area. A strategy to deliver Planned Maintenance in the longer term is being developed.</p>
<p>If capacity, new entries and delivery are issues, has NIHE procurement given though to National Frameworks as a quick, compliant route to market?</p>	<p>NIHE has previously utilised a number of frameworks provided by third party organisations when it was considered this was the most appropriate procurement strategy.</p>
<p>Don't really support a NIHE framework. There are already too many frameworks out there and contractors are spending an inordinate amount of time to get on them maybe with no work.</p>	<p>NIHE require many options to deliver such a large varied programme of work.</p>
<p>What is the benefit of using frameworks for the housing executive decarbonisation schemes when the previous Fusion 21 framework was not used to its potential?</p>	<p>National Frameworks provide NIHE access to a list of contractors that have already been assessed as capable of providing the work. In some circumstances they may also provide to new entrants that have never worked with NIHE before.</p>
<p>To get new contractors onboard is there an option to reduce the thresholds to be able to tender for work. Many small businesses are able to offer great services but are never able to qualify due to restrictions.</p>	<p>NIHE are currently considering how best to make the tendering process more accessible for smaller businesses, this includes consideration of establishing a dynamic procurement system</p>

	or framework whereby works are banded in values.
Have NIHE considered the cumulative financial impact on their contractors of their social value requirement to employ apprentices?	The industry recognises the need to employ apprentices to ensure there is future provision to deliver services. The Housing Executive is fully aware of the financial impacts of employing apprentices as it does so through its own DLO. Any costs in meeting these requirements should be factored into the price submitted by the economic operator.
Regarding response maintenance framework, the contracts are heavy with IT. How would a framework work? Would it reduce that requirement. With IT integrations costing £50-100k a year to maintain.	We intend to explore issues like this in the one-to-one meetings.
Tendering to the NIHE can be very daunting, is there any options for NIHE to hold workshops to educate the smaller businesses who seek more information regarding tendering processes.	Please make contact via the procurement@nihe.gov.uk .
Response could go back to the old 'modules' I.e. by trade. Should be to each District Office per contract.	All options will be considered as part of the Response Maintenance strategy
Other frameworks increase annual the rates by BCIS rates. A call off would be priced on each call off.	All options will be considered as part of the framework strategy.
If frameworks are to be in place April 25. When will the tender process start.	We aim to issue the first FW before end of financial year.
The experience and qualification of tenders - there are many sub-contractors who deliver currently through main contractors. Restrictions do not accept references unless the contract is direct.	We are currently reviewing options for references during the tender process.
Do you have a pipeline of external wall insulation projects?	The Housing Executive is currently preparing a small annual programme of EWI works.
Why is the housing executive the only governmental body that has their own Social Value reporting that differs to the agreed Strategic investment board and CPD?	NIHE currently use SIB suite of templates for Social Value and SIB for reporting.

<p>Cab retention contribute to the social value delivered. Currently not measured on contracts.</p>	<p>Unclear of the request, please make contact through Supplier Engagement Inbox.</p>
<p>Why not use existing frameworks? Fusion21, NHS SBS, CCS, etc.?</p>	<p>NIHE has used a number of national frameworks to deliver programme requirements. Any route to market will be considered for the procurement strategy for specific requirements.</p>
<p>What contracts are going out through Fusion 21?</p>	<p>A number of contracts have been procured via Fusion 21 such as CTE01 for External Wall Insulation, CTE12A Fire Remedial Works. All routes to market will be investigated when devising the procurement strategy for all requirements.</p>
<p>When will you able to advise contractors exactly which frameworks you will be using - there is a time and cost impact to get onto frameworks?</p>	<p>To deliver the programme of works, NIHE will consider utilising any framework that it believes can assist with its objectives. We therefore reserves the right to utilise any route to market when considering the procurement strategy for specific requirements.</p>
<p>CT120 and 121 are window and door contracts. Don't really replace CT055</p>	<p>CT0120 Bathroom and Kitchen Replacements & CT0121 Windows and Doors have replaced the requirements originally procured under CT055. A longer term strategy is being developed.</p>
<p>How as a manufacturer showcase innovative products designed for climate change and also providing protection to households and get specified to future projects?</p>	<p>If these are innovative products, we may ask for third party accreditation such as a BBA certificate or UKAS accredited. We generally do not name products in our specification, but provide a performance specification which manufacturers can submit their product for consideration along with a cost estimate. We have a weblink where you can fill out some information about any new energy efficient products, under the heading "Products and Proposals that are not on the market" which can be found in the link: https://www.nihe.gov.uk/working-with-us/procurement/doing-business-with-the-housing-executive</p>
<p>Is there benefit of NIHE senior personnel to meet with group of contractors under contracts in order to facilitate delivery and limit delays?</p>	<p>Many of the organisations larger contracts contain clauses to convene strategic core groups made up of NIHE personnel and contractors where strategic issues can be discussed. However, where contracts do not contain these clauses, the Housing Executive</p>

	would be open to have these discussions with contractors on a case-by-case basis.
Are there any plans to update sor code values and therefore become more realistic with current construction costs?	A project is on-going to migrate applicable new contracts to version 8 of NHF Schedule of Rates.