



**CORPORATE & ENVIRONMENTAL
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

**MEMBERS UPDATE 2021/22
Issue: 1**

Article of: Corporate Director of Transformation & Resources

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor Ian Moran

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**SUBJECT: EXEMPTION TO CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES - MAINTENANCE
OF FAN COIL UNITS (FCUs) AT WEST LANCASHIRE INVESTMENT CENTRE**

Wards affected: Borough Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF ARTICLE

1.1 To advise of an exemption from the Contracts Procedure Rules granted by the Chief Operating Officer to remove and replace filters and frames on approximately 120 fan coil units (FCUs) of the heating, ventilation and air conditioning system at the West Lancashire Investment Centre.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 West Lancashire Investment Centre provides accommodation for approximately 31 small and medium sized businesses in a two storey office building across c.47,000 sq ft.. The Centre also provides conferencing facilities and an on-site café open to the public.

3.0 CURRENT POSITION

3.1 Forming part of the air conditioning system at the Investment Centre there are 120 FCUs with air filter socks and frames. These are across both the ground and first floors in tenant suites, conference rooms and common areas.

3.2 Advice of consulting engineers/manufacturers is that filter socks are replaced on each unit every 12 months for maximum efficiency in terms of airflow quality and throughput as well as energy consumption.

3.3 Replacing the FCU filters will help to ensure the efficiency and reliability of the air conditioning system, ultimately leading to a reduction in repair costs and an increase in the life expectancy of the plant.

- 3.4 Dirty filters allow less air to pass through the FCUs, causing fans to work harder, thereby increasing energy consumption while also slowly damaging the system. This further leads to reduced air quality in the building.
- 3.5 Given COVID-19 considerations in particular it is imperative that maximum air flow is ensured throughout the Centre. The optimal operation of the air conditioning system is essential especially bearing in mind that tenant suites have no opening windows.

4.0 CONTRACT EXEMPTION RATIONALE

- 4.1 The specialist contractor, The James Mercer Group, has extensive knowledge of the Centre's heating, cooling and ventilation system gained through previous plant replacement and repair works awarded under an earlier contract.
- 4.2 The complex nature of the work and access logistics would not be immediately apparent to an alternative contractor and a full site survey, with additional cost, would be required, current COVID-19 circumstances also causing additional difficulties with this.
- 4.3 The contractor has been proven to successfully deliver previous commissions, on time and within budget, further supported by an excellent aftercare service.
- 4.4 COVID-19 concerns have resulted in a hesitancy among engineers to work on air filters and there is particular confidence in using a trusted, experienced contractor with knowledge of the site.

5.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 New clean filters will help towards reducing energy consumption in the building as the demands on the fans to allow air to pass through will be less.
- 5.2 There is no significant impact on crime and disorder.

6.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are financial implications of some £23,300 arising from this Article in respect of the replacement of the FCU filters. The sum of the expenditure is able to be met from existing resources from the Investment Centre's ring fenced account.

7.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 The actions referred to in this Article are covered by the scheme of delegation to officers and any necessary changes have been made in the relevant risk registers.

8.0 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Article will help towards ensuring the general wellbeing of tenants and visitors to the Investment Centre by serving to provide air of a good quality throughout as well as a comfortable ambient working environment.
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Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Article.

Equality Impact Assessment

This article is for information only and does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and/ or stakeholders. Therefore no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Appendices

None.