GLA 82284 - Solar Together London Programme Evaluation

Final Report

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Delivering a better world

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Abbreviations & Definitions

Abbreviation	Definition
ADD	Assistant Director Decision
ADE	Assistant Direct of Environment and Energy
API	Application Programming Interface
BEIS	Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy
CCR	Concession Contracts Regulations
CRM	Client Relationship Management
CSS	Customer Satisfaction Survey
DC	Direct Current
DESNZ	Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
DMA	Delivery Model Assessment
DSA	Data Sharing Agreement
EV	Electric Vehicle
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
GET UK	Green Energy Together UK
GLA	Greater London Authority
GLAAM	GLA Approvals Meeting
GND	Green New Deal
GW	Gigawatts
HIES	Home Insulation & Energy Systems
HM	His Majesty
IP	Intellectual Property
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
kWp	Kilowatts Peak
LID	Light Induced Degradation
MCS	Microgeneration Certification Scheme
MD	Mayoral Decision
MOPAC	The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime
MS	Microsoft
NDA	Non-disclosure agreement
NPS	Net Promoter Score
OFGEM	Office of Gas and Electricity Markets
OJEU	Office Journal of the European Union
PID	Potential Induced Degradation
PQQ	Pre-Qualification Questionnaire
PR	Public Relations
PV	Photovoltaic
QA	Quality Assurance
RECC	Renewable Energy Consumer Code
SAP	Solar Action Plan
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SSJ	Single-Source Justification
STL	Solar Together London Programme
T&C	Terms & Conditions
TfL	Transport for London
VAT	Value Added Tax

1 Executive Summary

This report sets out the comprehensive process and impact evaluation of the Solar Together London (STL) programme on behalf of Greater London Authority (GLA). The report provides a programme evaluation of the performance of STL's aims and objectives, highlighting the challenges with delivery, performance of the installers and the impact of the solar market and consumer interest.

iChoosr was chosen by the GLA to lead the group-buying scheme due to their success with Solar Together in the Netherlands and other regions of the UK. The programme sought to progress the Mayor's Solar Action Plan 2018 (SAP) to achieve 1 Gigawatts (GW) of rooftop solar PV by 2030 and 3.9 GW by 2050. This bolsters the GLA's aim to be net zero by 2030.

The scheme's ambition was to increase private investments for solar systems across London in the 'able -to-pay' sector. GLA wanted to increase solar uptake, provide a cost-effective way to procure solar for residents, increase private company involvement within the solar industry and encourage localised investment and use of local services.

Due to the scope of the programme, there were many stakeholders involved. These included:

- **GLA:** Programme owners and initiators as part of the Mayor's London SAP.
- **iChoosr:** Business model (group-buying scheme) owners responsible for delivering the programme. They oversaw the selection, appointment and management of the installers. They also owned the marketing material for Solar Together London.
- **London boroughs:** Supported the marketing of the programme in their borough by allowing their logos to be used on promotional materials which were provided by iChoosr. The boroughs actively monitored performance of the programme in their area.
- **Installers:** Selected by iChoosr to deliver the installation of solar systems.
- **MCS, HIES, RECC:** Regulators who certified codes of practice and validated installation certifications for the solar market. They have a responsibility to ensure safeguards, such as deposit protection, are in place to protect customers.

The STL programme commenced in 2018 and, to date, has been delivered through five phases. Originally meant to complete in November 2022, the scheme was extended until May 2024 following issues associated with one of the installers, GET UK.

The business case for each phase of the programme set a target for the number of installations. **STL resulted in 3,236 installations against a total target range of 3,700-5,400.** The STL programme achieved its target in Phases 1/2 and 4, however failed in Phases 3 and 5. It is likely that Phase 5 only achieved its target due to the lengthy extension of the phase.

The number of installations in Phases 4 and 5 was double the number in the early phases of the programme, likely driven by the increased number of boroughs signed-up by the start of Phase 4. However, the average rate of installations per month decreased over the term of the programme.

The 3,236 instillations equated to 19.27% of the total installations in London over the same period, and equated to a total installed capacity of 7,600 kilowatt peak (kWp). The carbon savings associated with these installations is estimated to be 10,229 tCO_2e across the expected 25-year operational lifetime of the installations.

The scheme provided an alternative business model for residents to install solar at a discounted rate. It supported the uplift of solar systems, cost savings, raised awareness of solar systems solutions, allowed boroughs to be involved in the delivery of the scheme and provide local expertise while developing capabilities. It also progressed a collective approach for residents who could register their interest with the aim of securing better pricing within the defined quality standards through collective purchasing. The reverse auction approach allowed pre-approved solar PV suppliers to bid installation offers at the lowest price considering the defined quality standards.

The scheme successfully achieved price reductions for residents. The level of saving achieved varied per phase based on the capacity installed and ranged from -29.6% - 33.1% (Phase 3), 2.1% - 43.6% (Phase 4) and 10.4% - 37.3% (Phase 5) compared to the average price of installation in London over the same time period. Following completion of the STL programme, the average installation cost per kWp in London has risen above the UK average.

It should be noted that some elements of the PV solar equipment specified by iChoosr are lower than would typically be expected of a domestic rooftop solar PV specification, which will have likely contributed to some of the cost reduction. In particular, the installation of lower quality inverters will have reduced cost. The consequence of this decision by iChoosr may be increased warranty claims and complaints in the future. There were several key challenges identified during the scheme. It proved more difficult to generate uptake for solar in London compared to other UK regions due to access problems, logistics, roofing materials, planning applications and loft conversions. During the scheme, there were also disruptions to the supply chain due to external factors, including Covid-19 and increased energy costs, and the failure of GET UK. Supply chain disruption impacted the success of the scheme by causing disruption to planned installations and deliveries, leading to an increase in complaints.

The level of installations in London followed UK wide trends; therefore, it appears STL had a limited impact on the number of installations expected. One potential explanation (although not evidenced by data captured or analysed in preparing this report) for this is that the scheme is beneficial to residents who were already going to install solar, because it delivered cost savings, however it did not attract people who were less in favour of installing solar because it did not overcome some of the known prevailing concerns associated with installing solar such as the scale of upfront expenditure, lack of financial return or certainty of returns.

The domestic rooftop solar PV market is tied closely to the price of electricity, with the number and cost of installations typically rising and falling in a similar pattern to the price of electricity, with a lag of a few months between electricity price and solar PV market trends. Customer demand for solar PV was not significantly impacted by Covid-19, with consistent installation numbers between London and the whole of the UK throughout the pandemic with the exception of April 2020.

Across the five phases of the STL programme (prior to Phase 5B), both the acceptance rate and installations as a proportion of registrations steadily decreased, demonstrating the challenges associated with the programme.

UK public opinions are increasingly in favour of both solar PV technology and the installation of domestic rooftop solar PV on individual households. Of those who are against the installation of solar PV on their home, 70% attribute this to high costs. The level of discount secured by the STL programme does not appear to have been sufficient to address this concern for the residents against the installation of solar PV. The failure of GET UK during Phase 4 had a material impact on the success of the STL programme. Performance issues including delays in the lead up to GET UK entering administration led to a significant increase in customer complaints and cancellations, and required extension of Phase 5 to incorporate customers that had to be transferred to a new installer. The percentage of complaints increased from <10% in Phase 3 to 22.4% in Phase 4, which likely impacted public confidence in the STL programme. 'No faith in supplier' as a reason for cancellation increased from 1.0% in Phase 3 to 6.0% in Phase 4.

This evaluation has considered the elements of the STL programme which could have been improved to enhance the success of the STL programme. These include:

1. **The performance of the STL programme may have been impacted by GLA's failure to consider a range of delivery models and alternative potential concessionaires**: While it is acknowledged that the scale of the STL programme may not have justified the level of analysis and market development required to generate alternative options, the adoption of an existing delivery model and direct award of a contract to iChoosr may have limited innovation and inhibited market development. Adopting a longer-term, more strategic view may have led to better delivery of the programme's objectives and outcomes.
2. **The level of governance applied to early decision-making may not have been appropriate given the potential impact of the STL programme**: The selection of a less rigorous governance process, given the perceived low risk and low spend of the programme, likely contributed to poor performance. A review of GLA's governance approach for launching new programmes should be commissioned.
3. **The concession contract lacked the necessary levers for driving the performance of the STL programme**: Significant gaps were identified in the contractual arrangement, including a lack of minimum standards, service level agreements, performance guarantees and detailed criteria for installer procurement and management. This reduced the contract levers available to GLA.
4. **iChoosr's performance could have been improved in some aspects of delivering the STL programme**: Examples include the selection of installers (IChoosr ignored red flags highlighted by RECC to proceed with the appointment of GET UK), monitoring of installer's financial status (annual checks could have been increased to quarterly) and the management of complaints (boroughs had to step in to manage resident's concerns during and following the failure of GET UK).
5. **Responsibility for client management to improve customer experience and increase conversion rate from expression of interest to installation:** A complex process between expressing interest and getting an installation slot could have contributed to large drop-off rates. Using bespoke client relationship management (CRM) solutions could have increased the chances of residents staying on the STL programme.
6. **In their role as Customer Code for the domestic solar PV market, HIES should have flagged the issues associated with GET UK earlier to allow mitigation actions to be implemented.** HIES role is to protect customers through accreditation of suppliers and then ongoing monitoring. Had they identified the issues associated with GET UK earlier, it would have allowed iChoosr and the GLA to implement actions which would likely have reduced the number of customer complaints and the negative impact on customer take-up. It should be noted that HIES's dual role as both a Consumer Code for installers and as a provider of insurance backed guarantees for customers introduces a potential conflict of interest.

2 Introduction

2.1 The Solar Together London programme

The Mayor's ambition: The Mayor of London aims to make London net zero by 2030 and sees an increase in the use of solar energy as a key renewable source to achieve this target.

The Solar Action Plan (SAP): The Mayor published a plan in 2018 to achieve 1.5 gigawatts (GW) of rooftop solar PV by 2030 and 2GW by 2050, along with supporting Londoners to retrofit solar technologies on their homes and workplaces. In the Mayor's Net Zero pathway for 2030 (published in 2022), achieving the ambition for net zero meant raising the target to 3.9GW by 2050.

The Solar Together London Programme (STL): GLA programme that used a collective purchasing approach to increase domestic rooftop solar in London. GLA selected a collective purchasing STL programme to support the Mayor's ambition and the SAP which was designed to reduce the costs of solar installations for Londoners through a reverse auction model, where pre-approved installers bid to offer the lowest price possible. The programme has been running since 2018 and has gone through five phases, each involving more boroughs and installations. However, the programme has also faced some issues with the performance and quality of one of the installers, Green Energy Together (GET UK), which led to complaints and public scrutiny of the programme and approach undertaken by GLA and the Mayor.

The STL delivery model encompassed various stages throughout the STL programme's lifecycle, each driven by specific objectives and milestones. Details of the activities forming each stage of the delivery model are set out in Table 1.

Table 1: Key actions across the development, mobilisation and delivery phases

Phase	Key Components
Development	• **Scheme design**: This phase involved the initial design of the STL scheme, including identifying key objectives, feasibility assessments and delivery model. • **Market research and engagement**: Initial market research and engagement activities were undertaken, involving desktop research and interactions with potential suppliers, including scheme administrators, technology providers and installers, to assess interest and solicit feedback. However, during the pilot phase implementation, this phase was primarily limited to desktop research. For Phase 3, the programme saw the release of a Prior Information Notice (PIN) to bolster market engagement efforts. • **Partnership formation**: Collaborations were forged between stakeholders such as the GLA, iChoosr, local authorities, and other relevant parties. iChoors was awarded a concession contract for the delivery agent role. • **Legal and regulatory considerations**: Legal and regulatory frameworks were established to govern the scheme's operation, including contractual agreements, compliance requirements and consumer protection measures. The findings related to the contractual vehicles used are available in section *4.2.1.2 Contractual Model* of this report.
Mobilisation	• **Marketing and promotion**: Comprehensive marketing strategies were developed to raise awareness of the STL programme in participating boroughs, targeting diverse audiences through various channels such as digital marketing, community outreach and media campaigns. • **Installer recruitment**: Installers were onboarded through a competitive selection process, ensuring they meat quality standards and capacity requirements to fulfil anticipated demand. • **Customer support setup**: Infrastructure for customer support, including helplines, online portals and informational resources, was established to assist residents throughout their journey. • **Technical and administrative setup**: Technical infrastructure, including online platforms for auctions and administrative tools for managing participant data, was set up to facilitate operations.
Execution phase	• **Registration and participation**: Homeowners and private landlords registered their interest in the scheme, providing necessary information for eligibility assessment and participation. • **Auction and supplier selection**: Auctions using pre-qualified installers were conducted through the online portal, allowing iChoosr to receive competitive bids from pre-vetted installers. Suppliers were selected based on price competitiveness criteria. • **Installation and project management**: Homeowner participants who accepted the proposed package proceed with the installation process, coordinated by selected suppliers. Project management aimed to ensures timely delivery, quality assurance and adherence to safety standards. • **Monitoring and evaluation**: Ongoing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms were implemented to track scheme performance, assess participant satisfaction and identify areas for improvement.
Post-installation and closure phase	• **Completion and handover**: Installations were completed and homeowners received the required documentation. Quality audits were conducted across one in every thirty installations to review quality of system installed. • **Scheme completion review**: A final review was conducted to evaluate the overall success of the scheme, including achievements, lessons learned, and recommendations for future iterations or similar initiatives. • **Stakeholder engagement**: Feedback mechanisms are utilized to gather input from stakeholders, including customer satisfaction surveys, ensuring their perspectives are considered in post-implementation assessments.

2.2 Objectives of the evaluation

The evaluation aims to deliver a comprehensive evaluation of the performance and impact of STL, assessing the performance of the programme against its aims and objectives, as well as exploring the issues and challenges that arose during its delivery, such as the poor performance of GET UK and the impact on the solar market and consumer interest.

The evaluation focuses primarily on Phases 4 and 5 of the programme, however, also provide reflections on the whole programme since its inception in 2018. The purpose of this report is not to criticise what might now seem to be obvious shortcomings, but to identify valuable lessons learned with a specific focus on the role of GLA as the programme sponsor.

The Table 2 sets out the timeline of the five phases of the STL programme, including installation suppliers appointed to each phase and the boroughs that signed up to that phase. Appendix D shows the timeline with additional detail.

Table 2: Timeline of STL Phases 1 to 5

STL Phase	Dates	Supplier(s) Selected	Boroughs Involved
Phase 1	February 2018 – June 2018	Solar century	Brent, Ealing, Kingston, Sutton, Merton
Phase 2	June 2018 – November 2019	Ecolution	Camden, Haringey, Islington, Kensington and Chelsea, Merton, Newham, Sutton, Waltham Forest and Westminster
Phase 3	November 2019 – November 2020	First 4 Solar, Spirit Energy	Brent, Camden, Croydon, Ealing, Hackney, Islington, Kensington and Chealsea, Kingston upon Thames, Lewisham, Merton, Newham, Sutton and Waltham Forest
Phase 4	November 2020 – November 2021	GET	Barking and Dagenham, Barnet, Bexley, Brent, Bromley, Camden, Croydon, Ealing, Enfield, Greenwich, Hackney, Hammersmith and Fulham, Haringey, Harrow, Havering, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Islington, Lambeth, Lewisham, Merton, Newham, Kensington and Chelsea, Kingston Upon Thames, Redbridge, Richmond Upon Thames, Southwark, Sutton, Tower Hamlets, Wandsworth, Waltham Forest and Westminster
Phase 5	November 2021 – November 2022	Dynamis, GET, Solar Bureau	Barking and Dagenham, Barnet, Bexley, Brent, Bromley, Camden, Croydon, Ealing, Enfield, Greenwich, Hammersmith and Fulham, Haringey, Hackney, Harrow, Havering, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Islington, Kensington and Chelsea, Kingston-Upon Thames, Lewisham, Merton, Newham, Redbridge, Richmond- Upon-Thames, Southwark, Sutton, Tower Hamlets, Wandsworth, Waltham Forest and Westminster
Programme extension (to resolve issues in Phases 4 & 5)	November 2022 – May 2024	Dynamis, Solar Bureau	

3 Methodology

This section details the methodology deployed to carry out the evaluation of the STL programme.

The methodology used to undertake the evaluation was agreed with the GLA prior to commencement and was based on:

- determining the impact of the STL programme by using available data sources to analyse the performance of each phase; and
- undertaking an independent assessment of key aspects of the STL programme to identify lessons learned and opportunities for improvement.

The report should be read in this context.

As highlighted in the limitations section below, the evaluation did not conduct new customer surveys or interview installers. The evaluation relies heavily on stakeholder interviews and analysis of data provided by the GLA, iChoosr or from publicly available sources.

3.1 Data sources and analytical methods used

To ensure a structured evaluation of the programme, the evaluation was structured around the following four workstreams, the scope of which is shown in Table 3. Details of the evaluation undertaken in each workstream and the associated findings can be found in Section 4.

Table 3: Workstreams used to structure the evaluation

Workstream 1 – Programme delivery	
- Assessment of the programme against its initial vision. - Programme delivery related lessons learned analysis. - Analysis of the roles and responsibilities involved in delivering the programme.	- Review of the role of iChoosr and their performance. - Quantification of the success of the programme in terms of take-up, expenditure, and carbon savings. - Where possible, benchmarking against other comparable programmes.
Workstream 2 – Commercial and supply chain	
- Review of the success of the eAuction method. - Review of the commercial arrangements implemented with each supplier. - Learning from GET UK going into administration.	- Commercial and supply chain related lessons learned analysis. - Assessment of macro and micro market trends which may impact the success of future phases.
Workstream 3 – Policy and regulatory	
- Assessment of regulatory and support frameworks and their impact on programme success.	- Future changes which may impact the programme delivery model.
Workstream 4 – Customer experience and marketing	
- Review of the marketing strategy. - Feedback from London boroughs (both those that signed up and those that didn't).	- Evaluation of customer experience and perception using questionnaires and interviews. - Analysis of customer complaints.

A three-phase approach was employed to undertake the evaluation:

- **Initial analysis** – desktop review of data and documentation, including from publicly available sources, to develop understanding of the programme and identify areas to be analysed in detail.
- **Stakeholder engagement** – discussion with stakeholders relevant to each workstream to gain insights, learning and recommendations for how the programme could be improved.
- **Analysis and report drafting** – finalise workstream analysis and draft the final report, setting out key findings and recommendations substantiated with evidence and data points.

3.2 Data review

GLA provided access to a large data set and secondary data sources. This data was used to understand key themes and build an understanding of the impact and performance of the STL programme. Appendix A contains the data sources used in the evaluation for each workstream.

3.2.1 Review of Solar Together London secondary data and information

Secondary data and documents provided by stakeholders including Micro-Certification Scheme (MCS), Renewable Energy Consumer Code (RECC) and iChoosr were reviewed, analysing the STL programme delivery, alongside the overall impacts to the domestic solar PV market in London regarding volume and average cost of installations. Secondary data from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) (formally the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS)) was also collated and analysed to review public attitudes towards solar PV technology and the uptake of domestic solar PV across the UK.

3.2.2 Review of publicly available data and information

Publicly available data was reviewed to understand the current market and policies that led to the STL programme. This generated insights into what led to the solar uptake in London along with government targets and initiatives that supported the development.

3.3 Stakeholder engagement

Engagement with stakeholders was a key part of the evaluation process for the STL programme. Engagement was conducted through a series of interviews and surveys.

Interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams, with stakeholders allocated one hour to answer questions and provide comments. A set of pre-prepared questions, sent to the stakeholders prior to the interviews, were grouped according to thematic areas and used to structure each interview. Interviews were recorded so responses could be compiled, analysed and categorised into different themes based on their significance. Table 4 highlights the stakeholders that were interviewed.

Table 4: Stakeholders engaged in STL evaluation

Team	Stakeholder description
GLA	Solar Together London Programme Manager
GLA	Head of Energy
GLA	Assistant Director – Environment and Energy
iChoosr	Solar Together London Representatives
MCS	Market Development Director
HIES	Managing Director
RECC	Chief Executive

3.4 Limitations of the evaluation

In undertaking the evaluation, a number of challenges were encountered which may have limited the extent of the evaluation. These are summarised in Table 5.

Table 5: Limitations of STL evaluation

Theme	Limitations or challenges
Access to stakeholders	The GLA/ TfL procurement team could not be interviewed. This omission has resulted in gaps that prevent clarification of questions related to the STL programme's procurement strategy and the execution of the concession contract procurement. Additionally, it was not possible to interview any installer. Although iChoosr initially agreed to provide a contact point within their supplier network for interview, they did not supply any contacts nor facilitate any interviews.
Attitudinal data	The available attitudinal data was limited thereby restricting capacity to analyse home-owners preference regarding solar system commercial models.
Auction process	iChoosr has not provided any procurement documentation related to the auction process, restricting the ability to comprehend the execution of the pre-qualification and pricing phases. Additionally, iChoosr has not revealed the minimum score needed for supplier qualification, rendering it difficult to assess the established quality standards or ascertain whether the quality threshold was suitable for a STL programme with the profile of the STL programme.
iChoosr supplier agreement	The iChoosr Supplier Agreement template shared by GLA contained substantial commercial confidentiality redactions and some of the annexes were not made available, which limited the ability to fully review all elements of the contract.

Customer surveys

The initial proposal for conducting this evaluation included surveying of residents to obtain their feedback on the scheme. However, in discussions with GLA and iChoosr it was determined that the evaluation could be conducted based on available data obtained by previous surveys conducted by iChoosr. This constrained the evaluation of customers' experience of the scheme by limiting the ability to ask tailored questions aligned to the objectives of this evaluation and survey additional stakeholders (i.e. potential customers who choose not to sign-up to the programme).

4 Findings

This section begins with an analysis of the programme delivery workstream and reviews the performance of the STL programme across the various phases. It aims to analyse the initial objectives of the STL programme for driving solar and net zero across the GLA while addressing the constraints of adopting solar in London.

4.1 Delivery and performance of the programme

This section comprises the evaluation of the impact of the STL programme, highlighting the number of installations carried out in London, installation costs, carbon savings and the market effects.

Several factors underscored the necessity for a PV solar programme in London. Despite advancements in solar PV technology and decreasing delivery costs, the city faced unique barriers to adoption, including demographic and housing typology challenges. The reduction in solar PV feed-in tariff rates in 2016 significantly slowed uptake, resulting in project cancellations and low interest in new solar installations. Presently, solar PV panels are installed in only a fraction of London's homes, with minimal monthly installations, contributing to the city having the lowest solar power capacity in the UK despite its favourable climate and economic standing.

Given these challenges, the Draft SAP proposed piloting a solar reverse auction STL programme to reduce installation costs for Londoners and increase uptake of solar installations. This approach was the Solar Together product, previously delivered by iChoosr in Norfolk. It was estimated to have substantially increased installation rates and provided cost savings for households, thereby aligning with the Mayor's objectives to accelerate solar PV adoption and contribute to London's renewable energy targets. iChoosr was identified as the only supplier of the services required to implement a Solar Together type programme.

While price reduction through discounts can be a compelling motivator, it has not been demonstrated that group procurement is the most suitable approach to facilitate private investment in solar systems by the 'able to pay sector'. The only evidence available relates to a YouGov attitudinal data[1] survey conducted on behalf of GLA in October 2022, where 60% of respondents identified 'cost/access to funding' as a primary concern regarding solar panel installation. BEIS's UK rooftop solar behavioural research also considers 'up-front costs barrier' and 'spreading cost is an incentive' as a barrier and motivator respectively. However, regarding 'cost/access to funding' it remains unclear whether the cost motivator relates specifically to reduced pricing or access to financing support. Nonetheless, it is the view that the STL programme likely acted as an incentive for customers that could afford to install solar systems. Additionally, if the STL programme encouraged lower costs, households with less financial capability may have been able to benefit from the STL programme.

4.1.1 Number of installations

MCS installation data has been obtained to analyse the impact of STL on the volume of domestic PV installations in London compared to trends across the UK and Manchester[2]. Figure 1 displays the monthly installations in London from January 2017 to March 2024, as well as 10% of the total monthly installations in the UK. This shows a direct correlation between UK-wide and London installation trends.

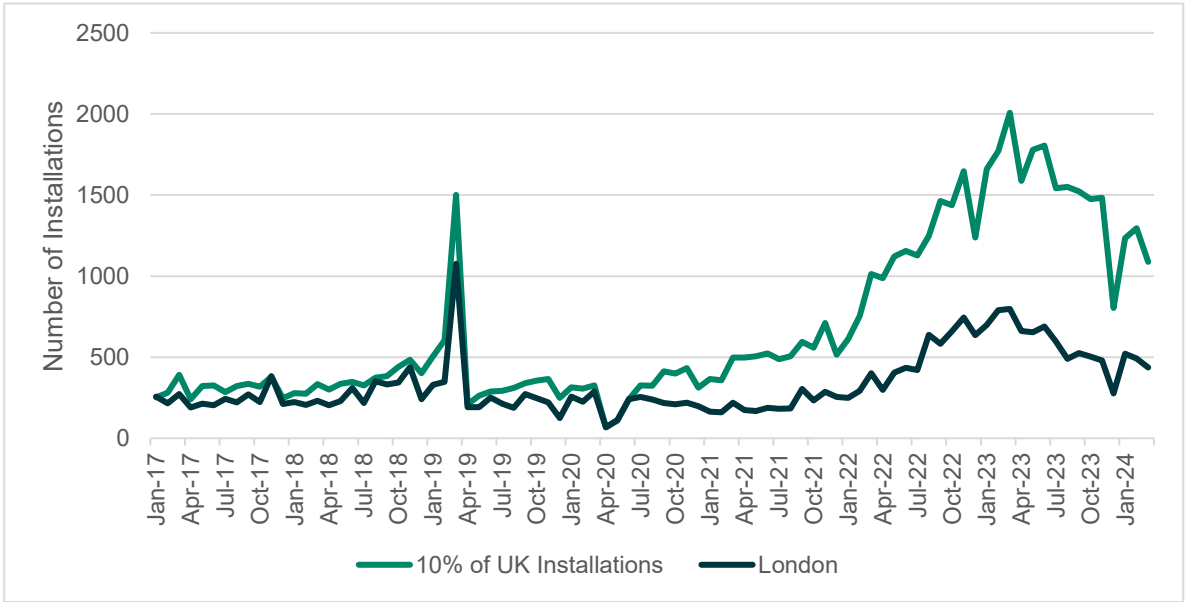


Figure 1: Number of monthly installations in London compared to 10% of UK-wide monthly installations.

[1] https://data.london.gov.uk/gla-solar-panel-polling/
[2] https://datadashboard.mcscertified.com

Prior to commencement of STL in February 2018, monthly installations were trending similarly to installations across the whole of the UK – London represented slightly less than 10% of the UK's domestic solar PV installations. This continued during the early phases of STL, up until August 2020 (during Phase 3) after which the volume of installations in London continued to follow UK-wide trends at a reduced percentage of overall UK installations. This has continued to date. It is to be noted that this drop off in percentage is not unique to London. Figure 2 shows the average percentage of monthly UK installations taking place in London and Manchester from January 2017 to August 2020 and September 2020 to February 2024. It can be seen that following the summer of 2020, Manchester also follows the UK-wide trends at a lower percentage than prior to this period. The fact that this trend occurs in other large cities in the UK and cannot be solely attributed to London indicates that this trend is not related to the impact of STL and is likely due to increasing uptake in previously underutilised areas across the UK. If STL had been effective in increasing installation numbers in London, then London have experienced less of a drop in installations when compared with Manchester. Manchester was selected for comparison due to the similar demographics and housing typologies with London.

Additionally, installations in London and Manchester following July 2022 (during Phase 5 of STL and following its conclusion) have typically been at a higher volume per month than at any point previously, excluding March 2019 which coincides with the cut-off date for the feed-in tariff. This increase in the volume of installations can likely be attributed to the increase in the price of electricity and therefore a reduced payback period from solar PV systems and instant benefit in customers energy bills.

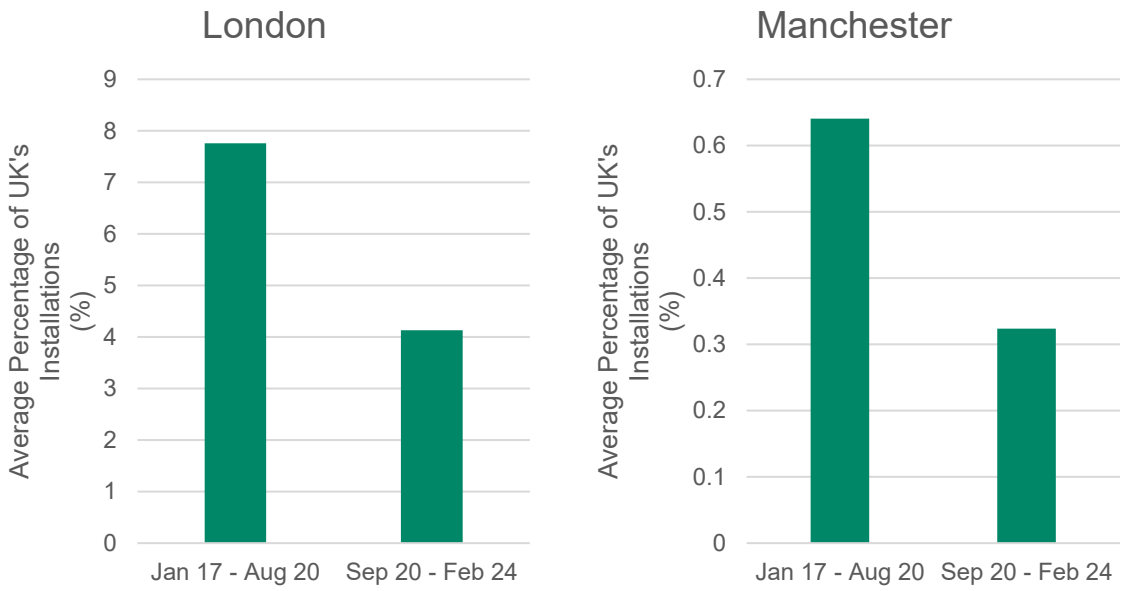
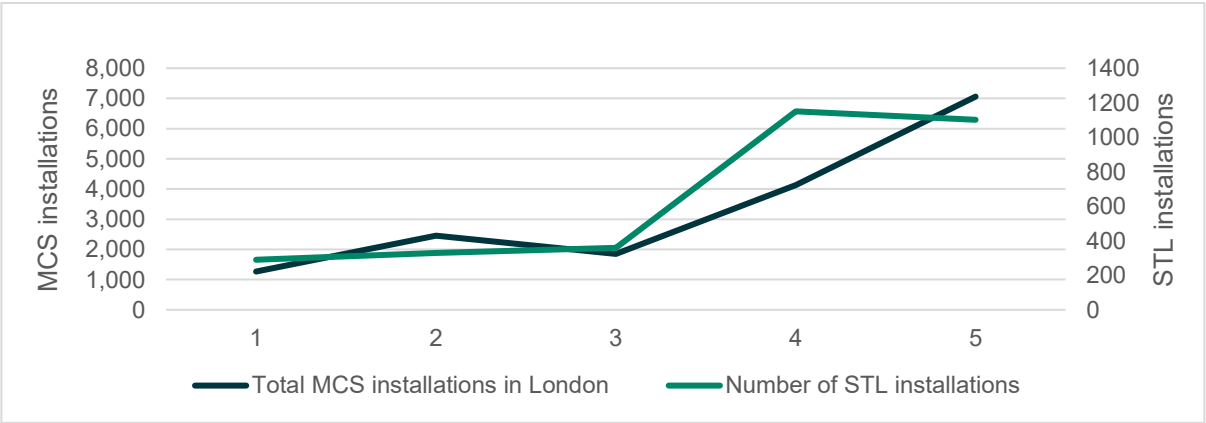


Figure 2: Percentage of monthly UK installations in London and Manchester

STL installations accounted for approximately 19% of total installations across the whole of London during the installation phases of the STL programme. Figure shows that the number of STL programme installations trended in line with the total MCS installations in London under Phase 4. From the data available it is not possible to determine the impact of the STL programme i.e. whether the installations under the STL programme would have occurred anyway.

Figure 3: London Installations over the term of the STL programme



Note: Due to a lack of data regarding commencement of installation dates for each of the STL phases, installation commencement dates have been assumed based on expected and actual completion dates provided by iChoosr.

Increased installations in the latter phases of the STL programme could have been due to external factors such as the increasing cost of electricity and the Government's removal of VAT from solar PV helping to reduce the upfront cost of installations. This trends was seen in other UK cities, such as Manchester.

4.1.2 Installation costs

MCS installation data has been obtained to facilitate analysis of the impact of the STL programme on the cost of domestic PV installations in comparison to trends across the whole of the UK.[3] Figure 4 displays the monthly average cost of installations in London from January 2019 to March 2024. MCS did not have any accessible cost data from earlier than 2019.

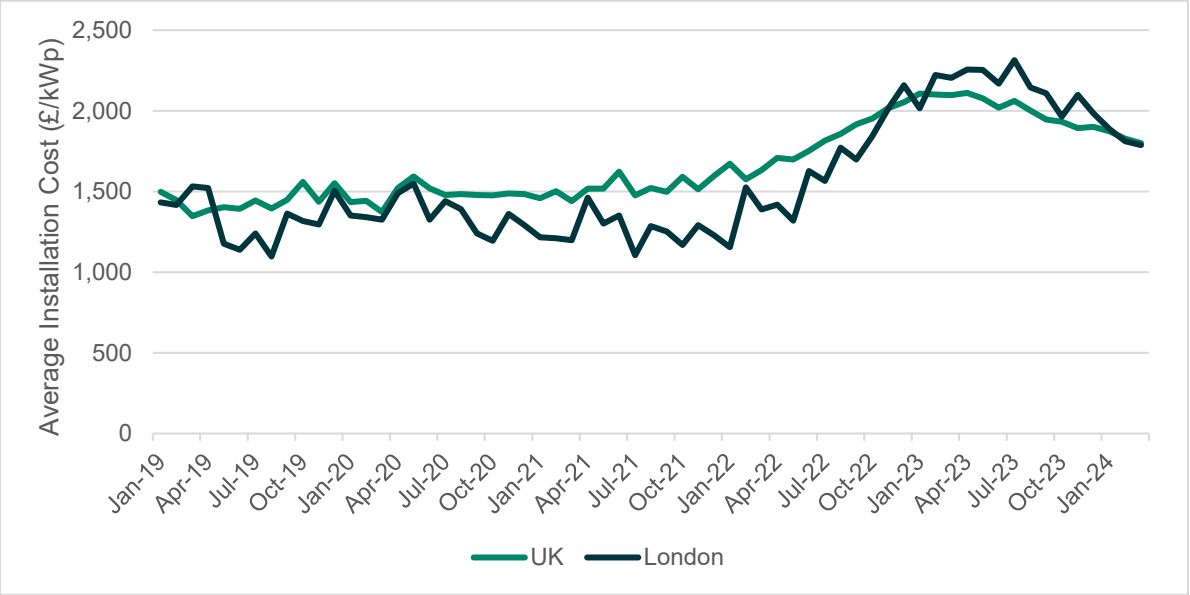


Figure 3: Monthly average installation cost in London compared to the UK-wide average cost.

Figure 3 demonstrates the positive financial impact of STL on average installation costs in London compared to the UK as a whole. STL overall accounted for approximately 19% of domestic solar PV installations in London during the installation phases and it can be seen in Figure 3 that during the STL programme, the monthly average installation cost in London is lower than the UK-wide average. Following the completion of Phase 5 of STL, the monthly average cost has risen to be slightly above that of the UK-wide average. It is to be noted that average installation costs have been higher than previously across the whole UK since March 2022. This is likely a result of the rise in energy prices and an increasing demand for solar PV.

iChoosr have provided the price breakdowns for different installed capacities as quoted by Spirit Energy, GET UK and Solar Bureau. It is to be noted that the price breakdowns were not provided for all of the installers involved in Phases 3 or 5 and no price breakdowns were provided for the installers involved in Phases 1 and 2. These installers were involved in Phases 3, 4 and 5. For comparison, MCS have provided similar data for all MCS certified installations within London from 2019 to present. The price savings achieved by the three installers are listed in Tables 6 to 8.

Table 6: Estimated Cost Savings Phase 3

Installation capacity (kWp)	Average Price of Installation in London During Phase 3 (£)	Spirit Energy			
		Min price (£)	Median price (£)	Max price (£)	Saving* (%)
0-2	2,025	2,371	2,625	2,907	**-29.6**
2-4	4,910	3,149	3,972	4,589	**19.1**
4-6	7,737	4,807	5,679	6,193	**26.6**

[3] https://datadashboard.mcscertified.com

>6	14,040	6,514	9,393	12,205	**33.1**

** Cost savings calculated as median cost against average cost in London at time of installation. Where there is no median cost, maximum cost has been used to provide a conservative estimate. Negative values for cost savings indicate an increase in cost compared to the average costs.*

Table 7: Estimated cost savings Phase 4

Installation capacity (kWp)	Average Price of Installation in London During Phase 4 (£)	GET UK			
		Min price (£)	Median price (£)	Max price (£)	Saving* (%)
0-2	2,830	2,514	--	2,771	**2.1**
2-4	4,394	3,042	3,796	4,336	**13.6**
4-6	7,037	4,609	5,109	5,562	**27.4**
>6	17,624	5,778	9,940	13,894	**43.6**

** Savings calculated as median price against average price in London at time of installation. Where there is no median cost, maximum cost has been used to provide a conservative estimate. Negative values for cost savings indicate an increase in cost compared to the average costs.*

Table 8: Estimated cost savings Phase 5

Installation capacity (kWp)	Average Price of Installation in London During Phase 5 (£)	Solar Bureau			
		Min price (£)	Median price (£)	Max price (£)	Saving* (%)
0-2	4,423	3,418	--	3,963	**10.4**
2-4	7,369	4,509	5,608	6,724	**23.9**
4-6	11,841	6,970	7,424	7,826	**37.3**
>6	16,385	8,000	12,764	16,055	**22.1**

** Cost savings calculated as median cost against average cost in London at time of installation. Where there is no median cost, maximum cost has been used to provide a conservative estimate. Negative values for cost savings indicate an increase in cost compared to the average costs.*

It can be seen in Tables 6 to 8 that the installers for STL typically offered price savings compared to the average installation prices in London at the time, with Solar Bureau offering the greatest savings for installations in the range of 0 kWp to 6 kWp and GET UK offering the greatest savings for installations above 6 kWp. It is to be noted that statistically, given that STL contributed a large proportion of the installations in London during Phases 3-5, it is probably that the average price will be lowered. Consequently, the savings listed in Tables 6 to 8 are seen as conservative estimates and the actual savings achieved in comparison to the London solar PV market at the time are likely greater.

4.1.3 Carbon savings

This section estimates the carbon savings that each phase of the STL programme is likely to have achieved at the point of use. Estimates have been established through comparison against grid electricity emissions, which have been estimated based on the BEIS Energy and Emissions Projections (2022), which was specifically created for appraisals used in business case and impact assessments. Figure 5 shows projected annual carbon emission from grid electricity from 2018 onwards:

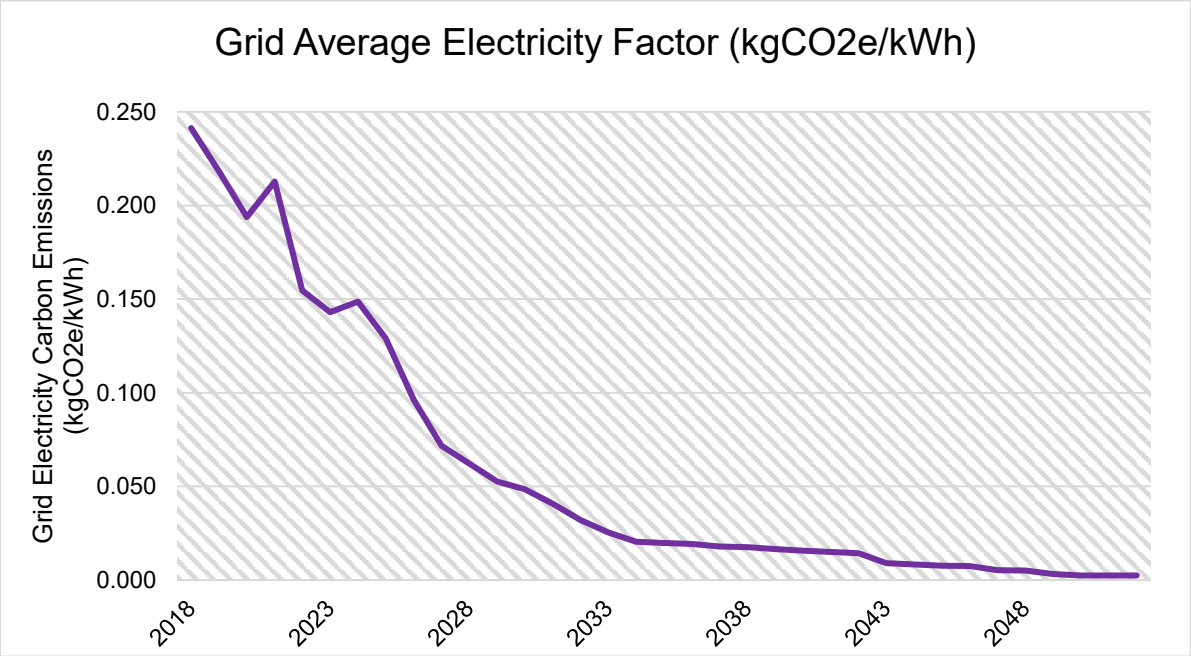


Figure 4: Grid electricity carbon emissions factor projection.

The total carbon savings calculated over the expected minimum 25-year lifespan for the installations within each phase can be seen in Table 9. This estimate accounts for warrantied degradation rates of the solar installations, typical shading losses for rooftop solar PV in London, and the lowering of the expected carbon intensity of grid electricity over the life of the installed systems. There were inconsistencies in the data provided regarding total installed capacities for Phases 3 to 5. Consequently, the total installed capacities for these phases have been estimated based on the number of installations per phase as quoted by iChoosr and the average installed capacity for Phases 1 and 2. These are the operational carbon savings and do not consider the embedded carbon from the production and installation processes. The total estimated carbon saving for the STL programme is 10,228.9tCO_2e over the lifetime of all installed PV.

Table 9: STL estimated carbon savings

Phase	Number of Installations	Estimated Installed Capacity (kWp)	Operational Carbon Savings over 25-year system life (tCO_2e)
1	290	698	1,304
2	330	795	1,484
3	359	865	1,264
4	1,150	2,120	2,738
5	1,102	3,123	3,439
Total	3,231	7,600	10,229

Note: Due to inconsistencies and incomplete datasets between different data sources regarding the installed capacity as part of individual phases of the STL programme, the figures for installed capacity have been estimated based on figures reported by iChoosr.

4.1.4 Market and attitudinal effects

4.1.4.1 Market outlook

MCS have provided data on members joining and leaving MCS to facilitate analysis of the state of the domestic solar PV market in London from January 2019 to December 2023. This data is displayed in Figure 6.

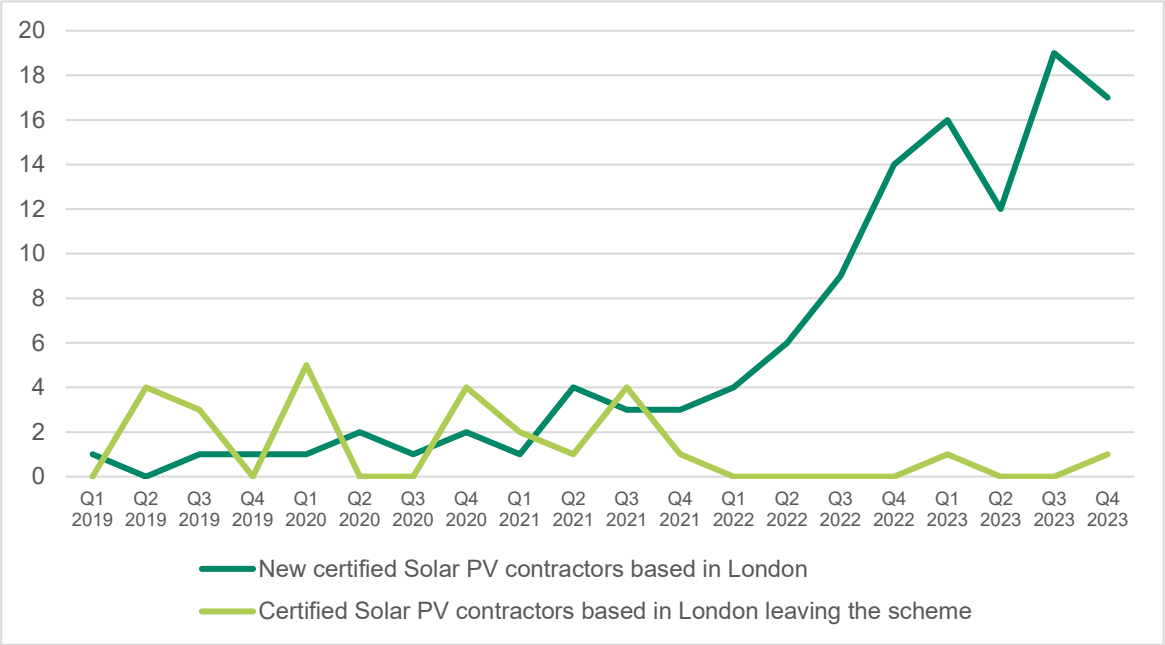


Figure 5: Quarterly figures for MCS membership amongst solar PV installers based in London.

The number of members joining and leaving the MCS is tied to the average electricity price, volume of installations and average cost of installations. When the price of electricity and demand for solar PV were lower, the levels of certified installers in London trended towards a slight decline (57 in Q1 2019 to 49 in Q1 2021). Following this, the rise in electricity prices has led to a consistent increase in the numbers of certified installers, with fewer installers withdrawing or being suspended from MCS certification than the years prior. This indicates that currently, due to high electricity prices, the solar market is growing.

4.1.4.2 Attitudes

Attitudes towards solar PV have been assessed based on public attitudes as tracked by DESNZ[4] and BEIS from autumn 2016 to spring 2023. Figure 7 displays the percentage of people surveyed who supported solar PV.

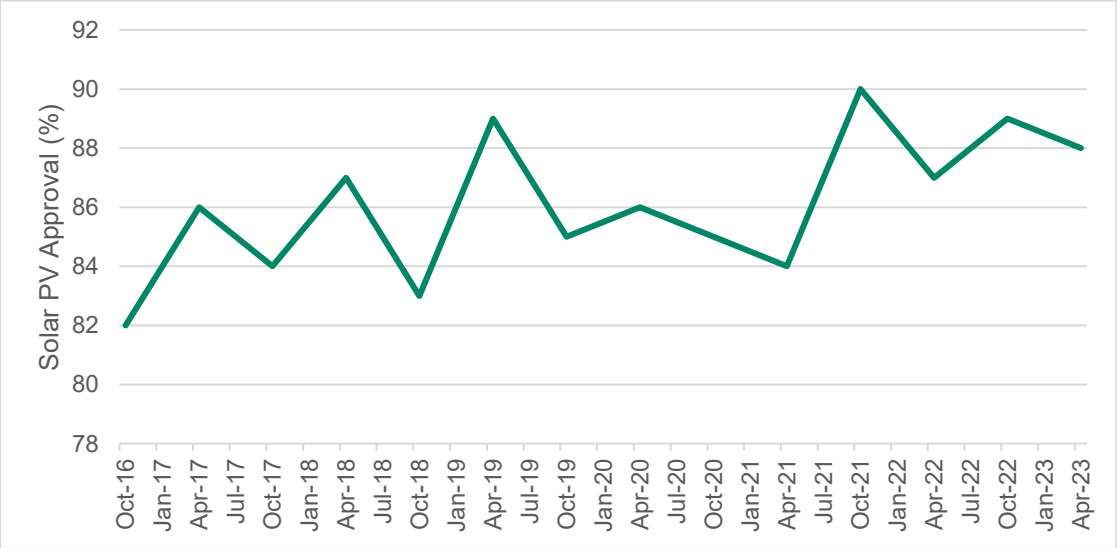


Figure 6: Public attitudes towards solar PV technology as tracked by DESNZ / BEIS

As can be seen in Figure 7, attitudes in favour of solar PV have generally trended upwards in recent years. This indicates that the recent increase in domestic solar PV uptake may be tied to positive public perception in

[4] https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/public-attitudes-tracking-survey#beis-public-attitudes-tracker

conjunction with increasing energy prices. This trend is further verified by DESNZ data, shown in Table 10 which shows public attitudes towards the installation of domestic rooftop solar PV among UK-based owner-occupiers.

Table 10: UK homeowners' likelihood to install solar PV

Year	% likelihood to install Solar PV
2022	66
2023	70

As can be seen in Table 10, there has been a slight increase in owner-occupiers who are in favour of installing domestic solar PV. This is in line with the increase in the number of installations in the UK and is likely to be attributed to increased energy prices and witnessing the positive impact that such installations have had for other members of the local community. With regards to the owner-occupiers who were not in favour of domestic PV installation, the reasons given for being against such installations has been recorded by DESNZ. This data is shown in Table .

Table 11: Reasons for not considering solar PV installation

Reasons for not considering solar systems	% respondents
Too expensive to install	70
Looks unsightly	25
Wouldn't be suitable in my home	20
Not sunny enough in the UK	15
I'm planning to move home	9
Concerned about safety	6
Other reason	7
Don't know	1

As one of the GLA's aims is to increase domestic solar PV uptake in London, as part of the Mayor's Solar Action Plan published in June 2018, these responses identify potential areas of focus for any future phases of STL or alternative approaches for delivering domestic solar PV in London. The high proportion of respondents who are against the installation of domestic solar PV due to high installation price indicates that the GLA is right to pursue STL programmes and policies with the intention of reducing the financial burden on customer. However, it is to be noted that with installation prices across the UK currently at higher levels than before the inception of the STL programme, the price of solar PV installations may still be too high for many potential customers, even with the discounts offered as part of the STL programme. Consequently, alternative or supplementary financial incentives may be required to increase solar PV take-up in the future. This may include a STL programme where GLA partially covers initial costs, with a monthly repayment plan set up between the customer and the GLA. Additionally, STL programmes which make it more financially beneficial to sell electricity back to the grid may also increase uptake.

The second largest group of respondents who are against the installation of domestic solar PV could potentially be impacted by a different marketing approach. Respondents who were against installation for aesthetic reasons, safety concerns and concerns around the level of sunlight in the UK would likely be impacted by marketing campaigns specifically designed to address these concerns and explain the benefits of domestic solar PV. Furthermore, GLA may be able to reduce the number of respondents who stated they had unsuitable homes for domestic solar PV by working with local planning authorities and the national government to implement policies to remove barriers caused by planning constraints in London. This would then need to be marketed to ensure households were made aware of the reduced planning constraint. It is also to be noted that the DESNZ public attitudes report highlights 24% of those against domestic solar PV could be swayed by high uptake in their local community. This highlights that an increase in uptake of solar PV in one area would likely result in further uptake within that area in the following years.

4.1.5 STL programme performance

The STL programme was created to advocate greater solar utilisation as part of the Mayor's plans to make London a zero-carbon city. The group-buying programme enabled local residents to install solar systems in their homes at an affordable price with the goal of achieving 1.5GW by 2030 as part of the Mayor of London's future strategy. STL has contributed 7.6MW (0.51%) towards this target to date. Following this ambition for London, the GLA adopted iChoosr's business model, which had proven successful in the Netherlands to grow the region's capabilities.

Beginning in early 2018, the STL programme initiated a pilot and five boroughs signed up. The development of the STL programme involved several key stages, each associated with a specific decision document. They can be found listed below:

1. **MD1289:** This document approved the budget for the RE:NEW Programme, which aimed to increase domestic rooftop solar installation rates in London.
2. **ADD2187:** The STL pilot was launched under this document. This pilot tested the collective purchasing approach. The STL programme marketing and project management were funded through the existing RE:NEW Programme budget, approved by the Mayor under MD1289.
3. **MD2503:** Following the successful pilot, which resulted in 624 new solar installations with price reductions of up to a third, it was proposed that GLA widen the STL programme to more boroughs. This decision was made under MD2503.
4. **MD2708:** Approval for Phase 4 of the Solar Together Programme with funding allocated from the New Green Deal
5. **MD2896:** Approval for Phase 5 of the Solar Together Programme
6. **MD3151:** Approval for GLA funding expenditure to support Phase 4 and 5 customers, following the decision of GET UK to instruct a liquidator.

Table sets out data showing the performance of each phase of the STL programme, obtained from the six documents listed above.

Table 2: STL scheme overview per phase of STL

	Phase 1&2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5
Target installation	300-1,200 (total of 150-600 per year)	700-1,000	1,100-1,600	1,600
Installations achieved (estimate)	624	359	1,150	1103
Phase duration	21 months	12 months	12 months	30 months
Average installations per month	29.7	29.9	95.8	36.7
Percentage of complaints	<10%	<10%	22.7%	16.6%
Capital expenditure	£50K	£200K	£420K	£686.5K – of which £550K was used for closedown costs (£500K for customer support such as GET UK deposit protection payments and £50K for further STL programme closedown costs) with the remainder covering marketing costs for the scheme.

The data in Table 12 shows that the STL programme failed to achieve its installation targets in two out of the four phases. It is likely that Phase 5 only achieved its target due to the lengthy extension of the phase. While the number of installations in Phases 4 and 5 was double the number in the early phases of the programme, likely driven by the increased number of boroughs signed-up by the start of Phase 4, the average rate of installations per month decreased. This demonstrates that the performance of the programme did not improve over its duration.

The level of customer satisfaction associated with the STL programme decreased in Phases 4 and 5 due to market factors (supply chain disruption due to Covid-19 and increased energy prices) and the failure of GET UK, which will likely have reduced the number of installations in these phases.

4.1.5.1 Delivery analysis

Table 13 sets out the number of resident registrations, acceptances and installations across the phases of the STL programme. Acceptance and installation rates compared to other Solar Together programmes are shown in Section 4.1.2, Table 15.

- Registrations refers to residents who received marketing communications and decided to register for the STL programme.
- Acceptances refers to the residents that had registered and subsequently accepted an offer for installation when contacted by iChoosr.
- Installations refers to the number of residents who had solar PV installed.

Customers who decided not to follow on with the final installation after either the registration or acceptance stage were classed as cancellations or declines. Acceptance and installation rates are calculated as a percentage of registrations.

Table 13: Registrations, acceptance and installations

Phase	Registrations	Acceptance	Installations	% acceptance	% installations
Phase 1	3,665	991	291	27.0%	7.9%
Phase 2	5,062	1,273	330	25.1%	6.5%
Phase 3	6,736	974	359	14.5%	5.3%
Phase 4	24,672	3,277	1,150	13.3%	4.7%
Phase 5	32,195	3,561	1103	11.1%	3.4%
TOTAL	**72,330**	**10,076**	**3,233**	**13.9%**	**4.5%**

Across the five phases of the STL programme both the acceptance rate and the number of installations as a proportion of registrations decreased, demonstrating the challenges associated with the programme. For Phase 5, installation data incorporates both phase 5 and the programme extension data for installations, to incorporate customers that were transferred to a new supplier after the administration of GET UK.

GET UK's failure is likely to have had a negative impact on public opinion during Phase 4, impacting the success of the programme. 'No faith in supplier' as a reason for cancellation increased from 1.0% in 2019 to 6.1% in 2021 and remained at 4.1% in 2022. This dropped to 0.7% by 2023 when the issues with GET UK began to be rectified. This data was provided by iChoosr based on reasons customers gave for cancellation. A further breakdown of the cancellations can be found in Table 14.

Table 14: STL programme cancellation

Cancellation reasons	2019	2021	2022	2023
Additional mandatory costs	6.2%	2.7%	0.3%	6.5%
Changed mind	28.0%	67.2%	58.7%	58.3%
Fewer panels offered	5.4%	5.9%	8.5%	5.7%
No faith in supplier	1.0%	6.1%	4.1%	0.7%
No contract	11.0%	13.2%	22.9%	16.6%
Other	28.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Roof unsuitable	19.7%	5.0%	5.5%	12.3%

In Phases 1 and 2, technical surveys that identified unsuitable roofing and delays with local planning submissions were the primary factors for dropout rates, however these issues appear to have been addressed by Phase 3.

4.1.5.2 London's performance vs other regions

The STL programme has a higher dropout rate compared to STL programmes in other regions. In part, this can be attributed to the inherent challenges associated with installing rooftop solar in London.

London's large population and significant urban density has proved difficult for many installers to navigate installations, compared to more rural regions in the UK. Examples of deterrents include shading and complex roofs, higher instances of loft conversion, difficulties with access, greater need for complex scaffolding, including scaffolding through properties and transportation, logistics, permit and parking challenges.

Table 15 compares London's Solar Together scheme's acceptance and installation rates against Solar Together programmes in other regions, showing the lower level of success in London.

Table 15: London's acceptance and installation against Solar Together programmes in other regions

	October 2019		February 2021		March 2022	
	London	**Other**	**London**	**Other**	**London**	**Other**
Acceptance rate	15.6%	15.8%	13.3%	18.7%	11.1%	19.0%
Installation rate	34.0%	60.0%	35.0%	45.0%	31.0%	67.0%

4.1.6 Roles and responsibilities

At programme inception, there was a lack of clarity on the role and responsibilities of the actors involved in the delivery of the STL programme, including details of interfaces between iChoosr, GLA and the boroughs. Documents such as the Concession Agreement and Grant Funding Agreement partly explain the roles but may not have been comprehensive enough. The Solar Together London Final Audit Report from December 2022 outlines the roles at a programme level but does not provide sufficient detail on commercial responsibilities.

Table 16: Roles and Responsibilities of STL Stakeholders

Roles	Responsibilities
Assistant Director of Environment and Energy – GLA	Signing off on any STL programme before it goes to the Mayor and Corporate Investment Board, such as the contract for iChoosr. Also has responsibility for delivery input, review/sign-off for some correspondence and part of escalation route.
Head of Energy – GLA	Leadership and responsibility for delivery input, review/sign-off for some correspondence and part of escalation route.
Programme Manager – GLA	Overall programme management including drafts, reviews, correspondence, and briefings.
Country Manager and Business Manager - iChoosr	Escalation route, contact for complaints and responsible for communications and marketing in the outreach phase.
Boroughs	Responsible for handling the marketing of the STL programme and monitoring the performance across its customers.

While the role of STL stakeholders and management at the top end are defined as shown in Table ,the roles start to lose structure between the interfaces particularly around the operational and administrative roles further down the supply chain. An example of this can be seen between the iChoosr installers and customers around the handling and resolution of complaints during Phase 4, where no presence of a RACI was found.

An audit undertaken in December 2022 led to roles and responsibilities being defined more clearly.

4.1.6.1 Reporting and communication

General reporting and communication from iChoosr to GLA in Phases 4 and 5 has been more detailed and focused than in previous phases, and has included analysis of installation, complaints and customer experience. However, the nature of the reporting structure and manner in which the data is presented has been inconsistent.

Inaccurate data reporting relating to GET UK's performance during Phases 4 and 5 was systematically reported from iChoosr to the GLA prior to GET UK going into administration in January 2023. However, the GLA were conducting an audit to improve data quality and collection prior to GET UK's administration.

4.1.6.2 Resolving issues associated with GET UK's failure

The GLA's collaboration with iChoosr to address issues associated with GET UK's failure was efficient. Regular meetings and enhanced engagement between the parties ensured development and ongoing monitoring of an action plan, fostering a proactive approach to solving the issues.

The actions undertaken by iChoosr and the GLA were effective in addressing immediate customer concerns. These actions included:

- Reinforcing customer services
- Facilitating the migration of installations to other installers
- Supporting customers with unprotected deposits (MD3151 approved up to £500k funding to provide this support)

Some challenges were encountered in developing the action plan, largely driven by a lack of accurate reporting to provide management information and provide a sound basis for determining the actions to take. In addition, the concession agreement did not include any provisions obligating iChoosr to develop improvement plans to address service failure, meaning the GLA had to rely on iChoosr's goodwill in supporting the action plan. These factors emphasise the need for enhancements to the concession agreement, including more prescriptive reporting requirements, defined minimum standards and service levels, and the need for improvement plans to rectify any underperformance.

4.1.7 Lessons learned and recommendations

Lessons learned have been captured by both GLA and iChoosr at key points of the STL programme. iChoosr have developed a series of documents detailing the lessons learned from various phases of the STL programme. These findings reflect the outcomes for Phases 1 and 2, known as "Solar Together London End of Scheme Review and Learnings" as well as updates for Phase 4 in "Solar Together London Update and Lessons Learned", dated August 2022.

The key learnings that iChoosr identified for Phases 1 and 2 in the "Solar Together London End of Scheme Review and Learnings" document include:

- **Additional costs** – the difficulty of installation in London has provided non-standard installations for customers which caused an increase in installation costs for some residents.
- **Customers unsure how to size their roof** – there was discrepancy between the number of panels residents expected to be able to install and the actual number it was possible to install.

- **Customers are unaware of planning requirements** – residents who live in listed buildings had to go through additional barriers associated with planning permission, leading to additional costs.
- **Poor communication from installers** – where installers had to amend delivery dates or change requirements, communication with residents was poor.

The document dated August 2022 was produced at the time the STL programme was dealing with the failure of GET UK, which had resulted in a high level of complaints. The document sets out the improvement initiatives which iChoosr planned to incorporate in Phase 5, including:

- Encouraging local installer participation due to improved access and logistics.
- Increased focus on installer onboarding, with iChoosr doubling their management team to focus on thoroughly onboarding installers to ensure best practice delivery.
- Using prescriptive communication templates for installers to ensure higher quality customer service.
- Splitting the regions between more than one installer so that installation can occur faster.
- Adopting a 25% booking deposit payment option for installers, facilitating a protected deposit by the Home Insulation & Energy Systems (HIES) Quality Assured Contractors Scheme and more options for installers to participate.

The lessons learned by iChoosr and the GLA were incorporated into the programme and benefited delivery in the latter phase. In hindsight, if lessons learned had been incorporated into project governance in the early phases, the programme may have seen better outcomes. For example, there was no well-defined complaints process, but this was strengthened after major problems occurred with GET UK. Financial health checks for suppliers were moved to a quarterly instead of yearly basis and so GET UK's failure resulted in financially more secure suppliers being selected for Phase 5. This is caveated by GET UK still being included in Phase 5 despite their delivery issues in Phase 4.

4.1.8 Risk

Risk tracking and reporting was introduced in Phases 4 and 5. The programme would have benefited from a risk management framework being implement from programme inception, as identified in the December 2022 audit report. However, despite this recommendation, there appears to be little evidence of a programme risk register being used as a proactive management tool to benefit the delivery of the programme.

4.2 Commercial and supply chain workstream

This section contains the commercial and supply chain workstream evaluation, including reviews of the commercial arrangements, contractual model, GLA grant agreement, iChoosr supplier agreement, Solar Together London terms and conditions and the reverse auction model.

4.2.1 Commercial arrangements

4.2.1.1 STL delivery model

This section aims to describe the STL delivery model across various phases of the STL programme, encompassing STL programme drivers and pivotal milestones in mobilisation and implementation. The STL programme was aligned with the broader SAP, indicating a strategic approach to increasing solar deployment in London. The plan anticipated the running of the STL initiative, reflecting its integral role in the city's environmental strategy to enable private investment from the able-to-pay sector. This strategic alignment underscored the STL programme's importance in achieving London's solar energy goals.

The STL programme delivery model aligned with the Solar Together initiative, a turnkey service provided by iChoosr, where local authorities worked with iChoosr to promote Solar Together London in their respective areas. iChoosr is a Dutch company with presence in multiple markets and experience in group-buying. They have been organising Solar Together programmes with boroughs and other community leaders in the UK since 2012, including over 160 councils to deliver collective energy switching Solar Together programmes nationwide.

The STL programme was a collective purchasing programme designed to increase domestic rooftop solar installations in London across able-to-pay customers and private landlords, and aimed to:

- **Create demand:** Encouraged customers and private landlords to invest in solar systems by using crafted communications and marketing strategies.
- **Collective approach:** Through the STL online portal, customers and private landlords registered their interest with STL to install solar PV on their roofs, aiming to secure a better price within the defined quality standards through collective purchasing.
- **Reverse auction:** For each phase, a procurement event was hold by STL where pre-approved solar PV installers bid to offer installations at the lowest price considering the quality standards defined.

- **Supporting growth:** To indirectly grow the solar supply chain in London.

The STL programme retained the same delivery models across all five phases, however lessons learned were implemented between phases, mainly relating to customer communication and engagement.

The commercial model for the STL programme was defined as follows:

1) iChoosr collected and retained a fee per installation (value not disclosed) from the installers per installation.
2) iChoosr collected a royalty fee of £70 per installation from the Installer (the fee is £70 in respect of each customer, of which £20 was paid to the relevant borough and £50 was reserved by the concessionaire on trust for GLA which aimed to contribute toward the extension of the STL programme by GLA).

The fee structure represented a low financial risk model for GLA, as the payment for iChoosr services were facilitated through the retained fee collected from the installers. This arrangement mitigates the immediate financial burden on GLA, with their only committed costs being related to marketing expenses aimed at promoting the STL programme.

For iChoosr, the commercial model of the STL programme also represented a low financial risk, as it doesn't necessitate a substantial operational investment to deliver the service. The anticipated costs for the STL programme primarily revolve around overhead expenses required to set up the online portal, conduct auctions, provide customer service, support communications and manage contracts. Additionally, iChoosr benefits from economies of scale derived from already established structures used to support other Solar Together programmes.

Both GLA and iChoosr benefited from a financial arrangement that minimises upfront costs and leverages existing delivery infrastructure, ensuring a mutually beneficial and sustainable partnership. However, the apparent low-risk model may have acted as a deterrent to ensuring the delivery model contained suitable contractual mechanisms and levers to ensure parties were incentivised to maximise the outcomes of the STL programme, while properly minimising all risks. It is crucial that the contractual agreements between GLA and iChoosr hold each party accountable and incentivise them to prioritise the success of the STL programme. For example, the agreement should have included performance metrics, penalties for underperformance and mechanisms for risk allocation, ensuring iChoosr had 'skin in the game' to ensure the success of STL.

4.2.1.2 Delivery model overview

The delivery model for the STL scheme, aimed at providing outsourced services to facilitate access to discounted solar installers for householders, was designed to align with its aims. By outsourcing, the GLA effectively reduced its operational and financial responsibilities while leveraging market expertise. However, this model introduced certain challenges, particularly in the GLA's ability to influence the supply chain and manage installer performance.

The customer user journey of the delivery model offered a relatively straightforward process from customer registration through to the completion of installations. This journey is structured to provide clear access points and robust customer support services at various stages, enhancing user experience and engagement. It features key aspects such as ease of registration, simplifying the initial sign-up process for customers; clear communication, ensuring customers are well-informed from registration through installation via defined communication channels; and accessible support, with customer service readily available at various stages to promptly address queries and issues, all of which are critical for maintaining customer satisfaction and trust in the scheme. However, the model reveals a significant dependency on the capabilities of installers to provide customer service during the installation phase. This reliance has resulted in some challenges related to the quality of support offered with the variability in installers' customer service skills leading to inconsistent service experiences for customers. Some had received excellent support, while others had encounter unresponsive or inadequate service, this was particular evident on Phase 4 and Phase 5.

Looking at the key components of the STL delivery model:

4.2.1.2.1 Marketing and communication

The model promoted a collaborative approach between iChoosr, the GLA and boroughs, combining knowledge and expertise to develop effective marketing and communication strategies. These efforts, supported by shared costs between GLA and boroughs, incorporate lessons learned from other similar schemes. The scheme featured a dedicated web portal that supports customers from registration through to the completion of installations, enhancing the user journey and engagement.

4.2.1.2.2 Installer selection via auction

Installers were sourced by iChoosr through a reverse auction process. While effective at driving lower prices for customers, the auction approach could potentially affect the overall quality of service. A detail review of the auction model is available below in the section 4.2.4.

4.2.1.2.3 Customer service

STL's model included customer service support provided by iChoosr throughout all phases of the scheme, with installers taking over during the installation phase. Although this setup was in line with contractual expectations, it has highlighted issues with the capabilities and capacity of installers to effectively manage customer service, indicating a need for more robust oversight and support mechanisms.

4.2.1.2.4 Scheme administration

The administration of the scheme featured structured reporting and data flows. However, the limited sharing of data and some issues identified in the quality of data shared suggest room for improvement. Performance review mechanisms were in place, which could have benefit from further enhancement for increased robustness, especially between the GLA and iChoosr.

Overall, while the STL programme's delivery model effectively used outsourced services to reduce GLA's direct responsibilities, it necessitated stronger controls and clearer standards within the contractual framework to mitigate risks and enhance scheme performance.

4.2.1.3 STL programme delivery model development and approval

The STL programme delivery model was conceived to facilitate increased private investment by incentivising participation through discounted pricing. The design of the delivery model closely mirrored the turnkey product already commercialised by iChoosr,, Solar Together. The GLA selected iChoosr's service model as a means to deliver its solar policy objectives.

No formal assessment of alternative delivery models was conducted by GLA during the development of the pilot phases or through a Delivery Model Assessment (DMA)[5]. Upon review of available documentation, it appears that design decisions for the delivery model were justified based on the perceived benefits observed in iChoosr's provision of Solar Together for other local authorities and their performance and relationship with boroughs in other energy related STL programmes. More information on the justification to utilise iChoosr and the Solar Together model is available in section 4.2.1.7.1.

The approval of the delivery model and STL programme complied with GLA's governance. Delegated authority and approval gateways and approval decisions were registered as per:

- **ADD2187:** Approval of exemption from GLA's Contracts and Funding Code for contract award without a competitive procedure to iChoosr for Phases 1 and 2, and approval of expenditure up to £50,000 from the RE:NEW budget to cover STL promotion costs (21/12/2017).
- **MD2503:** Approval for extension of the STL programme for three more years comprising Phases 3 - 5 and exemption from GLA's Contracts and Funding Code for contract award without a competitive procedure to iChoosr (29/07/2019).
- **MD2896:** Approval for expenditure up to £495,000 to support with STL promotion and communication. (25/11/2021)

4.2.1.4 Lessons learned and recommendations

From documentation review and interviews it appears the project team have not identified and assessed various delivery model options capable of achieving the required objectives when designing the STL programme. Instead, the project team opted to replicate the Solar Together turnkey service, assuming it as the sole service requirement and delivery model for GLA's solar system group procurement initiative. Consequently, this directed a strong preference towards iChoosr as the supplier, as they were perceived as the only suitable provider offering the required service. This may have hindered consideration of other potential delivery models and limited market opportunities for other parties to develop capabilities in the sector.

The risk transferred by GLA to iChoosr, and installers posed significant reputational risks. It appears the GLA may not have proportionally considered all potential risks during STL programme design, approval, and delivery, and should have anticipated higher risk factors associated with the risk of poor performance or failure of installers.

While the STL programme's delivery model included appropriate interfaces between parties and suitable contractual vehicles, GLA's contractual terms and conditions related to performance management and installer selection and management were not proportionate with the STL programme's risk level. In addition, they were not capable of ensuring the GLA retained the necessary control levels to influence STL programme delivery.

The GLA are advised to consider whether the level of governance applied led to the selection of the optimum delivery model and associated commercial approach. For clarity, the GLA complied with its governance, including Single Source Justification (SSJ) requirements, at all times. However, by valuing the contract based on GLA expenditure, as opposed to the potential concessionaire revenue, this allowed a less rigorous assurance and approval process to be applied (the governance applied under the GLA's Contracts and Funding code was based on the contract value being between £25k to £150k). The consequence of not applying a more rigorous level of governance, which would have been applied had the contract being valued at >£150k, was that a procurement strategy was not developed, and the contract approval was not subject to Mayoral Decision, which may have been appropriate given the high-profile nature of deploying solar in London.

It is recommended that any final business case seeking approval to award commercial contracts should robustly address key commercial elements such as contractual arrangements, management governance, supplier performance management, change management, risk management and contingency plans.

[5] DMA is an analytical, evidence-based approach to reach a recommendation on how a contracting authority should structure the delivery of a project or programme. The DMA process is defined in the Government Sourcing Playbook.

Using pilot phases to test the STL delivery model during Phases 1 and 2 was a positive strategy aligned with best practices advised under the Green Book. This approach enabled the team to mitigate risks and learn lessons to apply to future phases of the STL programme. The pilot phases offered additional benefits:

- **Risk mitigation:** By conducting pilot phases, potential risks associated with the delivery model and the STL programme were identified and addressed in a controlled environment.
- **Learning and adaptation:** Lessons learned from these initial stages were used to refine processes, improve efficiency, and enhance overall effectiveness in subsequent phases, an examples was the changes conducted in the marketing and engagement strategy introduced following the phase 1.
- **Demonstration of feasibility:** Successfully completing pilot phases demonstrated the feasibility and viability of the delivery model and the STL programme, providing confidence to stakeholders and garner support for scaling up the initiative.

4.2.1.5 Contractual model

This section presents a comprehensive evaluation of the contracts between the parties involved in the delivery of the STL programme. The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, and fairness of the contract terms, and to identify areas for potential improvement.

The contracts reviewed outline the complete agreement for the provision of solar systems under the STL programme. They cover a wide range of aspects, from the auction process and customer engagement to quality control and complaints management arrangements.

In the following sections, each contract is analysed, key findings identified, and their strengths, weaknesses and risks examined.

This evaluation was conducted through a desktop review of the contract templates and support documentation shared by the GLA, public sector procurement and industry best practices like the Green Book and Renewable Energy Consumer Code (RECC) contract model, and interviews conducted with iChoosr and the GLA programme manager. Significant elements within some contracts were redacted and it was not possible to conduct an interview with TfL's procurement team and installers, limiting the ability to evaluate certain elements.

4.2.1.6 Overview of the contractual model

The contractual structure for the STL programme involved a tiered arrangement where the GLA outsourced the service and scheme administration to iChoosr through a concession contract. iChoosr then contracted installers via an auction procedure, who subsequently engaged directly with householders under terms predefined by iChoosr. This model is in line with the GLA's strategy to fully outsource service delivery and is consistent with other similar solar together schemes.

The chosen contractual model was appropriate given the GLA's preference for outsourcing the operational aspects of the scheme. This approach enabled the GLA to utilise iChoosr's expertise in managing and administering the scheme, aligning with practices observed in other concession-based schemes where the main supplier manages subsequent supply chain relationships. However, this model introduced several challenges, including:

- Limited GLA Control: The GLA had no direct contractual relationships with the installers, which restricted its ability to influence installer selection or directly manage their performance. This made enforcing consistent quality standards and performance across the scheme more challenging.
- Dependence on iChoosr: The scheme's success heavily relied on iChoosr's performance. Inefficiencies by iChoosr have disproportionately impacted the overall effectiveness of the scheme.

These challenges could have been mitigated by strengthening iChoosr's contractual obligations. Incorporating stringent supply chain and performance standards in the concession agreement with iChoosr would have been beneficial. This should have included robust mechanisms such as damages for underperformance and detailed service level agreements (SLAs) to ensure accountability.

Considering the scope of the scheme and delivery model, it is essential for householders to contract directly with the installers due to the legal complexities associated with solar installations set out by the regulators, including liabilities, warranties, and insurances. This direct contractual relationship ensured that householders had a clear and enforceable recourse in the event of any issues related to the quality of installation or non-compliance with safety standards. Additionally, direct contracts allow householders to fully understand the terms and conditions of their warranties and insurance coverages, thereby providing them with the necessary assurances for long-term investment in solar technology.

Alternative contractual models could have granted the GLA greater control, however, this would have required changes to the delivery model selected. For instance, the GLA directly contracting installers through a utilities concession contract and managing scheme administration either in-house or through a delivery partner could have enhanced oversight. However, this model would increase the GLA's administrative burden and financial exposure, requiring careful consideration of the authority's capacity to manage these aspects.

4.2.1.7 Concession contract between the GLA and iChoosr

In this section the concession contract between GLA and iChoosr is evaluated. GLA awarded a concession contract to iChoosr with a commencement date of 13/7/2018 through a single tender procurement for Phase 1 and 2 delivery. In 2019, a new concession agreement was awarded for the delivery of Phase 3 - 5 again through a single tender procurement. The responsibilities of both iChoosr and GLA, as well as the agreed-upon contract terms and conditions, remained consistent between the contract for Phases 1 and 2 and the subsequent contract covering the remaining phases.

As part of the concession contracts the following services were contracted to be provided by iChoosr:

- **Coordination with boroughs and GLA:** Assist in strategy, planning and content of campaign plans for solar system installations.
- **Website provision:** Facilitate customer registration for the STL programme through a website, requiring personal data for determining the best fitting solar system size. Information about the STL programme on the website emphasises that participation does not obligate customers to accept any offer and confirms the terms and conditions of the STL programme.
- **Auction arrangement and management:** Arrange an auction for an all-in turnkey solar system installation, adhering to relevant laws and regulations, using a transparent and objective selection to ensure installers meet minimum standards. Ensure the registration of customers for the auctioning process, accept winning bids and manage installers with possible limitations on participant numbers.
- **Quality control measures:** Implement measures to minimise risks regarding product and work quality, including minimum quality criteria and sample checks.
- **Helpdesk provision:** Offer a helpdesk for telephone and email enquiries related to the STL programme during specified hours.
- **Complaints procedure:** Establish and monitor a robust complaints procedure, and manage outbound service calls for solving problems and informing participants.
- **Local information sessions**: Support boroughs in organising sessions where customers can receive information about their offer.
- **Reporting and management information:** Develop standard reports on participant numbers and acceptances for boroughs and the GLA via an online tool. Provide the GLA with a final evaluation report of the STL programme, including number of participants, registrants and acceptances.
- **FAQs provision:** Provide boroughs with a list of frequently asked questions and responses for routine inquiries about the STL programme.
- **Future STL programme invitations:** Invite customers who decline the winning offer to participate in future phases of the STL programme.
- **Post-STL programme survey:** Conduct a survey of registrants or a sample to obtain views on the STL programme within two months after the acceptance period ends.

In addition to iChoosr's obligations, the concession contract defined GLA as responsible for supporting selected boroughs financially to inform and promote the STL programme. This enabled customers to register their interest via a link on the selected boroughs and GLA websites.

IChoosr's duties focussed on operational execution, supplier management, participant engagement and reporting. The GLA's aim was to promote the STL programme, ensuring accessibility and providing financial support to boroughs for STL programme promotion. These were designed to ensure the STL programme's visibility, smooth operation and effective participant engagement. iChoosr handled the backend operations and direct participant interactions, while GLA and boroughs focus on STL programme promotion and accessibility.

This evaluation has identified findings that created or increased risk to the STL programme and restricted mechanisms to guarantee the anticipated performance standards of the STL programme. The absence of explicit requirements, detailed performance metrics and direct control measures have impacted the STL programme's effectiveness and its intended benefits. Appendix C outlines the principal findings.

4.2.1.7.1 Contract awarding procedure

A concession contract over £5,336,937 (inc. VAT)is subject to the Concession Contracts Regulations 2016 (CCR 2016)[6], meaning the contracting authority is required to issue a concession notice through OJEU to publicise the opportunity. During this evaluation, challenges were encountered in verifying the turnover of the iChoosr concession contract. This data was not provided. Consequently, it cannot be definitively determined whether the value of this concession contract has fallen below the specified threshold, thereby exempting it from the CCR 2016. However, considering GLA's SSJ assumptions for Phases 1 and 2 the exploitation rights granted would have been

[6] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2016/273

below the threshold, with GLA forecast stated as £52,500 in the SSJ as the low estimate, £210,000 as the high estimate and median estimate at £131,250, dependent on the eventual number of installations.

The single tender procurement required exemption from the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code[7] so the GLA could enter into an agreement with iChoosr without a competitive procurement exercise. The approval was conducted through an SSJ in December 2017[8] for Phases 1 and 2 and in April 2019[9] for subsequence phases. These were approved by GLA and Transport for London (TfL) on the basis of installers limitations and experience of iChoosr in delivering the Solar Together product. Completed justification is available in Appendix C.

Award of the concession contract complied with procurement regulations and the project team complied with GLA's internal governance. However, the following lessons learned are applicable:

Market capabilities:

- By not publicly advertising the opportunity, the GLA may have restricted the entry of new Concessionaires into the market. Even if the GLA did not initially recognise a supplier offering the complete suite of services, alternative service management organisations with expertise in the energy sector could have potentially stepped in. These organisations might have developed additional capabilities or established strategic partnerships with specialist entities to fulfil the required services.

Past performance:

- While acceptance and installations rates are essential, they are only part of the factors to evaluating the concession contract's success. Other elements such as customer satisfaction, energy savings, service quality, timeliness of installations, complaints and disputes are critical to fully access iChoosr's and the STL programme's performance.
- By directly awarded a second contract for Phases 3-5 to iChoosr, it appears that the decision-making process did not fully consider iChoosr's performance during the pilot phases and the overall performance of the STL programme. As an example, the available data from the pilot phases highlights concerning drop-off rates within the STL programme. Additional scrutiny would have been beneficial prior to awarding a second contract to iChoosr.

4.2.1.8 GLA's grant agreement

In this section the Grant Agreements awarded by the GLA are evaluated. The Grant Agreements were established between the GLA and the participating boroughs, allowing the GLA to support boroughs with the costs of marketing and communication to promote each phase of the STL programme. The funding awarded by the GLA to the participant boroughs had to be used exclusively to support the STL programme's objectives. It was spent on advertising and media campaigns, as described in the STL programme prospectus, with any changes requiring the GLA's prior written consent. This included producing brochures and posters, establishing information contact points at civic centres or borough contact centres, PR activities in local newspapers, radio, TV and websites, participation in borough events, websites and newsletters, outdoor advertising, using social media platforms and organising information sessions for customers.

The GLA's decision to support the boroughs through marketing initiatives that supported the STL programme was welcomed and enabled benefits, including:

- **Local knowledge**: Boroughs had a deep understanding of their local communities, which was leveraged to tailor marketing initiatives to the specific needs and interests of customers.
- **Increased engagement:** Direct involvement of the boroughs led to increased engagement with the project. Customers were considered more likely to participate by seeing their local government involved and endorsing the initiative as evident on feedback received from houseowners.

As part of the grant agreement conditions, the boroughs were required to establish effective monitoring and financial systems, comply with GLA's requirements, report any financial irregularities immediately, maintain records of all expenditures and allow for GLA inspections and audits. This allowed GLA to act if the grant was not being managed properly. They also had to provide a funding claim accompanied by a progress report and any other required information within 30 days of receipt.

Overall, the grant agreement template used for the STL programme appears to be clear and detailed, outlining the purpose of the grant, the conditions for its use and the requirements for monitoring and compliance. This clarity helps both parties understand their responsibilities. The template includes several measures to ensure accountability, with these measures helping to mitigate the risk of misuse of funds. However, certain risks and gaps were identified that could potentially impact the project's success. These are available in Appendix C.

[7] Section 9 of GLA's Contracts and Funding Code requires, where the expected value of a contract for services is between £25,000 and £150,000, that the services required should be procured competitively.
[8] ADD2187 Solar PV collective purchasing pilot (signed)
[9] Solar Together London Ph 3 SSJ.FINAL

4.2.2 iChoosr supplier agreement

In this section the contract entered into between iChoosr and the installers selected for the installation of solar systems in each of the phases of the STL programme is evaluated.

This contract forms the backbone of the STL programme, outlining the responsibilities and expectations of iChoosr and installers. It not only defines the scope of work but also establishes the terms of engagement between the parties and includes the Solar Together Terms and Conditions (T&C) contract, the template that is required to be used between installers and customers when contracting the installation of the solar systems.

The iChoosr Supplier Agreement appears to be a standard template used across all Solar Together programmes, rather than being specific to the STL programme. It is important to note that significant sections of the contract have been redacted, which may have limited the comprehensiveness of this evaluation.

Appendix C outlines the key findings of the contract review, highlighting key provisions, obligations it imposes on the parties and mechanisms it employs to ensure successful execution of the STL programme. While the agreement discusses quality control, customer satisfaction surveys and complaint handling, explicit service level descriptions are not detailed. The closest references to service levels can be inferred from the Quality Control (Section 9) and Supplier's Customer Engagement After Handover (Section 7), where there is an emphasis on quality and customer satisfaction. The agreement implies service expectations but would have benefit from more detailed Service Level Agreement (SLAs), so parties have aligned expectations regarding service delivery standards.

The contract provides a clause that allows iChoosr to transfer installations to other installers in case of poor performance. Specifically, in the section on ‘Planning and Installations’, it is mentioned that if a supplier fails to achieve its key performance indicators (KPIs) or if a customer notifies iChoosr of being unhappy with the service provided, iChoosr is entitled to inform customers of the details of any other supplier who participated in the relevant auction. This implies that iChoosr has the authority to redirect the work to another supplier should the original supplier not meet the expected standards or KPIs, ensuring project quality and customer satisfaction are maintained. This could have been used when the issues with GET UK were identified. However, considering the light approach to the KPIs or the STL programme phases where a single supplier was awarded, iChoosr’s ability to leverage the mechanisms may have been limited.

4.2.3 Solar Together London terms and conditions

The STL terms and conditions (T&Cs) is a contract document developed by iChoosr that is required to be used by the installers when contracting with customers for the installation of the solar systems.

In the STL programme, the Solar Together T&Cs serve as a foundational document that outlines the legal relationship between the customer/private landlord and the installer selected by iChoosr, and sets expectations regarding the quality of products and level of service provided. The emphasis on warranties, supplier obligations to adhere to quality standards and structured complaint handling mechanisms highlight the STL programme's commitment to delivering quality products and services. Following the review of the Solar Together T&Cs and benchmarking against the RECC Model Contract, key findings from the contract are available in Appendix C.

While the Solar Together T&Cs address most of the expected contractual terms, the contract model is less detailed compared with other industry contract models. Enhancing clarity and specificity regarding supplier obligations, particularly in areas of delay management, quality assurance and financial protections could further align the Solar Together T&Cs with best practice consumer protection and supplier accountability in solar system installations.

4.2.4 Auction model

In this section the key findings related to the auction procedure used to procedure the installers is reviewed. The procurement of solar installation services represents a critical component of the overarching STL programme strategy, aiming to maximise value for the customers involved in the STL programme. This section details the approach adopted by iChoosr for procuring installers, using a two-stage auction procedure designed to ensure quality service and cost-effectiveness. The auction model used is similar to the model used by iChoosr in other Solar Together schemes.

It is important to note that this review of the auction process was limited by the extent of information made available for assessment. Significant portions related to the auction process in the shared documentation were redacted and certain details withheld, citing commercial sensitivity and intellectual property justifications. The description of the competitive procedure methodology provided in the section below is based on iChoosr’s statement. No evidence was provided for this assessment. These constraints may impact the comprehensiveness of this analysis, as insights into critical aspects of the procurement process could not be fully explored.

This analysis has reviewed the requirements of the standard package provided by iChoosr. There were a number of gaps compared to what would typically be expected of a domestic rooftop solar PV specification:

- There is no reference to light induced degradation (LID). This is a standard requirement and should be less than 2%.

- There is no reference to potential induced degradation (PID). PV modules for domestic rooftop installations should be PID resistant and have negligible stray current loss.
- Minimum PV module efficiency is stated to be 18.1%. This is lower than the typical minimum efficiency (>20%).
- Typically, it would be specified that the PV module manufacturer has experience of at least 10 years in manufacturing solar PV modules.
- The inverter efficiency is stated to be 96%. This is lower than the typical minimum efficiency (>98%).
- There is no reference to sizing checks for the inverter. Typically, the installer would be expected to carry out these checks.
- There is no reference to total harmonic distortion. Typically, inverters shall have a total harmonic distortion less than 3%.
- The package states that 'in some cases, it will be necessary to use a separate DC isolator'. Typically, rooftop installations include separate DC isolators in addition to the inverters' built-in DC isolator.
- There are limited requirements regarding the inverter manufacturer. Typically, it would be expected that the inverter manufacturer has at least 10 years of experience in manufacturing inverters.
- There are a number of standard technical requirements for the inverters which are missing, including surge protection devices, under/over frequency protection, undervoltage and anti-islanding.
- The warranty period for the mounting frames is not specified.
- There is no reference to cable sizing and voltage drop calculations for the array.

iChoosr were contacted to provide clarification regarding the requirements of the standard package but were unable to provide any further clarification until the date of completion of this report. It is to be noted that an anonymous installer involved in an iChoosr Solar Together scheme outside London raised concerns with the quality of equipment that would be required to result in a successful bid for the work due to the low costs. This, combined with the limited specifications for the inverters indicate that the cost savings may be due, in part, to the selection of lower quality inverters than is typical for domestic rooftop solar installations.

4.2.4.1 Reverse auction procedure methodology

For each of the STL phases, iChoosr conducted a multi-stage open competitive procedure:

4.2.4.1.1 Stage 1: Pre-qualification of installers

The first stage involved pre-qualification of potential installers. This step was implemented to ascertain technical capability, financial stability and track record of each supplier in delivering similar projects. The pre-qualification stage was described by iChoosr as a five-step qualification process, with each step scored and installers having to achieve a minimum score to pass qualification and be eligible to participate in pricing.

iChoosr has not disclosed the minimum score required for supplier pre-qualification, making it impossible to evaluate the set quality standards or determine if the quality threshold was appropriate for a STL programme with the profile of the STL programme. Nonetheless, there is an indication that the minimum quality score might not have been appropriate, as evidenced by the selection of an installer with a membership application declined by RECC, known performance issues and a high level of complaints in a previous STL phases; GET UK, were still awarded a contract for Phase 5.

The five steps considered were:

- **Minimum criteria:** The aim of step one was to ensure that installers met a set of minimum requirements iChoosr deemed necessary to deliver the required volume of installations in a timely and safe manner. This included provision of MCS certification and either RECC or HEIS membership, CRM software, the ability to provide insurance backed guarantees for workmanship and required insurance policies.
- **Objective criteria:** If installers met the minimum requirements, they were scored on criteria relating to the company's scope, including quality of service and previous track record. They had to provide annual accounts, details of headcount and sub installers, completed domestic installations to date, safety methodology and customer satisfaction measures.
- **Financial due diligence:** iChoosr instructed an independent third party to deliver a screening report. The installer had to provide a corporate structure chart, trade register extracts, annual accounts, certified copies of passports of directors and ultimate beneficial owners of the company.
- **Methodology of approach and risk management:** The installers were required to submit a method of approach outlining STL programme delivery. This included projects goals, planning and cashflow, resourcing, supply chain, quality and logistics. Additionally, installers provided a risk assessment.
- **Interview:** iChoosr conducted interviews with the installer to review qualifications and answer remaining questions.

4.2.4.1.2 Stage 2: tendering on price through auction

Following the pre-qualification stage, shortlisted installers were invited to participate in a reserve auction price competitive procedure, where only pricing was considered to award the contract. The auction was designed to be transparent and fair, fostering a competitive environment that encouraged submission of the best possible bids. In this pricing stage, iChoosr would create a package of products and workmanship, referred to as the Standard Package, and determine its cost using the MCS's average costs from the last six months for the items included in the Standard Package. iChoosr would then invite the shortlisted installers to submit a fixed price proposal for this Standard Package, benchmarked against the determined packaged cost, and award the contract to the tender offering the lowest price. For extra items not included in the Standard Package, installers were required to submit a price as part of the tender but this was not considered as part of the basket price evaluated. Bid validation involved iChoosr interrogating the supply chain arrangements and pricing to ensure viability.

4.2.4.2 Auction competition outcomes

Table 17 offers insights into the participation and contract awards for installers during the auctions for Phases 3 - 5. These figures indicate a robust number of installers engaged in each auction phase, reflecting a healthy market interest, and fostering competitive dynamics. However, analysis on the auction robustness is limited by the lack of comprehensive data and the lack of opportunity to conduct interviews with installers. Consequently, the depth of market interest over successive phases and the ability to determine whether installers were consistently re-engaging with the STL programme or choosing to exit after initial involvement cannot be ascertained.

Table 17: Number of installers involved in STL Phases 3-5

STL programme	Stage 1 installers pre-qualification	Stage 2 installers shortlisted	Awarded installers	Awarded installers
Phase 3	15	6	2	First 4 Solar and Spirit Energy
Phase 4	20	7	1	GET UK
Phase 5	13	9	3	Dynamis, Solar Bureau and GET UK

In the allocation of installer contracts across the different phases, the number of installers awarded in Phases 3 - 5 aligned with the STL programme's demand profile, however, it was not possible to confirm the reason why in Phase 4 only a single installer was awarded. Distributing contracts among multiple installers introduces redundancy within the STL programme, which serves to reduce the impact of any single supplier's underperformance or potential exit from the market. This approach inherently builds in a risk mitigation factor by providing alternative options for service continuity.

However, the decision to award a contract to a sole supplier in Phase 4 introduced heightened risk. This approach materialised into tangible problems when the chosen installer failed to meet performance expectations, leading to delayed installations and a significant volume of customer complaints. Having a single installer underscores the value of maintaining a diverse supplier base to ensure service resilience.

The marketplace volatility has been demonstrated by the situation with First 4 Solar, which in addition to GET UK, is now in administration. This presents challenges for customers, particularly concerning the insurance and warranty coverage for the solar installations they have procured, underscoring the need for robust contingency planning in future phases of the STL programme.

Savings from the auction procedures were documented by iChoosr throughout the various phases. However, access to the detailed evidence regarding iChoosr's savings calculations was not granted. Nevertheless, considering the benchmark analysis, which considers STL's agreed costs and the MCS average costs datasets in section 4.1.2, it is reasonable to conclude that the auction has yielded significant savings for consumers.

4.2.4.3 Utilisation of the auction model overview

Considering the STL delivery model and the key objective of achieving the lowest possible price for the quality standards defined by iChoosr at the supplier competition, the utilisation of the auction model seems proportional and suitable. The auction approach was able to drive the agreed cost of the measures down from the indicative price and offer savings to the homeowners enrolled in the scheme.

The table below provide strengths and weakness of the auction models and when may or may not be suitable to use the model.

Table 18: Strengths and Weakness and When to Use - Auction Model

Strengths	Weakness
• Competitive Pricing: Auctions inherently drive competition among suppliers, potentially lowering costs of the solar measures procured. • Assured Minimum Quality and Capability: Since suppliers have been pre-qualified for quality,	• Quality Concerns: Even with pre-qualification, there is a risk that suppliers might cut corners to win the bid. Ensuring quality standards through the project duration remains a challenge.

capability, and capacity, the auction focuses solely on price. This ensures that potentially only competent suppliers participate, maintaining the required standards for STL while prioritising the price element. • Transparency: Auctions can be designed to be transparent, reducing the risk of corruption and favouritism. All pre-qualified suppliers have a fair chance to win the contract based on clear price criteria. • Speed of Procurement: Auctions can be relatively quick to execute once the process is set up, especially compared to methods like competitive procedure with negotiation which may require extensive proposal evaluations and negotiations. Once suppliers are pre-qualified, the auction can be conducted swiftly, leading to faster procurement decisions. • Innovation: Competitive environments often stimulate innovation. Suppliers may seek more efficient methods and technologies to offer the best value within the constraints of the maximum price. • Market Discovery: Auctions help discover the market price for services and goods within a controlled range, providing valuable data for future procurement strategies.	• Complexity: Setting up and managing an auction can be complex and resource-intensive. It requires careful planning and execution, particularly in defining the maximum price and ensuring fair competition. • Barrier to Entry: Smaller suppliers might find it difficult to compete in an auction environment, especially if they lack the resources to match the economies of scale of larger competitors. • Market Fluctuations: The auction model may not always respond well to market fluctuations, particularly in industries with volatile pricing or rapidly changing technologies. • Focus on Price Limiting Value for Money: While price is a crucial factor, an excessive focus on it can limit value for money. The auction model might overlook the unique capabilities and innovative approaches of suppliers that could offer better long-term value, even if their upfront costs are slightly higher.
When It Might Be Appropriate	**When It Might Not Be Appropriate**
• Mature Markets: In mature markets where there are multiple suppliers with proven track records, auctions can drive competitive pricing without significant risk to quality. • Standardised Products: When the products or services are standardised and there is little variation in quality, auctions can be very effective. • Clear Specifications: When the project specifications are clear and well-defined, reducing the risk of misunderstandings or variations in bids. • Focus on Price: Auctions are highly suitable when the focus is on price as it drives competition among suppliers, leading to lower prices. This is particularly effective when cost reduction is a primary goal.	• High Complexity Projects: For highly complex projects requiring specialised skills and innovation, an auction model might not yield the best outcomes as it could undervalue unique capabilities and innovative approaches. • Emerging Markets: In emerging markets where there are fewer suppliers and the market is still developing, auctions might lead to unsustainably low bids and potential project failures. • Quality-Sensitive Projects: When quality is paramount and hard to quantify, other procurement methods, such as direct negotiations or fixed-price contracts, might be more suitable. A supplier with a lower bid might win despite having less experience or lower-quality standards compared to a slightly more expensive but superior competitor.

While auctions can be very effective for driving down prices in a competitive environment, alternative procurement methods like competitive dialogue, competitive procedure with negotiation have their own advantages and are better suited to different types of projects. The choice of procedure depends on factors such but not limited to the complexity of the project, the need for innovation, the number of available suppliers, market capacity and capability and the importance of quality versus price. The competitive process to be used should be defined within the procurement strategy to support the decision-making process as the selection of the right procurement method is crucial to achieving the best outcomes for each specific situation. Considering the importance and focus of price for STL, the utilisation of the auction model was capable to enable this key objective.

4.2.4.4 Lessons learned and recommendations

Following the challenges encountered with GET UK's insolvency, iChoosr indicated that the auction qualification process from 2023 onwards was enhanced with new procedures. These appear to be positive and appropriate for mitigating risks associated with the awarding of contracts to installers. They also reflect iChoosr's commitment to implementing additional safeguards based on lessons learned from past experiences.

- The frequency of independent financial health checks on active supplier installers has been increased from annually to quarterly.
- The scope of checks carried out by the independent financial due diligence provider has been expanded to include more thorough examinations of company shareholders for the installers.
- Input from industry stakeholders has been increased to bolster the qualification process, including enhanced pre-qualification assessments in alignment with MCS and RECC standards.
- Installers are required to re-qualify for subsequent phases of the STL programme, with their performance in prior STL phases and any outstanding incomplete volumes affecting their eligibility for future phases.

- More stringent controls have been put in place regarding an installer's ability to requalify while concurrently delivering installation from a previous STL phase.
- KPIs now factor in a repeat installer's performance, encompassing customer satisfaction scores, volumes of complaints, installation quality and the findings from annual financial due diligence reports and/or quarterly risk assessments and financial health checks.
- The number of installations an installer is permitted to undertake within a single STL phase has been reduced.
- New installers are strictly limited to 250 installations during each 6-month delivery period of an STL phase.
- The results from the quarterly risk assessments and financial health checks now play a role in determining an installer's capacity limits for future STL phases.

4.2.5 Supply Chain Outlook

There were disruptions to the supply chain as a result of external factors, including: energy price rises, the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine. It is to be noted that these external factors may have temporarily impacted the delivery of STL however, installations were able to restart quickly after the initial Covid-19 lockdown.

4.3 Policy and regulatory workstream

This section comprises a review of the external regulatory bodies involved in the domestic solar PV industry, with a particular focus on the extent to which these bodies interact with installers and how regularly installers are assessed by such bodies. Three external bodies have been identified as STL stakeholders: Micro-Certification Scheme (MCS), Renewable Energy Consumer Code (RECC) and The Home Insulation & Energy Systems (HIES) Quality Assured Contractors Scheme. Registration with MCS and either HIES or RECC was a minimum requirement for any installer to be eligible for any phase of Solar Together London.

4.3.1 MCS

MCS typically take on a passive role in their involvement with solar PV installers, defining, maintaining, and improving standards for products, installers and their installations. Members of MCS have demonstrated that they are registered with a recognised Consumer Code (RECC/HIES) as well as completing an installation to the minimum requirements of the MCS standards. Registered installer assessments are undertaken by certifying bodies and the Consumer Code with which they are registered. The Consumer Codes undertake reviews of installers as a financial entity, with certifying bodies reviewing compliance with the MCS standards.

Typically, the certifying body undertakes assessments of the installers' processes annually to ensure they remain in line with the minimum standards of the MCS scheme. These assessments are only more frequent if an incident has occurred which raises concerns to MCS or the certifying body.

MCS were not involved with the STL programme until issues arose regarding GET UK's delivery. Following these issues, MCS became involved with GET UK to ensure they met the minimum requirements for MCS certification. A withdrawal of membership from MCS would have ended the GET UK STL contract as MCS membership was a minimum requirement for participation in the STL programme. MCS suspended GET UK's membership and confirmed that the suspension was due to the fact that GET UK were no longer registered with a recognised Consumer Code. This indicates that GET UK failed an assessment from the Consumer Code with which they were registered, rather than a failure relating to the MCS minimum standards.

It is to be noted that MCS are currently working on an update to their assessment process. This update predates the issues with the delivery of the STL programme and is not considered to be a reaction to the issues encountered with GET UK.

4.3.2 Consumer Codes

The Consumer Codes involved with the STL programme were RECC and HIES. These Consumer Codes operate in parallel with MCS, reviewing installers as a financial entity. Typically, an installer will be registered with a Consumer Code prior to MCS certification and will apply to MCS through the Consumer Code.

RECC were involved in the STL programme in an indirect role, reviewing domestic PV installers with regards their marketing, pre-contractual information, quotations, deposits, contracts, guarantees and after-sales service prior to MCS certification. Following registration with RECC, installers are assessed to ensure that their documentation and procedures continue to meet the requirements of the code. The regularity of these assessments is devised based on risk, with conditional membership offered for installers who require close monitoring. Typically, the audits and reviews undertaken by RECC are desk-based. Additionally, RECC provided desk-based checks for iChoosr on their selected installers which had not been registered with RECC. While GET UK were not registered with RECC, it is to be noted that RECC flagged concerns with them to iChoosr prior to their selection for the STL

programme. Furthermore, RECC stated that GET UK had previously applied for registration with RECC and been unsuccessful.

HIES are the alternative Consumer Code through which installers can become MCS certified. It is to be noted that HIES differ from RECC in that they act in a dual role, as both a Consumer Code for installers and as a provider of insurance backed guarantees. The accreditation and assessment process for HIES members is continuously improved to ensure that members are meeting standards for consumer protection. The assessment process includes a review of the company's and director's backgrounds, a review of policies and insurance to ensure up to date documentation and verification from technical certification bodies (MCS) that minimum technical standards are being met. Typically, HIES members are subject to an annual desk-based audit, with more regular audits undertaken if concerns are raised. HIES stated that they are notified automatically by external sources if there are any changes to an installer's status. These automatic notifications may relate to the company credit rating or a high volume of negative reviews. HIES were the Consumer Code through which GET UK were registered. In the stakeholder interview with HIES, HIES were unable to provide specific details relating to the assessment or suspension of GET UK's membership. By withdrawing GET UK's membership of HIES, this led to them being automatically disqualified from MCS certification. This resulted in GET UK being unable to complete MCS certified installations as required by the STL programme minimum requirements. It has not been made clear what triggered GET UK's suspension from HIES.

4.3.2.1 Recommendations

In order to reduce the risk of future issues arising such as those encountered with GET UK, the following changes to the regulatory bodies are recommended:

MCS

- MCS should undertake a thorough review of the minimum requirements for accreditation with the Consumer Codes.
- MCS should develop the capability to undertake assessment of prospective members' 'in-house', or work with the Consumer Codes to increase the robustness of their standards.
- MCS should increase the frequency of assessment of existing members.

HIES

- HIES should work to increase the robustness of their minimum standards to be at least in line with the minimum standards of RECC.
- HIES should undertake a thorough review of their membership process to reduce the risk of similar issues arising in future as with GET UK.

4.4 Customer experience and marketing workstream

This section comprises an evaluation of the customer experience and marketing data, including issues and complaints through collated customer and borough feedback.

4.4.1 Issues and complaints

The GLA faced some risks and challenges in managing the STL programme, such as supply chain constraints, limited market maturity, high level of complaints, poor quality service provision and lack of contractual provisions to deal with external risks. Complaint data provided comprehensive understanding of the nature of the complaints, however, no additional information was obtained to understand the length for complaint resolution and customer satisfaction.

4.4.1.1 Customer feedback

iChoosr, along with the GLA, have decided against conducting customer satisfaction surveys as part of this evaluation process. As such, the analysis in this section is based on the information provided by iChoosr. This information is not representative of the entire customer base as the surveys were only issued to customers that accepted an offer for installation. Customers who engaged with the STL programme but did not proceed to accept and offer were not surveyed.

During Phases 1 and 2, iChoosr created a customer satisfaction survey to obtain feedback from customers. Surveys were issues in all phases to all customers who accepted an offer for installation.

In Phase 1 and 2, these surveys achieved a 48% and 47% response rate respectively. In Phase 1, 50% of customers indicated a satisfaction score of 8/10 or above. This increased to 70% Phase 2.

In Phase 4, customer complaints rose from an average of 8-9% of customers raising a complaint to 14.4% as a result of the performance issues associated with GET UK. Complaints data is shown in Table 19.

Table 19: STL Phase and Complaint Correlation

STL phases	% of customers raising complaints
STL 1	9.7%
STL 2	8.0%
STL 3	8.3%
STL 4	14.4%
STL 5	6.4%

The “Solar Together London Progress Update - January 23” document highlights the main source of complaints was communication. In Phase 4, 208 complaints from a total of 566 (37%) related to communication. This increased to 65% in Phase 5 (280 complaints from a total of 430). Installation delays (33% in Phase 4 and 15% in Phase 5) was the second highest source of complaints. Other sources of customer complaints including examples included difficulties arranging appointments and lack of clarity on cancellations, transparency of communication relating to quoted installation and pricing, quality of installations and technical problems.

The STL Complaints Log, provided by the GLA, demonstrates that some customers are continuing to raise issues with the STL programme.

Despite some of the lessons learned sessions organised with iChoosr after Phase 4 and the situation with GET UK, customers still faced certain challenges with installers in Phase 5. These included lack of effective communication with installers not responding to phone calls and emails with postponed installation dates and installers not responding to notice that the panels weren’t working. There are also complaints surrounding the initial pricing provided with multiple customers complaining about increase in the post-survey price. Many customers choose not to continue with the installation after receiving the post-survey price.

In addition to complaints, positive customer feedback was obtained from a post installation survey conducted by iChoosr in Phase 5. The survey was sent two weeks after installation and asked customers how likely they were to recommend the installer to a friend or family member. The results were collated and used to calculate a Net Promoter Score (NPS).

Customers were asked to give a score from 0 to 10 to describe their experience on the STL programme and were grouped as follows:

- Promoters (score 9-10)
- Passives (score 7-8)
- Detractors (score 0-6)

The NPS is generated by subtracting the percentage of detractors from the percentage of promoters and is in the range of -100 to 100. A score of -100 shows every customer is a detractor and a score of 100 shows every customer is a promoter. As such any score above 0 is considered good because there are more promoters than detractors.

The NPS scores for two installers in Phase 5 were positive with Dynamis scoring 18 and Solar Bureau 33. For the third supplier, GET UK, there was not enough information at the time of writing.

4.4.1.2 Borough feedback

As part of this evaluation, surveys were issued to the London boroughs to obtain their feedback. Responses were received from Islington; Westminster; Royal Borough of Kingston Upon Thames; Richmond and Wandsworth; Lewisham Council and London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. Key feedback from boroughs indicated that they found the STL programme beneficial for enhancing environmental impact, delivering carbon savings and as improving borough reputation in supporting the achievement of net zero objectives.

The survey results highlighted the following:

- 5 out of the 6 boroughs used the marketing material provided by the STL programme, with one borough changing their approach to a digital marketing solution for Phase 5 onwards.
- Boroughs received a significant increase in complaints from Phase 4 onwards due to the disruption of GET UK - 4 out of the 6 boroughs indicated significant issues with delivery and customer satisfaction. The boroughs did acknowledge that while iChoosr were initially slow in responding to complaints, once a complaints reporting system was put in place, the quality and timeliness of support improved.
- Two-thirds of boroughs reported a poor to below average overall experience of the STL programme (Table 20).

Table 20: Borough experience of STL.

Rating	Number of Boroughs	Percentage

Poor	3	50%
Below average	1	17%
Average	0	0%
Good	2	33%
Excellent	0	0%

The boroughs faced challenges in handling the volume of complaints received. The Royal Borough of Kingston Upon Thames indicated its expected role was only to promote the campaign, but they had to allocate additional resource to ensure complaints were handled. There were concerns of reputational risk due to the issues arising from GET UK's performance, with perceptions among customers that the borough had directly commissioned the installer. The lack of a complaints process created further problems for the boroughs, with customers contacting the borough directly to raise their issues, not realising the role of iChoosr. The lack of communication between installers and boroughs added further dissatisfaction. Kingston Upon Thames indicated multiple reports of complaints where the iChoosr help desk line was never answered.

The boroughs stated that their experience of the STL programme would have been improved had iChoosr and the installer acted more quickly to resolve customer complaints. An effective complaint's resolution process from the inception of the STL programme would have alleviated a lot of these challenges, according to the borough responses. The boroughs reported having communication and internal meetings with GLA where iChoosr were rarely present. A better sense of communication and collaboration from iChoosr would have alleviated a lot of the boroughs' concerns.

5 Programme improvement opportunities

This section includes the key findings from the evaluation in relation to how the performance of the STL programme could have been improved, including actionable recommendations.

5.1 STL programme improvement opportunities

The key programme improvement opportunities are as follows:

1. **The performance of the STL programme may have been impacted by GLA's failure to consider a range of delivery models and alternative potential concessionaires**: While it is acknowledged that the scale of the STL programme may not have justified the level of analysis and market development required to generate alternative options, the adoption of an existing delivery model and direct award of a contract to iChoosr may have limited innovation and inhibited market development. Adopting a longer-term, more strategic view may have led to better delivery of the programme's objectives and outcomes.
2. **The level of governance applied to early decision-making may not have been appropriate given the potential impact of the STL programme.** GLA complied with its internal governance procedure. However, by valuing the contract based on GLA expenditure as opposed to the potential concessionaire revenue, a less rigorous assurance and approval process was applied (the governance applied under the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code was based on the contract value being between £25k to £150k)). Less detailed business cases were developed leading to award of both concession contracts, meaning some details of how the STL programme would be implemented and managed were limited, constraining the ability to effectively analyse the value of the Solar Together London proposition. In addition, the governance applied to the review and approval of the business cases may have been ineffective given the lack of analysis for the selection of the delivery model and single sourcing of the concessionaire through a robust delivery model assessment process. The selection of a less rigorous governance process given the perceived low risk and low spend of the programme likely contributed to the poor performance of the programme.
3. **The concession contract lacked the necessary levers for driving the performance of the STL programme.** While the concession contract included the core clauses associated with a robust and comprehensive contract agreement, key elements relating to performance management were missing. These included:
    a. *Lack of SLAs and performance guarantees*: the contract did not establish specific SLAs or performance guarantees for iChoosr, limiting the GLA's ability to enforce service quality and timeliness.
    b. *Undefined KPIs*: the contract did not include KPIs, making it difficult for the GLA to measure iChoosr's performance and hold them accountable. For example, the contract would have benefited from KPIs measuring performance on conversion rates from expression of interest to installation, duration between expression of interest and installation, and customer satisfaction.
    c. *Inadequate reporting specifications*: the contract lacked detailed requirements for reporting frequency, format and content. This restricted the GLA's ability to monitor the programme's performance.
    d. *Vague criteria for installer procurement and management*: the absence of concrete standards for the selection and oversight of installers could have led to inconsistencies in installation quality and participant satisfaction.
4. **iChoosr's performance could have been improved in some aspects of delivering the STL programme**. Elements of iChoosr's performance which were identified as sub-optimal include:
    a. The solar system minimum specifications set by iChoosr were below industry standard in some areas. The long term implications of this in terms of solar system performance are unknown at this time.
    b. GET UK were declined by RECC due to "red flags", however, were still appointed by iChoosr.
    c. iChoosr's annual monitoring of installers' financial status was not aligned with the quarterly frequency considered industry best practice.
    d. iChoosr were not transparent when reporting issues associated with GET UK to the GLA, which impacted the GLA's ability to contribute to actions to mitigate the impact of GET UK's failure.
    e. iChoosr's approach to resident management could have been improved. In particular, a more proactive approach could have been implemented to increase the conversion rate from expression of interest to installation.
    f. iChoosr's management of customer complaints, particularly associated with the performance of GET UK, was poor. This resulted in boroughs needing to step in.
5. **Responsibility for client management to improve customer experience and increase conversion rate from expression of interest to installation:** A complex process between expressing interest and getting an installation slot could have contributed to large drop-off rates. Using bespoke client relationship management (CRM) solutions could have increased the chances of residents staying on the STL programme.

6. **In their role as Customer Code for the domestic solar PV market, HIES should have flagged the issues associated with GET UK earlier to allow mitigation actions to be implemented.** HIES role is to protect customers through accreditation of suppliers and then ongoing monitoring. Had they identified the issues associated with GET UK earlier, it would have allowed iChoosr and the GLA to implement actions which would likely have reduced the number of customer complaints and the negative impact on customer take-up. It should be noted that HIES's dual role as both a Consumer Code for installers and as a provider of insurance backed guarantees for customers introduces a potential conflict of interest.

Table 21 sets out the main conclusions and lessons learned identified through this evaluation.

Table 21: Conclusions and Lessons Learned

Theme	Main conclusions and lessons learned
Communication	Effective communication and participation needed to be shown by all stakeholders to enable a more successful programme. Active participation and consistent catch-up meetings to address any concerns or risks when dealing with areas of concern needed to be prioritised. Consistent and transparent communication with customers would greatly improve customer satisfaction and reduce complaints
Complaints process	Residents' feedback to the boroughs suggested there was very little handling of complaints and monitoring of the entire process during Phase 4 of the programme . This feedback from the Royal Boroughs of Kingston Upon Thames and Richmond and Wandsworth highlighted the need for more support, and a robustness process, from iChoosr and that this would have improved the handling of customer complaints when responding to the issues associated with GET UK The boroughs of Kingston Upon Thames, Richmond and Wandsworth, Lewisham, and Hammersmith and Fulham all recorded poor service and responsiveness dealing with impacted customers until a complaints system was implemented. In 2023, a complaints process for Phase 5 was created by iChoosr after the failure of GET UK. This included a communication template for installers to handle complaints and provided a step-by-step process for how they should engage with customers. The adoption of frequent progress meetings between iChoosr and installers is recommended to expedite the resolution of issues impacted the smooth delivery of the STL programme. The adoption of a clearer complaints process would be beneficial including the communication of up to date information and progress on complaint resolutions. Many boroughs indicated a process being set up, but the system was vague and little monitoring conducted.
Restrictions to uptake	Customers in various boroughs highlighted challenges to solar uptake due to planning permissions and the ability to build on protected homes. Actions by boroughs, including Kensington and Chelsea, to allow solar installation on protected buildings have supported further uptake in their borough.
Transparency	Some customers felt that costs and marketing needed to be more transparent to influence their uptake of solar system installation. There are many examples of residents that cancelled their installation orders due to a difference in the initial pricing provided and the post-survey price. Customers were not expecting a price increase post survey as they believed they already had an agreed price with the installer.
Supplier failure	With the failure of GET UK, issues arose quickly with the boroughs becoming overwhelmed with complaints. This delayed resolving problems and placed a reputational risk on the boroughs and the GLA. Contingency planning should be implemented to mitigate the impact of any future installer failure.
Business case approval	The ADD and MD served as the single business case for approving the STL programme and awarding the contract to iChoosr. The approval process may have been influenced by factors such as the established delivery model, low risk and the perceived value of the contract based on the GLA expenditure, potentially leading to a less rigorous assessment of the STL programme's business case. There is a need for greater scrutiny and oversight in the approval process to ensure that business cases are thoroughly evaluated and aligned with project objectives, stakeholder interests, risks and best practices in project management.
Concession contract direct award	iChoosr's unique positioning for providing an end-to-end turn-key solution justified the direct award of the concession contract. However, this approach may have limited market competition by not advertising the opportunity publicly, potentially excluding other service management organisations capable of offering the service. Evaluating the STL programme's success requires consideration of various factors beyond acceptance and completion rates, including customer satisfaction, energy savings, service quality and timeliness. The decision-making process for extending the contract to iChoosr for additional phases might not have fully accounted for these broader performance metrics. Data

	from the pilot phases indicate significant drop-off rates, highlighting areas for further scrutiny and improvement.
iChoosr supplier agreement	While the contract between iChoosr and the selected installers can be considered a robust contract in many of the key elements, the findings from the evaluation included opportunities for improvement the installer contract: • **Limited reporting scope:** Current reporting focuses on progress metrics such as survey completions, installations and cancellations. This narrow focus overlooks essential aspects like quality issues, customer complaints and subcontractor performance, potentially obscuring a comprehensive view of performance. • **Lack of risk management reporting:** The contract lacks explicit directives for reporting on risk management activities, including the identification and mitigation of new risks. The absence of systematic risk reporting could lead to unforeseen project challenges, emphasising the need for proactive risk management strategies. • **Insufficient financial safeguards reporting:** There is a notable omission in the requirements for reporting on customer deposits and the status of deposit protection certificates. This gap may compromise the ability to ensure and communicate the financial safeguards in place for customer payments effectively. • **Performance standards and targets:** The agreement implies service expectations but could have benefit from more detailed SLAs and targets to ensure all parties have aligned expectations regarding service delivery standards. • **Absence of customer satisfaction KPIs:** The agreement does not clearly define KPIs for measuring customer satisfaction following installation or the resolution of complaints, missing an opportunity to measure and enhance service quality based on customer feedback. • **Undefined quality of installations KPIs:** Although the progress of installations is monitored, the quality of these installations is not measured as a distinct KPI, leaving a gap in quality assurance. • **Complaint resolution metrics omission:** The process for handling complaints is outlined, yet there are no specific KPIs for measuring the timeliness or effectiveness of complaint resolutions, which could enhance customer service and satisfaction.
Solar Together terms and conditions	The Solar Together terms and conditions establish a comprehensive and solid framework for the contractual relationship between customers and installers. However, the evaluation identified the following opportunities for improvement: • **Deposit and payment:** The contract required an acceptance deposit and a capped installation deposit payment, emphasising customer protection through a deposit protection certificate. However, there's a notable gap in detailing the safeguarding of advance payments, especially in scenarios involving contract cancellation or supplier insolvency. • **Delivery and installation:** Specified timelines and potential extensions in delivery time are covered in the contract, with an emphasis on informing customers of significant schedule changes. Yet the contract falls short in explicitly stating compensation for supplier-caused delays and articulating rights for cancellation due to such delays, focusing mainly on refund conditions for deposits under specific scenarios. • **Warranties and guarantees:** Specify product warranties are included but lack explicit details on insurance-backed guarantees for workmanship, potentially leaving customers unprotected if the supplier fails. • **Cancellation and termination rights:** The contract provides a 14-day statutory cancellation period and details conditions for deposit refunds, but lacks clarity on rights beyond this period, possibly leading to customer confusion regarding their options and related financial implications. • **Complaint handling and dispute resolution:** The contract mentions the availability of a complaints handling process and access to dispute resolution mechanisms but without detailed procedural guidance, which could hinder effective issue resolution and communication. • **Data protection and privacy:** The contract commits to data protection laws but provides limited information on specific data handling practices, highlighting a need for more comprehensive privacy clauses to enhance transparency and customer trust.
Auction procedure	For each of the STL programme phases, iChoosr conducted a multistage open competitive procedure to select installers. The procedure included a pre-qualification of installers followed by a price-only tender stage for the shortlisted installers. The key findings from the auction procedure are: • The pre-qualification stage aimed to assess the technical capability, financial stability and track record of potential installers. iChoosr implemented a five-step qualification process, scoring each step to determine eligibility for participation. However, it remains unclear whether the minimum qualification score was appropriate, as iChoosr awarded contracts to GET UK for both Phase 4 and 5, despite concerns raised by RECC and GET UK's subpar performance in Phase 4.

- Shortlisted installers participated in an auction where only pricing was considered. The auction aimed to create a transparent and competitive environment, with contracts awarded to the installer(s) offering the lowest price.
- Focusing on price only may have placed installers under financial pressure, requiring a balance between cost, quality and service, especially amid inflation, labour shortages and supply chain disruptions. Implementing the STL programme effectively requires stringent quality control, robust customer service, data protection compliance and competitive pricing. These demands, coupled with fees to iChoosr, pose a financial risk to installers. This risk potentially jeopardised supplier sustainability and stifled their ability to deliver a high quality service, undermining the STL programme's goal of promoting high-quality solar solutions. In addition, the aggressive focus on pricing likely disadvantaged smaller installers.

Table 22 contains detailed recommendations on how the STL programme could have been improved.

Table 22: Recommendations

Theme	Recommendations
Open book contract model[10]	For concession contracts, it is recommended that the adoption of an open book contract management model is evaluated. Using an open book contract management model offers several compelling advantages for managing complex projects, fostering a collaborative environment between clients and installers. This approach involves sharing the suppliers' financial records related to the project with the client, creating transparency relating costs, margins and performance. Sharing information about costs, margins and performance helps in jointly managing risks, as both the client and supplier can make informed decisions to mitigate risks more effectively.
Contractual agreement – improving quality	To address the concerns of diminished quality and service due to price pressures in the STL programme, incorporating comprehensive quality assurance mechanisms into the concession contract specification is crucial. The following mitigations are recommended: **Define clear minimum quality standards:** Clearly articulate minimum quality standards for all aspects of the programme, including materials, workmanship and service delivery. These standards should be in line with industry best practices and regulatory requirements. Incorporate these standards directly into the contract documents, making them binding for the concessionaire and installers. **Implement quality control measures:** Require the concessionaire to develop and implement a quality assurance plan that outlines procedures for ensuring compliance with the defined quality standards. **Installer performance management requirements:** Require the concessionaire to establish a system for ongoing monitoring of installer performance against the agreed standards and KPIs. This should include mechanisms for feedback and reporting to the GLA. **Reallocate contracts based on performance:** Introduce clauses that allow for the reallocation of contracts or adjustment of workloads based on installer performance. Ensure that the criteria for evaluating performance are transparent and agreed upon in advance, allowing installers to understand the benchmarks they need to meet or exceed. **Review and approval of procurement strategy:** Implement a process whereby the GLA reviews and approves the concessionaire's procurement strategy for sourcing installers before initiating the auction. This ensures alignment with project objectives and quality requirements. The procurement strategy should detail the criteria for installer selection, emphasising quality, reliability and value over price alone. **Documentation and reporting:** Require detailed reporting from the concessionaire on installer performance, quality control measures and compliance with standards. These reports should be reviewed regularly by the GLA. Consider making summaries of performance reports available to the public, enhancing transparency and accountability.
Risk management	It is recommended that a comprehensive and robust risk management framework be developed and implemented within the concession contract, encompassing the identification, assessment, mitigation and monitoring of all potential risks throughout the contract duration, to ensure proactive management and minimisation of impacts on project deliverables and outcomes. Also, the concession contract should include obligation for the concessionaire to implement an aligned robust risk management framework with awarded installers.

[10] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-policy-note-0516-open-book-contact-management

Complaint management

The concession contract should include a process, including clear guidance, for complaint handling, emphasising the installers and concessionaire's obligations to deal with complaints according to the Consumer Code. Examples of elements to be clearly defined and agreed are:

Defined timelines: Set and communicate specific timeframes for acknowledging, investigating and resolving complaints to provide transparency and manage consumer expectations.

Transparent dispute resolution: Provide comprehensive information on external dispute resolution options available to consumers, including detailed guidance on how to access these services.

Education and awareness: Proactively inform consumers about their rights and the complaint and dispute resolution processes available to them, potentially through welcome packs, FAQs or dedicated sections on the STL programme website.

Appendix A Documents reviewed

Table A1 outlines the list of documents reviewed as part of this evaluation. Documents were provided by the GLA, iChoosr and publicly available information.

Table A 1: Documents reviewed

Document	Author	Link	Workstream the document was used to inform
Request for Mayoral Decision – MD1289	GLA	Microsoft Word - MD1289 RENEW Support Team RTF.rtf (london.gov.uk)	Workstreams 1,2,3 and 4
ADD2187 Solar PV Collective purchasing pilot project	GLA	ADD2187 Solar PV collective purchasing pilot project | London City Hall	Workstreams 1,2,3 and 4
Request for Mayoral Decision - MD2503 Solar Together London	GLA	MD2503 Solar Together London | London City Hall	Workstreams 1,2,3 and 4
Request for Mayoral Decision – MD3151 – Supporting Solar Together London Phase four and five customers	GLA	MD3151 Supporting Solar Together London phase four and five customers - SIGNED.pdf (sharepoint.com)	Workstreams 1,2,3 and 4
STL Programme Performance	iChoosr	All STL programme Performance Overview – Installs Per STL programme.xlsx	Workstreams 1,2,3 and 4
STL Customer Declined Reasons	iChoosr	Overview of Decline Reasons.png	Workstreams 1 and 4
Solar Together London in Context	iChoosr	STL Benchmarking & Context.pdf	
STL programme Timelines	iChoosr	All STL programme Timelines.xlsx	Workstreams 1 and 2
Solar Together London Update and Lessons Learned	iChoosr	Solar Together London Boroughs Update and Lessons Learned August 2022.pdf	Workstreams 1, 2,3 and 4
Solar Together London Pilot STL programmes Review – 16th April 2019	iChoosr	Solar Together London 1&2 – End of STL Programme Review & Learnings.pdf	Workstreams 1,2,3 and 4
Directorate of Audit, Risk and Assurance Internal Auditors to the Greater London Authority – Risk and Assurance Review, Solar Together London, December 2022	GLA	Solar Together London Final Audit Report 8.12.22.docx	Workstreams 1,2 and 3
MD2896 Supporting Solar uptake in London	GLA	MD2896 Supporting solar uptake in London | London City Hall	Workstreams 1,2,3 and 4
Mayor of London – Draft Solar Action Plan for London	GLA	Date (london.gov.uk)	Workstreams 1,2,3 and 4
UK rooftop solar Behavioural Research	Basis Social – Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/60edea3b8fa8f50c7f08ae1e/uk-rooftop-solar-panel-behavioural-research.pdf	Workstreams 1,2 and 3
The Concession Contracts Regulations 2016	UK Statutory Instruments	The Concession Contracts Regulations 2016 (legislation.gov.uk)	Workstreams 2
GLA Contracts and Funding Code	GLA	contracts_and_funding_code_-_april_22.pdf (london.gov.uk)	Workstreams 2
The Green Book (2022)	HM Treasury	The Green Book (2022)	Workstreams 1 and 2
The Sourcing Playbook- Delivery Model Assessment	Cabinet Office and Government Commercial Function	The Sourcing Playbook (June 2023)	Workstreams 1 and 2
Single Source Request Form – Solar PV Aggregated Purchasing STL Programme	Transport for London	Solar Together London Ph3 SSJ.FiNAL	Workstreams 1 and 2
Renewable Energy Consumer Code (RECC) Model Contract			Workstreams 2 and 4
STL Complaints List sent 23/01/2024	iChoosr	STL Complaints Log 23.01.24	Workstreams 1,2 and 4
STL Complaints Log Final Version	iChoosr	STL Complaints Log LIVE FINAL VERSION_01. Xlsx	Workstreams 1,2 and 4

STL Complaints Log summary for SR Final	iChoosr	STL Complaints Log Summary for SR Final.xlsx	Workstreams 1,2 and 4
STL Complaints May 2023	iChoosr	STL Complaints Log 23.05.09	Workstreams 1,2 and 4
South West Net Zero Hub – Loan Example	SWNZ	https://www.swnetzerohub.org.uk/document/able-to-pay-loan-fund-business-case-report/	Workstreams 1 and 2
Government Functional Standard	HM Government	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62b0529be90e0765cecebb30/Functional-standard-8-2.pdf	Workstreams 1 and 2
Sourcing and Consultancy Playbook	HM Government	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-sourcing-and-consultancy-playbooks	Workstreams 1 and 2
Procurement Policy Note 05/16	Crown Commercial Service	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-policy-note-0516-open-book-contact-management	Workstreams 1 and 2
DESNZ – Public Attitudes Tracker	DESNZ	https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/public-attitudes-tracking-survey#beis-public-attitudes-tracker	Workstreams 1,2 and 3
The MCS Data Dashboard	MCS	https://datadashboard.mcscertified.com	Workstreams 1 and 3

Appendix B Stakeholder interview questions

Tables B1-B3 set out the questions used to structure the interviews that were undertaken with key stakeholders as part of this evaluation.

Table B4 shows the questionnaire issued to London boroughs to obtain their feedback on the STL programme.

Table B 1: Questions asked to GLA internal stakeholders.

Role and responsibilities:
What were your specific roles and responsibilities within the STL programme?
Was there a clear definition of accountability and responsibilities between the different stakeholders to successfully deliver this programme. (e.g. Responsibility Assignment Matrix)
Policy:
What policies re. domestic solar deployment has been put into place in London following the solar action plan for London and what impact have these had on the deployment of solar PV in London?
STL programme overview:
Can you provide an overview of the STL programme, including its objectives, scope, and intended outcomes? For example, KPIs, risk, quality, budget, and scheduling.
At STL programme design, had other delivery options been considered? If yes, how did you evaluate and compare the different options for delivering the STL programme and the rational on the selected delivery model?
How did you identify, assess, and manage the potential risks of the STL programme delivery model? What mitigation measures did you implement or propose? How effective were they?
How did GLA decide whether to renew the STL programme and award a new concession contract for iChoosr at each phase? Considering the performance levels, did you consider any alternative delivery model or changes to the agreed terms for the next phases?
In a similar STL programme in the future, would GLA consider other delivery models with GLA taking a more active role in managing the STL programme and installer supply chain? What would be the key drivers for alternative delivery models?
STL programme performance:
In your view, what were the main factors contributing to the performance and outcomes levels of the STL programme across the different phases?
In hindsight, are there any decisions or actions taken during the development or execution of the STL programme that you would have approached differently?
In your view how did iChoosr perform in the delivery of the STL programme across the different phases? How was the performance of the iChoosr monitored and evaluated throughout the duration of the STL programme and do you think the performance management procedure was proportional to the STL programme risks?
In your opinion, did iChoosr have the right procedures and controls in place to manage the supply chain properly and minimize the impact of GET losing their certifications and going into administration?
In your view, how has the STL programme performance affected the STL programme reputation and public trust and confidence in similar initiatives in the future?
How do you anticipate the receptiveness of boroughs and customers of future STL programmes and their viability? What measures are being taken to assess the receptiveness and readiness of the public and stakeholders for future STL programmes or similar initiatives?
Lessons Learned:
After each phase of the programme, did a lessons learnt session take place to understand any successes or challenges to improve on before the continuing phase? Were these findings documented?
Looking back, what would you consider to be the most significant lessons learned from the STL programme, and how do you plan to share these insights within GLA?
How has the performance of STL programme influenced your approach to risk management, project planning, and decision-making in subsequent initiatives?

Table B 2: iChoosr interview questions

Overview on the STL programme:
Please provide a summary of your experience with the STL programme as the delivery agent?
How effective was the communication and coordination between your team and GLA?
Were the objectives of the programme, including at each phase, clearly communicated to you and reflected in your concession contracts?
Assessment of Target Benefits:
Were the target benefits (installations) set for each phase of this STL programme achievable?

How closely did the actual performance align with your expected benefits outlined at the beginning of the STL programme? What were the reasons for any deviation?
What were the key challenges that impacted the success of the STL programme?
Procurement through eAuction
Can you provide a more detail explanation on the eAuction sourcing procedure?
Why did you select an eAuction approach to select installation supplier? Did the eAuctions drive savings vs your benchmarking pricing?
How did you identify and select the potential installers to participate in the eAuctions?
How did you conduct the pre-qualification of the installers ahead of the eAuction? What criteria were considered?
How many qualified installers did you include in each eAuction phase?
What criteria was used for the eAuction? How was supplier capability and capacity balanced with pricing?
What criteria was used to allocate orders to each supplier in the phases where more than one supplier was awarded? How was supplier capacity was considered?
Were there any challenges during the eAuctions during any of the phases of the STL programme?
Supply Chain Management and performance:
How did you manage risk and performance of the supply chain awarded for the delivery of the STL programmes (installation of solar system/batteries)?
Do you believe your contractual arrangement and procedures provided enough levers to manage risk, ensure performance and compliance with agreed terms by the supplier? If no, what would you do differently?
Are there tools, systems, or platforms in place to track and monitor the performance, inventory levels, and logistics of installers?
How do you manage information flow and share relevant data between the installers to enhance coordination and performance?
What were the areas and key internal and external challenges related with the supply chain and STL programme performance you encountered and fell short of expectations during the delivery of each phase of the STL programme?
What were the procedures or protocols for identifying, escalating, and resolving issues in a timely manner?
Were there any gaps in resource allocation, skills, or expertise that hindered the attainment of target benefits?
What measures or strategies did you implement to address the supplier's performance shortfalls and mitigate their impact during the STL programme delivery?
What in your opinion were the limitations to these mitigation efforts considering the outcome with GET?
How did you adapt your approach in response to the emerging challenges with GET performance and increasing risk of GET failure?
Were resources or training materials made available to help installers improve their skills, processes, or capabilities? Did you identify any areas where the supplier might has benefited from additional support, training, or capacity-building initiatives?
How were installations prioritised and scheduled?
In your view, what were the factors contributing to the low level of contracts uptake compared with eAuction registered customers?
Complaints Review:
What were the key challenges related with the complaint management you encountered during the delivery of the STL programme?
Can you describe the process for handling complaints received during the STL programme delivery, what channels were available for customers to submit their complaints, and how were these channels monitored and managed?
Did you have a designated team or individual responsible for managing the STL programme complaints, and what were their roles and responsibilities?
What were the typical response and resolution timeframes for addressing customer complaints within the STL programme?
What were the recurring complaints or issues raised by clients regarding the installation or service provided?
Can you explain how you addressed any complaints or issues that arose during the STL programme delivery with the installers?
Were there any specific initiatives or corrective actions implemented based on feedback received from complaints?
Did you establish mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of these improvement efforts over time?
The failure of GET UK to deliver has had a substantial impact on customers, with over 600 complaints received and many facing significant delays and difficulty recovering large deposits. How has iChoosr addressed these customer concerns?
Third-Party Audits and Customer Satisfaction Surveys:
How frequently were third-party audits conducted throughout the STL programme delivery process? Can you disclose the number of audits conducted in each phase?
What aspects of the STL programme were typically evaluated during these audits, and were there any specific areas of focus?
Can you provide insights into the number and types of defects identified during third-party audits?
Were there any trends or patterns observed in the types of defects encountered?
What procedures were in place for addressing defects identified during third-party audits?
How were corrective actions prioritized and assigned to ensure timely resolution of defects? Can you provide examples?

Did you conduct customer satisfaction surveys as part of the STL programme evaluation process and what methods or tools were utilized to gather feedback?
How were the results of customer satisfaction surveys integrated into your continuous improvement efforts?
Did you establish mechanisms for sharing audit and survey data with relevant stakeholders to drive accountability and transparency?
Did you track key performance indicators (KPIs) related to audit outcomes and customer satisfaction levels over time?
How did you use trend analysis to identify emerging issues or areas of concern requiring proactive intervention?
Lessons Learned:
What lessons have you learned from this STL programme?
What lessons were incorporate between the different phases?
Are there any specific improvements or changes you would implement in future STL programmes based on your experience with this one?
Other STL programmes Benchmark:
Can you compare the performance of this STL programme different phases with similar STL programmes or projects you have delivered under the Solar Together product?
What were the main differences or similarities between this STL programme and others you have worked on?
Did you apply any best practices or lessons learned from previous STL programmes to enhance the delivery of this one?
In terms of phase to phase comparisons, how did the baseline of Phase 1/2 compare to the later phases in terms of the key performance measures?
Market Trends - Insights:
What insights can you provide regarding current market trends in the solar panel and battery installation industry across UK and specifically in the London region?
How do you anticipate these trends evolving in the near future?
Are there any emerging technologies or practices that you believe will significantly impact the industry in the coming years or improve the Solar Together delivery models?
Marketing and Communications
Could you elaborate on the marketing strategies and channels iChoosr employed to promote GLA Solar Together STL programme?
Can you share how the marketing funds were allocated and what marketing channels were most effective?
As the Solar Together STL programme is a group-buying programme, how did iChoosr leverage this aspect in its marketing strategy to attract more participants?
How did the marketing strategies evolve across the different phases of the STL programme? Were there any significant changes or lessons learned that influenced your approach?
To what extent did policy impact the marketing of the STL programme?
How did GLA targets influence the marketing of different phases of STL ?
How did the marketing initiatives under STL performed compared with other UK STL programmes delivered by iChoosr under the Solar Together product?

Table B 3: Regulator Questions

Provide an overview of the process for a domestic solar PV installer to receive accreditation? (Optional if required to complement desktop research)
How are installers assessed to achieve accreditation?
How regularly are assessments conducted after initial accreditation?
How likely is it for an accredited installer to have their membership suspended?
Was there any change in the volume of membership suspensions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?
Did covid have an impact on the continuous assessment of existing members?
Did covid impact the volume or methodology of on-site assessments in any way?
How likely is it for a solar installation by an approved member to not meet your minimum requirements?
How likely is it for a solar installer to go out of business after finishing an installation? In such instances, how common is it for the installations by this installer to need to be 'made good' during their lifetime as part of the insurance backed guarantee?

Table B 4: Borough Experience Survey

Which London Borough do you represent?
What is your role within Borough?
What motivated the decision to participate as a Borough in the Solar Together London STL programme?
At what phase(s) did your Borough participate in the STL programme?
If you were involved in more than one phase, did you borough maintain the same marketing and communication activity=ies throughout the STL programme?

If No, can you please expand?
If you were involved in more than one phase, where there differences in terms of customers satisfaction between the different phases?
If yes, can you please expand?
How would you rate your Borough's overall experience in participating in GLA Solar Together STL programme?
Marketing Strategy
What methods did you use to get marketing information for the STL programme out?
Complaints
If your Borough had any complaints, what were the challenges you had in dealing with these complaints or concerns?
Is there any help you would have wanted to address these challenges but did not receive
How do you evaluate the performance of iChoosr in managing the complaints and concerns raised by customers during the STL programme?
How do you evaluate the performance of GLA in managing the complaints and concerns raised by customers during the STL programme?
Collaboration
How would you rate the level of collaboration between your Borough and GLA over the course of the STL programme?
How would you rate the level of collaboration between your Borough and iChoosr over the course of the STL programme?
Could you highlight any areas where better communication could have improved the success of the STL programme?
Did you have a clear understanding of your Borough's role in delivering the Solar Together London STL programme from the Grant Funding document?
To the question above, please expand your answer?
Considering your Borough's experience working with Solar Together London, would you be interested in participating in further STL programmes aiming to accelerate private investment in Solar?
To question 20 above, please expand your answer?
Considering the Solar Together London STL programme are there any lessons learned that you would like to highlight?

Appendix C Contractual Model

Table C 1: Concession Contract Findings

Findings	Risk
Services and Obligations: Details of the services to be provided and obligations of the parties are included in the contract, however, there are no service level agreements (SLAs) agreed in the contract and required by iChoosr.	**Inconsistent Service Quality**: Without SLAs, there's no baseline for service quality, leading to potential inconsistencies and dissatisfaction. **Difficulties in Accountability**: It becomes challenging to hold iChoosr accountable for their performance without defined service standards.
Key Performance Indicators (KPI's): The document does not define KPIs or defines any obligations to iChoosr in implementing KPIs to evaluate performance.	**Performance Measurement:** Without KPIs, measuring iChoosr's performance objectively is difficult, potentially leading to disputes over whether objectives are being met. **Continuous Improvement Barriers:** The absence of KPIs limits the ability to identify areas for improvement and track progress over time.
Governance and contract management: The contract does mention that iChoosr must properly manage and monitor the services, immediately informing GLA if any aspect of the contract is not being performed, however, there is no explicit mention of regular performance review meetings as part of the contract.	**Lack of Regular Review Meetings:** Without regular performance review meetings, there might be a delay in identifying and addressing issues. This could lead to inefficiencies or problems going unnoticed and unaddressed for longer periods. **Dependence on Concessionaire's Reporting:** The contract relies heavily on iChoosr's self-reporting for performance and risks monitoring. If iChoosr fails to report promptly and accurately, it could lead to issues.
Performance improvement plan: The contract does not provide a clear mechanism for Concessionaire performance improvement, e.g. a performance improvement Action Plan. The contract refers to Dispute Resolution plans agreed between the parties or determined by GLA; however, this seems to give effect to a Declaration of Ineffectiveness or a Public Procurement Termination Event, suggesting a structured approach to resolving contractual disputes and not performance improvement.	**Lack of Clarity:** Without a clear performance improvement plan, there may be ambiguity about what steps should be taken if iChoosr's performance is not up to the mark. This could lead to disagreements or delays in improving performance. **Inadequate Performance:** If there's no structured plan for performance improvement, iChoosr might not take adequate steps to improve their performance. This could potentially lead to subpar service delivery. **Dispute Escalation:** In the absence of a performance improvement plan, minor performance issues could escalate into major disputes.
Reporting: The reporting required by iChoosr to provide to GLA only includes number or participants, registrants' acceptance, final reports and survey results. It mentions that certain reports are to be provided at the end of the STL programme, but it does not provide specific timelines or formats for these reports. In addition to some recognised reporting gaps, eg financial performance, installers performance, KPIs, the contract also lacks the ability for formal ad hoc complementary reporting to be requested by GLA.	**Lack of Transparency**: Insufficient reporting guidelines can result in a lack of transparency, making it difficult for GLA to monitor and evaluate the STL programme's success. **Inability to Make Informed Decisions:** Without comprehensive and timely reports, decision-makers may lack the necessary information to adjust strategies or address issues promptly.
Insurance: Insurance requirements are defined under section 17 and relate with the concession agreement and seem proportional to the contract. However, the concession contract does not define any insurance requirement or standards for the Installers to be sourced by iChoosr for the installation of the solar systems.	**Financial Liability:** If installers are not required to carry appropriate insurance, the financial liability in the event of damages or accidents could fall on iChoosr or GLA, leading to unexpected costs. **Reputational Damage:** Accidents or damages without proper insurance coverage could also result in reputational damage, affecting the STL programme's credibility.
Warranties and Obligations: Extensive warranties and obligations are provided in Section 5 relating the concessions contract, ensuring compliance with laws and standards. However, the concession contract does not define any warranties requirement for the installers, only manufacturers, for the installation of the solar systems.	**Gap in Legal Protection:** A gap between the extensive warranties and obligations provided by the concession contract and the lack of specific installer warranties creates a potential risk for legal and financial exposure. This gap might make it harder to enforce quality and performance standards.

	Reputational Risks: Discrepancies in installation quality due to undefined installer warranty requirements could lead to public dissatisfaction and negative perceptions of the STL programme's effectiveness and reliability.
Installer's procurement: While the contract requires iChoosr to procure installers using transparent and objective selection and qualitative evaluation in order to ensure that installers meet minimum standards, it does not define what are the minimum standards or nether defined any minimum standards required for the procurement and management of the installers through the delivery of the concession contracts. The approach selected results in a strong dependency on the standards defined by iChoosr with no contractual mechanism to GLA to influence or review the approach implemented.	**Non-Compliance with Procurement Best Practices:** The absence of defined minimum standards may result in procurement processes that do not align with best practices or regulatory requirements. **Risk of Unqualified Installers:** The lack of specific procurement standards increases the risk of selecting installers who lack the necessary qualifications, experience, or capacity to deliver high-quality work. **Subpar Installer Performance**: Without clear standards, installers may not meet expectations, affecting overall STL programme quality and participant satisfaction. Poor feedback and public perception could deter future participation and trust in similar initiatives. **Compliance Issues:** Vague criteria for installer procurement could lead to challenges in ensuring compliance with relevant laws and regulations.
Solar systems quality standards: The contract does mention quality standards related to the services provided by iChoosr. However, it does not provide specific details about the minimum quality standards required for the solar system to be provided by the installers. While the contract requires iChoosr to establish quality control measures to minimise risks regarding quality of works and product, it allows iChoosr to define the minimum quality criteria	**Product Inconsistency:** Absence of specified quality standards for solar systems can result in product inconsistency, affecting performance and durability. **Risk to Investment:** Participants may find their investment in solar systems less valuable if product quality does not meet their expectations or needs, potentially leading to disputes and claims
Risk Management: IChoosr is required to identify potential risks associated with the delivery of the services and propose mitigation strategies. However, the contract does not explicitly detail how iChoosr is required to identify and manage risks and nether define obligation in implementing specific methodologies or procedures for risk identification and management.	**Inadequate Risk Identification:** Without a defined methodology, there's a significant risk that some critical risks might not be identified during the planning and execution phases of the service delivery. This oversight can lead to unanticipated challenges that could disrupt the STL programme's operations and outcomes. **Lack of Accountability:** Without clear requirements for risk management in the contract, holding iChoosr accountable for effectively managing risks becomes challenging. This situation can lead to disputes over responsibilities if unmanaged risks lead to issues within the STL programme.

Table C 2: Single Source Justification

PHASE ONE AND TWO SSJ	PHASE THREE, FOUR AND FIVE SSJ
• GLA expenditure of up to £50,000, from the RE NEW budget (approved by the Mayor under cover of MD1 289) for marketing and promoting the STL programme. • Section 10 of GLA's Contract and Funding Code provides an exemption from the competitive procedure where there is an absence of competition, or the proposed contractor has had previous involvement in a specific current project, or the work is continuation of existing work that cannot be separated from the new project/work. • GLA considered that there were no other company delivering the services required for this solar PV community purchasing STL programme; iChoosr is the only realistic source of supplying these services. • iChoosr experience in the Netherlands and Belgium in running solar PV STL programmes for over five years, working with local authorities and regional governments. Approximately 40,000 households had taken	• Market research has shown that there were no other providers that offer a digital group buying platform for solar systems. • The services that iChoosr provide, demand aggregation, marketing expertise, bespoke online platform provision and installer-quality vetting are distinctly different from a PV supplier and installers of digital buying or tendering platforms. • No other company delivering the combined services defined in the Solar Together model, leaving iChoosr as the only realistic choice of supplier. • Other existing group buying STL programmes been on a much smaller scale, localised group purchasing, as opposed to professional service provider to aggregate demand, vet supplier for quality and oversee the installations. • iChoosr platform which has the capacity to aggregate demand across London.

up their bespoke solar PV offer, leading to an installed capacity of 120MW.

- A commercial model where iChoosr would make money from a small fee per installed PV panel, paid for by the selected solar PV provider, with the fee been the same and agreed by iChoosr with all installers who will participate in the reverse auction.
- An established relationship between the majority of London boroughs with iChoosr through the Big London Energy Switch and other STL programmes. Under Big London Energy Switch iChoosr was procured through a shortened OJEU process, with iChoosr the only supplier in the market at that time who could deliver the online platform and the dedicated helpdesk, among other services, to run the collective switching STL programme. The Big London Energy Switch is still going today, as are similar STL programmes such as the Big Community Switch, Unison Switch, and Ready to Switch, all of which are run by iChoosr; and
- Market research to identify potential other installers have produced no suitable installers.
- iChoosr experience in the Netherlands and Belgium in running solar PV STL programmes.
- No money to be paid by GLA to iChoosr to run the STL programme through the concession contract.
- A commercial model where iChoosr would make money from a small fee per installed PV panel, paid for by the selected solar PV provider, with the fee been the same and agreed by iChoosr with all installers who will participate in the reverse auction.
- An established relationship between the majority of London boroughs with iChoosr through the Big London Energy Switch and other STL programmes. Under Big London Energy Switch iChoors was procured through a shortened OJEU process, with iChoosr the only supplier in the market at that time who could deliver the online platform and the dedicated helpdesk, among other services, to run the collective switching STL programme. The Big London Energy Switch is still going today, as are similar STL programmes such as the Big Community Switch, Unison Switch, and Ready to Switch, all of which are run by iChoosr.

Table C 3: Grant Agreement Gaps and Risks

Grant Terms	Findings
Financial Management	The borough is required to implement effective monitoring and financial systems to manage the grant. Any financial irregularity, mismanagement, or fraud could not only jeopardize the funding but also lead to reputational damage and potential legal consequences.
Insurance and Indemnification	The requirement for the borough to maintain insurance policies and indemnify GLA against losses or damages related to the project imposes a financial and administrative burden to the borough. Insufficient coverage or failure to comply could expose the borough to financial liabilities. However, while the approach is proportional, no information regarding insurance type or coverage is provided.
Termination Rights	GLA's right to terminate the agreement at its sole discretion, for breach or convenience, introduces uncertainty to the boroughs. This could disrupt project planning and execution, especially if the agreement is terminated prematurely.
Grant Scope	Given the emphasis on marketing and promotional activities, the agreement does not explicitly mention customer support as a funded activity. Customer support could encompass a range of services, from answering queries about the STL programme to support with complains when this were raised directly to the borough. It's not clear to which level or how customer support was provided by each borough. However, these activities are crucial for engaging the community, ensuring clear communication, and handling any concerns or questions that arise, which could significantly impact the STL programme's performance and customer satisfaction.
Data Sharing Agreement	The grant agreement outlines certain transparency and data-sharing obligations and commitments. However, it does not include a UK-GDPR compliant data-sharing agreement specifically facilitating the sharing of personal data. This omission poses a significant challenge for the borough in sharing any personal data with GLA related to customers involved in the STL programme promotion or customer support. This becomes particularly critical when handling complaints that need to be escalated to GLA.

Table C 4: IChoosr Supplier Agreement Key Findings

Contractual Terms	Findings
Definitions	• Clearly describes the roles of various actors like Customer, Community Leader, Registrant, and Installers in the context of the Solar Together STL programmes. • Definitions related with Auction were redacted.
General Terms	• Defines the obligation that installers must comply with various regulations, including data sharing, quality standards, and customer engagement rules. • There are specific requirements for installers regarding insurance, employee conduct, and regional employment preferences. • While the agreement mentions various obligations and responsibilities, there is a lack of specific performance and quality metrics for the supplier. • The general terms do not explicitly encourage or require continuous improvement or innovation from the supplier. • The agreement lacks detailed requirements for managing sub installers, including standards they must meet and how they are to be supervised. • There's no explicit mention of environmental or social responsibilities tied to the agreement. • The agreement specifies maximum amounts for direct and indirect damages, setting clear financial boundaries for liabilities. This is a common practice in commercial contracts to ensure that both parties have a clear understanding of their potential financial exposure. Setting such limits helps in risk management, enabling the Supplier to assess the potential costs of non-compliance or failure and to secure adequate insurance coverage. • The section mentions the signing of a Data Sharing Agreement compliant with current law, ensuring both parties adhere to data protection and privacy standards. However, it wasn't possible to review the data sharing agreement.
Objective and Scope of Solar Together STL programmes	• Aims to provide clear, quality, all-inclusive services for registrants at competitive prices while ensuring a professional installation process and positive references for installers. • Promotes regional sustainability and employment by encouraging the installation of solar systems and storage. • Parts of the section were redacted.
Process Description	• Section redacted.
The Personal Recommendation	• Details the specifications for the PV systems to be auctioned, including the types of panels, inverters, and additional options like battery storage and EV charge points. • Sets requirements for product and work quality, including specific standards for electrical energy storage and EV charge points. • Highlights VAT considerations for personal recommendations and bespoke systems. However, the version reviewed assumed the and outdated 5% VAT for the solar measures as since 1st April 2022 the VAT for solar systems changed to 0%. • Parts of the section were redacted.
Auction	• Section redacted.
Validation and Project Arrangements	• Describes the post-auction validation process for winning bids and project arrangements, including training for installers and regular progress updates. • The majority of this section is redacted.
Supplier's Customer Engagement After Handover	• Outlines the process for customer data transfer, survey requirements, deposit handling, and contract revisions or cancellations based on survey findings or customer service issues. • The section provides a structured process for engaging with customers post-handover, including surveys and contract finalization, which is crucial for maintaining clear expectations and standards. • The explicit mention of deposit handling, including conditions under which it is paid to the supplier or refunded to the customer, adds clarity and trust to the financial transactions involved. This is complemented by obligation within the Solar Together T&Cs contract. • The requirement for a survey to validate the customer's choice and the subsequent action (confirmation or revision of the contract) ensures that installations are feasible and meet customer expectations. • This section outline specific conditions under which customers can cancel their contracts and the implication for deposits protects both parties' interests and provides a clear exit strategy. • The section could benefit from specifying a more detailed communication plan between the supplier and customers, covering frequency, methods, and content of communications. • The agreement outlines a reactive approach to customer complaints and cancellations but lacks a proactive strategy for identifying and resolving potential issues before they escalate. • Parts of the section were redacted.
Planning and Installations (Installation KPIs)	• Establishes key performance indicators (KPIs) for survey completion and installations only, with specific targets and provisions for weather-related delays. • Includes commitments to delivery, and outlines consequences for customer contract cancelation for failing to meet KPIs or provide satisfactory service.

	• The agreement does not explicitly include KPIs related to customer satisfaction levels post-installation or post-complaint resolution. • While installation progress is monitored, the quality of the installations themselves is not explicitly defined as a KPI. • Safety practices and regulatory compliance are critical, yet not specifically addressed through KPIs. • The document outlines a process for handling complaints but does not set specific KPIs for the resolution time or satisfaction with the resolution. • There are areas where other KPIs could be expanded or refined to cover a broader spectrum of project and service quality aspects, eg Environmental and Sustainability Goals and Innovation and Improvement Metrics. • Parts of the section were redacted.
Quality Control (includes reporting)	• Details inspection, testing, audit, and customer satisfaction survey procedures to ensure quality control throughout the installation process. • Specifies the handling of complaints and the requirement for timely and effective resolution. • Defines weekly reporting on surveys, installations, and cancellations is mandated, facilitating oversight but not detailed in real-time or comprehensive risk assessments. • Reporting focuses primarily on progress metrics like survey completions, installations, and cancellations. This scope might omit critical areas such as quality issues, customer complaints status, and subcontractor performance. Without comprehensive metrics, stakeholders may lack visibility into all aspects of project performance, limiting the ability to make informed decisions and improvements. • There is no explicit requirement for reporting on risk management, including identification of new risks and status of risk mitigation strategies. Failing to regularly review and report on risks could result in unforeseen challenges impacting the project's success, as proactive risk management is crucial for complex projects. • The agreement omits specific obligations for reporting on customer deposits and the issuance or status of Deposit Protection Certificates, potentially leaving a gap in ensuring and communicating financial safeguards for customer payments.
Communication with Customers	• Focuses on the importance of clear communication, including handling complaints before and after installation. • Outlines complaint handling procedures before and after installation, emphasizing quick resolution and customer satisfaction. • The document delineates a structured approach to managing customer complaints, dividing the process into two phases: before and after the installation of the PV system. • A specific officer is appointed by the Supplier to handle customer complaints, ensuring accountability. • Upon receiving complaints, the Supplier must respond within 2 working days, aiming to resolve the complaint or find a solution within a reasonable timeframe, ideally within 10 working days. This seems proportional. • iChoosr retains the right to intervene in unresolved complaints after 14 calendar days, potentially taking over the complaint resolution process. Incorporating an escalation process, where iChoosr can intervene if complaints are not resolved within a specified period, ensures that there is a mechanism to address issues that cannot be resolved at the initial level of contact. This aligns with best practices that suggest having multiple tiers of escalation to ensure complaints are adequately addressed. • The Supplier is required to maintain an up-to-date record of ongoing complaints, updated daily, and iChoosr requires access to these reports. The requirement for daily updates and accessible reports on ongoing complaints ensures transparency and enables both parties to track the progress of complaint resolution. This practice aligns with the recommendation for comprehensive complaint tracking systems that allow for real-time updates and analytics. • Assigning a specific officer to handle complaints, as stipulated in the agreement, is in line with best practices. This ensures that there is clear accountability within the organization for managing and resolving customer complaints.
Financial Arrangements	• Section redacted.
Annexes	• Lists annexes that are part of the agreement, including requirements for products and work, battery installation, additional costs, data sharing agreement, NDA, Customer Journey and customer terms and conditions. Only the Requirements for Products and Work and Battery Installation and the Customer Terms and Conditions annexes were shared.

Table C 5: Solar Together T&C's

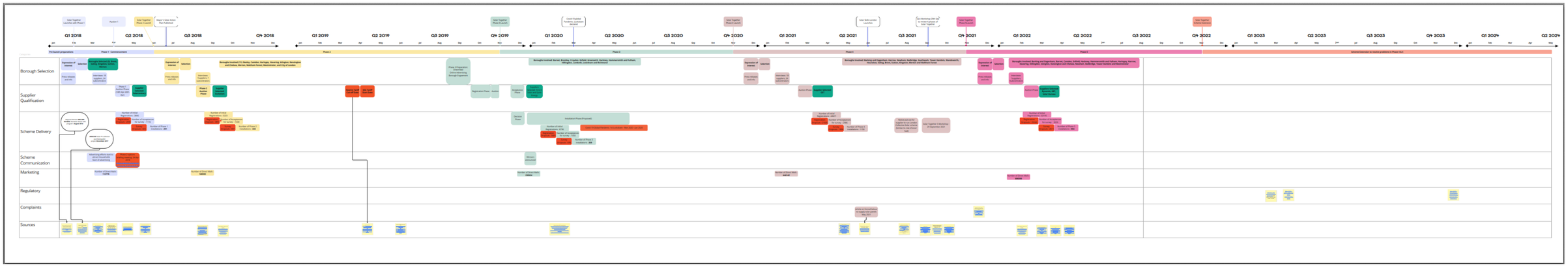
Contractual Terms	Findings
Deposit and Payment	• An Acceptance Deposit of £150 is required to be paid by the Customer upon accepting the Personal Recommendation. • The Installation Deposit Payment cannot exceed 25% of the total cost, minus the Acceptance Deposit, payable after the survey and upon scheduling the installation. It must be protected through a recognised STL programme, and a Deposit Protection Certificate must be provided to the customer.

	• The contract does not emphasize the protection of advance payments and the conditions under which they must be returned or protected, especially in case of contract cancellation or the company's insolvency.
Customer Rights and Obligations	• Customers have a statutory cancellation period of 14 days after all system components have been delivered. The Acceptance Deposit and Installation Deposit will be fully refunded if the agreement is terminated within this period. • Customers are responsible for obtaining necessary consents from third parties like landlords or mortgage companies and ensuring their property is suitable for installation. • The customer must ensure that their electrical system complies with current regulations and is safe for the installation. • While the contract address delays, it does no provides a detailed framework for compensation and customer rights in such events, which could enhance customer protection. • Other industry contract model includes more detailed obligations for the customer regarding the provision of facilities and preparatory works.
Supplier Responsibilities and Liabilities	• The supplier may adjust contract terms if unforeseen additional costs arise but must inform the customer, who can accept the revised contract or terminate the agreement. • The supplier is responsible for ensuring the system is installed correctly and complies with the agreed specifications. They must handle all complaints according to the terms stated in the T&Cs. • The supplier offers various warranties, including a ten-year product warranty for string inverters, solar systems, and battery storage, and a workmanship warranty for ten years. • Other industry contract models explicit obligations for installers regarding delays, quality of goods, and insurance-backed guarantees.
Delivery and Installation	• The supplier outlines specific timelines for delivery and completion of the installation, acknowledging potential delays. The customer must be informed of significant changes to the start date or timetable. • The agreement allows for extensions in delivery time if the number of customers exceeds expectations, with communication required within 10 working days after the STL programme closes. • The contract does not explicitly mention compensation for delays caused by the supplier. Instead, it focusses on the circumstances under which deposits are refundable, particularly if the system "does not fit" or if additional charges are not accepted by the customer. • The contract allows for the contract to be terminated and deposits to be refunded under specific circumstances, such as if the survey identifies that the system does not fit. However, detailed rights to cancel due to general delays are not explicitly stated beyond the provisions related to the system fitting or additional charges.
Warranties and Insurance-Backed Guarantees	• Comprehensive warranties cover the products and installation workmanship. Specific warranty periods are mentioned, such as ten years for the inverter and twelve years for solar systems. • Warranties for the system components, such as a ten-year product warranty for string inverters, solar systems, and battery storage, are specified. However, the process for providing test certificates and documentation upon commissioning is not detailed in the T&Cs. • The contract does not explicitly stats the provision of insurance-backed guarantees for workmanship, doing it would offer more assurance to customers regarding long-term warranty security. The focus is more on the product warranties provided by manufacturers. • The contract does not explicitly mention the provision of insurance-backed guarantees for workmanship that would be honoured even if the supplier falls into receivership, administration, or bankruptcy. This specific type of customer protection, designed to ensure that workmanship guarantees remain valid regardless of the supplier's financial situation, is a significant element of consumer protection but is not directly addressed in the contract.
Termination and Cancellation Rights	• Conditions under which the contract can be terminated by either party are detailed, including circumstances where the Acceptance Deposit becomes non-refundable. • Solar Together T&Cs mention a statutory cancellation period (cooling-off period) of 14 calendar days after the delivery of all components of the System, allowing customers to cancel the agreement without penalty and without providing a reason. • Specific scenarios where the customer can cancel the contract without cost are outlined, such as if the system does not fit the property as determined by the survey. • Solar Together T&Cs do not explicitly detail the dispute resolution processes available to customers who wish to contest charges or other issues related to cancellation. • The Solar Together T&Cs could benefit from more detailed provisions on the rights and processes for cancellation after the statutory cooling-off period, including any financial obligations or penalties. • Ensure that the T&Cs transparently outline the steps for cancellation and termination, providing clear guidance to customers on how to exercise their rights.

Quality of Goods	• The contract emphasizes the supplier's obligation to deliver and install the system according to the specification outlined in the Personal Recommendation. The adherence to quality standards is implied through the mention of the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) accredited installer and compliance with the RECC. • Upon system commissioning, the supplier must provide the customer with all relevant guarantees, test certificates, and documentation, highlighting the supplier's obligation to deliver goods that meet industry standards.
Complaints	• Complaint resolution processes include timelines for the supplier to acknowledge and address complaints, but do not provide detailed procedural steps for customers to follow. It does note the availability of the with further dispute resolution options available through RECC and Home Insulation & Energy Systems (HIES). • There is an indication that complaints should be handled within a reasonable period, yet specific timelines for acknowledgment, response, and resolution of complaints are not explicitly stated. The absence of defined timelines for complaint acknowledgment, response, and resolution might result in uncertainty and frustration for consumers awaiting outcome. • The document references the option to use RECC's Dispute Resolution Process, which includes the possibility of independent arbitration as an alternative to court action. However, specific guidance on how to access and navigate these options is limited.
Data Sharing Agreement	• The contract mentions the collection, storage, and processing of customer personal data in accordance with applicable Data Protection Law, including the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). It references to the supplier Privacy Policy without providing detailed information on the specifics of data handling practices, such as the types of data collected, purposes for processing, or the customers' rights regarding their data. • The document specifies that customer personal data will be handled as required by data protection legislation but does not elaborate on the circumstances under which data might be shared with third parties, how customers can access, rectify, or erase their data, or how data security is ensured during processing and storage. This can be critical. • There's a gap in explicitly stating customers' rights concerning their personal data and providing a clear procedure for exercising those rights, which is a core requirement under GDPR. • There's a gap in explicitly stating customers' rights concerning their personal data and providing a clear procedure for exercising those rights, which is a core requirement under GDPR. • Solar Together T&Cs could benefit from more detailed information regarding the processing of personal data, specifically concerning data sharing with third parties and the measures in place to ensure data protection during these transfers.

Appendix D Timeline

The diagram below represents the project timeline which shows the five phases of the STL programme. It includes key dates involving supplier selection and qualification, borough sign-up and STL programme delivery.



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