



## Executive Director/Director Non-Key Executive Decision Report

**Author/Lead Officer of Report:** (*Amanda Baxter,  
Social Landlords Relationship Team Manager*)

**Tel:** (0114 273 4636)

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**Report to:** Director of Housing

**Date of Decision:** 5<sup>th</sup> September 2019

**Subject:** Request from Sanctuary Housing to stop collection of water charges from their stock transfer tenants.

Which Cabinet Member Portfolio does this relate to? **Neighbourhoods and Community Safety**

Which Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee does this relate to? Safer and Stronger Communities

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken? Yes ☐ No ☒

If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? (*Insert reference number*)

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes ☐ No ☒

If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-

*"The (**report/appendix**) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (**insert relevant paragraph number**) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)."*

### Purpose of Report:

To provide the reasons for a request from Sanctuary Housing to cease acting as agent for collection of water rates from their stock transfer tenants on behalf of Yorkshire Water from April 2020.

**Recommendations:**

To agree not to exercise the Council's power to enforce upon Sanctuary Housing the covenant relating to water charge collection, provided that the right to enforce the covenant in future may be exercised in the future should the Council receive complaints from qualifying tenants.

**Background Papers:**

*(Insert details of any background papers used in the compilation of the report.)*

- Appendix A: Consultation letters for Shiregreen and Hyde Park used by Sanctuary Housing
- Appendix B: Text of email to Cllrs and MPs.
- Appendix C: Summary of consultation outcomes from Sanctuary Housing
- Appendix D: Information from Yorkshire Water on customer support

Lead Officer to complete:-		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.	Finance: Karen Jones
		Legal: Andrea Simpson
		Equalities:
	<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>	
2	<b>Lead Officer Name:</b> Amanda Baxter	<b>Job Title:</b> Social Landlords Relationship Team Manager
	<b>Date:</b> 05/09/2019	

## **1. PROPOSAL**

### **1.1 Background**

Following tenant consultation and ballots, the Shiregreen estate of 2,548 units was transferred from the Council to Sanctuary Housing Association in 2006 and the Hyde Park Walk and Terrace estate of 137 units was transferred in 2007. The total number of units transferred was 2,685.

As part of the formal consultation, the Council produced an offer document setting out the promises to tenants regarding the improvement works and housing services Sanctuary Housing would deliver. One of the promises within the offer documents was the commitment to continue to collect water rates with the rent on behalf of Yorkshire Water.

In November 2018 Sanctuary Housing approached the Council to propose that they no longer collect the water rates on behalf of Yorkshire Water. They would like to give notice to Yorkshire Water in September 2019 to allow collection to stop from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020.

Sanctuary Housing were advised that the stock transfer contract contained covenants by Sanctuary including a commitment to comply with the promises made in the Shiregreen and Hyde Park Walk and Terrace Offer Documents. The Council holds the benefit of such covenants, including the continued collection of water rates, on trust for the benefit of “qualifying tenants”, that is those tenants who were secure tenants of the Council immediately before the transfer.

As the covenants are held on trust, the Council cannot simply release Sanctuary Housing from its obligation; the Council has the power, but not the duty, to enforce the obligations on behalf of tenants. The Council could however agree not to enforce the covenant if Sanctuary Housing carried out a consultation to gauge the views of the tenants, making it clear that their proposal was a change to the promise made in the stock transfer offer document, and the result of the consultation evidenced little or no objection.

This would be without prejudice to the right to enforce the covenant in the future should the Council receive complaints from qualifying tenants over the withdrawal.

Water rates are currently collected from 2,432 households, all properties which were transferred. The number of properties in the collection scheme has reduced since transfer as tenants have exercised their preserved RTB or opted for a water meter. The number of qualifying tenants has also reduced as tenants have moved on or died. The number of qualifying tenants is now around 1,200 and is reducing.

### **1.2 Sanctuary Housing would like to stop collecting water rates for a number of reasons:**

- Their concern, following the Southwark judgment, that although they are an agent collecting water rates on behalf of Yorkshire Water, they could be seen as a reseller of water. They wish to mitigate this risk.
- Collecting water rates in Sheffield is an anomaly in their business. Additionally, a two tier system is developing whereby tenants in their new homes in Sheffield pay their water charges directly to Yorkshire Water but tenants in the transfer properties do not.
- A significant proportion of their tenants are in receipt of full Housing Benefit but have a responsibility for paying water rates; this results in significant transaction costs for the collection of water rates. The cost of collection comes from the housing operations budget and the funds could be better utilised in supporting tenants in other ways.
- Water debt on an account where a tenant is in receipt of Housing Benefit could be detrimental to the tenant in terms of a transfer or mutual exchange request.
- By paying direct to Yorkshire Water tenants would have access to a range of support initiatives including The Yorkshire Water Community Trust that they do not have access to now.

Of the four stock transfer associations, Great Places stopped collecting water rates in 2012 following the Council's decision not to enforce the covenant in relation to their collection of water rates. Sanctuary Housing is seeking the same outcome.

### **How it works now**

- 1.3 Currently Sanctuary Housing receives a bill from Yorkshire Water with a total water charge for properties on a given estate. This bill is then divided between households according to how many bedrooms each home has and the household's water charge is then paid weekly along with the tenant's rent, TARA levy and any heating charge on a 50 week rent year, or 52 week rent year for new tenants.

The main advantages of the current arrangement for Sanctuary Housing tenants are familiarity and simplicity, as water rates are paid with the rent and the customer has no relationship with Yorkshire Water.

The main disadvantage for those customers is that water rates are considered to be a priority debt while they are collected with the rent. If a customer is in arrears with their water charges, for example if they get full Housing Benefit but have to pay the water charges themselves, the arrears are shown on their rent account, which would be disadvantageous if they wanted to move to another Sanctuary property or another landlord and could also result in eviction if the level of arrears was significant enough.

### **How it would work**

- 1.4 If a decision is made that Sanctuary Housing may stop collecting water rates then Sanctuary Housing will give notice to Yorkshire Water before the end of September 2019 and will stop collection from April 2020.

Those of Sanctuary's tenants who currently pay their water rates to Sanctuary Housing as part of the rent will then be liable to pay the water rates for their home directly to Yorkshire Water, unless they decide they would prefer a metered bill.

Payments for metered or unmetered bills may be made to Yorkshire Water weekly, fortnightly, monthly or by instalments. There is some flexibility around payment dates. Payments can be made by direct debit, via online or telephone banking, via cash, cheque or payment card at a Pay Point or Post Office.

## **2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE?**

- 2.1 The proposal contributes to the ambitions of the Corporate Plan for Sheffield to be an in touch organisation, committed to tackling inequalities and supporting thriving neighbourhoods and communities.

### Summary of advantages for Sanctuary customers

1. Water rates paid via the rent account are considered to be a priority debt and could contribute to court action. This does not apply for water debt when paid directly to the water company.
2. Water debt on the rent account could prevent a transfer to a Sanctuary Housing property or a move to another landlord. This would not apply if the debt was owed to the water company.
3. While tenants are paying their water rates with their rent to Sanctuary Housing they are not customers of Yorkshire Water and so can't access budgeting and support arrangements. Details of support arrangements they would be able to access are given in Appendix D.

### Summary of advantages for Sanctuary Housing

1. Administrative. Ceasing collection would align Sheffield with other regions in Sanctuary Housing. Currently, as Sanctuary Housing's stock in Sheffield is developed, a two tiered system is developing in terms of those who pay Yorkshire Water direct for their supply and those who pay water rates with their rent, because tenants of all new properties pay direct to Yorkshire Water. This situation would end.
2. Resources. Ceasing collection would allow resources currently used in the collection of water charges to be used to provide services for tenants.

### Summary of disadvantages for Sanctuary tenants

1. Change. Tenants are familiar with the current arrangements.
2. Inconvenience. Tenants currently have one point of contact for payment of rent and water charges and for any payment problems.

### **3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?**

#### **3.1 Communication with tenants**

Letters announcing the proposals and the period of consultation were sent out to all tenants from whom Sanctuary Housing collects water rates on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2019. The consultation period lasted 28 days and closed on August 18<sup>th</sup> 2019. See Appendix A.

The letter explained the proposal, pointed out that the agreement to collect water rates was a commitment held on trust by the Council for qualifying tenants and offered different means by which tenants could make their views known or get more information. The different means were:

- At a consultation event
- By phone
- By email
- In person at the Sanctuary Housing Office on Beck Road, Shiregreen

#### **3.2 Consultation Events**

In the Hyde Park area, one consultation event was organised:

- 14, Hyde Park Walk, Sheffield, S2 5LX on Thursday 1 August 2019 between 4 pm and 7pm.

In the Shiregreen area, three consultation events were organised:

- Shiregreen Community Centre, 170-184 Sicey Avenue, Sheffield S5 0RN on Tuesday 30 July 2019 between 1.00 pm and 4.00 pm
- Shiregreen United Reformed Church, 44 Valentine Crescent, Sheffield S5 0NW on Tuesday 6 August 2019 between 4.00 pm and 7.00 pm
- Shiregreen Neighbourhood Centre, Westnall Road, Sheffield S5 0AA on Friday 9 August 2019 between 10.00 am and 1.00 pm

#### **3.3 Communication with elected members**

28/6/19 The project lead for the consultation, Operations Director Wendy Banks, met with MP Gill Furniss (Brightside and Hillsborough) to discuss.

9/7/19 Wendy Banks met with Shiregreen Councillors Peter Price and Dawn Dale at Shiregreen Committee to explain proposals.

11/7/19 Wendy Banks sent an email to both MPs: Gill Furniss and Paul Blomfield (Sheffield Central) and all 6 Councillors: Cllr Terry Fox, Cllr Pat Midgley and Cllr Sioned-Mair Richards for Hyde Park Walk and Terrace and

Cllr Garry Weatherall, Cllr Dawn Dale and Cllr Peter Price for Shiregreen explaining the proposals. See Appendix B.

19/7/19 Wendy Banks sent an email to both MPs, Gill Furniss and Paul Blomfield and all 6 Councillors to give them a copy of the consultation letters and advise them of the dates of the consultation sessions.

### 3.4 **Communication with TARAs**

10/7/19 Wendy Banks met with the Shiregreen TARA and Alpha TMO to explain proposals.

### 3.5 **Summary of the Consultation**

Sanctuary Housing co-operated with Sheffield City Council in drawing up their communications and consultation plan and has carried out a comprehensive consultation.

Sanctuary Housing is confident that all 2,432 affected tenants have had the opportunity to offer their views on the proposal.

All local elected Councillors and MPs were contacted for their views and none of them expressed any concerns about the proposals.

Of the 2,432 tenants who would be affected, 2,332 are Shiregreen tenants and Sanctuary Housing has spoken directly with 45 of them, just under 2% of tenants on this estate.

Of the 129 tenants at Hyde Park Walk and Terrace Sanctuary Housing has spoken to 18 tenants, which equates to 14% of tenants at this estate.

In total, 50 people came to the consultation 4 events and all those who attended had the opportunity to speak directly to Sanctuary Housing and Yorkshire Water representatives.

Of the 50 people who attended events, 4 objected to the proposals, although one these also requested a water meter, so that number was reduced to 3. 15 tenants made contact in person at the Shiregreen Office or by phone, and of these, 5 people raised objections.

So, of the 63 people in total who made contact (2 people who made contact with the office also attended an event); 8 would prefer to keep existing arrangements and 55 are indifferent to the proposal or had other queries. 33 people requested permission for a water meter for themselves.

The number of people objecting (8) as a % of the number of all households who currently pay water rates to Sanctuary Housing (2,432) is 0.3%. The number of qualifying tenants objecting (4) as a % of qualifying tenants (1,200) is also 0.3%. The responses of objectors are summarised below:

<b>Category of Response</b>	<b>Shiregreen qualifying</b>	<b>Shiregreen not qualifying</b>	<b>Hyde Park qualifying</b>	<b>Hyde Park not qualifying</b>	<b>Total</b>
Prefer to keep existing arrangements	4	2	2	0	8

### **Results in Detail**

- 3.6 Shiregreen: 34 households attended the Shiregreen consultation events, of these, 27 were qualifying tenant households.

From these meetings:

- Three tenant households did not want changes to the way water charges are collected (1 qualifying tenant, 2 not)
- One person wanted a vote for the whole estate, but also wanted permission for a water meter themselves
- 17 requested permission for a water meter.

Hyde Park Walk and Terrace: 16 households attended the Hyde Park consultation event, of these, 10 were qualifying tenant households

From this meeting:

- No objections were made to the proposed changes
- 13 requested permission for a water meter.

Customers were able to comment by phone, email or personal visit to Sanctuary Housing's office, 15 responses were made by visit or phone call.

No responses were received by email. Of these responses:

- Five tenant households did not want to change the way the water charges are collected. Of these, 2 were qualifying Hyde Park tenants, 3 were qualifying Shiregreen tenants.

The summary of the consultation outcomes from Sanctuary is attached at Appendix C

## **4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION**

### **4.1 Equality of Opportunity Implications**

- 4.1.1 There are no equality of opportunity implications.

### **4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications**

- 4.2.1 There are no financial or commercial implications for SCC.
- 4.2.2 Sanctuary Housing tenants would be liable to Yorkshire Water instead of Sanctuary Housing for the payment of their water charges.

### **4.3 Legal Implications**

- 4.3.1 The two stock transfer agreements provide that the Council holds the benefit of covenants, including the covenant by Sanctuary Housing to comply with the promises made on its behalf as set out in section 4 of the consultation document, on trust for each and every qualifying tenant with the intent that it may enforce this undertaking on behalf of those tenants.

Section 4 of both the Shiregreen and the Hyde Park Walk and Terrace consultation documents says "the Council currently acts as an agent to collect water rates on behalf of Yorkshire Water. If the transfer went ahead, Sanctuary would carry on collecting your water charges on behalf of



Yorkshire Water, so you wouldn't have a separate bill for your water".

Because the benefit of the covenant is held on trust the Council cannot simply agree to release Sanctuary Housing from their obligations. It can however agree, following consultation, not to enforce the covenant unless complaints are received from qualifying tenants in the future.

## **5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 5.1 The alternative to permitting Sanctuary Housing to stop collecting water charges on behalf of Yorkshire Water is to enforce the covenant and require Sanctuary Housing to continue to collect water charges, as they do currently.

## **6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 The principal reason to recommend a decision not to enforce the covenant to require Sanctuary Housing to continue to collect water rates on behalf of Yorkshire Water is that the comprehensive consultation exercise carried out by Sanctuary Housing has evidenced very little opposition to the proposal, only eight households out of 2,432 contacted stating that they would prefer arrangements to remain as they are.
- 6.2 The water rates collected from Sanctuary Housing tenants is based on the rateable value of tenants' homes which would not change.
- 6.3 As customers of Yorkshire Water, tenants would be able to access a range of budgeting and support schemes that they cannot access currently.
- 6.4 Given the outcome of the consultation evidencing very little opposition and the neutral impact on Sanctuary Housing tenants, the Council would want to act as a positive partner and not seek to enforce the covenant, a position which is without prejudice to enforcing the covenant in future if significant objection is received.



**Sanctuary Housing Services Limited**

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Liverpool  
L3 2BY

**0800 131 3348**

**0300 123 3511**

[contactus@sanctuary-housing.co.uk](mailto:contactus@sanctuary-housing.co.uk)

Name

Address

Ref:

19 July 2019

Dear

### **Shiregreen Water Billing**

We are writing to you today as we would like to discuss the way you pay your water charges.

Currently Sanctuary Housing receives a bill from Yorkshire Water with a total water charge for all our properties on the Shiregreen estate. This bill is then divided between residents according to how many bedrooms each home has and the household's water charge is then paid along with your rent and TARA levy.

This way of collecting water charges on behalf of Yorkshire Water has been in place since Sanctuary Housing acquired its homes at Shiregreen from Sheffield City Council in 2006. At this time, we committed to continuing to collect water charges from transferring tenants in the same way that the Council did, so that tenants wouldn't have a separate bill for water charges. That commitment applies to anyone who was a tenant before the transfer of homes took place and is still a tenant now. This commitment is held on trust by the Council for those qualifying tenants and may be enforced.

However, from 1 April 2020, we would like to make a change that would see each household pay their water supplier direct for the water that's used. Benefits of this change would include residents being able to take advantage of water saving measures offered by Yorkshire Water, and also the ability to choose from a number of different payment options.

To gauge the thoughts of residents, this letter will begin a 28-day consultation period to discuss this plan – which has also been shared with the Local Authority, Shiregreen Tenants and Residents Association and Shiregreen Community Committee - and the consultation will initially end on Sunday 18 August 2019.

Please be reassured that in the short-term – while the consultation is taking place, there is going to be no change to the way you pay for your water, so no action is required following this letter.

[sanctuary-housing.co.uk](http://sanctuary-housing.co.uk)



Sanctuary Housing Services Limited  
Registered office: Sanctuary House, Chamber Court, Castle Street, Worcester, WR1 3ZQ  
A company incorporated in England and Wales, Registration No. 02245594  
Sanctuary Housing Services Limited is a subsidiary of Sanctuary Housing Association, an exempt charity

**Consultation events:**

The thoughts of residents are important to us and we have arranged three consultation events so you can come and discuss these proposals with staff from Sanctuary Housing and Yorkshire Water.

The dates and times of the three events are as follows:

**Shiregreen Community Centre, 170-184 Sicey Avenue, Sheffield S5 0RN  
on Tuesday 30 July 2019 between 1.00 pm and 4.00 pm**

**Shiregreen United Reformed Church, 44 Valentine Crescent, Sheffield S5 0NW  
on Tuesday 6 August 2019 between 4.00 pm and 7.00 pm**

**Shiregreen Neighbourhood Centre, Westnall Road, Sheffield S5 0AA  
on Friday 9 August 2019 between 10.00 am and 1.00 pm**

We understand that not everyone will be able to make these events and therefore, if you cannot attend, you can read information about all Yorkshire Water's services and offers by visiting [www.yorkshirewater.com/policies](http://www.yorkshirewater.com/policies).

If you have any feedback regarding the consultation, or questions you would like to ask, please contact us either at the Shiregreen office, by calling our Customer Service Centre on 0300 123 3511, or by emailing [contactus@sanctuary-housing.co.uk](mailto:contactus@sanctuary-housing.co.uk).

Yours sincerely

*W Banks*

Wendy Banks  
**Operations Manager**

**Sanctuary Housing Services Limited**

Marybone House,  
2 Marybone,  
Liverpool  
L3 2BY

**0800 131 3348****0300 123 3511**[contactus@sanctuary-housing.co.uk](mailto:contactus@sanctuary-housing.co.uk)

Name  
Address

Ref:

19 July 2019

Dear

**Hyde Park Terrace and Walk Water Billing**

We are writing to you today as we would like to discuss the way you pay your water charges.

Currently Sanctuary Housing receives a bill from Yorkshire Water with a total water charge for all our properties at Hyde Park Terrace and Walk. This bill is then divided between residents according to how many bedrooms each home has and the household's water charge is then paid along with your rent, heating charge and TARA levy.

This way of collecting water charges on behalf of Yorkshire Water has been in place since Sanctuary Housing acquired its homes at Hyde Park Terrace and Walk from Sheffield City Council in 2007. At this time, we committed to continuing to collect water charges from transferring tenants in the same way that the Council did, so that tenants wouldn't have a separate bill for water charges. That commitment applies to anyone who was a tenant before the transfer of homes took place and is still a tenant now. This commitment is held on trust by the Council for those qualifying tenants and may be enforced.

However, from 1 April 2020, we would like to make a change that would see each household pay their water supplier direct for the water that's used. Benefits of this change would include residents being able to take advantage of water saving measures offered by Yorkshire Water, and also the ability to choose from a number of payment options.

To gauge the thoughts of residents, this letter will begin a 28-day consultation period to discuss this plan – which has also been shared with the Local Authority and Alpha Tenant Management Co-operative - and the consultation will initially end on Sunday 18 August 2019.

Please be reassured that in the short-term – while the consultation is taking place, there is going to be no change to the way you pay for your water, so no action is required following this letter.

[sanctuary-housing.co.uk](http://sanctuary-housing.co.uk)

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**Consultation events:**

The thoughts of residents are important to us and we have arranged a consultation event so you can come and discuss these proposals with staff from Sanctuary Housing and Yorkshire Water.

The date and time of this event is as follows:

**14, Hyde Park Walk, Sheffield, S2 5LX  
on Thursday 1 August 2019 between 4 pm and 7pm.**

We understand that not everyone will be able to make this event and therefore, if you cannot attend, you can read information about all Yorkshire Water's services and offers by visiting [www.yorkshirewater.com/policies](http://www.yorkshirewater.com/policies)

If you have any feedback regarding the consultation, or questions you would like to ask, please contact us either at the Shiregreen office, by calling our Customer Service Centre on 0300 123 3511, or by emailing [contactus@sanctuary-housing.co.uk](mailto:contactus@sanctuary-housing.co.uk)

Yours sincerely

*W Banks*

Wendy Banks  
**Operations Manager**

Appendix B

**From:** Wendy Banks

**Sent:** 11 July 2019 10:26

**To:** 'terry.fox2@sheffield.gov.uk'

**Subject:** Hyde Park Walk and Terrace Water Charges

Dear Mr Fox

I wanted to let you know that we are writing to residents as part of a consultation about the way they pay their water rates.

Currently Sanctuary Housing receives a bill from Yorkshire Water with a water charge for all our properties at Hyde Park Terrace and Walk. This bill is then divided between residents according to how many bedrooms each home has and the charge is paid along with their rent and heating charge.

This way of collecting water charges on behalf of Yorkshire Water has been in place since Sanctuary Housing acquired its homes at Hyde Park Terrace and Walk from Sheffield City Council in 2006. At this time, we committed to continuing to collect water charges from transferring tenants in the same way that the Council did, so that tenants wouldn't have a separate bill for water charges.

That commitment applies to anyone who was a tenant before the transfer of homes took place and is still a tenant now. This commitment is held on trust by the Council for those qualifying tenants and may be enforced.

However, from 1 April 2020 we would like to make a change that would see each household pay their water supplier direct for the water that's used. This would allow residents to benefit from water saving measures offered by Yorkshire Water and choose from a number of payment options.

We understand that residents may have questions about these proposals so we are arranging a consultation event at the Alpha Office where they can discuss them with staff from Sanctuary Housing and Yorkshire Water. I will confirm the date and times with you once they are finalised.

Until any decision is made following the consultation, residents have been reassured that there will be no change to the way they pay for their water.

We understand that not everyone will be able to make these events and therefore we have included a link to Yorkshire Water's website – [www.yorkshirewater.com](http://www.yorkshirewater.com) – in the letters we have sent out, which provides information about all the services they have on offer.

I would be grateful if you would not discuss this with tenants at present, I will let you know when the letter is sent out so you are aware that the consultation period has started.

If you would like to discuss this further, or have any questions, please do contact me on 0113 202 6103 or email [Wendy.Banks@sanctuary-housing.co.uk](mailto:Wendy.Banks@sanctuary-housing.co.uk)

Wendy Banks  
**Operations Manager**

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Sanctuary Housing Services is part of Sanctuary Group

## Appendix C

### **Shiregreen and Hyde Park Terrace and Walk consultation on Water Charge removal**

Letters were sent to all tenants who pay water charges on 19 July 2019 to explain the proposed amendment to the water charge collection and this opened the consultation which had an end date of Sunday 18 August 2019.

Four separate consultation events also took place; these were booked at different venues and times to accommodate as many tenants as possible. Details of each event are noted below.

Shiregreen Community Centre, 170-184 Sicey Avenue, Sheffield S5 0RN

Meeting held on Tuesday 30 July 2019 between 1.00 pm and 4.00pm.

15 households (14 of these were qualifying tenants) attended the session:

- 7 requested permission for a water meter to be fitted before the end of the consultation period; and
- 8 had no feedback to give.

14, Hyde Park Walk, Sheffield, S2 5LX

Meeting held on Thursday 1 August 2019 between 4 pm and 7pm.

16 households (10 of these are qualifying tenants) attended the session:

- 13 requested permission for a water meter to be fitted before the end of the consultation period;
- 1 was considering if a water meter was appropriate; and
- 2 had no feedback to give.

Shiregreen United Reformed Church, 44 Valentine Crescent, Sheffield, S5 0NW

Meeting held on Tuesday 6 August 2019 between 4.00 pm and 7.00 pm

7 households (3 are qualifying tenants) attended the session:

- 2 requested permission for a water meter to be fitted before the end of the consultation period:
- 1 specifically wanted to leave the charges as they are;
- 1 wanted to know what their water charges were (this was given to the tenant); and
- 3 had no feedback to give.



Shiregreen Neighbourhood Centre, Westnall Road, Sheffield, S5 0AA  
Meeting held on Friday 9 August 2019 between 10.00 am and 1.00 pm

12 households (10 of these are qualifying tenants) attended the session:

- 8 requested permission for a water meter to be fitted before the end of the consultation period;
- 1 requested a vote for the whole of the scheme;
- 2 do not want to change how they pay their charges at present;
- 1 had had a bill from Yorkshire Water (incorrect billing now sorted);
- 1 tenant who requested a water meter permission (counted above) also stated they had concerns over how much the new water rates will be and how Sanctuary tenants are being treated (his concerns were discussed and responded to);
- 1 tenant also stated that they did not understand rateable value (this was therefore explained to them) and advised they didn't want to change although they have since requested a water meter (counted above).

In addition, throughout the period tenants have been able to telephone in or visit either the Shiregreen office or Alpha's office to give feedback if they have not been able to attend the consultation events. As part of this additional opportunity to discuss the matter with Sanctuary staff we have had 13 responses from Shiregreen tenants (8 are qualifying tenants) and 2 responses (both qualifying) from tenants at Hyde Park Terrace/Walk. It should be noted that 2 of these tenants also attended a consultation event and are both qualifying tenants. From these 15 responses via telephone or personal visit to the offices the comments received were:

- 2 asked for water meter permission forms;
- 6 do not want to change the way they pay their charge now (however 1 has subsequently asked for permission for a water meter);
- 3 did not understand how water charges were paid (1 is now happy to pay either Sanctuary or Yorkshire Water);
- 3 queried payment arrangements – all are happy to pay Yorkshire Water direct; and
- 1 asked if there would be a change in the charges (they have subsequently attended a consultation event and asked for permission for a water meter).

All residents have been contacted and their queries responded to, or their points were noted.

### **Summary**

During the consultation period we have contacted 100% of the 2,432 tenants who would be impacted by this change.

2,333 of these are Shiregreen tenants and we have directly spoken to 45 tenants which equate to just under 2% of tenants at this scheme.

Of the 129 tenants at Hyde Park Terrace and Walk we have directly spoken to 18 tenants which equates to 14% of tenants at this scheme.

Whilst the numbers are very low we consider that this is a reflection on the fact that very few tenants have a concern regarding the proposed change. Wendy Banks, 19/08/2019

## Appendix D

- Water Support: A scheme to cap the annual water bill at £450 for households on a low income
- Resolve: A scheme which works with tenants to remove debt of over 12 months on water accounts by offering credits in exchange for committing to repayments
- Water Direct: A scheme which can make direct deductions of deductible benefits once arrears are over £70
- Community Trust: Grants and awards of up to £750 for customers with over 12 months of water arrears combined with rent, gas, electricity or Council Tax arrears
- Priority Services Register Helping Hands Support: Various forms of assistance for vulnerable customers; passwords to identify workers, nominees to support customers, large print and braille communications, talking bills, regular meter readings, alternative water supply and advance notice of work to be undertaken.
- Where tenants become a customer of Yorkshire Water by opting for a water meter there is also Water Sure: A scheme which offers capped bills for those with a water meter who have 3 dependent children or a medical condition.

# Summary of Schemes and Tariffs

