

## Economic

### At a glance

Over the past 12 months we have worked closely with South West Water to **help our customers save money** on their water bills

We have partnered up with Energy SW to offer competitively priced energy bills, including the **free installation of smart meters** for customers on pre-payment meters.

Our rents team continue to work with customers to **increase awareness of Welfare Reform changes** including Universal Credit

We ran a Direct Debit campaign and **obtained 60 extra Direct Debit payers**.

**Charge rent in line with the standards set out by the Governments direction. We will provide cost-effective, efficient and good quality services and homes and show how we are using our finances to provide good value for money.**

#### Working with South West Water

Over the past 12 months we have worked closely with South West Water to help our customers save money on their water bills and to assist those in debt.

We are really happy with how this partnership with South West Water has assisted our customers during the year. The number of customers who have had a water meter installed has increased

by 145 properties. South West Water customers save, on average, between £300 - £400 per year by switching to a water meter.

**The number of our customers who are now supported by one of South West Water's affordability schemes has increased by 170%. We sent applications forms for South West Water's WaterCare tariff, which offers a discount of between 15-50% off water bills to our customers and 46% of the ones returned were successful.**

In August 2015 we attended a community engagement event which was arranged by South West Water at Buckland, Newton Abbot where we talked to customers about ways they could save money off their water bills. Customers who attended provided the following feedback:

- 100% said that it was helpful having someone to talk to face to face
- 100% said that South West Water had identified ways to save them money on their water bill
- 74% said they did not know about any of the help available before the event
- 87% rated the event as 'excellent'

#### EnergySW

We have also been working with EnergySW to offer customers and their neighbours exclusive and competitively priced energy tariffs. The offer also includes the free installation of a Smart meter for customers who are on a pre-payment meter, which gives them greater convenience in topping up and visibility of their energy usage to help manage their energy budget.

#### National Energy Action

National Energy Action ran a series of Winter Warmth drop-in sessions at our town centre office from October 2015 – April 2016. The aim of the

sessions was to help customer reduce their energy bills and be more efficient with what they are using. Advice included:

- how to challenge an incorrect bill
- energy efficiency
- discussing how to tackle condensation
- information and advice on fuel debt
- help you to understand how to read your meter
- discussing how to get cheaper bills

### **Universal Credit**

To make sure that changes related to Universal Credit are well communicated to our customers. The rents team have put together four articles for our monthly online newsletter and have produced two rents newsletters. We have also used social media and our website to create awareness of the changes. All customers under a court order have been written to with a Universal Credit leaflet enclosed and ongoing conversations are being had with customers in arrears.

### **Community Pledge**

We wanted to run some drop-in information sessions prior to Universal Credit being implemented in our area, but we decided to wait for some additional census data to be inputted onto our system so that we can do this using a more targeted approach.

### **Community Pledge**

We have contacted in excess of 400 customers who we believe may be impacted by the changes to Disability Living Allowance (DLA) to Personal Independence Payment (PIP). Communications have been by way of telephone call, text, email and letter. Follow up work will continue for those that we have still not had contact with.

### **Community Pledge**

Once we are aware of a customer moving over to Universal Credit we complete a financial health check form with them which includes an agreed monthly payment of rent, awareness of priority debt and more in depth support if required.

### **Community Pledge**

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### **In 2016/17 we will:**

- Upper quartile for Rent Collection Rate
- Upper quartile for Current tenant arrears %
- Upper quartile for Former tenant arrears %
- Upper quartile Total Cost per property

