



**Update to all Thistle Tenants, Residents and Shareholders - 13 August 2020**

**Draft Transfer Offer from Sanctuary Scotland Unveiled!**

We updated you last month on the positive progress we have been making on developing the joint Business Case that supports our plans for Thistle Housing Association to transfer into Sanctuary Scotland Housing Association. Our focus has been on getting the very best offer for Thistle’s tenants and other customers shaped by the things that matter to **YOU**.

We are delighted to report that we have now finalised the Business Case and will present it to Thistle’s Management Committee and the Boards of Sanctuary Scotland and its parent, Sanctuary Group over August for approval. It will also be reviewed over that period by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) and TIS, Thistle’s appointed independent tenant advisers.

**The Outline Sanctuary Scotland Transfer Offer**

We wanted to share the headlines of the transfer offer with you as soon as we possibly could so, in advance of the formal consultation commencing, here is what has been agreed against Thistle’s top transfer priorities, subject to any final minor amendments:

Thistle Transfer Priorities	Sanctuary Scotland Outline Transfer Offer
Investment programme to improve the condition of our homes and the wider environment and prioritising the EON contract remedial work.	<p>• <b>Over the 4 years from transfer, Sanctuary Scotland will deliver a major accelerated investment programme in Thistle’s homes that will see over <u>£11m</u> spent in the area by the end of 2024</b> (compared to £3.6m that Thistle planned to spend). This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>completing the EON contract remedial works and related asbestos issues</b></li> <li>✓ <b>almost £7m to renew kitchens and bathrooms in all homes</b> (except those who have already had renewal).</li> <li>✓ <b>over £0.5m on door/ window renewals</b></li> <li>✓ <b>almost £0.6m to improve the environment</b> (including remodelling of back courts, power washing, replacement paths, fencing, planting and maintaining open spaces).</li> </ul>

Thistle Transfer Priorities	Sanctuary Scotland Outline Transfer Offer
Improving rent affordability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Rents capped over the next 3 years at the <u>lower</u> of the Retail Price Index (inflation) plus 0.5% or 3%</b> (compared to RPI plus 1% that Thistle planned to increase rents by).</li> <li>● <b>A three-month delay to rent increases post transfer, with rents increasing on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021.</b> (instead of 28 March with Thistle)</li> </ul>
Strong and positive customer service culture that puts customers at the heart of the service. A skilled, supported and well led staff team empowered to do the right thing for customers. Retaining a local office and staff presence in Toryglen.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sanctuary Scotland will <b>retain and expand services from Thistle’s current offices so that it acts as a vibrant community hub.</b></li> <li>● Culture change programme to embed Sanctuary Scotland customer focused culture.</li> <li>● In addition to <b>locally based services</b>, customers will be able to call Sanctuary’s <b>Customer Service Centre 24 hours a day/ 7 days a week.</b></li> <li>● <b>Current staff will remain in place &amp; no compulsory redundancies</b> will happen as a result of the transfer.</li> </ul>
Effective communication and engagement with local tenants and residents to ensure local tenants and residents shape local services and priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>A new dedicated Toryglen Customer Review Panel</b> will be set up to monitor transfer promises and shape local services.</li> <li>● Tenants will also have an <b>opportunity to join a central Area Committee.</b></li> </ul>
Well run factoring service, providing value for money for owners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Cost effective service for owners on a 24/7 basis.</b></li> <li>● <b>A reduction in annual common insurance policy premiums</b> (similar cover from Sanctuary Scotland factored owners in 2019/20 was almost £90 cheaper for the year than that offered in the same period by Thistle).</li> <li>● <b>Value for money common repairs service, utilising Sanctuary’s in-house service from 2022.</b></li> <li>● <b>A fair payment policy for major works.</b></li> <li>●</li> </ul>
High calibre asset and contract management expertise to ensure all contacts, including the repair service, deliver high quality work, to required standards with excellent service to customers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Sanctuary’s housing, asset management, gas safety, fire, compliance and health and safety teams with access to a framework of specialist contractors.</b></li> <li>● <b>Sanctuary’s in house maintenance service will take over delivery of repairs, landscaping and gas services from 2022,</b> ensuring high quality services, direct control and value for money.</li> </ul>

All of this will be supported by the **strong governance and leadership** of Sanctuary Scotland who have a sound track record in **positive customer and stakeholder engagement**. The transfer offer is supported by a **new business plan** that has already been tested to ensure that all that is promised can be paid for. Sanctuary Scotland are also committed to using their **experience in new build housing and stock acquisitions to expand on housing options** in Toryglen for those in housing need.

We held a further four Focus Groups with Thistle tenants and owners on 5 and 6 August 2020 and shared the outline offer. Those who attended were very impressed by what Thistle and Sanctuary Scotland put forward and there was unanimous support for transfer.

The staff team at Thistle have also seen the outline offer and fed back that it responds to the things that tenants and factored owners say are important.

If the transfer proceeds, there will be no need for tenants to sign new tenancy agreements as **all of your rights will be protected**. Similarly, the rights of factored owners remain unchanged.

**Next Steps** - If approved by the governing bodies and subject to positive review by the SHR and TIS, we will then begin formal tenant consultation immediately thereafter from **27 August 2020**. This will involve the issue of a Stage 1 Notice in booklet form that will be issued to every Thistle tenant including joint tenants. A copy of the booklet will be sent to all factored owners and shareholders and similarly, we will be happy to receive feedback.

The Notice will set out in detail the transfer promises from Sanctuary Scotland should tenants support the transfer and vote YES to transfer to Sanctuary in the tenant Ballot later this year. The formal consultation will run for 28 days. ***When you receive the Stage 1 booklet, please take the time to read it and tell us what you think.***

We are forming an intensive communication plan for over the consultation period to speak with as many tenants as possible so that we make sure the plans are clear and to answer any questions. We hope you like what you see and look forward to kicking off the formal consultation later this month and getting out to meet you to hear what you think.

When the consultation period ends, Thistle's Management Committee will consider feedback. If they are happy there is support, we will serve a second notice to tenants (copied to owners and members) confirming whether there are any changes to the offer and then immediately make plans to commence the independent tenant ballot in October 2020.

The Scottish Housing Regulator will require Sanctuary Scotland to keep them informed about progress with the integration of Thistle into Sanctuary Scotland and with meeting the promises made to Thistle tenants and residents.

The proposed new Toryglen Customer Review Panel will have a direct role in monitoring delivery of the transfer promises as well as shaping local services.

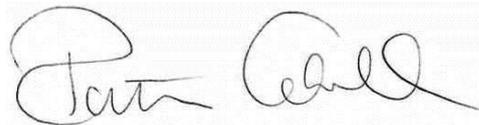
**Do we have your contact details?** - If your phone number or email address has recently changed, please email [transfer@thistle-ha.org.uk](mailto:transfer@thistle-ha.org.uk) or text 07990 078054 with your new contact details. This enables us to update our database and ensures you won't miss out on important updates during the formal consultation process.

**Any Comments or Questions?** - If you have any transfer questions at this stage, please email [transfer@thistle-ha.org.uk](mailto:transfer@thistle-ha.org.uk) or phone us on 0141 613 2700.

You can also contact the Tenants Information Service (TIS), your Independent Tenant Advisor. TIS can provide you with advice and information on the proposal and answer any questions you have about it. You can contact TIS by telephone on Freephone 0800 488 0982 (Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm) or email [info@tis.org.uk](mailto:info@tis.org.uk)



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