



Reference: RFI 1709040

**Request:**

I recently came across a court case between Southwark council in London and one of its tenants which said that the council had been overcharging its tenants for the supply of water. I read about the case in newspaper reports and understand that the tenants were paid millions of pounds in refunds.

I want to know whether my family and friends have been overcharged too and am asking you to give me information and copies of agreements so that I can investigate.

1. Please tell me if you have ever charged your housing tenants for supplying water to them. I understand that this is sometimes included in a rent payment and sometimes as a separate service charge, so please include both.

**Response**

North Tyneside Council have an agency agreement in place and collect water rates on behalf of Northumbrian Water. We have had similar arrangements in place for over 12 years using similar contracting arrangements. The cost of Water rates are not included in rent and are itemised separately.

2. If so, please tell me the date that you started doing it and the date that you stopped.

**Response**

North Tyneside has been collecting monies on behalf of Northumbrian Water for over 12 years.  
We currently have an agreement with Northumbrian Water to collect monies for Water Rates.

3. Please send me a copy of the agreements between the council and the water companies that give you the ability to make those charges to tenants and show me how much the council has to pay back to the water companies.

**Response**

Unfortunately we cannot share the detail of the agreement as it is commercially sensitive. However, I can confirm North Tyneside Council will collect an estimated £5.5m in 2017/18 in relation to Water Rate charges on behalf of Northumbrian Water under an Agency agreement.

4. Please show me the minutes of any council meetings where you talked about water charges for your tenants so I can understand what made the council want to do it this way.

**Response**

There are no minutes that that can be shared in relation to Water Rate charges however all associated costs are built into the Housing Revenue account budgets. Please find attached a link to the Housing Revenue Account Budget Report that went to Cabinet in January 2017. [http://www.northtyneside.gov.uk/browse-display.shtml?p\\_ID=567582&p\\_subjectCategory=41](http://www.northtyneside.gov.uk/browse-display.shtml?p_ID=567582&p_subjectCategory=41)