1. What is a Section 20 consultation?
Under the terms of Section 20 of the ‘Landlord and Tenant Act 1985’, we must send you a letter telling you before we enter into a long term agreement for works and services. This letter is known as a ‘Section 20 Notice’.

For long term agreements there is a two-step consultation process. This letter represents the first stage.

The second step of the process comes later, after we have received bids from the shortlisted companies who would like to do the work. At this stage we will send you a second Section 20 Notice known as a ‘Notice of Estimates’ which includes estimates of the costs of the works.

2. What is a Long Term Agreement?
This is a contract which your landlord enters into with a company or companies to supply services and works for over a year.

The Hyde Group believe it can give better service to residents by entering into long term agreements for works and services. These offer the following benefits:
• A service standard to all Hyde residents, with planned flexibility to meet local needs
• Increased value for money through better pricing and quality
• Better service due to a more manageable number of contractors
• Service Charges that are more accurate and easier to understand
• Residents involved in choosing contractors and checking performance
• Get more out of contracts, for example training for residents and more green initiatives

3. Which Long Term Agreements are covered by these notices?
To provide a full range of works and services we intend to sign a number of long term agreements.

The works and services included in the long term agreement we have sent out Section 20 notices are for:

• Cleaning services – including but not limited to: Communal Cleaning, Window Cleaning, Cleaning Equipment/Materials, Graffiti Removal, Pest control, Inspection of communal areas in street properties, Replacing communal light bulbs
• Gardening services – including but not limited to: Grounds Maintenance and Cleaning, Bulk rubbish, Gardening, Trees and Tree Surveys, Japanese Knotweed Control and Eradication, Pest control, Estate Signage, Play Area Inspection/Cleaning
4. Can I suggest a contractor?

The Service Charges (Consultation Requirements) (England) Regulations 2003 state that residents are not allowed to suggest a contractor for us to approach for a quote.

The reason for this is that under European Union law we are required to provide an opportunity for companies based in all European Union countries to bid for the contract. We placed an advertisement in the Official Journal of the European Union and received expressions of interest from contractors.

We are not allowed to ask companies directly and invite them to bid to do the works or services as this is seen to be unfair to other companies across the European Union.

5. What is an observation?

The law says you have a right to reply to a Section 20 notice up to 30 calendar days from the date of the notice. Your reply is known as an ‘observation’. We must reply to any observations we receive within 21 calendar days. We must consider any comments or concerns you raise before going any further with the proposed long term agreement.

It is normal for affected residents to express a variety of opinions and concerns. For this reason it may not be possible to accommodate everyone’s suggestions about the proposed long term agreements. However, we do aim to take account of all comments or concerns raised and to amend our approach if there is good reason to do so. You do not have to make an observation if you do not wish to do so.

6. How do I make an observation?

You can make an observation about this notice in writing either by letter or e-mail to the following addresses. Unfortunately the law says you cannot make observations verbally either over the telephone or in person.

- Write to: Hollingsworth House, 181 Lewisham High Street, London, SE13 6AA
- Email: s20@hyde-housing.co.uk

7. I have received a Section 20 letter, is this notice a bill?

No, this is not a bill. You do not need to make any payment in response to receiving this letter or the enclosed notices.

8. Do I need to reply to this notice?

You only need to reply if you want to make an observation about the proposed long term agreements.

9. What if I don’t currently pay for these services?

You may get a Section 20 Notice which lists a service or works that you don’t require (for example “gardening”). If this is the case then we will not be carrying out that work or service to your building and this part of the long term agreement will not be relevant to you.

You may get a Section 20 Notice which lists a service or works that you don’t currently receive (for example “cleaning”). If you do not receive the services but Hyde is responsible for maintaining your communal areas, we will consider carrying out that work or service to your building and this consultation is relevant to you.

You may receive some of these services but you may not be currently charged via Service Charges. In this case you may need to start contributing to Service Charges if your tenancy agreement states so. You will receive further information within the “Notice of Estimates” letter.
10. Will my service charges increase?
Your service charge will depend on the services and works which take place in the building/estate that you live in. We will not be asking you to pay for anything for which you are not receiving a service. Before we award the contract we will select the services which are specific to your building/estate.

By entering into long term agreements with contractors, we are aiming to get lower costs for services and works and better value for money. We hope that as a result, this will mean lower overall costs to residents but we cannot anticipate the impact that this will have for your particular building/estate. At this stage we do not know how this will affect your individual Service Charges.

11. What happens next?
At the end of the Section 20 consultation period, we will look at all residents’ observations. We will decide whether to carry on with inviting companies to bid to provide these services and works.

If we continue, then we will carry out a tender process. Shortlisted companies will receive a detailed specification against which they will bid for work.

Bids, or tenders as they are known, will then be subject to another check against a set of criteria which we developed in consultation with residents and our resident panel.

Once we have chosen the successful bidder/s for each long term agreement, we will write to affected residents again with a second Section 20 Notice to notify them and outline these bids.

Residents will then have another 30 day consultation period in which to make any comments. After reading these comments we may then enter into long term agreements with these bidders. The whole process will most likely take 6 months from the date of this letter.

12. What is the reason behind changing the current cleaning and grounds maintenance contractors?
From the procurement perspective Hyde needs to comply with European Union law. This set of regulations requires Hyde to openly tender contract renewals.

Hyde will take this important opportunity to get a better service for its residents, bringing a service standard across the group, improved contract terms, clear specifications with detailed frequency of tasks and value for money through competitive pricing.

13. Will Hyde use one standard specification to cover all the properties?
One specification will be used as the basis for the majority of Hyde’s blocks/estates and housing schemes (General Needs Schemes). Different versions of this specification have been designed for:

- **Light touch** general needs specification for properties where Hyde did not previously provide any cleaning services
- **High traffic** buildings where an entrance or entrances are used by a large number of people
- **Supported and sheltered** housing schemes, and other schemes with communal facilities
- **High-profile, modern** schemes which may have particular components, e.g. a large amount of glazing
14. How will the contract be priced, by estates or a contract sum for the whole of the contract?
The contract will be priced by blocks/estates, with clear cost breakdowns for estates/blocks and activities.
This will help to improve clarity of residents’ service charges.

15. What would happen if a contractor did not perform well and the contract was terminated, would Hyde start the whole procurement process again?
Hyde is procuring a Framework of contractors. This means that if any of the contractors appointed to carry out the works did not perform well and the contract needed to be terminated Hyde could run a mini-competition (a 4 week tender process) within the Framework to award a new contract.
This would be subject to formal section 20 consultation.

16. If the contracts will cover grounds maintenance and cleaning, does it mean that we will have cleaners doing gardening?
No, both services will be provided by the same contractor but not by the same operatives.
Cleaners and gardeners will have to hold the relevant training and experience in their fields.

17. Will Social Value be considered as part of the evaluation criteria?
Yes, Social Value will be part of the evaluation criteria.
Contractors will be encouraged to hire local staff and bring extra value to the communities.
Hyde Plus is heavily involved in this procurement to ensure Social Value is at the heart of these contracts.

18. How will residents be involved?
In first instance, via this letter, residents are given the opportunity to review the specification that will serve their properties and they can make any observations.
The Resident Procurement Panel has been involved from the beginning in the preparation of the specifications, tender documentation and tender evaluation. In addition, RAC members were given the opportunity to review and comment on the specification.
Also, for larger estates, Hyde will host Estate Open Days where the selected contractors will be introduced to the residents and residents will be given the opportunity to highlight any local issues or requirements.
Please note that Hyde is in the process of recruiting residents to form part of our evaluation panel for this tender.
Residents are also given the opportunity to fill in a survey where they can provide useful information about their block/estates.
For more information about the Estate Open Days, surveys or to express your interest to form part of the evaluation panel, please visit http://hydeweb2.webcms.hydegrp.net/residents/estate-services

19. Currently, some estates are cleaned by the residents, is it an arrangement that will be maintained?
No, it is not Hyde’s intention to maintain this type of arrangement as we are not able to deliver our quality standards and this will also
represent a health and safety risk to the residents and visitors.

Hyde will look into the individual cases to analyse the reasons why these arrangements are in place and consult with residents before introducing new arrangements.

20. What will happen with the estates where some cleaning or grounds maintenance services are currently carried out by caretakers? In most cases the current in-house staff will be maintained, with the exception of Hyde Property Services (HPS)

21. How can I apply to be involved in interviewing the potential new contractors for Estate Services in my regional area? If you would like to be involved, please email residentengagement@hyde-housing.co.uk or call and ask to speak to Kimberley Wadham, Governance and Scrutiny Advisor on 0800 3282282 or 0300 1232233 (from a mobile).