

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

26 FEBRUARY 2008

ITEM NO.

REWARD AND RECOGNITION SCHEME

Purpose of Report

1. This report provides details of the Reward and Recognition Scheme to be implemented following consultation with stakeholders.

Information and Analysis**Background**

2. On the 5 June 2007 Cabinet considered a report, which outlined how a Reward and Recognition Scheme could be developed for Council tenants and leaseholders. Cabinet resolved to implement the scheme subject to further detailed consultation (Minute C8(4)/Jun/07 refers).
3. The Tenants Board meeting on the 18 July 2007 considered the proposals and agreed to establish a small Task and Finish Group to look at what should be included in the scheme. The group started by researching what other schemes include. All of the schemes looked at have two elements:-
 - (a) Membership criteria - Tenants and Leaseholders need to apply to be members and they have to satisfy an eligibility criteria that is a clear rent account or be repaying to an agreed arrangement. Where these criteria are satisfied the tenant/leaseholder is issued a discount card. The discount scheme is operated by a national organisation and gives discount from both national and local shops and companies that are members. The criteria also rewards and recognises good behaviour and there is an element of investing to save. For example, tenants are rewarded by a money payment for giving notice when terminating tenancies, and leaving with a clear rent account and a clean and tidy property and garden. This will reduce the costs associated with re-letting vacant homes and recovering former tenant arrears.
 - (b) Prize competitions - a number of prize competitions and other rewards, for example, draws for tenants who pay by direct debit, and good neighbour category.
4. The group put together a consultation article, which was included in the November edition of Hotnews. The qualifications for the scheme were set as:-
 - (a) You must be up to date with your rent and pay by Direct Debit.
 - (b) You must have been a tenant for at least three months.
 - (c) Your property and garden must be clean and tidy.
 - (d) You must not have been guilty of any anti social behaviour and agree to sign a Good Neighbour Agreement.

5. The benefits of the scheme could be:-
- (a) A discount card to use in local and national shops, supermarkets and leisure facilities offering a range of discounts and special offers.
 - (b) Entry into regular competitions and prize draws.
 - (c) Faster repairs (including Saturday morning service).
 - (d) Priority over other residents for garage allocation.
 - (e) Low-cost home contents insurance.
 - (f) Good Neighbour and Young Peoples Recognition Awards.
 - (g) Access to seeds to improve gardens and the surrounding environment.
 - (h) Community Chest - funding for local groups to further community projects and initiatives.
 - (i) Education grants for members and their families.
 - (j) A welcome package for new tenants to foster good relations and Golden Goodbyes for tenants leaving their homes in good condition and with clear rent accounts.
6. Some 60 responses were received, 48 were in favour, 9 against and 3 did not indicate their view. Some of the positive comments made were:
- “A refreshing change to reward good, not just to punish the miscreants”.
 - “I think it is a good incentive for people to take pride in their homes and gardens”.
 - “Bearing in mind that the majority of Council tenants are on low incomes, the chance to personally benefit from the dividend scheme would I believe provide the motive to be a good tenant”.
7. Whilst there was a positive response there were 17 respondents who said that it was unfair that one of the application criteria was that rent had to be paid by direct debit. This had been included as there are considerable financial savings over the costs associated with paying rent by giro. We had wanted to increase the number of tenants choosing direct debit. After discussion with the Task and Finish Group it was decided that this criteria should be removed. It is recommended that as an alternative tenants will be encouraged to pay by direct debit by including tenants who use this payment method in prize draws.
8. Proposals for membership were included in the December Hotnews, details of which are attached at **Appendix 1**. A list of local companies recruited to the scheme, which has been named the Darlington Dividend Scheme, is attached at **Appendix 2**. Recruitment does not stop and continues throughout our involvement with the scheme. The Tenants Board was given a number of options for a scheme logo and has selected the design at **Appendix 3**.
9. The Tenants Board has also agreed a set of Terms and Conditions for the scheme and these are at **Appendix 4**.

Proposals

10. The February edition of the Hotnews will include an application form for tenants to complete. These applications will be processed and the Darlington Dividend cards issued from the beginning of April. Tenants will be able to apply at anytime and as long as they fulfil the criteria will be issued a Dividend Card. Prize draws of £100 will be held quarterly for tenants who pay by Direct Debit and have a clear rent account at the end of June, September and December. To promote clear rent accounts in time for the end of the financial year there will be a special draw with prizes of £200 and four of £50 for tenants who have clear rent accounts at the end of March. A payment of £150 will be made to all tenants who terminate their tenancies in accord with the scheme, which means four weeks notice, letting procedures can commence, there is a clear rent account, no rechargeable repairs or decoration allowance and the property and garden are left clean and tidy.
11. Most of the rewards are for existing tenants and it is also important to offer something to new tenants. It is proposed that new tenants will be able to apply for one hour of time from either the Care and Repair or CABLE handy person service. The handyperson could be used to fit curtain tracks and shelves or do gardening. Also it is proposed to enter all Leaseholders with clear service charge accounts at the end of the financial year in a draw with a prize of £200.
12. The Tenants Board are keen to look at developing further rewards and as part of the 2008/9 Service Plan are to consider awards for Good Neighbours. Consideration is being given as to how these awards can include young people living in Council tenancies and leasehold properties. The Board will also be involved in monitoring and evaluating the overall scheme.

Legal Implications

13. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

14. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. Schemes that promote rewards for looking after property and promoting being a good neighbour and which are not available to those who cause anti-social behaviour, are believed to have a positive impact on crime and disorder.

Conclusion

15. Following Cabinet's decision to introduce a Reward and Recognition scheme, the Tenants Board have developed eligibility criteria and been involved in the consultation of all tenants and leaseholders. The scheme was well received with the exception of the criteria that required payment of rent by direct debit and this was subsequently removed.

Recommendation

16. Members of Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny are asked to receive the report and comment on the proposed Rewards and Recognition scheme.

Cliff Brown
Director of Community Services

Background Papers

No Background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

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JW

Membership Details – Darlington Dividend

To qualify you must:

1. Have had a clear rent account for 6 consecutive weeks
2. Have an agreement to pay off any rent arrears or outstanding recharges maintained for twelve consecutive weeks
3. Have no breaches of tenancy for example – anti-social behaviour or untidy garden
4. Sign up to a Good Neighbour Agreement

Scheme members will be eligible for the following benefits:

- A Countdown discount card, valid at many local and national shops, restaurants and leisure facilities
- Prize draws and competitions
- Saturday morning repair appointments
- A ‘Golden Goodbye’ when leaving your property
- Garden competitions, good neighbour awards and recognition for young people
- Plants and seeds to improve gardens and the surrounding environment
- A ‘Welcome Package’ for new tenants

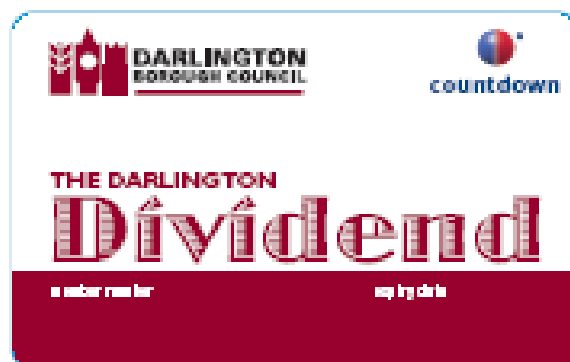
APPENDIX 2
Local Companies Taking Part in the Reward and Recognition Scheme

Company	Address	Trade	Description	Discount %
Robin Finnegan Jeweller	27 Post House Wynd	Jewellery and watches	New, second-hand and antique jewellery and militaria	10%
Quick Prints	4 Post House Wynd	Photography	One hour photographic processing Enlargement on the premises, very competitive rates	10%
Affleck & Moffet Menswear	8 Duke Street	Fashion		10%
Goldmart	Unit 1, 2 Houndgate	Jewellery and watches	Discount jewellers offering a wide range of 9 carat gold chains, bracelets, earrings, rings, etc. Full jewellery repair service in their own workshop. Stocking diamonds and antique jewellery	10%
HSS Hire Shop	MGA Centre, Cleveland Street	DIY/Home Improvements	Countdown and HSS have teamed up to offer members an amazing £5 off whenever you hire from HSS. What makes this offer even better is that you only have to show your card to get your discount. So you can make your savings as many times as you like.	£5 off
D & H Jewellers	17 Queens Street	Jewellery and watches		10%
Faceclinique	16 Woodland Road	Health and Beauty	Dental examination and scale and polish for £29 (usual price £69)	Special Offer
Aromatique	39 Priestgate	Gifts	Yankee candles and accessories. Bad taste bears and lots of gifts.	10%
All Pressed Out	154 Gladstone Street	DIY cleaners/laundryers	Ironing and laundry service. Collection and delivery also available	10%

Company	Address	Trade	Description	Discount %
Anderson Domestic Appliances	94 Victoria Road	Audio/Visual/Electrical		10%
Radhuni Contemporary Indian Restaurant	81-83 Parkgate	Restaurants	Offer applies to the total bill	10%
Voodoo Café Restaurant	1st Floor 84 Skinnergate	Food and Drink	Darlington's first latino café and restaurant specialising in Mexican and South American food and spice.	10%
Visual Photography	29 Duke Street	Photography	Free studio session (Value £35) and 8" by 6" print	Special Offer
Opulent Bride	5 Duke Street	Wedding Service		10%
In-Arcadia	84 Skinnergate	Fashion	Free coffee with every tarot reading	10%
Music Matters	17 Coniscliffe Road	Audio/visual/Electrical	Specialist hifi, home cinema, multi room audio/video retailers. Accessories, cables, DAB radios	5%
Boho Milano	20 Bondgate	Fashion	Ladies clothing, costume jewellery and accessories	10%
Ron's Music	39 Blackwellgate	Music	Music shop, spares and repairs and retail sales	10%
Wrapit	21 Duke Street	Gifts	Offer applies to shop purchases. Come to wrapit for stylish and imaginative gifts for all occasions.	10%
Urban Hairdressing	31B Skinnergate	Hairdressing	Offer applies to hairdressing	10%
The Cricketers Hotel	53-55 Parkgate	Accommodation		10%
Nu-interiors	Leadenhall Street	DIY/Home Improvements	Wallpaper, paints, conservatory furniture, cushions, lamps and rugs	10%
Funtastic	80 High Street	Telecommunications	Mobile phone accessories and repairs	15%
Direct Removals	104 High Northgate	Rental and Hire		10%
Topoli Joe	172 Northgate	Children's requirements	Children's nursery and after school club. Holiday club with activities including soft play area, cookery, crafts, day trips,	10%

Company	Address	Trade	Description	Discount %
			sports, team games and much more	
Joegio Italiano Ristorante	172 Northgate	Restaurant	Offer applies to the total bill	10%
S and C L Wilkinson	4 Stone Bridge	Opticians/Optical		10%
Direct Studies	104 High Northgate	Home Furnishing		10%
Eye Candy Hair and Beauty	44 Tubwell Row	Hairdressing		15%
Fairielicious	1 Clark's Yard	Food and Drink	Traditional sweets, chocolates and goodies	15%
Rise Clothing	3 Crown Street	Fashion		10%
Printing.com and Pro-actif Communications	29 Northgate	Printers	Offer applies to print. 15% off artwork.	5%
Around the World Aquatics	56 Bondgate	Pets		10%
PI Nail Art	40 Bondgate	Health and Beauty		25%
Babycare	3 Stonebridge	Children's Requirements		5%
Gift 'n' Toys	3-5 Blackwellgate	Toys, games and hobbies		10%
D H Jewellers	17 Queen Street	Jewellery and watches	Modern, second-hand and antique jewellery bought and sold	10%
Boola	21 Post House Wynd	Fashion		10%
Betty Boo's Bits and Bobs	3 Buckton's Yard	Gifts	Second-hand bric-a-brac, curios, fancy goods, come in and have a leisurely browse	10%
Camera 'A' Photography	3 Skinnergate	Florists		10%
The Tailor	39 Bondgate	Fashion	Ladies and gents tailoring in any design	15%

The Dividend Card



The Darlington Dividend

Terms and Conditions

- Tenants /Leaseholders must apply to join the scheme using the Darlington Dividend application form.
- Tenants/Leaseholders must meet the qualification criteria to join and will be suspended at any time should it be determined that the qualification criteria is no longer being met.
- We reserve the right to stop running the Darlington Dividend scheme at any time giving tenants/leaseholders one month's notice of the decision through Hotnews magazine.
- We reserve the right to change the terms, condition and membership criteria of the scheme. Notice of any changes will be published in Hotnews magazine. Members can get up to date terms and conditions by requesting a latest copy of our Darlington Dividend policy and procedure.
- We reserve the right to change the rewards on offer and/or the contractors supplying them at anytime giving tenants on month's notice of this decision through the Hotnews magazine.
- We will not be responsible or liable for any product or service provided by a third party supplier, the provision of which shall be subject to that supplier's terms and conditions.

Competitions

Terms and conditions

- Closing date for competitions will be stated.
- No cash alternatives will be offered.
- No correspondence will be entered into.
- No responsibility can be accepted for entries lost or damaged in the post.
- Proof of posting is not proof of receipt.
- The Judges' decision is final.
- One entry per household.
- Details of the winners will be available after the closing date by writing to:
- Tenancy Empowerment Officer, Housing Services, Town Hall, Darlington, DL1 5QT.
- Winners will be drawn at random after the closing date.
- A list of winners will always be published in Hotnews.
- Unless otherwise stated competitions are only open to current Darlington Dividend members.

We make every effort to verify all the information we publish but products and prices do change. We cannot accept any responsibility for any errors or omissions or for any losses that may arise as a result.