

5 DECORATION CARDS (AN175-2012)

The Housing Department operates a Tenants' Allowances Scheme to ensure that tenants are not significantly 'out of pocket' following improvement works being carried out in their homes. For new tenants where minimal decoration is required a decoration voucher may be provided.

Allowances are paid by vouchers and by cheque. These methods involve significant administration and can cause difficulties for tenants who do not have bank accounts.

The allowances are updated each year in line with the retail prices index. The most recent report (Housing Committee Report 120-2012) in March, 2012 on the updating of allowances reported that a procurement exercise was underway to look at alternative methods of issuing decoration allowances to ensure value for money and continued improvement in customer service.

Following on from the procurement exercise it is recommended that B&Q is appointed to provide allowances by a decoration card scheme from 1st November, 2012. Under this scheme tenants would be provided with cards credited with the appropriate amount of allowance and would be able to use these for purchasing decorating materials at B&Q stores. The cards can be used in one or several separate transactions.

The scheme provides benefits to tenants in terms of ease of operation, choice and variety of decorating materials, free delivery on purchases over £250. Decorating cards would be valid for up to 12 months and can be cancelled if lost, stolen or in the event of fraudulent use. B&Q provided in store 'You Can Do It' sessions for tenants to provide tuition on decoration for a small fee of £10.

The Council will benefit from simplified administration as the system is IT based with overnight processing; a discount of 13.5% on the expenditure on decoration cards as well as VAT savings.

The Dundee Federation of Tenants' Associations has been consulted and is supportive of the scheme.