



## CAERPHILLY TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP – 11TH FEBRUARY 2014

**SUBJECT: 'UNIQUE PLACES CHRISTMAS DISCOUNT CARD' ANALYSIS REPORT  
FOR INFORMATION**

**REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 This report provides information on the *Unique Places Christmas Discount Card* Scheme, which ran in the County Borough's five managed town centres in the two weeks leading up to Christmas 2013.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The report provides details of the performance of the 'Unique Places Christmas Discount Card' scheme, which the Council's Town Centre Management Team operated over Christmas 2013. Included in the report are details of visitor figures for a website which was created especially for the initiative and also feedback from a questionnaire sent to all retailers who participated in the scheme.

### **3. LINKS TO STRATEGY**

- 3.1 The Council has agreed to a five-year regeneration programme entitled "People, Businesses and Places". The proposals within the strategy are based on a number of regeneration principles, one of which is "Strengthening Town Centres".

### **4. THE REPORT**

- 4.1 The Council's *Unique Places Christmas Discount Card* scheme operated between 7th December and 24th December 2013. Every retailer in the managed town centres of: Caerphilly, Blackwood, Bargoed, Risca and Ystrad Mynach, was given the chance to register for the scheme and in doing so agreed to offer the customer a discount on production of the card. The level of discount was left to the retailer's own discretion. Retailers who registered for the scheme received a 'star' poster, which they displayed in their shop windows and the offer was posted on a dedicated website, which was specifically designed for Smartphones, tablets & PCs. Various platforms were used to promote the scheme including: bus advertising, newspaper adverts and a dedicated page in the Council's *Newsline* paper, which goes to every household in the County Borough. The scheme was designed to get more people in the County Borough to spend locally this Christmas and provide retailers with the opportunity to capture some of that spend.
- 4.2 In total 30,000 *Unique Places Christmas Discount Cards* were given out across the County Borough at libraries, Customer First Centres and the visitor attractions.

### Retail Offers

- 4.3 The Town Centre Management team made 267 visits to retailers in the five town centres explaining the scheme and encouraging participation. A number of businesses from outside the managed town centres also expressed an interest in joining the scheme and were accommodated on the 'Offers in Other Towns' section of the web site.

Unique Places Christmas Discount Card Yearly Comparison		
Town Centre	Number of Offers in 2013	Number of Offers in 2012
Caerphilly	26	24
Blackwood	24	20
Bargoed	21	14
Risca	4	5
Ystrad Mynach	4	N/A
Offers in other towns	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>64</b>

### Website Usage

- 4.4 Through the use of the *Google Analytics* tool it is possible to obtain information regarding the use of the scheme web site [www.uniqueplacesoffers.co.uk](http://www.uniqueplacesoffers.co.uk)

Google Analytics Data – www.uniqueplacesoffers.co.uk		
Visits	Unique Visitors	Page Views
1,117	865	12,608

### Retailer Survey

- 4.5 Town Centre Management sent out a survey to all retailers who participated in the scheme and the results are shown in the table below. A total of 80 surveys were sent out and 32 returned, a response rate of 40%.

Retail Survey		
Did the scheme bring in new customers?	Yes 13%	No 87%
Did you feel the scheme was well publicised?	Yes 37%	No 63%
Did you feel that your business was well publicised as a participant of the scheme?	Yes 57%	No 43%
Did you use a Unique Places Christmas Discount Card yourself?	Yes 16%	No 84%
Would you consider taking part in a discount scheme in the future?	Yes 83%	No 17%

### Conclusion

- 4.6 The issues that were raised following last year's inaugural scheme were addressed this year, these included, rebranding the card as a 'discount card', making the shop window stickers much larger and improving the publicity of the scheme through the Council's own *Newsline* paper, bus advertising and newspaper adverts. The biggest change was the introduction of a dedicated website to promote the offers and participating businesses, enabling customers to access them on Smartphones whilst in the town centres.
- 4.7 Despite making these changes and almost 30,000 cards being distributed, participating retailers were disappointed at the number of people who used the card. Nationally, Christmas

2013 was a difficult one for retailers. With customer spending under intense pressure, retailers reacted with strong promotions, which in turn adversely affected sales and profitability. Undoubtedly the torrential rain in the days leading up to Christmas affected consumer spend on local high streets, which offered no shelter for shoppers. A combination of a highly competitive trading environment and inclement weather may have had a detrimental affect on the use the card, with local retailers struggling to compete on price, even when offering a discount through the scheme.

- 4.8 Although the number of transactions using the card appears to have been low, the promotion of the town centres through the scheme did raise awareness of the need to support local retailers at Christmas. It also provided free publicity for those retailers who took part and gave them an enhanced online presence during this crucial period.

## **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no potential equalities implications of this report and its recommendations on groups or individuals who fall under the categories identified in Section 6 of the Council's Strategic Equality Plan. As such, there is no requirement for an Equalities Impact Assessment Questionnaire to be completed for this report.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no financial implications.

## **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no personnel implications.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 It is recommended that Members note the content of the report for information.

## **9. STATUTORY POWER**

- 9.1 Local Government Act 2000.

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