

CONSIDERATION OF A POSSIBLE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT FOR BRADFORD INFORMATION SHEET 2

Background

Following a recent survey of city centre businesses, which garnered over 200 responses and indicated considerable support for the possible creation of a Business Improvement District (BID) in Bradford, Heartflood have been commissioned to assist the Bradford BID Development Group to work up a series of project proposals. This is, therefore, the first of a series of updates for businesses asking for your views on the proposals and we hope that this answers a few common questions about what is being proposed.

What is a Business Improvement District or BID?

A BID is a business-led and business funded body, formed to improve a defined commercial area. This means that businesses have a genuine voice to decide and direct what they want for the area.

Is there business support towards a BID in Bradford?

Yes – a recent study included a survey which asked city centre businesses about creating a BID in central Bradford. 203 responses were received, 70% of whom supported a project of this type being taken forward.

How would a BID help my business?

There are more than 280 BIDs already operating across the UK, with the majority focusing on town or city centres. Businesses say the benefits they have brought about include:

- Businesses deciding and directing major projects that they want for their area
- Improved promotion & marketing of the town or city
- Increased footfall, which leads to increased business turnover
- Added vibrancy & vitality
- Additional networking opportunities within the local business community
- Improved relations with councils, police and other public bodies



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What type of projects are being considered?

The survey responses suggested that improvement plans for Bradford should focus around:

- 01 Improving the appearance of empty shops
- 02 Projects to encourage investment into Bradford
- 03 Marketing and promotion to project the City to a far wider audience
- 04 More major city centre events or festivals
- 05 Street cleansing & street washing, to include chewing gum removal
- 06 Improvements to problem areas, such as graffiti or fly-tipping removal
- 07 Security improvements, possibly to include more policing
- 08 Greater lobbying, representation and championing of the City
- 09 New seasonal events, including more Christmas activities
- 10 Daytime wardens/hosts/ambassadors

Any other ideas you may have are encouraged as part of our ongoing consultation.

How are BIDs funded and set up?

A BID is funded by businesses paying a small proportion (typically between 1% and 1.75%) of their business Rateable Value towards the BID. This money is then ring-fenced for use only in the BID area – unlike Business Rates which are re-distributed by Government. A BID can only be formed following consultation and a ballot in which businesses vote on a business plan which they have developed.

How much would it cost my business?

A levy of 1.25% is being considered in Bradford, which means that a small business with a Rateable Value of £20,000 would invest £250 per year, a medium sized business with a Rateable Value of £70,000 would invest £875 per year and a large business with a Rateable Value of £140,000 would invest £1,750 per year. A 25% discount is being considered for tenants of managed centres to reflect the service charges that they pay, which are likely to include some of the services provided by a BID.



How much money would be generated?

The survey suggested a BID area that includes approximately 585 businesses. This would generate approximately £419,000 per year, which we would also expect to be supplemented by contributions from local businesses outside the City Centre. BIDs are also often successful in gaining additional funding, because they are attractive to public sector bodies who are encouraged to match-fund money raised by the private sector through the BID.

How does the Ballot work?

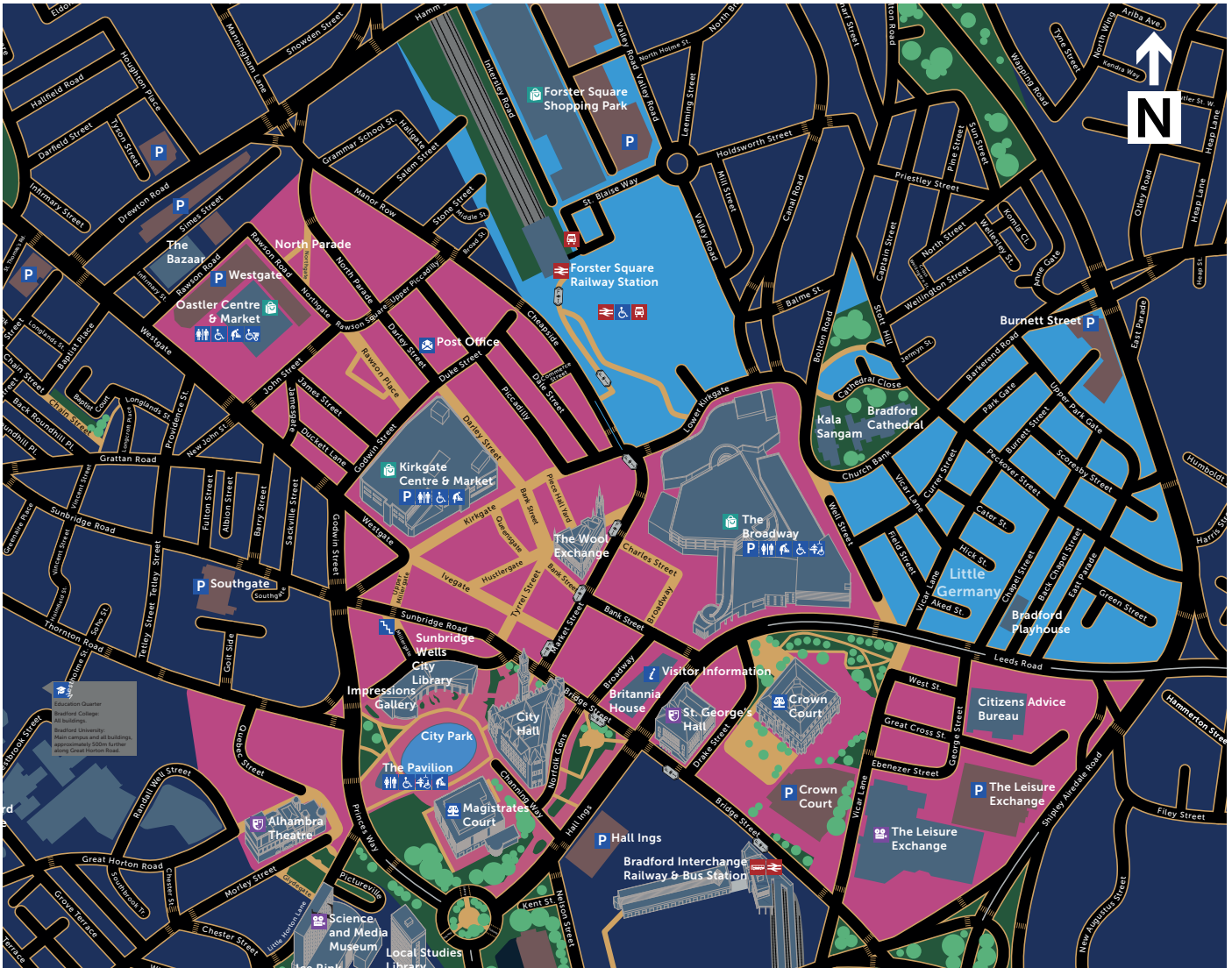
It is run by the Council on behalf of local businesses or outsourced to a third party and is conducted entirely by post. All businesses that would pay the levy have a minimum of 28 days to vote. For a BID to go ahead the Ballot must be won on two counts – a straight majority and majority of Rateable Value. There is no minimum turnout threshold.

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Which area would be covered?

Although the proposed area remains open to consultation, the survey suggested that the area covered by a BID should be as follows:



Would all businesses be liable to pay the BID levy?

In principle, yes, although an exemption level of £12,000 is being considered, which means that small businesses that fall under this threshold would not be liable to pay the levy or to vote in the Ballot. They would, however, be able to join the BID and benefit from a number of services for a voluntary annual contribution of approximately £100.

Isn't this just businesses paying for existing services?

No - the BID would be established to carry out projects in addition to anything currently happening or planned in Bradford, so would deliver added value and activity in the key areas identified. Furthermore, the BID would be governed by a Board made up of BID levy payers, who would be tasked with ensuring that BID activities deliver additional impact to existing activities.

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Why doesn't the Council provide these services already?

Councils are under increasing pressure to deliver a range of public services and simply do not have the finances to deliver the services which BIDs can. BIDs are, however, designed to deliver additional activity and generally enter into a legal agreement with public-sector bodies, such as councils, to ensure that they continue to provide core services, with the BID delivering projects above and beyond these standards. Therefore, BIDs are usually the best opportunity to make a real difference to the area.

When could this happen?

The current proposals are for the following timetable to be adopted:

Dates	Action
November 2017	Decision taken to develop a BID proposal
November 2017 to March 2018	Business liaison and consultation on proposed business plan
April 2018	Notification to Secretary of State and Local Authority of intention to hold a ballot
June 2018	Provision of a definitive business plan to the Local Authority
June 2018	Launch of business plan
July 2018	Notice of Ballot issued
September 2018	Ballot papers issued
October 2018	Day of the Ballot
October 2018	Declaration of the Ballot result
October/ November 2018	Formation of Board of Directors, appointment of staff
December 2018	BID begins operation



How long would a BID last?

The maximum term for any BID is 5 years and we are proposing this timescale in Bradford, which would generate more than £2 million towards key improvements. If businesses wish, further 5-year terms could subsequently be proposed and taken to ballot.

So how can I give you my views?

We want the views of as many businesses as possible in helping shape the proposals and would urge you to get in touch with us via the details shown below.

How can I become more involved?

We are currently seeking to appoint a number of BID Champions to act as informal ambassadors for the BID proposals and are also seeking volunteers who may be interested in joining the Shadow Board to direct the emerging BID proposals.

Please contact:

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