



Consideration of a possible Business Improvement District for Bradford

INITIAL INFORMATION SHEET

Background

The Bradford BID Development Group recently asked the City Council to investigate the possible creation of a Business Improvement District (BID) in Bradford and Heartflood have been commissioned to carry out an independent Feasibility Study to establish whether or not a BID would be viable. This note is therefore the first of a series of ways in which we will be asking city centre businesses for their views on this and we hope that it answers a few initial questions about what could be proposed.

What is a BID?

A BID is a business-led and business-funded body formed to improve a defined commercial area. Most are governed by a board made up of BID levy payers who represent the BID area, which means that businesses have a genuine voice - and are able to decide and direct what they want for their town or city.

Does there need to be business support towards a BID?

Absolutely – which is why it will be critical for us to assess the views of as many city centre businesses as possible. Any BID is subject to a vote of all eligible businesses within the area and so we will be surveying the views of at least 150 such businesses between now and November to establish whether or not a BID should be proposed for the city.

How could a BID help my business?

There are more than 270 BIDs already operating across the UK, with the majority focusing on town or city centres. Businesses report the benefits they have brought include:

- Businesses get to decide the major improvements they want to see enacted
- The town or city benefits from increased footfall, which in turn boosts trade
- Major improvements, such as promotions, events and streetscene enhancements generate a greater sense of local pride in the town, which is good for business
- Businesses gain better networking opportunities with their fellow traders and better links to contact the Council, Police and other public bodies

What type of projects might be considered?

This will depend entirely on the results of the survey, although many other BIDs focus upon:

- Marketing & promotion of their town or city centre
- Major town or city centre events
- Improvements to the town or city centre streetscene
- Initiatives to improve the security of the town or city
- Projects to support businesses and to reduce business overheads

Many other ideas will be encouraged as part of the business survey.





How are BIDs funded and set up?

A BID is funded by businesses paying a small proportion (typically of between 1% and 1.5%) 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 go to and are re-distributed by Government. A BID can only be formed following extensive consultation and a ballot in which businesses vote on a detailed Business Plan.



How much would it cost my business and how much money would be raised?

Both of these questions would be considered as part of the survey, because we need to assess the level of local support for businesses to invest in major improvements. The typical BID levy is approximately 1.25% of the rateable value of the business premises and we anticipate that a BID in Bradford would generate over £500,000 per year, although it should be emphasised that these are simply guide figures, which remain open to consultation as part of the survey.

Which area could be covered?

This question would also need to be considered as part of the survey, because we will also need to assess the level of local support for businesses to be situated within a possible BID area. Any possible BID boundary therefore remains open to consultation.

Would all businesses be liable to pay the BID levy?

In principle yes, although an exemption level is typically applied, with £12,000 being considered in Bradford, which means that small businesses falling under this threshold would not be liable to pay the levy. A lower BID levy is also typically applied to businesses within managed shopping centres in lieu of the management charges which these businesses pay.

When could this happen?

The current proposals are for the Feasibility Study to be completed in November, which should provide a clear indication of whether or not a BID proposal could be pursued. Given the complexity of a BID and the level of consultation required, we would anticipate that a BID would take a further 9-12 months to be implemented, which would be subject to the majority of businesses voting to support the BID in a ballot.

How long could a BID last?

The maximum term for any BID is 5 years and this is the typical duration chosen, which we would typically expect to generate over £2.5 million over this timescale in Bradford.

So how can I give you my views?

We are seeking the views of as many businesses as possible in helping shape the considerations and would urge you to complete the business survey via www.surveymonkey.com/r/BradfordBID You can also get in touch with Chris Gregory, Project Manager for the Feasibility Study to request a copy of this via either chris@heartflood.co.uk or 07854 027080.

Where can I get further information on BIDs?

For further information on BIDs, please feel to get in touch using the details above, or alternatively visit <http://britishbids.info/about-bids/what-is-a-bid/>

