

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Executive - 9 February 2012

Taunton Business Improvement District (BID) – Formal Request from The Taunton Town Centre Company to Instruct a BID Renewal Ballot

Report of the Economic Development Specialist

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Norman Cavill)

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Council has been formally served notice by the Taunton Town Centre Company to request that it holds a ballot of businesses in Taunton town centre in relation to an extension to the Business Improvement District (BID) programme.
- 1.2 This Report is intended to inform the Executive of the process undertaken by The Taunton Town Centre Company to lodge the BID Submission with this Council, and to obtain the Council's authority to instruct a referendum amongst businesses for the purpose of renewing the BID programme from October 2012 for a period of 5 years.
- 1.3 In resolving to instruct the referendum The Council should be confident that due process has been followed by the BID Proposer, and that the proposals in the BID programme accord with its own policies for the town centre.

2. Background

- 2.1 Members will recall the report to the Executive in November 2011, which informed the Committee of the background to the BID programme in Taunton, and set out the company's intention to make the BID Submission following consultation amongst businesses. Members were informed about the valuable role that the Taunton Town Centre Company plays in supporting the Council's aim to enhance the vibrancy and vitality of the town centre, and that the Council's support for the BID is alongside financial support offered for the delivery of other Town Centre Management activities.
- 2.2 The Executive resolved that:-
 - (1) The development of a new Business Improvement District (BID) Submission by the Taunton Town Centre Company (TTCC) be supported;

- (2) The future request for the Council to hold a ballot on behalf of TTCC be anticipated and that £5,000 be allocated from the Local Authority Business Growth Incentives budget to pay for the costs associated with the ballot;
- (3) Future provision for the collection of the annual levy and any liability for payment of the levy for its own hereditaments within the BID area under a second BID term be made by the Council; and
- (4) The possibility of making a contribution to the TTCC for the administration of the BID programme be considered by the Council as part of its annual budget setting process

2.3 Since consideration of the above report further work has been carried out by the Taunton Town Centre Company to consult with businesses and other organisations, including the Council, on a draft BID Business Plan.

2.4 The latest Draft of the BID Business Plan is included at Appendix 1.

3. Requirements of the Business Improvement District (England) Regulations, 2004 – Schedule 1

3.1 Officers are of the view that in drafting the BID Submission, due attention has been paid by the Taunton Town Centre Company (the BID Proposer) to the BID Regulations. The relevant schedule from those Regulations is included at Appendix 2. Specifically, the Taunton Town Centre Company has given consideration to the following elements of the Schedule:

1(a) a statement of the services to be provided by The Taunton Town Centre Company, and a description of the company's legal status. Specifically, the company intends to deliver services **'To position Taunton as the first choice destination for business. Creating a vibrant, safe and accessible county town for retail, leisure and commerce. By 2017 Taunton will be recognised as the premier shopping and leisure destination in south Somerset'**. Sections 1 to 5 of the Business Plan set out the proposed objectives to deliver that vision.

1(b) a statement of the existing baseline services provided by the Council, The Avon & Somerset Police Authority, and the Avon and Somerset Probation Trust as the statutory agencies that provide services affected by the BID Submission. The Baseline Statements will be completed prior to the issue of the ballot papers, and will cover the following areas:

- Policing
- Events
- Marketing and Promotion
- Graffiti clean up
- Business information, advice and guidance

- Car parks
- Pedestrian Signage
- Town Centre Management

1(c) a description of the geographical area in which the proposed BID arrangements are to have effect. Section 8 of the BID Business Plan describes the streets that fall within the BID area. A map showing the BID area will be circulated to Members at the meeting.

1(d) a statement of whether all non-domestic ratepayers in the geographical area or a specified class of them are to be liable to the BID levy, an explanation of how the amount of the BID levy to be levied is to be calculated, and an explanation of whether any of the costs incurred in developing the BID proposals, holding of the ballot or implementing the BID are to be recovered through the BID levy.

Members will note that the Annual BID Levy proposed is 1.25% of the Rateable Value shown in the Local Non-domestic Rates List at the commencement of the new BID term (1 October 2012). The levy rate will be subject to a BID multiplier, increasing the levy each year to keep pace with increasing costs over the five year BID term. The BID multiplier will be measured by the Consumer Price index or 3%, whichever is the lower.

The Council's Revenues service will collect the BID Levy on behalf of the Taunton Town Centre Company (the BID Body), making an annual charge to the company for provision of that service. An operating agreement between the two parties will set out how the BID revenue account is to be controlled and managed.

The Council will contract the Electoral Reform Service to carry out the referendum, via a postal ballot, on behalf of the company.

1(e) a statement of the specified class of non-domestic ratepayer for which and the level at which any relief from the BID levy is to apply. Members will note that there will be no reduction to the BID levy for exemptions relief or discounts. Unoccupied and part occupied hereditaments, charities and not for profit organisation in the BID area will be liable for the full BID levy

1(f) The BID Business Plan includes a statement of whether the BID arrangements may be altered during the BID term. Specifically it includes a proposal to include Firepool within the BID area at an appropriate stage in the site's development, and it reserve the opportunity to vire between budget headings during the BID term.

1(g) a statement that the duration of the BID arrangement will be five years and

1(h) a statement that the proposed BID will commence on 1st October 2012.

3.2 It is the company's intention to hold the BID ballot on 30th March 2012, giving ample notice to businesses of the outcome.

3.3 The Council is entitled under the BID Regulations to veto the BID submission should it be of the opinion that the BID arrangements are:

- 1) likely to conflict to a material extent with any policy formally adopted by and contained in a document published by the authority; or
- 2) to be a significantly disproportionate financial burden on any person or class of persons in the BID area, and (i) that burden is caused by the manipulation of the geographical area of the BID or by the structure of the BID levy; and (ii) that burden is inequitable.

4. Consultation with the Council

4.1 Officers have maintained close contact with the Town Centre Company throughout the past year in order to ensure that the Council's interests, be that of a policy and strategy nature or of an operational and financial nature, are taken into account in the drafting of the BID Business Plan.

4.2 Discussions were held over the proposals to include Firepool in the BID area, and it is the view of Officers that if it implemented on a phased basis, and if it is subject to the types of end user that the site attracts in due course, the inclusion is acceptable. Discussions were also held over the inclusion of The Deane House and additional car parks in the BID area. It was recognised that The Deane House is on the edge of the town centre but that inclusion will create parity with other local authority offices in the BID area. The inclusion of the Deane House would have financial implications upon the Council, which are summarised in paragraph 5.4 below.

4.3 In summary, Officers would seek to assure The Executive that the BID Submission does not conflict to a material extent with any policy formally adopted by and contained in a document published by the Council. Furthermore, the consultation has been wide ranging with businesses throughout the town centre. Therefore, both of the conditions summarised in paragraph 3.3 have been met.

5. Finance Comments

5.1 As the ballot holder, the Council must meet the costs of the ballot in full including officer time, stationery, postages and so on. Under the BID regulations, the cost of a successful ballot cannot be recharged by the billing authority to the BID body. ERS has quoted the sum of £2,500 to carry out the ballot. It is proposed that that sum be taken from the Economic Development budget.

5.2 As the collecting authority, the Council will be responsible for collecting the BID levy in each year of the BID term. The Council may charge the BID body reasonable collection costs, and negotiations are ongoing to that affect. The Taunton Town Centre Company has made budgetary provision within the BID

Business Plan for £15,000 per annum for the Levy collection plus an up front charge of £5,000 in year one for the purchase of an enhanced BID software system from CIVICA to help with the Billing and Recovery of BID levies. Collection of the BID Levy would be administered by South West One.

- 5.3 Whilst the purpose of this report is to obtain the Council's authority to progress the BID ballot, Members should note that, if the BID programme proceeds the Council would be liable for payment of the BID levy for any Council properties attracting non-domestic rates (hereditaments) within the proposed BID area. That payment (under the first BID programme) is currently £4,500 per annum and it is estimated that the contribution will increase to between £10,000 and £12,000 in the light of the proposed inclusion of The Deane House, Flook House and certain car parks in and adjacent to the town centre. That additional contribution will require a budget increase.
- 5.4 In previous years the Council has also contributed, on a discretionary basis, £20,000 per year towards administration costs. The Executive considered this item in relation to 2011/12 at its meeting in November 2011. It is anticipated that the Town Centre Company will seek a similar financial contribution from the Council to benefit the next BID programme. The Company is, however, aware of the financial difficulties facing the Council, and that there is no provision within the Council's budget to make such payments.

6 Legal Comments

- 6.1 It is incumbent on the Council to meet its responsibilities under the Business Improvement District Regulations (England) 2004. The Localism Bill and the proposals to localize Business Rates, both of which are currently under consideration by the Government both make reference to BIDs as a mechanism to support the localism agenda and encourage business growth.

7. Links to Corporate Aims

- 7.1 This proposal links to the Regeneration Aim of the Corporate Strategy.

8. Environmental and Community Safety Implications

- 8.1 The BID Submission impacts directly upon the quality of the environment and the safety of the town centre. The Business Plan proposes increased policing in support of the daytime and evening economies as well as enhanced marketing of the town centre to business and visitors. Members should note that, in contrast to the first BID Business Plan, which is currently being delivered, enhanced street cleaning services over and above the local authority provision (with the exception of Graffiti removal) are not included.

9. Equalities Impact

9.1 No direct equalities implications at this stage.

10. Risk Management

10.1 Should the TTCC proposals for a second term BID fail at referendum there is presently no other funding mechanism to take up the range of services currently offered by the BID.

11. Partnership Implications

11.1 The Council works in close partnership with the Taunton Town Centre Company, being represented by Council Members on the Company Management Board. Officer representation is additionally made on the BID Steering Group and other operational groups.

11.2 The BID Levy is collected on behalf of the Council by South West One.

12 Recommendations

12.1 It is **recommended** that the Executive:-

1. acknowledges that the proposal submitted by the Taunton Town Centre Company to instruct the Council to hold a ballot amongst businesses with the intention of extending the BID programme for a period of five years from October 2012 (The BID Submission) is in accordance with the The Business Improvement District (England) Regulations, 2004, and that it;
2. delegates authority to The Chief Executive to instruct the ballot holder to hold a ballot in accordance with the BID Submission.

Contact: David Evans
Tel. 01823 356545
Email: d.evans@tauntondeane.gov.uk

Appendix 1

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**Taunton Business Improvement District
Second Term
Business Plan Proposal**

January 2012

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1. The Aim

The vision for Taunton's second Business Improvement District (BID) term is:

'To position Taunton as the first choice destination for business. Creating a vibrant, safe and accessible county town for retail, leisure and commerce. By 2017 Taunton will be recognised as the premier shopping and leisure destination in south Somerset.'

1.1 Strategic Objectives

Building on the strategic objectives of Taunton Town Centre Company and our partner organisations; Somerset County Council, Taunton Deane Borough Council and Avon & Somerset Constabulary. The second term BID will seek to create:

- A Better Promoted Taunton
- A Safer Taunton
- A Better Taunton for Business

In addition, the BID will have a supporting role with those partners and others:

- A Voice for Business
- To support Taunton at Night
- To support the vision of Project Taunton

1.2 The Second BID Term

The existing BID term expires on 30 September 2012. Our proposal is to extend the BID for a second five year term commencing 1 October 2012 and ending 30 September 2017.

The second term BID will play an important role over the next five years to aid economic recovery.

2. Objective 1: A Better Promoted Taunton

To increase the appeal of Taunton as a vibrant shopper and visitor destination. To halt decline in footfall; asserting Taunton as the premier business, shopping and visitor destination in south Somerset.

Taunton is a great place but many feel that the town lacks identity. As the County Town of Somerset we need to play to our strengths and compete as a retail and business destination in the South West.

Taunton offers quality and choice in the safe setting of a county town and this is hard to beat. During the second term the BID will place the highest importance on marketing and promotion, increasing customer loyalty among the towns 60,000 inhabitants and reaching out to the 250,000 residents within a forty minute drive time.

Building and maintaining footfall is the lifeblood of the town and is a top priority. The BID will support efforts to increase awareness of Taunton and the retail & service offering.

Through the BID, businesses will raise the profile of Taunton. Independent traders in particular can look forward to marketing campaigns geared to increase awareness of the specialist independent offering while national brands will benefit from the increased opportunity which repeat footfall brings.

Business Promotion Issues:

Encouraging Footfall Positioning the County Town Rewarding Customer Loyalty Increasing Business Competitiveness
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2.1 Marketing Projects

Consumer Campaigns

The BID will reach out to entice shoppers and visitors to the County Town. On behalf of businesses the BID will seek to develop and deliver seasonal media campaigns to highlight Taunton as a regional shopping destination and counter the pull from other locations. At the same time the BID will invest in local initiatives to reduce seepage from Taunton to out-of-town and other competing destinations.

Sales Promotion

In this second BID term, businesses have told us they want to see more support to address any weakness in trading conditions. The BID will launch sales promotion initiatives in partnership with local businesses and the media; increasing business competitiveness and rewarding customer loyalty. Initiatives like SHOP TAUNTON have served to highlight the towns independent and national service offering. Businesses have told us these must continue.

Community Events

The collective action of businesses through the BID has transformed community events. A second term BID will ensure that we build on the gains made in the last five years to deliver large scale memorable events; stimulating trade and creating a bond between business and visitors to the town. Initiatives like the Christmas Festival in November and spring Family Fun Day attract an audience of thousands. Events such as these reward customers, create affinity with the town and help to position Taunton as a vibrant welcoming place.

New public spaces like Castle Green, developed under Project Taunton, will give rise to opportunity for a greater variety of activity in the town. The BID has developed the expertise necessary to provide large community events befitting of the county town - beyond the BID there is no other local mechanism to provide for this.

Public Relations

The BID will invest in public relations to increase the profile of the county town locally and regionally. In addition to developing newsworthy stories for the print and broadcast media the BID will seek to maintain Taunton online at the top of popular search engines. Keeping pace with new developments the BID will introduce the Taunton APP and develop QR codes for use across a range of media.

Publications

The second term BID will place less emphasis on printed media however; the printed word will still have its place. The BID will seek commercial sponsorship and advertising revenue to produce a range of seasonal and annual publications to promote the county town. The BID has a proven track record in making the levy go further through additional advertising support. Seasonal event publications and town guides will marry with web and media promotions to ensure an integrated approach to any marketing spend.

OUTCOME:

Greater recognition for Taunton as a premier location for business, shopping and leisure. Increased footfall and a higher profile of the county town within a forty minute drive time. Reduced seepage to out of town locations and a greater affinity with the people of Taunton.

Item	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total Spend £ 000's
Marketing & Promotion	39	39	45	50	55	228
Events	40	40	40	40	40	200
Publications	15	15	15	15	15	75
Christmas Lights	40	40	40	40	40	200
Web Communications	4	4	4	4	4	20
Total Spend To Promote Business						£723

3. Objective 2: A Safer Taunton

To reduce crime and the fear of crime for businesses and their customers. To increase the profitability of businesses operating in both the day and night time economy. Reducing anti-social behaviour and creating a safe and pleasant county town for all.

To now the BID has provided additional high visibility policing over and above the service offered to the town by the police under separate arrangements.

It is proposed to continue with this partnership and the award winning BID Police Team into the second BID term.

Safety Issues:

Theft
Anti-Social Behaviour
Aggressive Begging
Drug and Alcohol Abuse
Graffiti

3.1 Community Safety Projects

The BID Police Team

The BID will work with Avon & Somerset Constabulary to continue the presence of officers dedicated to the support of the retail and service sector economy including the licensed trade. Directed by the BID, this Award Winning Team provides for old fashioned 'Bobby on the Beat' high visibility policing and has proved successful in supporting a reduction in anti-social behaviour, youth offending, business crime and the fear of crime within the BID area.

The BID Police Team supports a link to the successful, independently run business crime reduction partnerships operating within the town.

The Officers directly employed by Avon & Somerset Constabulary, will provide dedicated support to the BID with work patterns geared in support of problems affecting both the daytime and evening economy.

Support to the Night Time Economy

The second term BID will go further to support the night-time economy in Taunton. The licensed trade and leisure sector has come under increased pressure as footfall has dwindled and disposable income drops. Better times will return and Taunton needs to ensure it is ready to take advantage of any upturn when it comes. The BID will work with the licensed trade, local authorities and the police to improve standards and encourage diversity within the evening economy. Working with our partners the BID will support Taunton to achieve Purple Flag status for the town (see support objective 5).

Taunton Community Payback

The second term BID will provide support to this initiative by Avon & Somerset Probation Trust. The BID will secure a team of volunteers to help keep Taunton looking at its best. Graffiti, fly-posting and littering are perennial problems. The volunteers are deployed to tackle essential work which otherwise would fall through the cracks to be left unattended. Through modest investment by the BID, the Community Payback service is deployed to deal with these low level issues, reducing incidents of vandalism to manage the fear of crime and improve the image of the town.

Tackling Business Crime

Taunton BID will seek to support initiatives designed to tackle business crime. The BID will partner with organisations working with the business community across the BID area and direct funds to help ensure that businesses are better equipped to tackle both crime and the fear of crime.

Street Begging

The Diverted Giving Scheme provides members of the public with an alternative to giving to beggars on the street; diverting funds to local charities that work with the homeless in Taunton. The scheme can be enhanced under the BID to raise awareness of homelessness and the plight of those most in need. The BID will aim to increase the level of public donation to local charities by increasing the effectiveness of the Diverted Giving Scheme.

As with the existing scheme 100% of funds donated will be passed to local charities. No donated funds will be withheld for administration or other purpose.

OUTCOME:

A safe and welcoming Taunton for businesses, residents, shoppers and visitors.

Item	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total Spend £ 000's
BID Police Team	66.4	66.4	66.4	66.4	66.4	332
Community Safety Projects	5	5	5	5	5	25
Total Spend To Improve Safety						£357

4. Objective 3: Better for Business

The BID will offer direct support to independent businesses. Providing services which increase business competitiveness, reduce costs and support customer loyalty. Under this objective the BID will support businesses and managers across the BID area to increase business performance; creating the right conditions for growth.

Small businesses, including those on the periphery of the BID area want to know that their investment provides value for money.

Under this new Business Plan Proposal a range of services are designed specifically with small businesses in mind.

By taking up the range of business services on offer, the independent sector will be able to maximise the benefit derived from the BID with the potential to recoup a significant proportion of outlay.

The BID will already have significant benefits for all businesses in terms of marketing and promotion of the county town and increased community safety. The new business support services will go further than ever to provide a return on investment.

Issues for business

Lack of direct support Increased business costs Isolation Availability of information, advice and guidance

4.1 Business Support Projects

Lobbying and Representation

The collective action of businesses coordinated under the BID provides for a substantial lobbying body. Through Taunton Town Centre Company (The BID Body) businesses can make effective representation. The BID body acts as a voice for the business community working to bring about positive change.

Shop-front Grants

This grant scheme implemented during the first BID term has proved popular with firms seeking to improve the trading environment. It is proposed to continue with the scheme and to broaden the scope in order that more businesses will qualify. The BID Steering Group will monitor the success of the scheme and recommend adjustments as necessary.

Business Coach

In 2011 the BID launched a customer service initiative, 'Who Cares Wins'. Businesses welcomed the initiative and in particular the business coaching provided. The second term BID will develop business coaching initiatives on a range of topics of interest to

proprietors and managers. The business coach programme will be offered to all businesses in the BID area to provide practical skills and advice to improve individual and business performance.

Seasonal Planting Schemes

The BID will subsidise the cost of seasonal hanging baskets in support of Taunton in Bloom; providing businesses with low cost services and creating a welcoming atmosphere in the summer months. The BID will continue to subsidise the cost of seasonal shop-front Christmas trees for orders placed in good time.

Cheaper Utilities

The BID will create the possibility for levy payers to take up the services of a utilities broker. This free service to businesses could help significantly reduce the cost of electricity and other utilities by obtaining competitive rates from the utility providers. The service seeks to support businesses and avoid the trap of being rolled over into out-of-contract rates.

Development Fund

Businesses have said that they want the BID to be more responsive and flexible to changing needs over the five year BID term. Responding to this feedback the second term BID will include a Development Fund (see table below) in addition to the greater degree of flexibility written into this plan. This fund, commencing in the second year, will be available to the BID Steering Group, making recommendations to the BID body, on how the available funds can best be deployed in direct support of the BID objectives. The Development Fund will be available to allocate to new projects in direct response to the changing needs of businesses within the BID area.

OUTCOME:

A more focused BID and a voice for business.

Item	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total Spend £000's
Utilities Broker	1	1	1	1	1	5
Business Coach	10	10	10	10	10	50
Shop-front Grants	5	10	10	10	10	45
Seasonal Decoration	5	5	5	5	5	25
Signage & Information	10	10	10	10	10	50
Development Fund	0	7.21	8.42	10.63	12.84	39.1
Total Spend Better for Business						£214.1

5. Support Objectives

5.1 Objective 4: A Voice for Business

Representing the levy paying business community, the BID will coordinate the response from businesses on issues important to successful trading in the town. The BID creates a strong voice for business united through collective action to bring about positive improvements.

The BID will use its position as the representative of some 800 levy paying businesses to influence local government and other statutory service providers to improve their services for businesses and their customers.

Maintaining access to the town centre is of primary concern to businesses while important redevelopment work takes place. By monitoring and lobbying, the BID will seek to ensure that the needs of businesses are heard and that suitable measures are put in place to minimise disruption during redevelopment.

The BID can push for improved services - giving shoppers and visitors a better experience of the county town.

Taunton BID needs to be realistic about what it can achieve at a modest levy; it will be unable to engage directly in the provision of major infrastructure (capital projects). However, Taunton BID can continue to press for investment in infrastructure and lobby for improvement through links with Project Taunton, Taunton Deane Borough Council, Somerset County Council and other statutory bodies.

Access Issues:

Availability of parking
Temporary reduction in parking spaces during redevelopment
Use of public spaces
Information
Visitor experience

OUTCOME:

A champion for business, creating a more coordinated approach to tackling business issues. Improved understanding from statutory bodies and their support for a more accessible and welcoming Taunton.

5.2 Objective 5: To Support Taunton at Night

To improve the perception of Taunton as a safe and viable destination for leisure and entertainment at night. To improve standards, creating the reputation of a mixed use evening economy for the safe enjoyment of all.

The second term BID will place greater emphasis on the evening economy with services geared to support mixed use of the county town; from eating and drinking to theatre and entertainment. Reduction in the number of customers is a national problem - in Taunton the effects of the downturn are being felt by businesses operating within the evening economy.

Under objectives 1 & 2 of this plan; the BID will seek to partner with businesses, the licensing authority and police to broaden the appeal of Taunton's night time economy.

The licensed trade in particular will need support as businesses pull out of recession. The BID will serve to market Taunton as a vibrant county town for both the daytime and evening economy.

Issues for Taunton at night:

Image
Early Evening Activity
Crime & Fear of Crime
Drug & Alcohol Abuse

Evening Economy Projects

Purple Flag Scheme

Businesses operating within the evening economy have told us they wish to see standards improve. Purple Flag is a relatively new accreditation scheme that recognises excellence in the management of town centres at night.

Working in partnership with businesses, the licensing authority and police the BID will work to achieve Purple Flag accreditation for Taunton. Ultimately the aim will be to offer a better night out to visitors.

Marketing and Promotion

As with the daytime economy the BID will introduce marketing initiatives to support the evening economy. The aim is to promote the county town and attract footfall from within Taunton and the outlying area. Working closely with leisure operators and licensees the BID will tailor new promotions supporting a more diverse evening economy.

BID Police Team

The BID Police Team will work to support both the daytime and evening economy. Shift patterns will reflect the mix of businesses within the BID area and service demands. The BID Team provides an extra resource in addition to the other beat teams and operates alongside regular officers deployed within the town.

OUTCOME:

A more appealing evening economy. Raising standards and improving the experience for all visitors to the county town.

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5.3 Objective 6: Supporting Project Taunton

Supporting the redevelopment of Taunton to 2017. Maximising the towns potential to attract new business, imaginative use of the public realm and in promoting and encouraging diversity.

Taunton is set for significant growth and change over the next decade. In principle the BID Company supports Project Taunton and strongly welcomes it.

The BID Company will work closely with Project Taunton and Taunton Deane Borough Council to maximize the potential for the development of Taunton to the benefit of BID levy payers.

OUTCOME:

A BID which embraces new developments, encourages BID levy payers and supports the Taunton economy.

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6. Financials

BID 2 Business Plan

Income	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total 5 Years
Levy (see BID Multiplier)	300400	307610	314819	322029	329238	1574096
Sponsorship Income	20000	20000	20000	20000	20000	100000
Total Income	320400	372610	334819	342029	349238	1674096
Expenditure						
A Better Promoted Taunton						
Marketing Events and Promotions	134000	134000	140000	145000	150000	703000
Web Communications	4000	4000	4000	4000	4000	20000
A Safer Taunton						
BID Police Team	66400	66400	66400	66400	66400	332000
Community Safety Projects	5000	5000	5000	5000	5000	25000
Better for Business						
Business Support Projects	31000	36000	36000	36000	36000	175000
Development Fund	0	7210	8419	10629	12838	39096
Operating Costs						
Management & Administration	60000	60000	60000	60000	60000	300000
Levy Collection	20000	15000	15000	15000	15000	80000
Total Expenditure	320400	372610	334819	342029	349238	1674096

Notes

TTCC Reserves the right to make adjustments and movements between between budget headings as budget pressures demand

7. Voting and Levy Arrangements

7.1 The Ballot

Taunton Deane Borough Council will contract the Electoral Reform Service to carry out the referendum on behalf of the Taunton Town Centre Company. It will be conducted via a postal ballot. The ballot papers and any other relevant information will be sent out to the appropriate person/organisation for every hereditament (rateable premises) within the BID area. The results will be published as soon as practicable after the close of ballot and posted on the Town Centre Company website www.tauntontowncentre.co.uk.

7.2 Who Can Vote

Every non-domestic ratepayer will be entitled to vote, provided that they are listed on the National Non-domestic Rates List for the defined area on the day the notice of ballot is given by Taunton Deane Borough Council. In the case of unoccupied buildings the owner will be entitled to vote. Each eligible voter in the BID ballot will have one vote in respect of each hereditament in the Taunton BID area. Proxy votes will be available, details will be sent with the notice of ballot. The vote has to meet two tests for the second term BID to go ahead. First a simple majority of those voting must vote in favour, secondly the aggregate rateable value of those voting 'YES' must be greater than those voting 'NO'. Following a positive ballot the BID levy will be charged on all hereditaments listed within the BID area (defined in this plan).

None of the costs incurred while holding the ballot, are to be recovered through the levy.

7.3 The Levy

The annual BID levy proposed is 1.25% of the Rateable Value shown in the Local Non-domestic Rates List at commencement of the new BID term. The levy rate will be subject to a BID Multiplier, increasing the levy each year to keep pace with increasing costs over the five year BID term. The BID levy will be payable by the liable party. There will be no adjustments during the year to reflect changes in the liable party. Where property is taken out of rating the BID levy will be due up to the day before the effective date of the removal from the list. In the case of a new business opening in the area the BID levy will become payable by the occupier on the next due date for the BID levy.

There will be **no** reduction to the BID levy for exemptions relief or discounts prescribed in the Non-Domestic Rating (Collections and Enforcement).

Regulations 1989 made under the Local Government Finance Act 1988 will not apply. Unoccupied and part occupied hereditaments charities or not-for-profit organisations, in the BID area will be liable for the full BID levy. The annual amount payable for a chargeable period will be due in one payment within the payment period detailed on the demand notice.

7.4 Levy Collection

Taunton Deane Borough Council will collect the BID levy on behalf of Taunton Town Centre Company (The BID Body). The funds are then controlled by the private sector through the BID body and the BID Steering Group. The council may make an annual charge for the cost of collecting the levy (see Financials).

Levy payers will be advised of the amount of levy in the ballot information. You can check rateable values online at www.voa.gov.uk.

7.5 Keeping Up With Inflation

There will be an annual increase in the levy each year (the BID multiplier) for the life of the BID.

The BID multiplier will be measured by the Consumer Price Index (the lower of the two standard measures of inflation) or 3% whichever is the least.

The BID multiplier is expressed by the following calculation;

Levy = BID RV x Bid Multiplier*

The Table below shows the maximum levy rate to be applied in each year of the BID term. If the rate of inflation drops below 3% it will be less. If inflation rises above 3% the rate of levy will be capped at the rates illustrated below.

Year	BID Multiplier
2012/13	1.25% fixed
2013/14	1.28% max
2014/15	1.31% max
2015/16	1.34% max
2016/17	1.37% max

The annual BID Levy will be calculated as RV x BID Multiplier where:

The RV is the current RV of the hereditament on 1st October (the due date) in each year of the BID term.

The levy will be calculated on the 2010 Non Domestic Rating List for the duration of the BID term. Where properties split or merge, the BID levy will be calculated on the new value at the next due date on the current rating list. New hereditaments will be charged at the next due date on joining the current rating list.

*Under this proposal the BID multiplier is capped at 3% per annum. Taunton Town Centre Company (The BID Body) reserves the right to decrease the BID multiplier should the annual rate of inflation, expressed as the Consumer Price Index, fall below 3%.

7.6 The cost to your business

Introducing a BID multiplier, the indicative costs to a business in each year are:

Rateable Value	Annual Levy					Ave. Weekly Cost £	Ave. Daily Cost £
	Year 1 £	Year 2 £	Year 3 £	Year 4 £	Year 5 £		
£5,000	62.50	64	65.5	67	68.50	1.26	0.18
£10,000	125	128	131	134	137	2.52	0.36
£20,000	250	256	262	268	274	5.04	0.72
£50,000	625	640	655	670	685	12.6	1.80
£100,000	1250	1280	1310	1340	1370	25.2	3.59
£250,000	3125	3200	3275	3350	3425	62.98	8.97
£300,000	3750	3840	3930	4020	4110	75.58	10.77

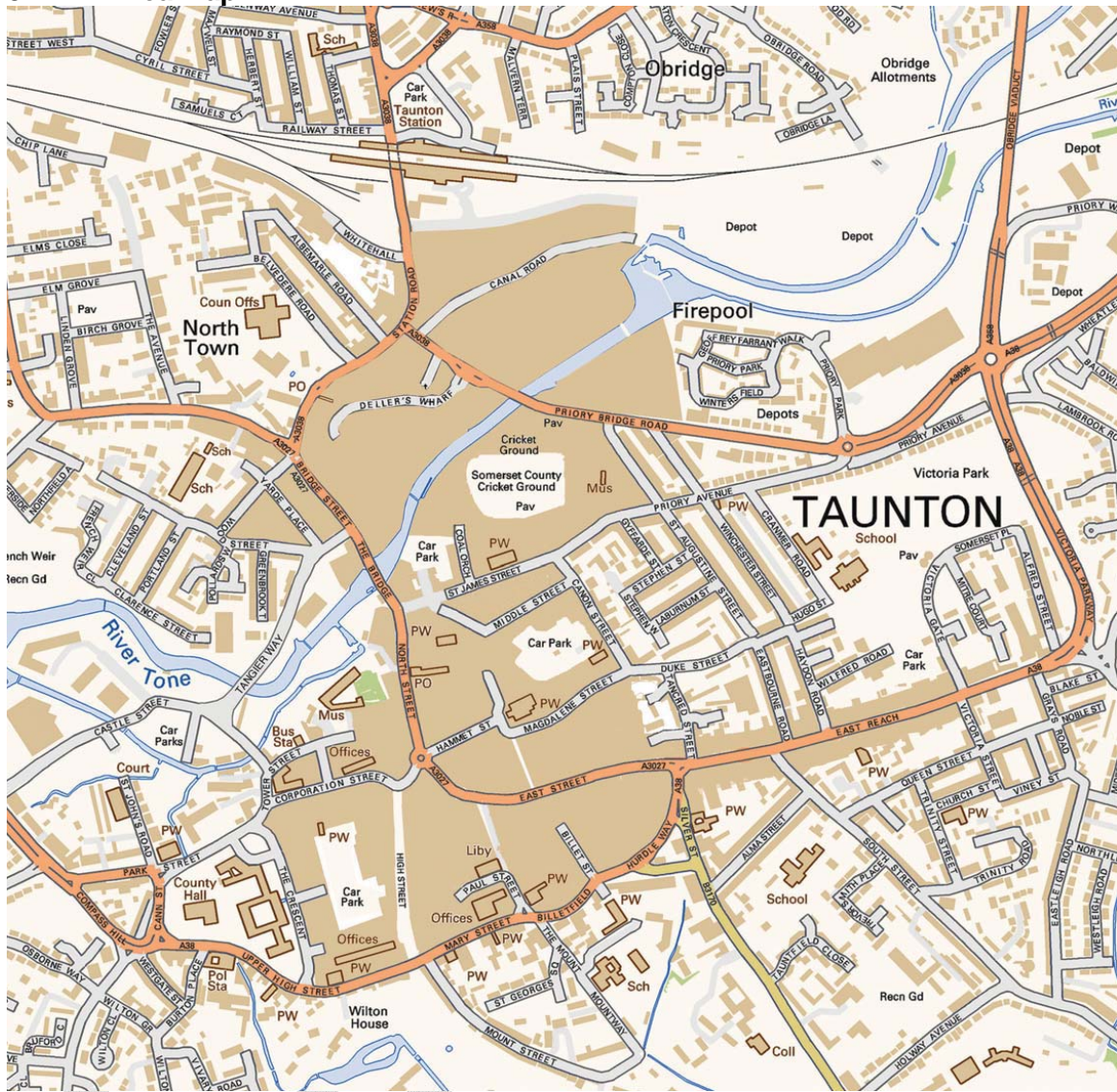
8. The BID Area

8.1 Streets within the BID area

- Bath Place
- Billet Street
- Blackhorse Lane
- Bridge Street
- Castle Green
- Cheapside
- Church Square
- Coal Orchard
- Corporation Street
- County Walk
- Crown Walk
- Eastgate
- East Reach
(to Victoria Gate)
- East Street
- Firepool
- Fore Street
- Foundry Road
- Hammet Street
- High Street
- Lower Middle Street
- Magdalene Lane
- Magdalene Street
- Middle Street
- Mill Lane
- North Street
- Paul Street
- Riverside Place
- Somerset Square
- Station Road
- St James Street
- The Bridge
- The Courtyard
- Orchard
- Tower St

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8.2 BID Area Map



Note - A more detailed map will accompany the finalised business plan.

8.3 Extension to Firepool

The BID area has been extended to include Firepool to the north of the area established in the first BID term. Firepool is an important extension to the town which could see a significant retail and leisure development over the life of the second BID term. The BID Company wishes to be fair and equitable in its treatment of all rateable value properties (hereditaments) within the BID area. The following paragraphs set out when and how hereditaments on Firepool are to be included.

The Firepool site is not yet developed and so hereditaments within the extended BID area will have their liability to pay the BID levy deferred until significant redevelopment has taken place. Because the liability to pay the levy is deferred the linked obligation on behalf of the BID Company to deliver services is also deferred. The BID Company will monitor developments on Firepool and retains the discretion to decide when to commence delivery of BID services to that area and bring the deferral period to an end.

An important factor in the BID Company decision on if and when to end the deferment will be the extent of retail and leisure etc. business activity on Firepool. The BID Company believes it would be wrong to continue the deferment of BID services and BID levy once such activity is a significant proportion of the Taunton retail offer.

The BID Company will consult with Taunton Deane Borough Council (the billing authority) before the alterations required by the end of the deferment are implemented. All businesses across the BID area, including those on Firepool will be notified of the changes to the BID arrangements bringing the period of deferment to an end before the changes come into effect. The BID levy will then be applied to all properties on Firepool at the next due date. The levy, once applied to Firepool, will be the same as the prevailing annual rate applied to all hereditaments throughout the BID area.

The BID Company reserves the right to bring the deferment period to an end on giving notice at any time during the operation of the five year BID term.

9. Baseline Statements

The BID is absolutely **NOT** designed to subsidise or replace services that are already covered by contribution to the local councils through Non-domestic Rates (these rates are collected locally but transferred in total to the Treasury; only a proportion of this fund is returned to the local authority for local services).

The BID provides for additional services identified by businesses as important to a successful trading environment. These services are to be funded and controlled by the business community through the application of the BID levy.

It is very important that current levels of public sector service are understood, so we have collected baseline statements from the relevant public service providers in the town to agree the levels, scale, frequency and extent of their service provision.

The baseline statements set out where existing public sector service provision ends and the BID scheme begins.

The baseline statements cover the following areas:

- Policing
- Events
- Marketing and Promotion
- Graffiti clean up
- Business information, advice and guidance
- Car parks
- Pedestrian Signage
- Town Centre Management

The baseline statements are available to view online at www.tauntontowncentre.co.uk

Following a successful ballot Taunton Town Centre Company will draw up formal contracts with the Police, Borough Council and other service providers to deliver the BID services outlined above.

10. Targets

Naturally, businesses will want to know how the levy is being invested and the outcome of the projects and programmes delivered. The BID Steering Group will regularly review progress of the BID to ensure that your contribution is invested wisely.

10.1 Measuring Success

A Better Promoted Taunton – the timely delivery of successful seasonal marketing campaigns, events and sales promotion activities. Measures of success will include publicity generated; income generation from external sources; participation at events and the footfall generated.

A Safer Taunton – BID Police Team patrolling hours; issues identified and outcomes published on our website. Development of new initiatives in support of businesses. The number and type of incidents occurring, detections and interventions by the BID Police Team.

Better for Business – Number of businesses engaged. Value of training provided, Take up of available shop-front grants. Take up of other subsidised BID services. Feedback from businesses. Savings achieved.

A voice for Business - Attendance at business meetings and forums to represent the business community. Facilitating the BID Steering Group.

Supporting Taunton at Night – Stimulate mixed use evening economy. Reduce decline and stimulate early evening & night time footfall. Change perceptions of Taunton at night.

Support Project Taunton – Community engagement; represent the interests of businesses. Consultation and information on new investment to Taunton.

OUTCOME:

Collective action by businesses for businesses; creating a more welcoming, vibrant county town. Fighting the negative effects of recession and increasing opportunity for growth.

11. Governance

The BID will be controlled and operated by the Taunton Town Centre Company Limited (TTCC). The Company Management Board which will be responsible for the proper application of funds raised through the BID Levy.

The second BID term and business plan proposal must be more responsive and flexible. TTCC reserves the right to make sensible adjustments to the BID budget and to move funds between budget headings as budget pressures demand.

11.1 Operating Agreement

An operating agreement between Taunton Town Centre Company (The BID Body) and Taunton Deane Borough Council (The Collecting Authority) will set out how the BID revenue account is to be controlled and managed.

It is however very important that those who are paying the levy have a say in how the scheme is delivered on an operational basis. The BID Steering Group established during the first BID term will continue as the forum representing the interests of the levy payers.

11.2 BID Steering Group

The Steering Group comprises of two representatives of the Taunton Town Centre Company Board, the Chief Executive of TTCC, a representative of Taunton Deane Borough Council and a representation of 6 BID levy payers from the BID area by sector and geography. The Chairman of the steering group is a representative of the BID levy payers, but not a member of either the TTCC or TDBC.

The Steering Group meets monthly to monitor progress and direct the overall delivery of the plan. In turn these activities are reported formally to the TTCC Management Board for ratification.

Regular information about Taunton Town Centre Company and progress of the BID is to be reported in the local media and circulated to levy payers providing a contact email address. Regular updates will also be published online at www.tauntontowncentre.co.uk

The levy paying representatives of the BID Steering Group will be voted in by the business community on an 18 month cycle when nominations are invited from across the BID area. Nominations to the BID Steering Group will be invited following a positive BID ballot and prior to commencement of the new BID term.

The Steering Group is responsible for ensuring that the Business Plan is delivered and for representing the views of the levy payers.

BID Steering Group Representation

Directors of TTCC	Chief Exec TTCC	TDBC	Levy Payers
2	1	1	6

12. Business Consultation

Taunton Town Centre Company (The BID Body) has undertaken an extensive consultation exercise with the business community, particularly non domestic rate payers within the current BID area.

The views of businesses have been instrumental to the Town Centre Company bringing forward plans for a second term BID and in determining the priorities within this business plan proposal.

Consultation began in May 2011 and concluded in January 2012. During the consultation, businesses were provided with information about plans to extend the BID for a second term and responded with valuable feedback about services and priorities for business over the next five years.

12.1 Consultation Summary

Date	Action	Indicator	Outcome
May 2011	Telephone survey	530 contacts	Participation in survey highlighting the current and future BID
June 2011	Invitation	750 contacts by letter or email	Invitation to attend consultation event
July 2011	Consultation Event	Attendance by business community	Report survey findings and consult businesses. Outline BID2 timetable.
July 2011	Business mailing	Consultation document mailed to 750 businesses	All businesses advised of consultation and invited to complete survey online
July 2011	Online Survey	Extend survey period	Increased response from businesses
September 2011	Company Meeting	Consultation with partners	Increased awareness of plans
October 2011	Invitation	750 contacts by letter or email with follow up telephone call	Greater feedback received
November 2011	Consultation event	Attendance by business community	Consult on priorities, costs and ballot timetable within outline business plan
December 2011	Draft business plan	Publish to website	Raise awareness & feedback from local businesses
December 2011	Invitation and Final Consultation Document	750 contacts by email or letter	Businesses invited to further consultation to feedback on draft business plan
December 2011	Survey	Invite feedback on draft business plan	Response to draft business plan
December 2011	Survey	Contact with Nationals at head office	Increased awareness of local plans
January 2012	Final Consultation Event	Attendance by businesses	Response to draft business plan proposal

13. Contacting the BID

This Business Plan Proposal has been prepared following consultation when businesses took the opportunity to input to proposals by Taunton Town Centre Company to extend the BID for a second term.

You can contact the BID office through Town Centre Manager Graham Love using the details below or your BID Representative.

The final version of the Business Plan will be published in advance of the ballot and will be available to download from the Taunton Town Centre Company website www.tauntontowncentre.co.uk

Copies of the current Draft Business Plan are available on request.

Taunton Town Centre Company
Orchard Shopping Centre
Unit 12F
Fore Street
Taunton
TA1 3TP

General enquiries	01823 324050
Email	info@tauntontowncentre.co.uk
Web	www.tauntontowncentre.co.uk

Appendix 2

The Business Improvement District (England) Regulations, 2004

SCHEDULE 1

CONTENT OF BID PROPOSALS, RENEWAL PROPOSALS OR ALTERATION PROPOSALS

1.—(1) Subject to sub-paragraphs (2) and (3), the matters which shall be included in BID proposals are—

(a) a statement of the works or services to be provided, the name of who will provide them (the name of the BID body or local authority BID body) and the type of body the provider is (whether a local authority, a company under the control of the authority, a limited company or a partnership);

(b) a statement of the existing baseline services (if any) provided by the relevant billing authority or other public authority;

(c) a description of the geographical area (including a map showing that area) in which the proposed BID arrangements are to have effect;

(d) a statement of whether all non-domestic ratepayers in the geographical area or a specified class of them are to be liable to the BID levy, an explanation of how the amount of the BID levy to be levied is to be calculated and an explanation of whether any of the costs incurred in developing the BID proposals, holding of the ballot or implementing the BID are to be recovered through the BID levy;

(e) a statement of the specified class of non-domestic ratepayer (if any) for which and the level at which any relief from the BID levy is to apply;

(f) a statement of whether the BID arrangements may be altered without an alteration ballot and, if so, which aspects of the BID arrangements may be altered in this way;

(g) a statement of the duration of the BID arrangements; and

(h) a statement of the commencement date of the BID arrangements.

(2) In relation to sub-paragraph (1)(c), the geographical area in which BID arrangements are to have effect shall not include part only of a whole hereditament.

(3) In relation to sub-paragraph (1)(h), the BID proposer shall specify how many days after the notice of the result is published pursuant to paragraph 17 of Schedule 2 it proposes the BID arrangements will commence and such commencement date shall be no later than a year after the date of that notice.

2. The matters which shall be included in renewal proposals are—

(a) a statement of the proposed period (not exceeding 5 years) of the renewed BID arrangements; and

(b) a summary of the BID arrangements (including the geographical area of the BID, the works or service provided, an explanation of who is liable for the BID levy, the level of the BID levy and how it is calculated).