

# **Taunton Deane Borough Council**

## **Executive - 4 December 2013**

### **Presentation by the Taunton Town Centre Company Limited (TTCC) of its proposal for a Business Improvement District (BID) and request for support to lead to a local referendum**

#### **Report of the Economic Development Manager**

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

#### **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This Report presents the Draft Business Improvement District (BID) proposal on behalf of the Taunton Town Centre Company (TTCC). The proposal is currently the subject of consultation amongst businesses and organisations in the town centre and the Committees views and comments are sought on the proposals contained.
- 1.2 The BID proposal will form part of a BID Submission to the Council. This Report also seeks the involvement of the Council, providing information, guidance and support to TTCC in its intention to develop the BID Submission. On receiving the BID Submission the Council will be asked to hold a local referendum in the form of a postal ballot of all payers of non-domestic rate within the proposed BID area in early 2014 under the Business Improvement District Regulations (England) 2004.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1 A Business Improvement District (BID) is a business-led and business funded body formed to improve a defined commercial area. Legislation enabling the formation of BIDs was passed in 2003 in England (with Regulations published in 2004). The majority of BIDs in the UK are in town centres.
- 2.2 The Taunton Town Centre Company (TTCC) first proposed a BID for Taunton town centre in 2007. During the 5 year term the BID secured over £1.1 million from the businesses.
- 2.3 The services of the first Taunton BID were focussed upon:
  - Enhancing safety and reducing fear of crime
  - Enhanced cleansing and physical improvements
  - Better signage and visitor interpretation

- A limited number of events and modest marketing of Taunton to visitors and shoppers

- 2.4 Members will recall that a successor BID programme was proposed by TTCC, due to commence at the end of the first BID programme on 30 September 2012. The report to Executive Committee on 9 February 2012 presented the BID renewal and formally requested the Council to hold the necessary ballot. In March 2012, the renewal ballot was held but the proposal was rejected by the ballot. The BID programme therefore ceased at the end of the five year term on 30 September 2012.
- 2.5 The report to this Committee on 25 October 2012 presented a review of the failed ballot, and informed Members of the way forward for the BID in Taunton. Members noted that the loss of income had an immediate negative impact on the town centre, including removing the funding available to deliver the traditional Christmas lights and switch-on event in November.
- 2.6 In consideration of the report Members asked searching questions of the Taunton Town Centre Company and were concerned by the apparent divided support for the company amongst businesses. The Committee recommended that it no longer had confidence in the Town Centre Company to deliver a further BID programme.
- 2.7 At the subsequent Executive meeting on 14 November Members acknowledged that the Town Centre Company's reputational issues had contributed to the failed BID proposal. The Committee also recognised, however, the importance of securing a further BID programme and resolved to fully support the Town Centre Company in progressing another BID proposal at the right time.
- 2.8 Over the past 12 months, and since consideration of the above, the Town Centre company has undertaken a process of radical overhaul of its membership structures and governance in order to make it more relevant to the needs of Taunton's businesses. Specifically the Town Centre Company now has a management board directly appointed by the Company membership. A membership recruitment drive was launched to increase engagement and garner support from all sectors within the business community. The cost of Company Membership was radically reduced in support of that aim. The new, democratically elected board gives the Company a new legitimacy as a business led organisation, controlled and operated by its membership.

### **3. Current Situation**

- 3.1 TTCC has embarked on consultation with the business community to determine the appetite for another BID and to establish the priority services to be delivered under a new BID proposal. That consultation has been progressed over the past six months and has adopted a rigorous approach to identifying businesses'

priorities within the town centre, and then turning those priorities into a formal BID proposal.

- 3.2 TTCC is now formally asking for the support and input of the Council, including the provision of information held by the Council necessary for the development of the new BID proposals.
- 3.3 Once developed, the BID proposal will form the basis of the formal BID Submission to be made to the Council early in 2014. On receiving the BID Submission it will be incumbent on the Council to make onward arrangements and to instruct the ballot.
- 3.4 Through this committee report TTCC is asking the Council for supporting information under the Business Improvement District Regulations (England) 2004. See Appendix 1.
- 3.5 Taunton Town Centre Company has written to the Council giving formal notice of its intention make a BID submission. On making the BID submission TTCC will request the Council to hold a referendum among the business community in the form of a postal ballot. An outline timetable for the BID Submission and Ballot is attached at Appendix 2.

#### **4. BID Proposal**

- 4.1 The latest draft of the BID Plan, which is currently subject to consultation amongst businesses, is at Appendix 3. The Committee's views and observations on that Plan are invited. Those views will be recorded by the Town Centre Company and will help to shape the final Plan alongside other representation received.
- 4.2 In summary, Members will note the following key proposals within the Plan:
  - The income generated would enable the provision of the following projects:
    - Enhanced marketing of the town to visitors and shoppers and the provision of additional cultural events
    - Effective business support to help businesses to reduce their costs
    - Lobbying and representation on behalf of businesses to the Council, Somerset County Council and other relevant authorities.
  - The Proposed BID area includes the major shopping and commercial streets in Taunton, extending from the Railway Station in the north to High Street in the South, and from Victoria Gate in the east to County Hall in the west. The Deane House, along with other Council and other public sector properties, is included in the BID area.

- The proposed BID levy would be 1% of the Rateable Value of each hereditament, as valued on the 2010 Rating list.
- Businesses with a Rateable Value of £6,000 or less on the 2010 Rating list would be exempt from the BID levy. Businesses that are exempt would not have a vote in the BID ballot but would still be encouraged to become members of the Taunton Town Centre Company.
- The BID would include approximately 700 hereditaments, generating a total income of £1.3m over the 5 year term.
- The BID ballot would be held in February 2014.
- The BID Term would be 5 years, commencing April 2014

## 5. Comment

- 5.1 A Business Improvement District in the town centre would enable the securing of significant finances to augment the services currently provided to support businesses. If, however, the submission is to convince businesses to vote 'yes' the plan needs to be explicit and clear about the additional products and services on offer.
- 5.2 It is clear that the company has learned many of the lessons from the last, failed BID process. As a result, the new proposal is business led and has emerged from a process of consultation held widely across the business community. The new proposal has been drafted by a sub group of the TTCC Board who appear to be in touch with the needs of their fellow businesses.
- 5.3 Officers submitted the following observations to the Town Centre Company on the first draft of the BID Plan, and requested that they are taken into account in drafting the proposal;

**Lobbying and Representation.** TTCC has an important role to represent the views of its members and the wider business community in the town centre. This is a role that the Council welcomes. This activity appears to have, however, no expenditure against it so no demonstration of what additional activity the BID levy is actually affording. Furthermore, the lobbying role is already mentioned as one of the outputs in the SLA between the Council and the company. On the same subject, the Council is not the only statutory provider of services, and the Plan should include other services providers, such as the County Council, Police, Wessex Water, etc. whose activities impact on the town centre..

**The Council as a BID levy payer.** Whilst it is important that TTCC needs to present itself as the businesses' champion, to be accurate and fair, the BID

plan also needs to point out that TDBC, SCC and other non business organizations will be contributing significantly to the BID through the levy on their hereditaments.

**Clear BID map.** To avoid misunderstandings that arose within the first BID programme (eg was The Crescent in or out?), the map to accompany the BID submission, needs to be very explicit about which hereditaments are in and which are out of the BID Area.

- 5.4 Under the BID Regulations the BID funding must be exclusively additional to those already being provided by the Local Authority and other relevant service providers. Members will be aware that the Council already delivers and coordinates events in Taunton, and provides extensive services to market the town to shoppers and visitors. In advance of the BID ballot officers would therefore work with the company to draft a Baseline Agreement, which would define those services of relevance to the BID proposal that are currently provided.

## **6. Corporate Scrutiny Recommendation**

- 6.1 The Corporate Scrutiny Committee considered this report at its meeting on 25 November 2013. They were satisfied with the progress made by the Town Centre Company in learning the lessons from the last, failed BID proposal, and recommended support for the current BID proposal.

## **7. Finance Comments**

- 7.1 The request by TTCC will involve the deployment of officer time to provide the specific information requested in support of the BID Submission (Appendix 1.).
- 7.2 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. The ballot carried out in March 2012 cost the Council in the order of £2500, and it is anticipated that a sum slightly higher will be incurred this time (owing to increased postal charges). It is proposed that that sum be taken from existing budgets, specifically the amount allocated to the Council's anticipated BID contribution during the current year, which totals £4,000.
- 7.3 As the billing 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. The Council's Head of Revenues and Benefits has requested the annual sum of £15,000 from the Town Centre Company to administer the proposed BID. That sum is based on 0.5 FTE of a Revenues Officer post plus costs associated with software, postage, stationery, accountancy/finance support, Court costs and the time spent by a Principal Officer within the

Revenues Team in support of the programme. The Council would also need to acquire a dedicated Software system at the commencement of the programme, which would cost a one off £13,900.

- 7.4 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 and where the Council is the responsible party for the payment of non-domestic rate. It is estimated that the annual levy due from the Council will be in the order of £15,000. The amount of £4,000 is currently included in the base budget, based on costs per the previous BID Levy, therefore the Council would need to find an additional £11,000 to fund the increased annual costs. In view of the severe financial pressures faced by the Council and the need to make significant budget savings it would be preferable from a financial perspective to prioritise existing Growth / Economic Development budgets to absorb this additional cost if the ballot is successful.
- 7.5 In previous years the Council also contributed £20,000 per year towards BID administration costs, so that businesses' contributions could be better focussed on project delivery. However, in view of the Council's severe financial pressures it is advised that such a contribution is not affordable, and it would be a reasonable charge against future BID Levy receipts.
- 7.6 The Council provides core funding to the Town Centre Company. During the current financial year that funding was £42,700.
- 7.7 In conclusion a successful BID would involve the Council in the following costs:
- An initial purchase of software required for the collection of the BID levy, estimated at £13,900. In addition there will also be annual administrative costs of approximately £15,000 incurred by the Council through its involvement in the collection of BID monies. Both of these cost elements would be recovered in full from the Town Centre Company.
  - The Council would have to meet the cost of the BID ballot which could be met from within existing budgets.
  - In addition the Council would need to provide for a future budget increase of £11,000 for an annual BID levy on authority properties within the BID area. It is proposed this is met as a priority call on existing budgets.

The request by TTCC will involve the deployment of officer time to provide the specific information requested in support of the BID Submission (Appendix 1.).

## **8. Legal Comments**

- 8.1 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.
- 8.2 Under the 2004 BID Regulations the Council as the Billing Authority may veto the BID proposal if it is of the opinion that the proposal:
- i) conflicts to a material extent with any policy formally adopted by and contained in a document published by the authority, or
  - ii) would be a significantly disproportionate financial burden on any person or class of persons (as compared to the other nondomestic ratepayers in the geographical area of the BID) and -
    - that burden is caused by the manipulation of the geographical area of the BID or by the structure of the BID levy; and
    - that burden is inequitable

## **9. Links to Corporate Aims**

- 9.1 The proposal has direct relevance to Aims 2 and 3 of the Corporate Business Plan 2013-16.

## **10. Environmental and Community Safety Implications**

- 10.1 The current proposal contains some small resources allocated towards enhancing the environment and community safety through the local Business Crime Reduction Partnership, Somerset Businesses Against Crime. The company would, however, direct resources towards lobbying the Council and other statutory providers of these services (eg Police) in order to ensure that high standards are maintained.

## **11. Equalities Impact**

- 11.1 The BID ballot will be open to all Non Domestic (Business) Rate payers in the defined BID area with a rateable value greater than £6,000, and it is therefore important that all of those rate payers are given a full and equal opportunity to vote. Officers will liaise with the Town Centre Company to ensure that the Ballot is carried out with a mind to equalities and diversity, and that the BID Plan takes into account the differing needs of users of the services funded.

## **12. Risk Management**

- 12.1 Should the TTCC proposals for a new BID fail at referendum it is unlikely that the

Company could survive financially, and the Council would be faced with a dilemma over its support for town centre management going forward.

### **13. Partnership Implications**

- 13.1 The Council works in close partnership with TTCC, being represented by Councillor David Reed on the Company Board, and at meetings of TTCC Company Members by Cllrs Cavill and Horsley. Officers liaise on a regular basis with The Town Centre Manager at a strategic as well as project level, including working together on events and marketing activities.

### **14 Recommendations**

- 14.1 That the Executive supports the Taunton Town Centre Company in the development of a new BID Submission, and that:-
1. the Council anticipates the future request to instruct the ballot holder to hold a ballot on behalf of TTCC.
  2. the Council makes 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 new BID term.
  3. the Council approves the acquisition of software to operate the BID levy estimated at £13,900, should the ballot prove successful. This cost to be recovered from the Town Centre Company.
  4. the Council budgets for an annual revenue provision of £15,000 to meet the cost of future BID levies on its properties within the BID area, should the ballot prove successful.

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## **APPENDICES:**

### **Appendix 1**

#### **Information and support requested to fulfill the BID Submission**

Taunton Town Centre Company is seeking the following information and support of Taunton Deane Borough Council under the Business Improvement District Regulations (England) 2004.

- A list of heraditaments within the proposed BID area
- A statement of existing baseline services provided by the Council within the proposed BID area
- Support in developing the BID operating agreement to exist between TTCC and the Council for the duration of the BID term
- Administration of the BID Referendum in the form of a postal ballot among all levy payers within the proposed BID area
- Provision for the billing, collection and administration of the BID levy funds including establishment of the BID Revenue Account

## Appendix 2

### The Ballot Timetable

Notice of Ballot	Businesses receive written notice six weeks in advance of ballot day	17 January 2014
Ballot Papers	Businesses receive ballot papers four weeks in advance of ballot day	31 January 2014
<b>Ballot Day</b>	Only ballot papers received by this date are counted	<b>28 February 2014</b>
Ballot result	The ballot result is declared by the returning officer as soon as possible after the close of ballot	3 March 2014
<b>BID commences</b>	The BID commences on issuing the first year levy demand notices to levy payers	<b>31 March 2014</b>

# A New BID for Taunton

by businesses : for businesses



2013

## Draft Business Plan November 2013

Taunton Town Centre Company is a member of the  
Association of Town Centre Management and of British BIDs



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## Our pledge to you

- We will engage with businesses and reflect your needs
- We value your input and respect your point of view
- We will produce proposals on behalf of the business community in an open and honest dialogue
- We will keep you informed of progress and will keep our plans transparent
- We will always remember it is your future and ours. Together we will treat this with great care



# What the BID Aims to do

Under this proposal the BID sets out to do three things;

- Provide substantial additional marketing of Taunton to attract more people to the town
- Improve the experience for people coming to the town
- Improve the competitiveness of businesses by increasing trade and reducing costs

Businesses have told us that to achieve this, the BID must concentrate its efforts to provide;

- High quality Marketing & Events
- Effective Business Support
- Lobby persistently the local authorities to improve the fabric of the town and deliver on the promises and plans made
- Monitor performance of the town centre & BID







## BID Priorities

### Priority No.1 - High quality marketing & events

- Provide additional support to cultural and artistic events with a regional and national audience, pulling in big names to support initiatives like the Comedy and Literary Festivals
- Improvements to smaller local events, bringing back crowd pulling attractions like the aerial acrobatic performances seen at the Market House Christmas events in 2010 and 2011
- Implement professional, credible marketing by working with external agencies to deliver compelling campaigns to attract visitors and shoppers from within a 30 minute drive time. And focusing on the benefits of staying local and spending local through marketing and incentives/schemes
- Reporting in the regional and national press, tourism and travel media to put Taunton on the map. Good stories sell and bring visitors to the county town
- Working with businesses to optimise online presence through search engine optimisation, social media and m-commerce



# Marketing & Events – What the BID will do;

Businesses have told us that increasing footfall is the critical priority.

The BID will seek to support cultural and artistic events with regional appeal. The aim is to attract more visitors and their disposable income to Taunton. The BID will offer match funds to events meeting the BID criteria, pulling people into Taunton from beyond the immediate area with measurable benefit to the local retail and service economy.

The BID will deliver a series of events to draw local people into town more often. The BID will develop a Christmas Market utilising Castle Green and Goodland Gardens to increase the seasonal offer and counter the draw of nearby Bristol and Exeter. Surplus generated through this project will be ploughed back in to sustain further marketing and promotional event activity.

The BID will support themed fairs, community events, festivals and regular street entertainment – anything that will increase the vibrancy and appeal of the county town and bring potential customers to your trading area.

The BID will seek to generate maximum PR in regional terms creating regular news features about the county town and its attractions, shopping offer and events. Marketing campaigns will set out to welcome and encourage more shoppers and visitors to Taunton; targeting the 250,000 people within a 30 minute drive time.

The BID will develop parking incentives and promotions; building on the successes of initiatives like 'Free after Three' and implement loyalty schemes to retain local shoppers and reduce seepage to neighbouring towns.

Taunton already has a successful web portal with high Google rankings. The website attracts thousands of unique visits each month. The BID will build on this platform to integrate social media and mobile; making Taunton and its businesses more accessible.







## Priority No.2 – Effective business support

- Helping independent businesses to reduce their annual electricity, gas and phone bills. Typical savings can be as much as 27%. In many cases savings will exceed the cost of the BID levy. Making business more profitable under the BID
- A town wide recycling and waste collection service to reduce business costs even further
- A service to assist businesses in cutting the cost of non-domestic rate. The BID will identify and vet service providers to help businesses reduce the cost of presenting a claim
- Help businesses to fight back against crime by working in tandem with the local Business Crime Reduction Partnership offering information, advice and guidance to reduce business crime and boost profits
- Access to funded training to support businesses, develop customer service skills and train managers to run their businesses more effectively

## Priority No.3 – Lobbying & representation

- Lobby persistently the local authorities to improve the fabric of the town and deliver on the promises and plans made and outlined in the document 'A Plan for Taunton'
- Represent the business community to ensure that those in authority are listening and coordinating their actions in support of business performance

# Business Support – What the BID will do;

## Reducing costs and increasing profitability is the second priority.

The BID will secure the services of reliable third party agents to work on behalf of all levy payers to reduce the cost of business services whether it be utilities, waste management or consumables. The BID will seek to support levy payers on an individual basis for some services like utilities and implement group buying of others like recycling. The aim is to reduce your costs and increase profitability as a result.

Business Rates are one of the biggest costs (and headaches) for many small businesses within the BID area. It is recognised that independent business operators do not have the time or expertise to take on the task of securing a reduction in the cost of business rates. The BID will source an agent, offering support to levy payers to review the level of business rates and seek a reduction on their behalf.

Taunton already has a well established and effective business crime reduction partnership. The BID will work alongside Somerset Business Against Crime (SBAC) helping all businesses within the BID area to reduce the incidents of business crime. In partnership with the BID, SBAC will work towards achieving the Safer Socialising Award in support of the night time economy and run crime reduction seminars to assist businesses in reducing stock loss. Through SBAC the BID will tackle social issues affecting patterns of crime to support initiatives such as the Food Bank and revamp the Diverted Giving Scheme in support of local agencies tackling homelessness.

Strengthening the link between profit and skills the BID will support independent businesses to top up skills for managers and help retain key staff. The BID will offer top-up funding to eligible businesses seeking to improve skills through recognised training routes offered by the National Skills Council for Retail.

# Lobbying & Representation – What the BID will do;

## Lobbying the interests of businesses is the third priority.

The BID provides a body to represent the interests of around 700 businesses in Taunton.

Businesses are concerned about falling standards in the fabric of the town, accessibility and visitor perception. In association with other lobbying groups representing businesses like the Chamber of Commerce, the BID will lobby wherever it can to ensure incremental improvements are made to the fabric of the town and priorities addressed.

Signage, car parking, highways maintenance and cleanliness are among the issues identified by businesses as impacting on the appeal of the BID area and profitability of trade.

Not all issues can be addressed locally for example Non-Domestic Rate; in addition to lobbying the local authorities, the BID will raise these business issues through organisations to which Taunton Town Centre Company is affiliated including the Association of Town Centre Management and British BIDs.

# The proposed BID area (and why)?

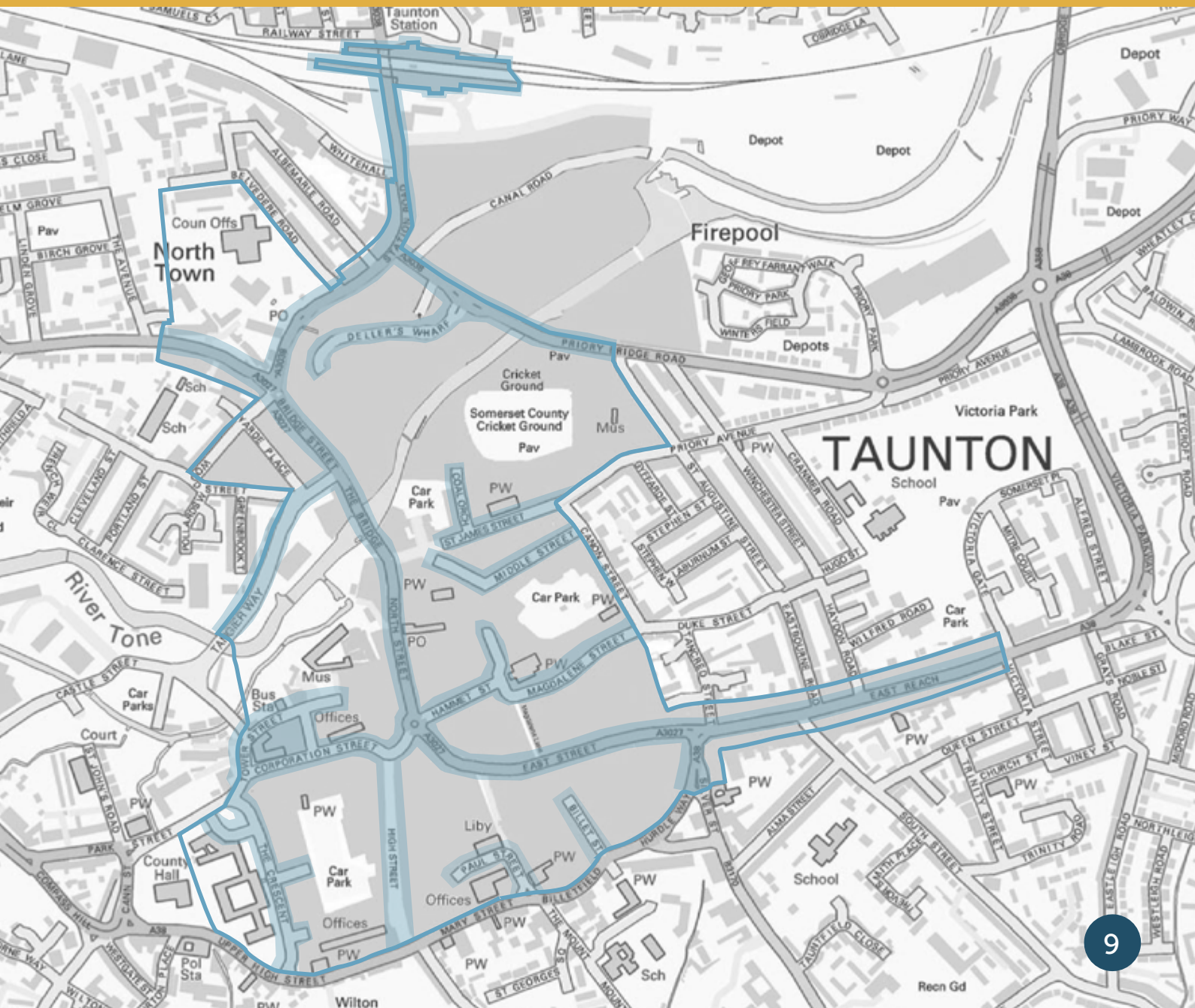
In developing the BID area we propose to include the major shopping and commercial streets within the county town.

From the Railway Station in the North to High Street in the South, East to Victoria Gate and West to The Crescent and County Hall.

Streets have been chosen to reflect the main business and commercial area; businesses and other rate payers of all property in these streets are being asked to contribute their ideas to the plan prior to the voting decision.

It is proposed to include the following principle streets;

- |                 |                    |                          |                    |                                 |
|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| Bath Place      | Coal Orchard       | Goodland Gardens         | North Street       | St James Street & The Courtyard |
| Belvedere Road  | Corporation Street | Hammet Street            | Paul Street        | The Bridge                      |
| Billet Street   | County Walk        | High Street & Crown Walk | Priory Bridge Road | The Crescent                    |
| Blackhorse Lane | Dellers Wharf      | Lower Middle Street      | Riverside Place    | Orchard                         |
| Bridge Street   | Eastgate           | Magdelene Lane & Street  | Silver Street      | Tower Street                    |
| Canon Street    | East Reach         | Middle Street            | Somerset Square    |                                 |
| Castle Green    | Fore Street        | Mill Lane                | Staplegrave Road   |                                 |
| Cheapside       | Foundry Road       |                          | Station Road       |                                 |
| Church Square   |                    |                          |                    |                                 |







## The proposed levy rate (and why)?

Businesses have told us that operating costs are a major issue in the current climate. For the BID proposal to gain acceptance, costs must be kept to a minimum with no nasty surprises over the BID term.

These proposals are based on that understanding – the cost to businesses will be fixed at 1% of rateable value, calculated for each premises on the 2010 rating list, fixed at the commencement of the BID for the life of the BID term.

During the BID term new properties, splits and mergers will have their levy calculated on the Rateable Value fixed at the point of entering the rating list current at the time.

Full details of the BID levy rules and how these are to be applied will be finalised and available upon request before the BID ballot.

## Exemptions (and why)?

It is proposed that premises with a Rateable Value of £6,000 or less on the 2010 rating list will be exempt from the BID levy. Known as the levy threshold, this exemption is made to support the smallest of businesses and reflects the current Rate Relief scheme from Government.

It is uneconomical to pursue annual receipts of under £60. This exemption supports approximately 200 small businesses within the proposed BID area.

No other exemptions or concessions are proposed.

Businesses exempt from the levy will not have a vote in the BID ballot but can still play their part as Members of the Taunton Town Centre Company. Membership is voluntary, open to all businesses and costs just £50 + VAT for 12 months subscription.



## The length of the BID term (and why)?

The BID can be for a minimum of one year or a maximum of five years. This is known as the BID term.

It is proposed that, as per most BIDs in the UK, the term for the BID will be five years.

This five year term allows the BID to prove its worth and creates sustainable funding to plan and bring forward great projects, spanning more than a few months, to support profitable trade for businesses within the BID area.

Five years is a long time and the plans will be kept flexible to meet changing needs and cater for the unexpected.

## When will the BID start?

All eligible businesses and other organisations liable for non-domestic rate will receive a notice of ballot in January 2014.

Businesses will be asked to vote on their acceptance of the plans in a postal ballot to take place in February 2014.

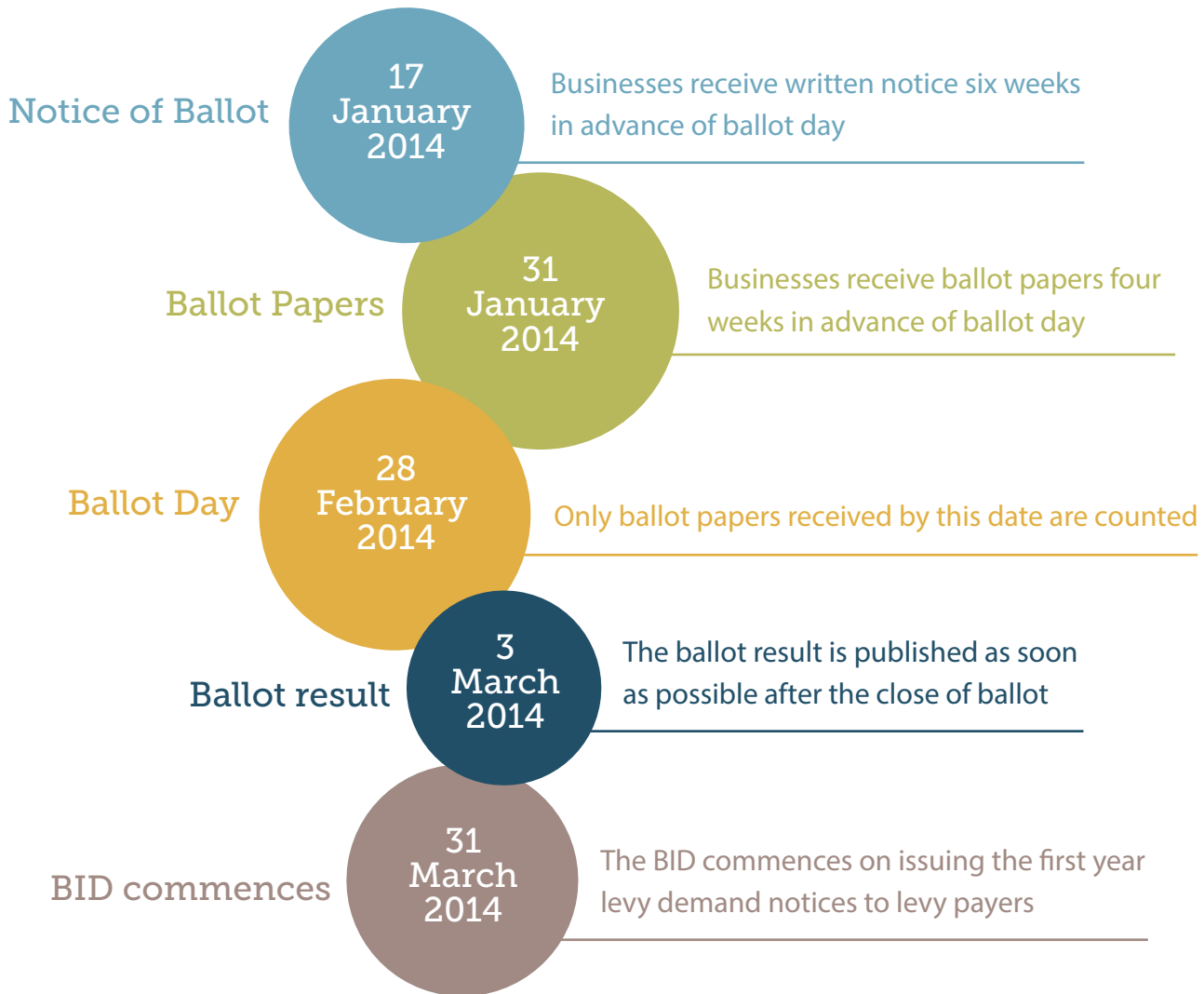
You will have six weeks from the notice of ballot to make your decision and return your voting paper(s).

Once accepted at ballot the BID will commence in March/April 2014. At this point businesses will be asked to pay the first year installment of the annual BID levy expressed as 1% of rateable value.

Taunton Town Centre Company will use the BID levy collected by Taunton Deane Borough Council to deliver the services agreed with businesses under the BID business plan.



# The Ballot Timetable



## Voting Arrangements

The BID regulations stipulate that the BID ballot must be conducted by the billing authority. This means that Taunton Deane Borough Council will hold the ballot on behalf of Taunton Town Centre Company.

The Council will use a third party, Electoral Reform Services (ERS), to conduct the postal ballot.

ERS will send out the notice of ballot and the ballot papers to all voter contacts to meet the ballot timetable.

Full details of the voting and levy arrangements will be available online prior to the postal ballot [www.tauntontowncentre.co.uk](http://www.tauntontowncentre.co.uk)

Or can be requested by email [info@tauntontowncentre.co.uk](mailto:info@tauntontowncentre.co.uk) or by writing to the Town Centre Manager at the address overleaf.



## What will I get for my money?

By contributing a 1% levy calculated on your Rateable Value you will be joining with approximately 700 other businesses in Taunton to fund the BID plan.

Your contribution enables a fund of £260,000 in each year of the BID – even for the largest of businesses this represents a great return on investment.

The BID will seek to lever funds from other sources during the five year term. The table overleaf shows just one element of additional funding to support the BID levy through advertising and sponsorship; increasing the available funds by £100,000 over the five year term.

In return for your contribution, the BID will deliver a range of services directed by the business community in Taunton for the benefit of trade and profit.

You can read about the proposed work of the BID in the earlier section marked 'BID Priorities page 5-8'.

# The BID at a glance

## BID Business Plan 2014 - 2019

Income	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Levy	260000	260000	260000	260000	260000
Advertising & Sponsorship	20000	20000	20000	20000	20000
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>280000</b>	<b>280000</b>	<b>280000</b>	<b>280000</b>	<b>280000</b>

## Expenditure

### Marketing

Marketing & PR Campaigns	60000	60000	60000	60000	60000
Web, App & Social Media	5000	2000	2000	2000	2000
Publications	15000	15000	15000	15000	15000

### Events

Supporting Events/Festivals	95000	95000	95000	95000	95000
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### Reducing the Cost of Business

Cost Reduction Services	15000	15000	15000	15000	15000
Supported Training	5000	5000	5000	5000	5000
Fighting Business Crime	7500	7500	7500	7500	7500

### Performance Monitoring

Business & Visitor Survey	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000
Footfall Monitoring	6000	6000	6000	6000	6000

### Operating Costs

Administration (20% of levy)	52000	52000	52000	52000	52000
Levy Collection	15000	15000	15000	15000	15000
Surplus	3500	6500	6500	6500	6500

<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>280000</b>	<b>280000</b>	<b>280000</b>	<b>280000</b>	<b>280000</b>
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Taunton Town Centre Company reserves the right to make adjustments and movements between budget headings as budget pressures demand. Any surplus carried forward will be used to support BID projects and/or renewal of the BID proposals in year 5.



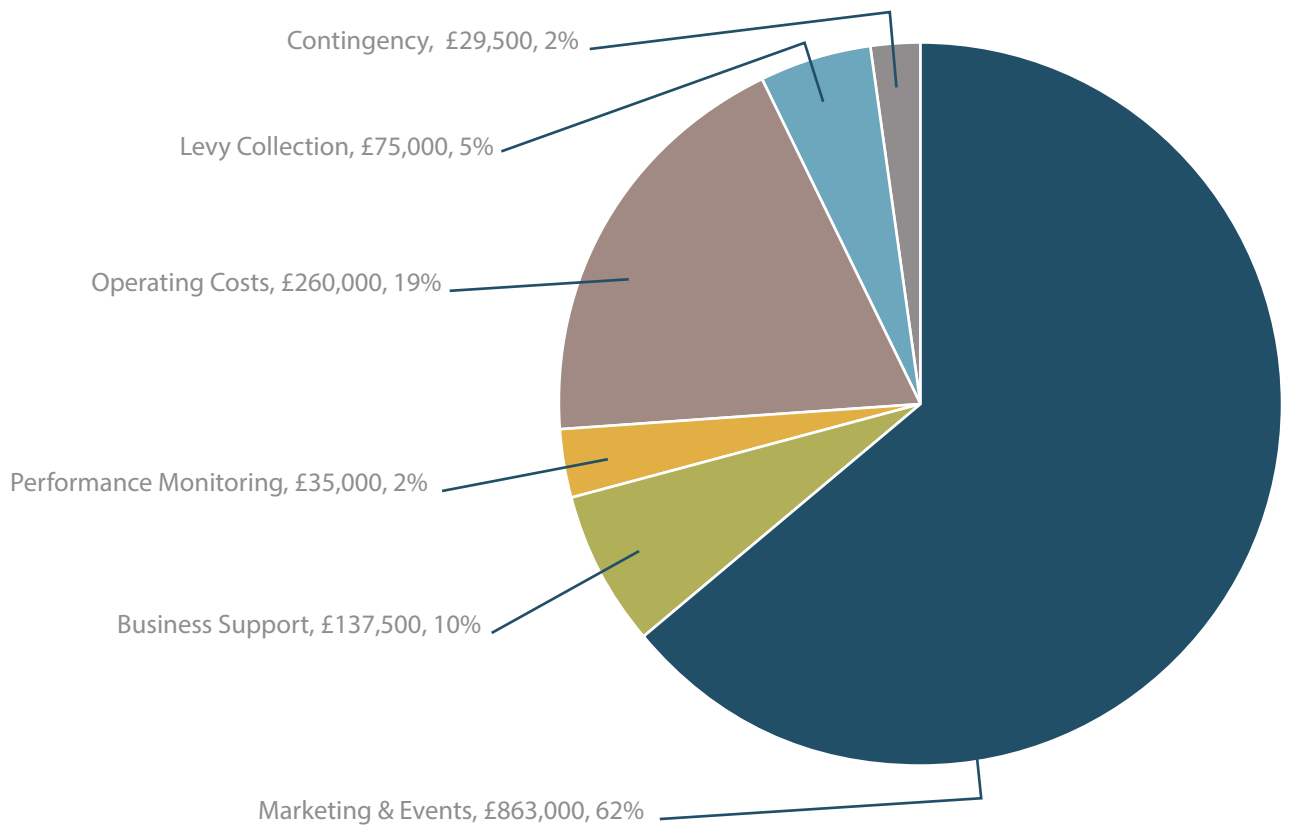
# How will the money be allocated (weighting of projects)?

The BID will have some costs and we want to be upfront about that. The contribution from the levy to the cost of administration will be limited to no more than 20% of the levy. It takes significant administration to deliver a wide and varied programme.

In addition, the local authority will charge for collection of the levy and this is estimated at £15,000 each year making this one of the lowest collection charges of any BID and well below national average.

Taking the views expressed by businesses so far, here is how the money breaks down;

## BID Proposal 2014-2019



**Total Spend £1.4m over five years \*.**

\*Includes other income of £100,000



## Who controls my money & do I get a say?

The BID levy is collected by Taunton Deane Borough Council (the billing authority) on behalf of Taunton Town Centre Company (the BID Body).

The levy is collected by the Council; then every penny collected is passed to Town Centre Company control to allocate under the BID.

In other words, the Council cannot keep the money; it belongs to businesses and other levy payers and is entrusted to Taunton Town Centre Company.

Taunton Town Centre Company is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee. Run by a democratically elected Board on behalf of its business members. Every business is invited to become a member of the Company for which there is a small annual fee.

The Company will set up a separate BID trading division; the funds will be controlled by the Company on your behalf and allocated to projects overseen by a group of volunteers drawn from the levy paying business community. Representatives will include national brands and independent retailers, the night time economy and the professional sector. The BID Team will be supported by the Directors, Manager and Staff of the Town Centre Company.

The Company will be accountable for the BID funds to all levy payers. An account of income and expenditure will be prepared quarterly and made available to all levy payers.

This way you can see how BID is doing and measure progress against the agreed BID business plan.

## Consultation

Before proposing this draft BID Business Plan, Taunton Town Centre Company sought the views of the business community over many months. A summary of the consultation which the Company has undertaken will be included in the final version of the BID business plan to be published in advance of the BID ballot early in 2014.

# What are the key activities/measures of success?

Working with our partners in the public and private sector, the BID will plan to develop a confident Taunton.

The BID will support major event activities which have regional and national appeal to draw people to Taunton and which impact positively on the local economy.

The BID will commission professional, effective public relations and work to create positive column inches in the regional and national press. It will confirm Taunton as a thriving county town – a great place to live and for business, education, retail and leisure.

The BID will produce marketing activities, online, through social media and in print to support the generation of new footfall and retain customer loyalty.

The BID will celebrate the arts and produce local events to surprise and delight shoppers and visitors creating a positive atmosphere.

The BID will support businesses striving to reduce overheads including taxation through non-domestic rate, utilities, telecoms and other business costs. We will act on the behalf of the majority to negotiate group prices from service providers where possible.

The BID will plan to support the daytime and night time economy and support those working in the service sector to increase personal effectiveness through training and development, leading to improved profits as a result.





# Project Summary

Here is a list of what the BID will deliver, investing £1.3m of BID levy over five years:

1. Marketing campaigns to welcome more visitors to Taunton
2. Increased profile of Taunton through regional publications, news features, local television and radio
3. Parking Promotions to encourage repeat visits and greater length of stay
4. Encourage a move to pay on exit parking
5. Customer loyalty schemes to encourage repeat business and reduce seepage
6. Promotion of your business online, through social media and mobile platforms
7. Increase footfall through cultural events with regional appeal
8. Numerous local events to draw visitors and shoppers from a 30 minute drive time
9. Development of a specialist Christmas Market to boost seasonal appeal
10. Support to the towns festive lights
11. Introduce services to help reduce costs for businesses including assessments for business rates, utilities and waste management services
12. Crime reduction advice for all businesses
13. Support to the night time economy through achievement of the Safer Socialising Award
14. Effective lobbying at local level and through national representative bodies on issues important to businesses in Taunton
15. Annual business and consumer surveys
16. Footfall analysis and collation of secondary performance indicators





## How will I know if the BID promise has been kept (controls)?

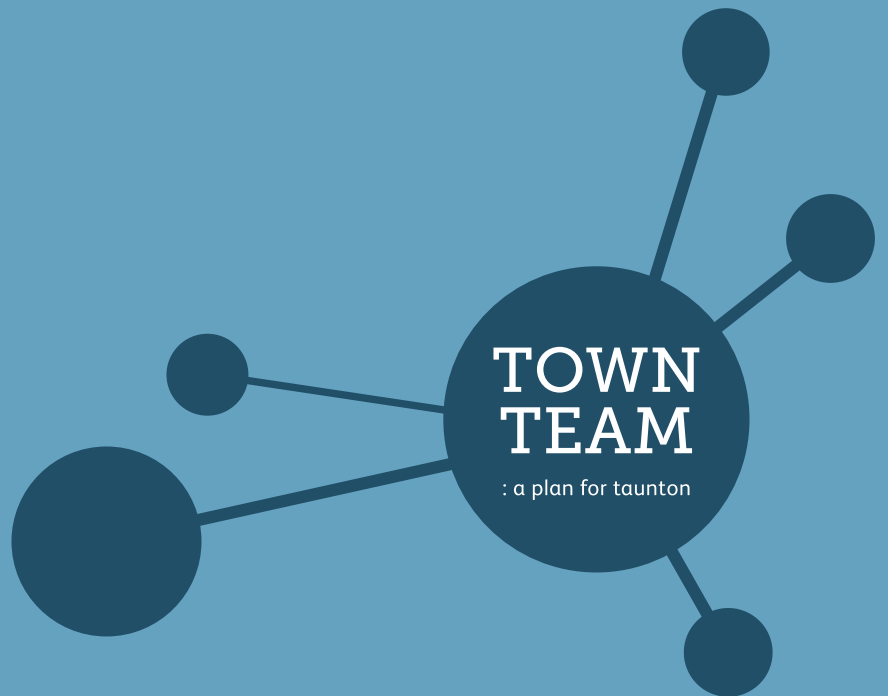
The BID will monitor how the town is performing in terms of footfall and compile other secondary indicators like car parking and retail vacancy rates.

The BID will ask businesses and the public for regular feedback, at least once a year there will be a formal feedback process, following which there will be appropriate adjustments to service delivery as required.

The BID will publish an account of income and expenditure quarterly and make this information available to all levy payers so you can see how the funds are being collected and expensed.

Levy payers will be able to compare actual expenditure against budget and delivery of projects against those detailed within the final BID business plan.

The BID will strive to keep costs low and outputs high. The company will always remember it is your money we are spending and that we are accountable to you.



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