



# Cabinet Meeting

## 15 April 2015

<b>Report title</b>	Bilston Town Centre Business Improvement District (BID)	
<b>Decision designation</b>	AMBER	
<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Councillor Peter Bilson, Economic Regeneration and Prosperity Councillor Andrew Johnson, Resources	
<b>Key decision</b>	Yes	
<b>In forward plan</b>	Yes	
<b>Wards affected</b>	All	
<b>Accountable director</b>	Keren Jones, City Economy	
<b>Originating service</b>	Place	
<b>Accountable employee(s)</b>	Jim Cunningham	Head of Enterprise and Skills
	Tel	01902 550166
	Email	James.cunningham@wolverhampton.gov.uk
<b>Report to be/has been considered by</b>	None	

---

### Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Exercise the Council's vote in support of the proposed BID Ballot in respect of the hereditaments in the Council's ownership within the BID area and to delegate authority to the Strategic Director for Place to complete and return the voting papers on behalf of the Council.
2. Should the BID Ballot be successful, authorise the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration and Prosperity in discussion with the Strategic Director Place and the Director of Governance to decide on appropriate Council Board representation.
3. Delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration and Prosperity in consultation with the Service Director for City Economy and the Director of Finance to:-

- Take such steps to assist in the delivery of the development and implementation of the Bilston town centre BID project.
  - Formally approve the BID Business Plan and associated documents.
  - Negotiate, agree and complete the BID Operating Agreement between the Council and the BID Company if a YES vote is secured.
- 4 If a YES vote is secured, confirm up front funding in August 2015 of an amount of £40,000 for the first quarter of the BID levy in order that delivery of BID projects and services are not delayed. The Council will be reimbursed after the levy is collected
- 5 To confirm employee recommendations to charge the BID Company £3904 per annum for the duration of the BID (five years) to cover the Council's costs associated with collection of the BID levy.

**Recommendations for noting:**

The Cabinet is asked to note:

1. The Bilston town centre BID Business plan and boundary.
2. That formal notice for the Ballot has been received therefore the Returning Officer has been instructed to organise the BID ballot in accordance with the BID Regulations (2004).

## **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek approval to support the progression of a Business Improvement District (BID) for Bilston town centre.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 A BID is a business led initiative in a defined area in this instance Bilston town centre, where businesses decide what additional improvements they want to deliver in their trading area. Businesses in the area agree on the level of funding required to deliver the projects and services that are additional to those being provided by the Local Authority and to fund them through a levy.
- 2.2 BIDs were first established in UK legislation in 2004. To date there have been over 180 successful BID ballots which include a significant number of second term ballots. BIDs are a successful model in delivering town and town centre management. Wolverhampton city centre BID has received a Yes vote. In addition, six BIDs operate within Birmingham and also in cities and towns including Manchester, Rugby, Coventry, and Stratford upon Avon, Worcester, Leamington Spa and Nottingham. The Mosaic Partnership, the consultancy that provides expert advice to the Bilston town centre BID have delivered over 65 BIDs in other UK locations including Wolverhampton city centre.
- 2.3 BIDs deliver a range of services and projects that are always additional to those already being provided by the public agencies. Most common BID projects and services include marketing, promotions and events, cleansing, safety, accessibility and business support. Businesses determine through consultation the projects and services they feel are a priority in their location to be delivered by a BID.
- 2.4 The Council understands the significant importance of having a BID in the Corporate Plan and recognises that a BID helps to achieve the objectives of re-invigorating the town centre and creating an attractive, accessible and lively town of choice for our residents and future generations who wish to make Bilston their home.
- 2.5 Within the proposed BID area of the town centre there are 244 hereditaments (properties) that would be liable for the BID levy through charging a levy based on circa 2% of business rates – within a banded levy structure. It is estimated that the BID will raise in the region of £100,000 per annum for the 5 years term of the proposed BID, generating £500,000 investment for the town centre BID area.
- 2.6 The BID can only come into force if businesses vote in favour for the BID on two counts; being an overall majority in terms of number and that majority must also represent higher rateable value than those businesses that vote No. If the vote is successful all businesses eligible to pay the levy will have to pay their respective levy.

- 2.7 Wolverhampton Council's Returning officer has instructed Electoral Reform Services to undertake the independent month long postal vote. The BID covers the cost of appointing Electoral Reform Services. The ballot runs from the 18 June until the 15 July with the result being announced by 5pm on 16 July 2015.
- 2.8 The Council owns 15 (NDR) properties within the proposed BID area which afford a rates value of £1,000 or over which therefore attracts an applied levy. Based on the banding approach set out in the BID proposals this would result in the Council's BID levy liability being £28,550. Each hereditament that is liable to pay the levy will have a vote. In respect of the 15 council properties within the BID area it is requested that delegated authority be given to the Service Director of City Economy to be the officer responsible for supporting the BID and being responsible for completing and returning the voting papers.

### **3.0 Bilston BID**

- 3.1 Since October 2014 business consultations have been undertaken within the town centre to determine what their priorities are for enhancing the town centre. A BID Task Group has been formed of businesses within the BID area that are responsible for making key decision for the BID. Members of the Task group include CeX, Robin 2 Club, Jennings Funeral Directors, Café Metro, Wetherspoons, Coffee Express, Bilston Motor Spares, Wolverhampton Homes and Workman Facilities.
- 3.2 Businesses have identified that the specific priorities for Bilston town centre are:
- Safety and security, parking
  - Town centre marketing, events and promotional activities
  - Business support
  - Improved public realm and environment

These headings set the structure for the services and projects which will be delivered through the BID. All projects and services that the BID will deliver are set out in the full BID Business Plan under each of the headings and include, additional cleansing , professional marketing, promotions and events, monitored CCTV scheme, town ambassadors, and business support to reduce business overheads through collective procurement of services such as trade waste, recycling and utilities.

- 3.3 As part of the BID process the Council has produced baseline service statements that set out the current level of service provision within the BID area for both statutory and non-statutory provision. Statements covering services includes, street cleansing, highway maintenance, car parking, events, neighbourhood wardens, street lighting, markets and Christmas decorations (a full copy of the baseline report is available on request). These allow the BID Company to understand the level of services currently in place so that it can provide services and projects that are additional. These statements are not legally binding but do provide an outline of the commitment to provision of services.

- 3.4 The creation of a new BID Company will be required that specifically delivers the services set out in the BID Business Plan. The Company will be set up following a successful YES vote. The BID Company Board will be recruited via an elected process and will be made up of representatives from town centre stakeholders covering all areas and all business sectors. Wolverhampton City Council will hold at least one seat on the Board.
- 3.5 Wolverhampton City Council will be the organisation responsible for collecting the BID levy and will incur costs due to staffing required to administer the collection. The Council will seek an annual fee of £3904 from the BID Company to cover these additional staffing costs. This fee is representative of average comparative BIDs collection costs in the UK.
- 3.6 In order that the BID company can deliver projects as set out in the BID Business Plan (April 2015) the BID director has requested that the Council agree to providing the BID company with up front funding of £40,000 in August 2015 to ensure that the BID projects can start being delivered effectively from the earliest stage. The Council as levy collector will retain the £40,000 funding as it receives BID levy payments. The timing of the BID collection will be set out in a schedule attached to the Operating Agreement and in discussion with officers it will be distinct from the Business Rates bill collection and will be sent out in December 2015 as a separate bill.

#### **4.0 Financial implications**

- 4.1 A positive vote for the creation of a BID would result in an additional levy being raised on 244 properties in the town centre. This is expected to raise £100,000 per annum over a five year period which will be managed by a newly established BID company and be invested in additional services in the town centre.
- 4.2 There are 15 Council owned properties that would be subject to a levy should the BID be established, Funding for the additional costs estimated at £28,550 will be met from offsetting savings on existing support for Bilston centre management.
- 4.3 The Council will provide an initial cash advance to the BID Company of £40,000 to fund activities in advance of the levy funds being received. This will be a short term advance which will have minimal financial implications for Wolverhampton City Council.
- 4.4 Additional software will be required to administer the levy. The cost of the software is absorbed by the Wolverhampton City Centre BID and an additional license will be issued to the Bilston town centre BID at no extra cost.  
[MF/27032015/M]

#### **5.0 Legal implications**

- 5.1 Part 4 of the Local Government Act 2003 gave local authorities the power to enable BID arrangements for the benefit of a district or those who live, work or carry on an activity in the district. The Council also has the power to make financial contributions or take action for the purpose of enabling the BID to be carried out.

- 5.2 The Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004 outlines the legal responsibilities of the Council as billing authority. The Council must approve the BID business plan, financial management, and consultation as well as providing an accurate non-domestic rates list.
- 5.3 The Council will negotiate, agree and enter into a BID Operating Agreement with the BID Company providing a Yes vote is secured in the forthcoming ballot.  
[RB/25032015/W]

## **6.0 Equalities implications**

- 6.1 The introduction of a BID within the town centre and the council's support for it will not have any negative equality implications. The BID's aims to ensure that the town centre remain and thrives as an attractive, vibrant, safe and secure town centre will ensure that the town remains accessible and inclusive for all. The BID company will need to demonstrate to all town centre businesses and levy payers that in delivering its services and projects that the town benefits.

## **7.0 Environmental implications**

- 7.1 Through the delivery of the projects and services by the BID the only intention is to positively enhance the town centre environment.

## **8.0 Human resources implications**

- 8.1 There will be the requirement to provide staffing to cover additional activities by the business rates team for the collection of the BID levy.

## **9. Corporate landlord implications**

- 9.1 The current position with respect to Council properties is set out in paragraph 2.8 above. Properties within the BID area will be assessed on annual basis

## **10.0 Schedule of background papers**

- 10.1 BID Business Plan Summary April 2014