

REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

RENEWAL OF MANSFIELD BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID) FOR 2020-2025

Purpose of the Report

1. This report provides members with an update on the Mansfield Business Improvement District achievements 2014-2019 and requests a decision on how to vote in the second 5-year period from 2020-2025 in the renew ballot.

Information

2. The Council Plan 2017-2021 'Your Nottinghamshire, Your Future' aims to make our County a great place to start and grow a business. Having attractive and economically vibrant towns is a priority for the Council. A Business Improvement District (BID) is a business led body formed to improve a defined commercial area. Legislation enabling the formation of BID's was passed in 2003. Working in partnership with town centre groups to co-ordinate activities and backing BID's, supports the realisation of theses strategic County Council priorities.
3. The Mansfield BID acts independently as the voice and champion of businesses within Mansfield town centre. It is run through a Board, supported by a BID team and led by a Chief Executive based at an office in Regent Street.
4. Mansfield's BID is due for renewal through a vote, to be held between the 27 September 2019 and 24 October 2019, with the result being announced on 25th October.
5. The BID has an ambition to make Mansfield a destination of choice, achieving this key strategic objective through:
 - a safer and more welcoming town centre
 - a clean, appealing and accessible town centre
 - place marketing, promotion and events
 - offering business, a voice and support
6. Through both the District and County Council and a close relationship with the businesses/levy-payers, themed meetings and regular Board meetings, the BID offers services such as: free Wi-Fi across the town centre; street cleansing and emergency washes; hanging baskets and planters; support to key events across the year; key gateway information support; a town patrol team; night time ambassadors; the business crime partnership and emergency liaison with the police regarding a range of town centre support; shopping guides and a loyalty card scheme and supporting individual businesses address their needs and issues.

7. To date, the Council has taken a seat on the Board, supported by officers from the Growth and Economic Development Team. This matter will be the subject of a report on appointments to Outside Bodies on this Committee's November agenda.

Business Plan 2020-25

8. In preparation for its renewal and the vote, the BID has prepared a Business Plan, based on performance to date and consultation with its levy-payers and statutory bodies. The consultation secured a 91% response rate, reflecting a range of requested priorities and ideas for the forthcoming 5 years of operation. The Board has agreed a series of commitments going forward under each priority, tackling what businesses see as the key issues in the town, summarised as follows:
- Tackling perceptions of crime and actual anti-social behaviour
 - An insufficient range of shops and too few customers
 - The generally poor quality and appearance of the retail units and the general shopping environment
 - The image of Mansfield locally - and wider
 - A lack of places to socialise, eat and drink and engage in non-retail activities
 - The need for greater promotion and a wider range of events in the town
9. Whilst not all these issues fall within the responsibilities and powers of the BID, the BID's ambitions and planned activities are shaped by these issues and reinforce the requirement for them to build on the strong working arrangements with its key partners across local government and other public and voluntary services. If the vote secures a further 5 years of activity, the BID will play a key role in championing the voice of businesses across the town centre.
10. Further details regarding the Mansfield BID, its defined area and Business Plan 2020-2025 are available online at: <https://www.mansfieldbid.co.uk>

Mansfield BID Renew Ballot

11. Nottinghamshire County Council is eligible to vote in the BID renewal ballot by virtue of it being the occupier of three properties.
12. Should the vote result in a continuation of the BID, an additional annual levy will be charged of between 0 and 2% of the Rateable Value, to pay for the BID's activities. 2% is the standard levy rate; 1% where discounted and 0% where the building is Listed, as is the case with one of the Council's properties.
13. Financially overall, this will see the levy increase the total business rates payments by an estimated £1,740 per annum. This will be met via the respective service area budgets.
14. In operational terms, the work of the BID relates to several County Council services, including highways and transport (directly and through Via), business support and regulatory services, rights of way, cultural services and crime and community safety. Co-ordination and support are facilitated through the Board member and officers.

15. Several wider town centre issues relate to the BID's activities and those of the Council. Mansfield District Council's submission to the Future High Streets Fund has been shortlisted for progression to the next stage of development, with a focus on revitalising several key sites within the town centre. On 6 September 2019, the Government announced that Mansfield (alongside Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Newark-on-Trent and Stapleford) has been invited to develop proposals to secure up to £25M of investment through the development of a partnership-driven Town Deal. It is anticipated that the BID will be a stakeholder in both initiatives. The Council is an active partner in the development of both initiatives and further details are referenced under the Background Papers.
16. Given the above, it is proposed that the Council supports the continuation of the BID over the five years to March 2025, with the vote being delegated to the Corporate Director for Place in consultation with the Chairman of this Committee.

Other Options Considered

17. The Council may choose not to support the BID's renewal and withdraw from the Board and the influencing of its activities. However, as the ambitions of the BID align with those of the Council Plan and the Place Departmental Strategy, this option was discounted. Regardless of how the Council votes, the additional levy will still have to be paid by the Council if the outcome of the vote is the renewal of the BID.

Reasons for Recommendation

18. If the BID continues, there is an opportunity for them to work with the Council and its officers, and other partners to assist with each other's activities.
19. If the BID is not voted in, the Council and other partners have limited resources to deliver services currently provided by them.

Statutory and Policy Implications

20. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Implications for Sustainability and the Environment

21. The BID works to support a sustainable future for the town centre and a cleaner, healthier and more attractive environment.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that Policy Committee:

- 1) supports the renewal of the Mansfield Business Improvement District for a further five-year term

- 2) Delegates the authorisation of the Council's vote to be facilitated by the Corporate Director for Place in consultation with the Chairman of this Committee.

COUNCILLOR MRS KAY CUTTS MBE
Leader of the County Council

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Constitutional Comments (KK - 13/09/2019)

22. The proposals in the report are within the remit of the Policy Committee

Financial Comments (RWK 19/09/2019)

23. If the renewal of the Mansfield BID is approved the cost to the County Council of the additional levy is estimated at £1,740 per annum. As the BID has been in operation for a number of years existing budget provision is available to meet these costs.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- Future High Streets Fund - <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/multi-million-fund-to-revitalise-country-s-high-streets>
- Towns Fund - <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/100-places-to-benefit-from-new-towns-fund>

Electoral Divisions

- All Mansfield Divisions