

Renewal of Camberley town centre Business Improvement District

Summary: The Camberley town centre Business Improvement District (BID) was established in 2011 and is operated by Collectively Camberley. The BID, approaching the end of its initial five year period of office, is asking the Camberley business community to vote for a further five year term of operation. This report, setting out the recommendation from the Camberley Town Centre Future Working Group, gives the Council the opportunity to cast its vote.

Portfolio: Leader

Date Portfolio Holder signed off report: 23 May 2016

Wards Affected: All, but St. Michael's and Town in particular

Recommendation

The Executive is advised to RESOLVE to accept the recommendation of the Camberley Town Centre Future Management Working Group and vote 'Yes' to support a further five years of the Camberley Business Improvement District.

1. Resource Implications

- 1.1 The Council's liability to the Business Improvement District (BID) is based on a 1.5% levy of the total Rateable Value of its property within the BID area. For 2016 this amount is £10,086.29. Amounts vary year on year depending on the size of the Council's property portfolio.
- 1.2 The Council has a non-pecuniary position on the Collectively Camberley board; currently held by Councillor Richard Brooks, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance.
- 1.3 In addition, the Council administers the billing and collection of BID levies, for which the authority receives £5,000 per annum.
- 1.4 Additional officer support is provided by the Media and Marketing, Greenspace and Economic Development teams on a project by project basis.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 The Council has established the Camberley Town Centre Future Management Working Group (Working Group) to consider and make recommendations to the Executive regarding proposals for a second period of operation of a Business Improvement District (BID) in the town.
- 2.2 Collectively Camberley will ballot the business community in Camberley between June and July 2016 requesting support for its business plan to deliver projects and events for a renewed period. The vote is by postal ballot carried out by Electoral Reform Services.

- 2.3 Should the business community vote in favour of renewal of the existing arrangements the BID will continue from October 2016. Should the vote go against the decision to continue the BID will cease operating from that month.
- 2.4 As one of the businesses in the town centre and in the BID area, the Council has the opportunity to cast votes relating to the properties for which it has the responsibility for National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR) payments.
- 2.5 In the Camberley BID area there are 396 votes to be cast. In order for the BID to be re-elected a majority of those voting by number, and a majority of those voting by rateable value, need to be in favour.
- 2.6 The terms of reference for the Working Group set an objective to review the benefits of the BID since its inception in 2011 and recommend to the Executive whether the Council's decision should be to support or not support a further five year period.
- 2.7 The BID published three documents in the spring of 2016; summarising achievements against priorities; reporting the results of a recent survey of BID levy payers; and, outlining additional priorities for the next five year period.
- 2.8 The Working Group had previously given its comments to the BID on the information it suggested should be included in the documents. The papers published by the BID reflected these conversations, along with those from the wider business community, in setting out the BID's priorities for the next period should it be successful in gaining a second term of office.

3. Options

- 3.1 The Council can vote 'Yes' to support the BID re-election, or 'No' to not support. The recommendation of the Working Group is that the Council votes 'Yes'.

4. Proposals

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Council votes 'Yes' to support a further term of the BID, in accordance with the recommendation of the Working Group.

5. Supporting Information

- 5.1 To date, nine out of ten BID renewals nationally have been successful, and a number of local proposals for BIDS are currently under consideration including Aldershot and Farnborough/North Camp.
- 5.1 There are 396 different businesses in the BID area, amounting to £198 million of rateable value, each contributing a 1.5% annual levy. This has resulted in an extra £1.5 million being invested in Camberley town centre over the 5 year period of the BID.
- 5.2 The BID is coming to the end of its first 5 year period and a renewal is being sought. To be renewed, the BID needs the support of over 50 % of businesses in the BID area, both in terms of numbers and rateable value.

- 5.3 As part of the renewal process the BID has surveyed its members, (gaining a 27% response level). The survey included a mix of questions in which the respondents were asked to score current projects from very important to 'need to be dropped'. The survey also asked contributors to indicate other areas that the BID should focus on.
- 5.4 The survey outcomes, indicated that none of the BID's current projects should be terminated, but that a whole range of new areas should be developed, including vacant unit improvements, improvements to the town centre environment, support for the late night economy and improved signage.
- 5.5 The respondents also indicated the need for increased income without adding to the existing levy, looking more to sponsorship, engaging with businesses on the periphery of the BID area and seeking increased voluntary contributions.
- 5.6 Of the businesses who responded, 53% had rated the BID performance as excellent, with 38% rating it as good and 9% as average. No businesses had opted for the poor or very poor options.
- 5.7 78% of respondents had indicated that they would vote in favour of renewing the BID, though a small number, typically local outlets for national retailers, were awaiting guidance from parent organisations. The BID Business Plan would be distributed on 16 May 2016, with a ballot on the future of the BID to be held between 9 June and 7 July 2016. The outcome would be announced on 8 July 2016.
- 5.8 The Working Group has highlighted to Collectively Camberley management improvements resulting directly from the operation of the BID, including Christmas displays, floral displays and events in Park Street and High Street and also noted the following:
- Signage – The need for improved signage to the Atrium had been highlighted by both Working Group members and responding businesses;
 - Christmas Lights – The quality had not been of an acceptable standard. A new supplier would be engaged for future years;
 - Environmental Improvements – It was anticipated that the refurbishment planned for The Mall would start to address the need identified for environmental improvements.
 - Engaging Organisations outside of the BID area – Whilst legislation did not permit giving any rights to organisations lying outside the BID area, it was suggested that the BID explore with companies such as Bank of America, Siemens, Eli Lilly, Novartis and the Business Parks, projects which could benefit the wider area;
 - Pembroke Broadway – Improvements were already planned for the transport hub on Pembroke Broadway.

6 Corporate Objectives And Key Priorities

- 6.1 The BID aligns with the Council's key priority of delivering an improved Camberley town centre.
- 6.2 The BID also supports the Council's objective relating to encouraging economic development in the Borough.

7 Policy Framework

- 7.1 The Local Government Act, which received Royal Assent in 2003, introduced Business Improvement Districts to the UK.
- 7.2 Essentially a BID is an arrangement whereby businesses get together, decide what improvements they want to make in their town centre, how they will manage these and what it will cost them. A business plan is then drawn up which is voted upon by those who would have to pay a levy. A BID lasts for a maximum of five years and needs to be able to demonstrate the businesses that have supported it.

8 Legal Issues

- 8.1 There are no legal issues.

9 Governance

- 9.1 The Camberley BID is delivered through a limited company, the Camberley Town Centre BID Company, known as Collectively Camberley, with a Board of Directors drawn from organisations supporting the BID.

10 Risk Management

- 10.1 There is no direct risk to the Council, the Collectively Camberley board meets regularly to oversee projects and manage activities. The BID has actively marketed the town centre over the past five years.

11 Consultation

- 11.1 The BID has carried out consultation with the Camberley business community in developing the documentation supporting its application for re-election.

12 PR And Marketing

- 12.1 The BID has extensively marketed the benefits of Camberley town centre over the five years of its duration; and has similar plans to carry this on should it be re-elected.

13 Officer Comments

- 13.1 The Camberley BID continues to deliver a number of high profile, high quality events to help promote Camberley town centre. Events such as the annual classic car show have proven to be hugely popular and significantly swells the number of shoppers and visitors in to the town when it is hosted, helping to promote the town across the region and boost trade for local companies.

Annexes	None
Background Papers	None
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Consultations, Implications and Issues Addressed

Resources	Required	Consulted
Revenue	✓	12/5/16
Capital		
Human Resources		
Asset Management		
IT		
Other Issues	Required	Consulted
Corporate Objectives & Key Priorities	✓	12/5/16
Policy Framework		
Legal	✓	12/5/16
Governance		
Sustainability		
Risk Management		
Equalities Impact Assessment		
Community Safety		
Human Rights		
Consultation		
P R & Marketing	✓	12/5/16

Review Date:

Version: