



Item: 8

CAMBRIDGE BID (BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT) THIRD TERM BALLOT

To:

Councillor Alice Gilderdale, Executive Councillor for Recovery,
Employment and Community Safety
Strategy and Resources Committee

11/07/2022

Report by:

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Wards affected:

Market, Petersfield and Newnham

Key Decision

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 Cambridge BID's (Business Improvement District) second consecutive five-year term concludes on 31st March 2023.
- 1.2 Cambridge BID is seeking a third five-year term, to run from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2028, which will be determined by a legally required ballot of non-domestic rate payers within the BID area, to take place between 14th October and 10th November 2022.

- 1.3 The third term ballot will be based on a proposed set of levy rules, which will apply to all non-domestic rate payers within the Cambridge BID area; and a five-year business plan, which will outline the key workstream activities the BID will invest the levy income in over its third term period.
- 1.4 The Council, as a non-domestic ratepayer, in respect of a number of Council owned properties within the BID area, will be liable for a proposed BID levy charge of c£300k over the third term period. The Council's charge represents c5% of the expected total levy income of c£6.5 million, which Cambridge BID will be raising via the levy over the third term period.
- 1.5 This paper outlines what Cambridge BID has achieved in its second term, and what it's seeking to achieve from its proposed third term.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended:

2.1 To exercise the Council's voting entitlement in the forthcoming Cambridge BID third term ballot.

2.2 To support Cambridge BID's third term ballot.

3. Background

- 3.1 BIDs are business led partnerships, which are created following a ballot process, in order to deliver additional services and projects to local businesses over a defined period (up to a maximum five years). BIDs are a powerful tool for directly involving local businesses in local activities and to allow the business community and local authorities to work together to improve the local trading environment.

3.2 BIDs serve a defined geographical area in which a modest levy is charged on all qualifying non-domestic ratepayers, in addition to the non-domestic rates bill. A BID can only be established, and a levy charged, following approval of proposals setting out what the BID will do, via a ballot of those businesses liable to pay the levy. This levy is used to develop services and projects which will benefit businesses in the local area. There is no limit on what services or projects can be provided through a BID. The only requirement is that it should be activities that are in addition to services provided by local authorities.

Cambridge BID achievements

3.3 Cambridge BID is a not-for-profit organisation limited by guarantee with a Board of Directors representing key business sector interests from within the city centre BID area. The Council, as a non-domestic rate payer within the area, is represented on the Board by a nominated member of the Council's Executive, which, following the Council's 2022 AGM, is the Executive Councillor for Recovery, Employment and Community Safety.

3.4 Cambridge BID was established in 2013, following a successful first term ballot; and is now coming to the end of its second consecutive five-year term, which will end 31st March 2023. Over its second term, Cambridge BID has invested a total of c£5 million (raised through the BID levy) on a valuable programme of activities to support the city centre trading environment. These have included services to support the visitor experience, such as the City Ambassadors and Taxi Marshals; and events to animate and attract footfall, including the Christmas Lights and Market Square family film screenings.

3.5 Following the outbreak of the COVID pandemic in early 2020, Cambridge BID has played a key role, working closely with the Council and other key partners, to support the city's response and subsequent recovery. This has included launching a £150K Covid Business Support Grant and delivering the 2021 Cows about

Cambridge city-wide public art project. A copy of the BID's Annual Report for 2021/22 is included in appendix A.

Third term proposal

- 3.6 Cambridge BID has agreed to pursue a third five-year term to run from April 2023 to March 2028. In accordance with national legislation governing BIDs, to secure a third term, Cambridge BID must now go through a formal ballot process. The ballot will be open to non-domestic rate payers within the BID area and run from 14th October to 10th November 2022.
- 3.7 To inform the ballot, Cambridge BID has published a third term consultation plan (see appendix B), which sets out the proposed key objectives and associated targets for the third term, together with an outline of the key priority activities to achieve them. The consultation plan has been circulated to non-domestic rate payers within the BID area to obtain their feedback and so help shape the third term business plan. The business plan together with any proposed changes to the levy rules (eg. % charge rate and threshold rateable value (above which it will apply), will be published in September 2022, ahead of the ballot. Subject to a successful ballot, the proposed levy rules will apply to all non-domestic rate payers within the BID area. The third term levy is expected to deliver a total income of c£6.5 million, which Cambridge BID will invest in accordance with the third term business plan.
- 3.8 The third term business plan will build on Cambridge BID's first and second term achievements, with a focus on strengthening and sustaining the city's recovery (post pandemic) around two key objectives:
- Encouraging more residents, employees and students to make more of the city offer
 - Encouraging more visitors to extend their stay in the city and to stay overnight

3.9 Outlined below are some of the proposed new activities to form the basis of the third term business plan, listed under two new workstream themes - '*Welcome and Experience*' and '*Support and Connect*'. These are taken from the aforementioned consultation plan (see appendix B), which the BID is currently out to consultation on with non-domestic rate payers within the BID area.

Welcome and Experience

- a) Work with the Council, and other partners, to develop a Destination Management Plan for the city
- b) Develop bookable product to promote more visitors staying in the city, especially mid-week and for longer 3-4 night/ week-long stay; showcase Cambridge as a gateway to East Anglia and the coast.
- c) Deliver a second city wide art trail in spring 2024 and a third in spring 2026 or 2027, building on the huge success of the 2021 Cows about Cambridge trail
- d) Develop midweek promotions to target residents, workers and more overnight stays, including themes around Wellbeing Wednesday, spas, beauty and hair as well as food and drink.
- e) Continue to develop the Purple Flag accredited night-time economy partnership for the city
- f) Work with the Council to ensure city centre streets and open spaces are kept clean and safe and businesses are supported when dealing with issues like anti-social behaviour

Support and Connect

- a) Develop a loyalty programme for employees, residents and students (particularly based on walking and cycling)
- b) Support better digital connectivity and presentation of the city to give consumers a vibrant experience of the offer and encourage visits, stays and spend.
- c) Work with the Council and businesses on supporting environmental initiatives and objectives, including biodiversity, climate change and greening of the city centre public realm

3.9 In addition to the proposed new workstreams and associated activities, Cambridge BID is also proposing to continue to deliver its established core services over the third term period, including:

- a) Website and social media content
- b) City events and screenings
- c) Christmas Lighting display across the city
- d) City Ambassador Service, including mobile visitor information
- e) Supporting Cambridge Business Against Crime (CAMBAC)
- f) City centre performance monitoring and footfall information
- g) Love Cambridge Gift Card

4. Implications

a) Financial implications

4.1 Legally, the Council is responsible for organising and managing the BID ballot, including providing all relevant notifications, ballot papers, voting documentation and storage in line with the schedules. The cost to the Council of holding the third term ballot is likely to be c£4k and will be found from within the existing budget.

4.2 Based on the Council's rateable non-domestic properties within the BID area, the total Council levy charge for the third term period is c£300k, or 5% of the total expected levy income of c£6.5 million.

b) Staffing implications

4.3 There is currently one Council employee working on secondment for Cambridge BID. Subject to a successful third term ballot, Cambridge BID has confirmed, in principle, its intentions to formally take on this individual staff member's contractual employment with their permission. Should the third term ballot be unsuccessful, the individual staff member's secondment to the BID will formally end and their situation managed in accordance with the Council's Organisational Change Policy.

c) Equality and poverty implications

4.4 Given Cambridge BID's proposed third term strategic focus on continuing to strengthen and sustain the city's economic recovery, the proposed third term business plan has been assessed as having a net positive equality and poverty impact.

d) Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental Implications

4.5 Given Cambridge BID's proposed third term commitment to work with the Council and other partners to develop a Destination Management Plan for the city, focused on encouraging longer stay visits; and, also to work with the Council and businesses on supporting environmental initiatives and objectives, including biodiversity, climate change and greening of the public realm, the proposed third term business plan has been assessed as having a net low positive carbon, climate change and environmental impact.

e) Procurement Implications

4.6 There are no procurement implications.

f) Community Safety Implications

4.7 Given Cambridge BID's third term commitment to continue to develop the Purple Flag accredited night-time economy partnership and to ensure city centre streets and open spaces are kept clean and safe and businesses are supported when dealing with issues like anti-social behaviour, the implications of the proposed third term business plan has been assessed as having a net positive community safety impact.

5. Consultation and communication considerations

5.1 To inform the proposed third term business plan, the BID has undertaken significant primary research, including a city centre business and visitor survey; and, since March 2022, a series of face-to-face consultation workshops.

5.2 The consultation undertaken to date and proposed third term ballot process, to be undertaken between now and the end of the ballot on 10th November 2022, is in accordance with the BID's legal requirements.

6. Background papers

None

7. Appendices

Appendix A: Cambridge BID Annual Report 2021/22

Appendix B: Cambridge BID third term consultation plan

8. Inspection of papers

Should you have any queries on the report, please contact:

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