

COBHAM

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Hello and welcome to the first edition of your Cobham BID News, where we will be answering your questions and keeping you updated as Cobham works together to become a Business Improvement District (BID). This is an exciting new project initiated by the Cobham Chamber of Commerce.

A Business Improvement District (BID) is an exciting way to help businesses take control of and improve their trading environment. If you are a business within the defined BID area (see map) you have a great opportunity to identify the projects, you want to implement that will make a positive change to your business and your place.

In order to remain competitive we need to collaborate and work together to invest in our destination. This will allow us to better manage and market our location, attracting more shoppers and visitors and in the long term, businesses wanting to invest. With 2020/21 having proven, perhaps one of the most challenging times for the retail and visitor economy, it is even more important than ever to come together and make sure we are at the forefront of recovery and growth efforts.

Please take the time to read this fact sheet as a BID in Cobham could make a real difference to your business. Over the coming months the BID organisers (a collection of local businesses) will be meeting with you all to find out what is important to you and how we can work together to ensure local businesses and therefore our destination thrives.



COBHAM BID AREA



WHAT IS A BID?

An arrangement whereby businesses get together, decide what improvements they want to make in their destination, how they will manage these and what it will cost them. This all goes into a business plan which is voted on by all those who would have to pay. The BID lasts for a maximum of five years and must be able to demonstrate how it benefits the businesses that have funded it.

Let us know what you think!

Please go to our website

www.cobhambid.co.uk

to complete our online survey.

QUESTIONS?

Contact the Cobham BID Project Manager, Sue McGeown on **07766 915111** or email **sue@themosaicpartnership.co.uk**. Please visit our website for more information **www.cobhambid.co.uk**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Have BIDs been supported elsewhere in the UK?

Since 2004 when this legislation was introduced, there have been over 300 BIDs developed in the UK, which over the next 5 years will bring in over £100 million of new finance to develop their locations. The nearest ones to here are Walton, Guildford, Dorking, Oxted & Caterham.

What might a BID deliver?

It's up to you. BIDs can deliver any projects or services that are agreed by the businesses in the BID area and that are over and above anything that the Public Sector provides through your business rates. In most cases they include marketing and promotional activities, improving access and facilities, welcome and safety measures, attracting new businesses and investment, reducing costs and enhancing the visitor experience. The important thing is that the BID is focused on delivering the operational and other projects as determined by detailed consultation with all businesses in the BID area.

Why do businesses support BIDs?

A BID is a mechanism which allows businesses to raise a sum of money to manage and deliver projects that they have identified and believe will improve their trading environment, ultimately increasing trade for those businesses who are paying for the improvements.

How is a BID monitored?

Like any good business plan, specific key performance indicators (KPI's) are set and performance is monitored against the KPI's by the BID board. The BID Company is answerable to the businesses that pay the BID levy, and will be required to monitor and inform its members on its progress towards the agreed KPI's.

How will the BID be managed?

BIDs are normally controlled and managed by local businesses that are paying the levy, currently the majority of successful BIDs are delivered through a Company Limited by Guarantee (not for profit). The BID Company would be responsible for the delivery of the BID projects and services and directly responsible to all businesses through a board elected from those businesses that pay the BID levy.

Who can develop a BID?

A BID can be proposed by any business ratepayer, property owner, local authority or a partnership with an interest in the BID Area.

Who pays for a BID?

Once projects and services have been agreed by businesses along with how they are going to be delivered and managed, they are costed up and set out in a detailed business plan. The cost to each business is worked out on a pro rata basis. 'This is called the 'BID LEVY'. An independent and formal vote then takes place on the agreed projects and services and if the majority vote YES then ALL within the BID area HAVE to pay. The BID levy is normally paid by the occupiers of a property. In addition, BIDs can draw in other voluntary funding, grants and 'in kind' contributions to supplement the BID levy.

How does an area become a BID?

Normally a 'BID Task Group' is set up which is responsible for putting together a detailed business plan setting out the projects it aims to deliver on behalf of the businesses in the BID area. This is based on a detailed consultation process with businesses. The business plan will include the projects, cost, delivery guarantees, performance indicators and the management structure. A confidential postal vote is held, all the businesses that would pay the BID levy get a vote. To become a BID a majority of those that vote must be in favour by number and rateable value. A successful BID then has a mandate for a maximum of 5 years after which the BID would need to seek a re-ballot. The indicative timetable for developing the Cobham BID is set out below:

Mar - May 2022 | Business Consultation & Engagement

Jul 2022 | Business Plan

Sept 2022 | Campaign

Oct 2022 | BID Ballot

Does this mean the local authority will stop delivering services?

BID money can only be used to carry out projects/ services ADDITIONAL to those that public services have to provide. Prior to the BID Business Plan being produced the current services being delivered by all public agencies including the Local Authority and Police are benchmarked. This means the Local Authority has to continue to deliver that level of service for the period of the BID. The BID company can agree to provide additional resources to deliver a higher level of service over and above the benchmarked level if this is what businesses have identified.