

A PROPOSAL TO DELIVER A BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT FOR MORECAMBE TOWN CENTRE

Background

Lancaster District Chamber of Commerce would like to apply to Lancaster City Council for consideration of establishing a Business Improvement District (BID) for Morecambe town centre and believes £40,000 is available to fund the campaign and balloting arrangements. The preferred start date for the BID is July 2016.

This proposal is to undertake all activity associated with the development of the proposed BID and the subsequent management arrangements post ballot if the vote is YES.

Guiding Principles

The BID will operate in a clearly defined area of the town centre and will deliver a programme of investment and marketing activity financed by a levy on the rateable value of properties in the BID area.

The Morecambe BID will be:

- Dedicated to improving the interests of business ratepayers in the BID area.
- Delivering a range of projects and services that provide added value to activity provided by Lancaster City Council, Morecambe Town Council, Lancashire County Council, and Lancashire Constabulary.
- Representative of business ratepayers in the BID area.
- Will look at attracting funding in addition to the BID levy.
- Accountable by publishing annual accounts and holding annual general meetings.
- Owned, managed, and financed by business ratepayers in the BID area.

It is important to appreciate that:

- BID projects and services are determined through consultation with the business ratepayers.
- The BID must be seen to provide added value to existing city council and town council activity and not simply be used to replace what is already being delivered.
- The BID will fail if the levy is seen to be used to meet shortfalls in the city or town council's budgets.
- The "type of body" providing the BID services must operate independently from Lancaster City Council, Morecambe Town Council, Lancashire County Council, and Lancashire Constabulary.

Experience

The initial preparatory work, consultation activity and project development will be undertaken by Lancaster District Chamber of Commerce, Trade and Industry and North and Western Lancashire Chamber of Commerce. Both Chambers are "not-for-profit" companies limited by guarantee.

Lancaster District Chamber has extensive experience in working with businesses and is fully aware of the issues facing the area. The Chamber is affiliated to North and Western Lancashire Chamber of Commerce.

North and Western Lancashire Chamber of Commerce have extensive experience in city centre management. The Chamber assumed responsibility for the Preston City Centre Management Company in 2006 and subsequently managed the successful campaign to deliver a BID for Preston city centre in 2009.

North and Western Lancashire Chamber is the accountable body for the Preston BID and provides or manages the works and services that are being delivered. The BID levy of 1% raises approximately £430,000 per year from over 720 business levy payers in the city centre. It has also been successful in securing a YES vote for Southport – which is a large BID both by number of hereditaments (910) and area. It concentrates on four main industry sectors: retail; accommodation; hospitality; and attraction that collectively make up about 80% of the businesses that operate in the BID area. The total levy “take” (based on 1.5% levy and a £2000 minimum threshold) will generate around £2.5 million over the five year period.

Key projects are events, promotion, town-wide free Wi Fi, shop and pub watch, and visual improvements (including complete modernisation of the town’s Christmas lights). The campaign lasted 12 months and was the third attempt at getting a BID for the town (the first two failed at ballot largely because they were perceived as being local authority led).

Together both Lancaster District Chamber of Commerce and North & Western Lancashire Chamber of Commerce successfully achieved a YES vote for a Lancaster BID in November 2012. The BID for Lancaster City Centre commenced in April 2013 and has just completed its first successful year.

The accountable body for Lancaster BID is North & Western Lancashire Chamber of Commerce and the BID Manager and support staff are housed and supported by the Lancaster District Chamber of Commerce office. Both the Chair and Vice Chair of the Lancaster Unlimited BID management committee are also non-Executive Directors of the Lancaster District Chamber of Commerce. The BID levy of 1.5% for Lancaster city centre raises £228,000 per year from over 360 business levy payers in the city centre. This money is used to deliver the following successes for Lancaster city centre:

- **Promoting OUR City**
 - The BID has brought together the unique artistic heritage, retail sector and the historic assets of city centre to provide a promotional strategy to raise awareness of Lancaster City Centre and the businesses that operate within it. To date this has included:
 - The national distribution of over 30,000 copies of the publication ‘Lancaster a City for all Seasons’
 - A vibrant, active online community including over 664 Twitter followers, 3.6k likes on the Lancaster – A city for all seasons Facebook page and a dedicated Lancaster City Centre BID website – www.lancasterunlimited.org.uk
 - Monthly newsletters online and hardcopy distributed to all levy payers informing them of BID activities and City Centre events.
 - Holding bi monthly meetings open to all levy payers, a chance to find out more about Lancaster BID, current activities, recent achievements and a chance to feedback and ask the management team questions.

Improving OUR City

- The BID is creating a more pleasant, cleaner and safer city centre. The BID team are currently working on improving traffic management, way finding and cleaner streets. A campaign to target 'grot spots' has commenced with the Sun Square (photo below)



- **Special Projects**

- The Lancaster BID not only supports and enhances existing festivals activities and events but has put on a host of events, activities and festivals that wouldn't have been possible without the levy. These include:
 - Light Up Lancaster
 - Lancaster Music Festival
 - Christmas in the City incl. The 'Christmas Lights Switch On' (30,000 visitors)
 - Laugh Out Lancaster (LOL) www.laughoutlancaster.co.uk
 - Street Theatre in the City
 - Comedy Acts in the City
 - Armed Forces Day
 - Lancaster's Great Outdoors weekend celebration 'Family Fun in the City'
 - Incl. Easter Festival with Churches Together
 - Egg Hunt at the Maritime Museum
 - Activities at Lancaster Castle
- The BID team and Lancaster District Chamber of Commerce secured the continued free parking on Bank Holidays in Lancaster City Centre.

- **Dedicated BID Manager**

- Lancaster Unlimited appointed Suzi Bunting as BID Manager back in July 2013 and along with the Management Committee Members has been instrumental in delivering the business plan. The BID Manager work's and acts on behalf of the businesses in the BID zone and with clout, responsibility and a budget delivers the things that those businesses want doing.

The Proposal

Lancaster District Chamber of Commerce and North and Western Lancashire Chamber of Commerce will undertake all preparatory work associated with the development of the Morecambe BID up to and including the ballot.

The proposal will deliver the following activity:

- Undertake business surveys (questionnaires, focus groups, interviews) to identify the key priorities and potential projects and services to be delivered by the BID
- Coordinate the establishing of a BID Steering Group
- Identify a proposed BID area and recommend a levy charge
- Prepare a draft BID Business and Financial Plan incorporating initial project ideas, costs, and governance arrangements
- Undertake full consultation with business ratepayers and key stakeholders on the BID Business and Financial Plan
- Determine the baseline Service Level Agreements with Lancaster City Council, Morecambe Town Council, Lancashire County Council, and Lancashire Constabulary
- Establish and maintain a database of BID levy ratepayers
- Undertake an extensive communications plan including canvassing of BID levy payers, media activity, and presentations to stakeholder groups
- Undertake all balloting and formal notification arrangements
- Manage the pre BID start up arrangements if vote is Yes
- Attend briefings and meetings as requested by Lancaster City Council

The BID proposer

The BID proposer will be Lancaster District Chamber of Commerce, Trade and Industry

With support from North & Western Lancashire Chamber of Commerce, Morecambe & District Chamber of Trade, Morecambe Town Team, the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), British BID's and ATCM. Our media partners include Lancaster & Morecambe Newspapers and The Bay Radio.

Governance arrangements post ballot

The BID regulations do not require BIDs to take on a particular organisational structure. They do, however, require the BID proposal to indicate the “type of body” which will be providing the BID services.

BID services cannot be delivered, managed, or controlled by Lancaster City Council although the “type of body” providing the BID services may sub-contract delivery (managed by Service Level Agreements) to the City Council.

Lancaster District Chamber of Commerce, Trade and Industry will be the accountable body for the BID and will manage the works and services to be delivered.

The BID will be managed by a Steering Group of businesses and other stakeholders operating in the BID area who will meet on a monthly basis to oversee and monitor the delivery of projects and other BID objectives.

Budget (BID development work only)

Staff time	£26,000
Marketing materials	£6,000
Ballot costs	£3,000
Other costs (postage, telephone, travel)	£2,000
Training	£1,000
British BID's Membership	£500
Contingency	£1,500
Total	£40,000

Timetable

The assumed start date for the BID of July 2016 would require a ballot date of end March 2016. The intervening months between the ballot and start date would be used to develop the procedures, projects and monitoring controls for the BID.

At least 12 months would be required to develop the BID campaign and undertake canvassing and consultation. This would necessitate a start date in March 2015.

BID development work / campaigning to begin	September 2014
BID ballot date	end March 2016
BID commencement date	1st July 2016

Contact

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