

Watford Business Improvement District Business Proposal (BID)

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1. What is a Business Improvement District (BID)

A BID is a defined geographical area of a town, city, or commercial district where National Non Domestic rates (NNDR) business ratepayers are invited to vote to invest collectively in local improvements that are additional to those currently provided by the Council and other statutory bodies.

Business ratepayers are asked to vote on agreeing and paying an additional levy to their rates bill that, if supported, will be collected by the Council, and retained in a ring-fenced account and then used to finance the delivery of projects, services and activities detailed in the Business Plan.

2. The benefits of a BID for Watford Town centre

A BID will give businesses the opportunity to decide what happens in the BID area and to influence key stakeholders such as the Council as to what they want to see happen in the BID area. By acting together business in the town will have a stronger voice. While there will be a small levy to

pay, it is the businesses who will decide where the money is invested and how it is invested over five years of the BID. It will also mean that by buying in certain activities collectively businesses may get more for their money.

A BID will not replace existing statutory services (those services the Council and other agencies such as the Police are legally obliged to provide), although these agencies will be under increasing pressure to reduce spend on activities they are not legally obliged to provide. The town and its businesses need to be well placed to face the changes that occur as economic circumstances change. A BID will provide the town and businesses with stability and a chance to shape the future of Watford town centre.

3. The BID Proposer

The 'BID Proposer' for the Watford town centre Business Improvement District is the Watford Town Centre Partnership (TCP). The Watford TCP is an informal partnership comprising of representatives from businesses and organisations based in the town. The TCP is wholly independent of the Council, although it is supported by the Council.

The TCP seeks to facilitate and encourage investment in the town while also building on the opportunities provided by the ongoing developments within the town.

The TCP has a vision, objectives and governance arrangements. It meets every two months.

4. BID management

Subject to a successful vote, the Watford town centre BID will be managed by a newly created Watford BID Company, which will have its own legal identity, corporate structure and accounts.

If a BID ballot is successful the Watford BID company will commence operation from 1 April 2016, and be in operation for an initial 5 year period. From the 1 April 2016 the Watford Town Centre Partnership will cease to operate and any remaining budgets will be transferred to the Watford town centre BID company. These will be shown within the final business plan budgets as 'extra income'.

The Watford Town Centre Partnership (TCP) currently has a Board. It is anticipated there will be some continuity between the TCP Board and BID Board if the ballot is successful.

The TCP Board comprises representatives from the following:

- Large retailer
- Shopping Centre
- Small/independent retailer
- Night time economy
- Leisure
- Culture & Arts
- Finance & professional services
- Public sector
- Mayor
- Pubs/restaurants
- Skills & business development

The BID Board will have a nomination and election process to ensure transparency and accountability. The role of the Board will be:

- To act as the main focal point for all those involved in the BID partnership.
- To support all key stakeholders involved in the BID partnership.
- To develop new ideas for projects and to co-ordinate and oversee project implementation.

- To oversee the BID budget and ensure it is managed effectively.

Agreements will be put in place outlining what decisions will be reserved for the Board, delegated to the executive team or require handling at a member level. A company secretary will be appointed to ensure compliance with company law.

The BID company will be limited by guarantee and as of April 2016 the structure of the company will be Not for Profit limited by guarantee.

5. Statement of works proposed

Vision

For Watford to be the region's premier centre for retail, leisure and business, where everyone enjoys spending time in a well maintained town centre with a variety of offerings, and where businesses are thriving.

The objectives of the Watford BID, as defined by the businesses and the TCP are to:

- Raise awareness of the town's wide offer – retail, business, food & drink, entertainment and leisure.
- Improve perceptions of the town centre
- Encourage greater footfall & retention of existing users during Charter Place redevelopment
- Make the overall visitor experience even better
- Ensuring our businesses prosper

The Watford town centre BID do this by delivering projects and activities against three key theme areas:

- **Promotion, marketing & events** - improving perceptions & raising awareness of the town; developing a comprehensive communications and marketing strategy supported by relevant branding, campaigns and activities. Supporting and enhancing existing events and developing new, relevant events.
- **Enhancing the look and feel of the town centre** – additional deep cleaning of streets; improving the environment of the town centre; enhancing pedestrian routes and access to and from car parks; improving coach facilities and working with car park operators to meet the aspirations of the town its businesses and customers. Supporting the early evening and night time economy and maintaining reputation of town as a welcoming and safe place to spend time and do business.
- **Working together to secure the future of the town** – building on opportunities and developments ensuring the town is future proofed; working in partnership with the public sector and other organisations and agencies to develop the aspirations of the town; developing and assisting social and community enterprise and entrepreneurship; provision of an information hub for the town centre; supporting business and skills development in the town; managing vacant units and information; supporting the town with the development of new technologies; benchmarking and maintaining the quality of the town centre.

Further details are outlined in the draft Business Plan (Attachment 3)

6. A statement of baseline services

Much is already being achieved through the activities and resources of Watford Borough Council, Herts County Council and Hertfordshire Constabulary. For the purpose of this BID, the services provided by Herts County Council are excluded from the resourcing baseline. These will be monitored and managed through the on-going relationship with Watford Borough Council. It should be noted that not all resources are listed, there are some activities that may be delivered as part of

on-going partnership agreements with other agencies, these will be monitored as part of the on-going partnership arrangements.

To ensure BID resources are directed towards delivering real added value, a Partnership and Services Agreements have been prepared to secure the ongoing commitment of Watford Borough Council and define a baseline service specification and performance monitoring arrangements. Watford BID will not only be committed to monitoring these baseline standards, but also to pursuing higher standards where possible.

The agreements will, in practice, provide an essential input into the annual BID business planning process. The baseline services cover the following categories:

- CCTV
- Footfall counters
- Street cleansing & maintenance of street furniture
- Christmas lights
- Hanging baskets
- Town Centre Events
- Compliance Services

Watford Borough Council provides other services, which, while not possible to baseline for their specific impact on the BID area, will have significant implications for existing and future investment in the area. The agreement seeks to promote effective engagement and dialogue between Watford BID and Watford Borough Council on matters of mutual interest.

Copies of the Service Level agreements can be found at Attachment 1

7. The proposed BID area

The streets included are:

List of Streets in BID Area:

- Albert Road South
- Cambridge Road
- Carey Place
- Charter Place
- Church Street
- Crown Passage
- Clarendon Road (Numbers: 1-35 & 2-24)
- Escort Road (only Sutton Car park)
- Exchange Road (East side of road, including: the British Telecom Exchange buildings, Church Car Park, and Wren House (numbers 15-23)
- Gaumont Approach
- George Street
- Granville Road
- Halsey Road
- Hempstead Road (up to and including the Leisure Centre & Avenue Car Park)
- High Street (down to numbers: 165 & 174)
- King Street
- Market Street (from the High Street to numbers: 24 and 25)
- New Street

- Peace Prospect
- Peace Drive (The Peace Hospice and Prospect House)
- Queens Road (Numbers: 1-19A)
- Rickmansworth Road (Numbers 1-5 and up to Peace Drive)
- Rosslyn Road (Numbers: 13-27, plus Gade Car Park and Halsey House)
- Smith Street
- St Mary's View
- St Mary's Close
- St Mary's Churchyard
- The Cloisters
- The Crescent
- The Parade including Rigby House
- Upton Road (Numbers: 14-20)
- Watford House Lane
- Water Lane (the section west of Beechen Grove)
- Wellstones
- Wilmington Close
- Meeting Alley

Map of the BID area: Attachment 2

8. Statement of who is within the BID area and how the BID levy is calculated

Any NNDR business rate payer for a hereditament will be liable to pay the levy in respect of that hereditament if at time on the Chargeable Day the hereditament is in the BID area and is on the Rating List. If a hereditament becomes empty, the liability for the BID Levy will fall on the organisation or person entitled to possession on the relevant day, or the administrator for any business that has ceased trading. For this purpose 'entitled to possession' shall have the same meaning as under section 65 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988. It is compulsory to pay the BID levy if a yes vote is secured, regardless of whether or not you voted in the ballot, or how you cast your vote.

The levy rate is set against the rateable value of a property or hereditament.

- The BID levy rate is set locally at 1.25% of the rateable value for each property as at 1 April 2016. The levy will be a fixed charge per annum for the initial 5 year period, but based on the rateable value (RV) as at the 1 April for each subsequent year, for all businesses within the BID area excluding those businesses within the intu shopping centre who already pay a service charge. Those businesses in the intu shopping centre who are paying an annual service charge will receive a discount of 0.25% on the headline levy rate, meaning the levy payable by those businesses is 1% plus the annual inflation rate of 2% from year 2.
- The Watford BID area includes 533 hereditaments with a rateable value of £10,000 and over.

Their combined rateable value (RV) is a calculation based on the existing RV survey information. The combined rateable value is £44,502,000. This should raise £572,588 per annum or £2,907,236

over the 5 years of the Watford BID. This is based on a levy rate of 1.25% being applied to the core area and Charter Place and 1% being applied to the intu retail businesses who pay service charges to intu, and a 2% inflation rate being applied from year 2 to all hereditaments.

It is anticipated that some properties will be de-rated during the redevelopment of Charter Place, but once completed the redevelopment should see an increase in hereditaments, therefore the annual income level for 2 years of the BID (yrs 2 & 3) have been reduced accordingly to take this into account.

None of the pre-ballot BID development work or ballot costs will be recovered through the BID levy, but Watford Borough Council will make charges for setting up the collection of the BID levy on behalf of the Watford BID, this involves setting up the template and other works related to the pre-collection works.

The Watford BID will not be limited to income derived from the BID levy and can expect to raise further funds from:

- Voluntary contributions
- Grants
- Sponsorship and advertising revenue
- Other extra income

The BID levy is calculated for each hereditament for each Chargeable Day as follows:

Amount payable by the hereditament = $0.0125 \times$ Listed Rateable Value as at 1 April each year (excluding those businesses listed within the intu centre) plus 2% inflation rate from year 2.

For those businesses listed within the intu centre the Amount payable by the hereditament = $0.01 \times$ Listed Rateable Value as at 1 April each year) plus 2% inflation rate from year 2.

Costs associated with going for a BID: The Town Centre Partnership successfully applied for a BID loan from the DCLG if the ballot is successful the TCP will be required to repay a total of £52,113.81 by 1 May 2016. This repayment is reflected in the Business Plan budgets. The TCP also manages the Innovation Fund budget and Watford For You marketing budget.

There are costs associated with purchasing software, licence costs, setting up templates and bills and accounts within the BID areas on the system – these are estimated to be in the region of £10,000.

These initial costs will be met by the Watford Town Centre BID.

If the BID is unsuccessful the loan will not have to be repaid.

9. A statement of any relief (threshold, discounts etc)

The BID levy will be applied annually from 1 April 2016 to all NNDR business ratepayers within the defined area of the Watford town centre BID with a rateable value of £10,000, before any discounts or exemptions have been applied to the individual account and above with no exceptions.

In other words charitable organisations who receive 80% mandatory discounts and in some cases an additional 20% discretionary rate relief, meaning they no NNDR liability, will still be required to pay the levy if the original RV, before discounts is £10,000 or greater per year.

In the case of an empty, partly refurbished or demolished hereditament the property owner will be liable for the BID levy, where the NNDR RV is greater than £10,000 and they will be entitled to vote. There will be no void period and every property will pay for all 365 days of the year .

The levy will be charged annually in advance for each chargeable period to be April to March each year starting in 2016. The levy will then be calculated on the RV as at 1 April each subsequent year. No refunds will be made.

Those hereditaments that are within the intu shopping centre and are subject to a service charge for services such as security and cleaning will receive a reduction of 0.25% of the levy rate payable, in other words they will pay 80% of the baseline levy.

Any rating revaluation proposed during the 5 year BID period will be ignored for the purposes of calculating the levy. Instead the rateable value due to any change of use or a physical change to a property hereditament including: new construction, merger, subdivision, extension and refurbishment which will result in the issue of a new entry (entries) in the Rating List current at the time. The Ratings List (including the 2017 list) will be examined for new entries each year prior to the issue of levy invoices.

If, during the term, the rateable value assigned to a property of hereditament falls below £10,000 for whatever reason (either through physical change, change of use, or revaluation), the property or hereditament will be exempt from the levy from the next chargeable period.

There will be no other reduction to the BID levy other than specified above.

Other associated costs with collecting the BID levy

The Council will issue an annual bill to each business, which is separate from the normal NNDR bill. The Council will endeavour to collect all outstanding amounts of the levy, using the same processes and mechanisms for collecting the usual NNDR liability. This includes charging businesses where a summons is issued and passing debts to bailiffs, for which the bailiffs will make a charge.

The recovery processes for the NNDR liability and the BID levy are separate processes. Businesses will be liable to pay two sets of costs where they are summoned for each debt. The costs that are collected by the Council are retained by the Council to meet its additional administrative costs and are not passed to the BID levy company.

10. A statement of any alteration/variation provision

The BID Board will develop projects that meet the 3 project areas, these must be appropriate to the prevailing state of the economy.

All budget headings and project costs can be altered within the constraints of the revenue received through the levy, and the BID Board will be empowered to move the funds between budgets providing the BID's aims are adhered to.

Any proposed variance to budgets and significant projects must be agreed by the Board and reported in the annual financial report and action plan.

11. A statement of the duration of the BID

If the BID is approved then it will commence operation on 1 April 2016 for a period of 5 years. At this date all occupiers of eligible properties will be required to pay the BID levy on receipt of an invoice from Watford Borough Council.

A postal ballot of business ratepayers in the BID area based on the list of non-domestic ratepayers will take place between 2 October and 29 October 2015. The result of the ballot will be published on the Watford Borough Council website and Watford BID website on 30 October 2015.

If successful in 2015, the Watford BID will seek a renewal ballot in 2021. From December 2020 the BID Board will allocate funds to manage the required consultation for the re-ballot in 2021.

12. Start date of the BID

If successful at ballot, the new BID company will commence delivery of services on 1 April 2016 and will continue for a period of 5 calendar years to 31 March 2021.

13. Details of research and consultation

Background

In late 2013 initial work was undertaken by British BIDs in the town and found there was an appetite for a Watford BID, at this point it was also established a levy of 1% could potentially generate £2.5m investment in the town centre over 5 years.

Informal conversations continued with businesses from September 2013 to March 2014 with regular newsletters and email updates being provided by the Town Centre Partnership supported by the Council's Economic Development Officer. Contacts and databases were started of businesses in the town.

The Town Centre Partnership was formed and in March 2014 the Council funded the appointment of the Town Centre Manager.

In April 2014 Loughborough University published the results of a year long study of consumer behaviour in 5 towns – Watford was one of them. In June a survey of businesses on the database in the town and the Board was undertaken to establish if the vision and objectives were appropriate for the town.

In July 2014 it was agreed Watford For You would report to the TCP Board. Senior council officers and members participated in a one day BID training workshop in the early autumn (September) and in November 2014 the first business engagement event occurred – three venues and three different times of the day, a summary of the events follows.

Overview

- Two town centre wide consultation events have now taken place: 'Shaping the Future of Watford Town Centre' (18 November 2014) and 'Find out more for plans to create A BID for Watford Town Centre' (3 March 2015)
- Two surveys of town centre businesses have been undertaken.
- Where would you spend the BID money? – Establishing priorities - money drop event (20 May 2015)

EVENT 1: Shaping the future of Watford Town Centre

Three events were held on 18 November, at different times and locations across the town centre. The aims of the events were to:

- engage with businesses in the town,

- introduce businesses to the Town Centre Partnership and Board members
- do an initial introduction to the principle of a Business Improvement District.

Format of the event

An early morning event was held at Watford Colosseum, located at the top of the town. A lunchtime event was held, with lunch provided, at a large venue in the middle of the town centre and an early evening event was held in the John Lewis restaurant at the far end of the town centre. Board members attended each event and a presentation was given to attendees, which was well received on each occasion. Stakeholders from town centre organisations attended with pop-up stands to facilitate discussions and networking.

Engagement ahead of the event

In the lead up to the day the following activities were undertaken to try and encourage businesses to attend during the day:

- Early October – an initial letter went out advising people an event would be taking place on 18 November and further details would follow.
- Mid October prior to letters being sent out some Board members visited businesses to advise them something was planned for 18 November and to expect further details.
- Mid October the invitation and details of the events were distributed to every business in the town centre by the following means: email; hand delivered letters with pre paid envelopes included; via the Intu contact list and hand delivery in the Intu.
- A reply date was included and by the closing date very few responses had been received (10) as a result, further visits by the Board Members were conducted and one to one chats were held, plus additional letters were once again distributed around town.
- The response level improved, however a number of apologies were received on the day.

Responses received:

Confirmed attendees: 95

Declined invites: 8

Unknown: 10

Actual attendees on the day: 49 (excluding board members)

EVENT 2: Watford Town Centre's plans for a BID

The aims of the event on 3rd March 2015 were to:

- Explain the BID process
- Outline the benefits a BID can bring to a town – using case studies and videos from other BID areas
- Introduce the vision, objectives and activities that the Watford BID is looking at and get feedback and other ideas from businesses

Format of the event

The event was a drop-in for businesses, held between 5pm and 8pm, with formal presentations promoted as happening from 6pm. The chair of the Board presented along with Paul Clements from British BIDs and the Town Centre Partnership team. Food and drinks were provided for all attendees. Information packs were provided to all attendees.

Engagement ahead of the event

In the lead up to the day the following activities were undertaken to try and encourage businesses to attend during the day:

- December: the event was plugged in the Town Centre Partnership newsletter, along with a summary of the November event

- January 2015: the local paper covered the Cabinet report headlining town was going for Business Improvement District
- February/March:
 - An e-flyer invitation was emailed to all businesses
 - Letter hand-delivered to all businesses (with reply slip and envelope)
 - Presentation to Pub Watch members
 - Face to face visits by Board Members (the town was divided up and given to the Board Members to contact businesses in their area)
 - Online 'Eventbrite' event registration page set up & publicised using social media: Facebook and Twitter, including individual tweets to all town centre businesses with Twitter accounts
 - Postcard invitations were left with all businesses
 - 'Don't forget' email reminders & tweets were sent
 - Positive press coverage online and in the local newspaper promoting the event.

Responses received:

Confirmed attendees: 86

Declined invites: 9

Actual attendees on the day: 24 (excluding board members)

Follow up:

All businesses that attended were emailed by the town centre partnership officer individually thanking them for attending and reminding them to complete the survey in their information pack. The Chair of the Board also personally emailed the attendees thanking them for attending and reinforcing the reasons to get behind the BID. Each Board Member visited everybody on their list that had said they intended to come, as well as those who had declined the invite, to provide an information pack.

Surveys

Overview

Attendees at the March consultation event were invited to complete and return a survey to us that was included in their information packs. It sought their views on the vision, objectives and activities that were being proposed as part of a BID. It also asked for their updated contact details and asked them to state whether or not they were principally in favour of a Watford BID.

Board members were also asked to distribute information packs to businesses on their lists that had indicated they were interested in attending the event, but that did not make it on the night, as well as to those that had taken the time to formally decline the invite.

An online version of the survey was also created and sent to all businesses on our database, and the link was shared on social media.

Headline results

- There were a total of 50 respondents, of which 10 left no name or organisation details.
- There was strong overall support for the objectives of the BID and for the themes proposed.
- Under the theme 'Marketing, Promotion & Events' a Christmas Festival was the most popular activity proposed, appealing to 93% of respondents. Other popular activities were: increased marketing (91%), improved use of technology (91%), loyalty vouchers,

specialised weeks eg Restaurant Week, Fashion Week, a summer party and Halloween events (all at 84%).

- Under the theme 'In Business Together' the most popular activities were the 'footfall counters' and 'future proofing the town' with 93% respondents saying each was either very appealing or quite appealing. Other popular activities were: supporting the development of technology (91%) and cost-saving initiatives (89%)
- Under the theme 'Enhancing the look & feel of the town' initiatives to support crime and safety appealed to all respondents. 'Deep cleaning', 'enhancing entry points to the town' and 'supporting the night time economy' were the next most popular activities, appealing to 98% of respondents.
- 43 respondents (86%) said they were in favour of the principle of a BID for Watford town centre, two respondents (4%) said they 'didn't know' and five (10%) did not answer. The organisations that have said yes they are in favour of the BID have a collective rateable value of £9.025 million. This would represent a share of the annual levy income amounting to £90,025 (at 1%) or £112, 807 (at 1.25%). This is 18% of the total annual levy¹.

Question 1

Respondents were asked to 'tick' if they supported the objectives for creating a BID. None of the respondents skipped this question.

Answer Options	Ticked 'yes'	Left Blank
Raise awareness of the town's wide offer - retail, business, food & drinks, entertainment and leisure	49	1
Improve the perception of the town	45	5
Encourage greater footfall & retention of existing users during Charter Place redevelopment	49	1
Make the overall visitor experience even better	47	3
Ensuring our businesses prosper	48	2

Question 2

Respondents were asked to 'tick' if they supported the three key themes for the BID. 47 respondents replied to this question, three skipped it.

* As a reminder, for a BID to go ahead we need 50% of the ballots returned to be in favour of the BID, and of those returned in favour, their collective rateable value needs to be greater than the collective rateable value of those that voted no.

Answer Options	Ticked 'yes'	Left Blank
Marketing, promotion and events	46	1
In Business Together	43	4
Enhancing the look & feel of the town centre	46	1

Question 3

Respondents were asked to look at a number of activities proposed under the theme ‘**Marketing, promotion and events**’ and say how appealing they were. 44 respondents replied to this question, six skipped it.

- All activities proposed except for ‘vintage tea dances’ appealed to over 50% of respondents
- A Christmas Festival was the most popular activity proposed, appealing to 93% of respondents; 55% saying it was ‘very appealing’
- Other popular activities were: Increased marketing (91%), Improved use of technology (91%), Loyalty vouchers, specialised weeks, summer party and Halloween events (all at 84%).

Answer Options	Very appealing	Quite appealing	Total who find it appealing	Not that appealing	Not at all	Total who don't find it appealing	Don't know
Christmas festival – including lights switch-on	24	17	41	3	0	3	0
Increase town centre marketing via Watford For You	26	14	40	3	0	3	1
Improve use of technology inc WIFI	29	11	40	2	1	3	0
Restaurant Week / Fashion Week / Shopping week	29	8	37	6	1	7	0
Loyalty vouchers	21	16	37	6	1	7	0
Summer Party/ live music festival	28	9	37	5	1	6	0
Halloween event: ghost train, fancy dress	11	26	37	5	1	6	1
Easter activities (tie in with Intu)	16	20	36	7	0	7	1
Watford Comedy Festival	22	14	36	7	1	8	0
Pop-up screens & live theatre	19	14	33	10	0	10	0
Big Band sounds	17	16	33	10	0	10	1
Themed decades of activities & music Victorian Fair	12	18	30	13	1	14	0
Secret cinemas	14	15	29	9	2	11	4
Black Friday activities	19	9	28	12	2	14	1
Story telling/family fun, eg giant board games	13	15	28	12	3	15	1
Shrove Tuesday Pancake Race	11	16	27	15	1	16	1
Silent disco	11	13	24	9	7	16	4
Vintage tea dances	7	13	20	16	4	20	4

Question 4

Respondents were asked to look at a number of activities proposed under the theme 'In Business Together' and say how appealing they were. 44 respondents replied to this question, six skipped it.

- The most popular activities were the 'footfall counters' and 'future proofing the town', with 41 out of 44 respondents (93%) saying each was either very appealing or quite appealing.
- Other popular activities were: supporting the development of technology (91%) and cost-saving initiatives (89%)
- The activity that held the least appeal for respondents was 'skills radar & skills development', with six businesses (14%) saying it was not appealing. However by contrast 32 businesses (73%) still said it was appealing.

Answer Options	Very appealing	Quite appealing	Total who find it appealing	Not that appealing	Not at all	Total who don't find it appealing	Don't know
Footfall counters	26	15	41	1	1	2	1
Future proofing the town	28	13	41	1	0	1	2
Supporting the development of technology	24	16	40	3	0	3	1
Cost-saving initiatives including shared recycling, energy purchasing	22	17	39	4	0	4	1
Encouraging & developing high quality apprentices	29	9	38	4	0	4	1
Managing vacant units and working with agents	30	8	38	4	1	5	0
Community engagement, social enterprise & developing entrepreneurship	26	12	38	4	0	4	1
Information hub for the town, which also acts as small business development centre	27	10	37	3	2	5	2
Welcome pack for new businesses opening in town	23	14	37	5	1	6	1
Market research & benchmarking against other towns	25	11	36	4	2	6	1
Town Centre Business week: eg managers back to shop floor,	25	10	35	7	1	8	1

recruitment fair, employee of the town awards, sports/social activities							
Business mentoring & training courses	20	15	35	6	0	6	2
Skills radar, skills development	21	11	32	8	0	8	3

Question 5

Respondents were asked to look at a number of activities proposed under the theme ‘**Enhancing the Look & Feel of the Town**’ and say how appealing they were. 44 respondents replied to this question, six skipped it.

- There was strong support for all activities proposed under this theme, with the activity ‘Supporting crime and safety initiatives’ appealing to ALL respondents.
- ‘Deep cleaning’, ‘enhancing entry points to the town’ and ‘supporting the night time economy’ were the next most popular activity, appealing to 43 out of 44 respondents (98%).
- The activity that had the least support was ‘rangers’ – but even they were ‘very appealing’ to 50% of respondents and ‘quite appealing’ to 30%.

Answer Options	Very appealing	Quite appealing	Total who find it appealing	Not that appealing	Not at all	Total who don't find it appealing	Don't know
Supporting crime & safety initiatives and improving where possible via use of technology	31	12	43	0	0	0	0
Deep clean of streets once or twice a year	35	8	43	1	0	1	0
Enhancing entry points into town centre	35	8	43	1	0	1	0
Supporting night time economy and maintaining reputation of town as a safe place to come - Purple Flag or similar	33	10	43	1	0	1	0
Enhancement of routes from car parks to town centre	32	10	42	1	0	1	0
Improving coach facilities and parking	34	5	39	5	0	5	0
Supporting organisations which work with businesses in the town such as Merchants Association, Pubwatch, ScanNet, Business Against Crime	26	13	39	4	0	4	1
Hanging baskets, floral sculptures to define BID area	26	12	38	6	0	6	0

Introduction of rangers to cover a range of duties including welcoming people to Watford, liaising with businesses and reporting issues to the relevant people	22	13	35	6	1	7	1
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Question 6

Respondents were asked whether, based on all the information they had been provided with to date, they were in favour of the principle of a BID For Watford Town Centre. 45 respondents replied to this question, five skipped it.

Yes	No	Don't know
43	0	2*

*Beaverbrooks and one un-named respondent

Organisation	Rateable value
Banana Tree Restaurants Ltd	TBC
Clements	13,300
Costa Coffee	80,500
Geezers	11,500
HCPS Training Ltd (Pitman)	13,500
Hertfordshire Library and heritage services	62,500
High and Mighty	70,000
Intu Centre (inc vacant shops on database)	3,442,750.00
Jackson Jewellers Ltd	51,500
Jimmy's Restaurants	163,000
John Lewis Partnership	1,820,000
Jury's Inn x 2	375,000
Keech Hospice Care	42,000
Marshall Vizard Estate Agents (not in BID area)	0
Nationwide	55,500
Ocean Belles Coffee Company	12,500
Oceana	609,000
Penknife International (not in BID area)	0
Pepe Rosso	21,000
Pret a Manger	71,000
Primark Stores Ltd	970,000
Proffitt & Holt	21,500
Que Pasa	79,500
Radiolux Ltd (Bang & Olufsen)	28,750
RBS - Future Williams & Glyn	64,500
Rift & Co x 2	127,000
Situls Of Watford	36,750
Subway franchisee/Sriram Abhi Ltd.	157,50
The Langley Banqueting and Conference Suites	202,000
The Moon Under Water	136,000
Toni & Guy	20,500
Travelodge	120,000
Vape Store Watford	24,000
Watford Borough Council (Town Hall only)	42,500
Watford Colosseum	50,000
YMCA	84,000
Zizzi Restaurant	103,000
Total RV:	£9,024,550
Bid levy income (1%):	£90,025
Bid levy income (1.25%):	£112,807

Additional Comments

Respondents were asked to provide any feedback, ideas or additional comment after each question and again at the end. The follow table shows each business that left comments.

- The Charter Place redevelopment is a concern and work needs to be done to ensure the town remains open for business while the construction work is underway
- Lower High Street businesses are keen to ensure that any planned events drive footfall to their end of town too
- Parking – free parking, better access to parking, improvements to car parks themselves
- Customers need to be attracted from beyond the Watford area

Organisation	
Banana Tree Restaurants Ltd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a business in a part of the Town Centre with very poor footfall, we are in favour of anything that can bring people, but as a loss making business, we are worried about the cost.
Clements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More general advertising as well as in Watford For You eg specific adverts for named shops on a rota basis. Paper based advertising as well as internet, radio, TV. etc. • Sharing information/knowledge with fellow businesses by way of forums held quarterly? • Enhancing look & feel of the town is the key area, get this right & the rest will follow • We are in favour of a BID for Watford subject to the amount it will cost and an agreement as to how the money will be spent. If the funds are not put into the 'Enhancing the look and the feel of the town' then we would not favour a BID. • We are exceedingly concerned about the impact and the disruption to trade whilst Charter Place is being refurbished. Intu will be barely affected as customers enter the centre from the main car parks. However at least one of the routes to the High Street will be blocked off and therefore many people will just not visit the High Street. This was why the original Clements failed. The flyover was built, the Harlequin opened and the public stopped walking down the High Street. • Our belief is that Watford Town Centre has an extremely bright future but the next 2 to 3 years will be critical. If the businesses survive that then Watford should be in an excellent position to flourish, something we all wish to see. The timing of the BID is therefore not good given the disruption that is about to happen.
Jackson Jewellers Ltd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues surrounding layout of new market, the volume of pound shops on The Parade & how do we entice shoppers out of Intu Centre. Would like an undercover walkway for High St when it rains • Just had the 2015/16 rates in - that would explain why there are empty shops and non quality shops in the High Street
Jimmy's Restaurants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free parking days • Job centre, job fairs, open day at businesses for applicants • More lighting on high street in the night, better lighting in and around Church car park

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watford is an appealing town and has a bright future if all activities listed here are diligently implemented • More lighting, better/cheaper parking
Ocean Belles Coffee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrianisation of the lower high street for a cafe/restaurant to have outdoor seating without cars and buses driving past
Central Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's not that I don't find many of these ideas appealing but they don't necessarily link into the library service in quite the same way, as we are not a business in the same way.
Penknife International	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free parking on poor retail days
Primark Stores Ltd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the BID goes ahead it would be a great opportunity for us all. We would also like to have extended trading hours in Watford to compete with other towns and also to make Watford a better shopping destination in particular to those living just outside Watford.
Rift & Co	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is nothing focusing on night life
Situls Of Watford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the co-owner of a small business which has been established in Watford for almost 40 years, we have seen many changes in town. Quite often the changes have helped the larger businesses, but fail to help small independents such as ours. I think the BID process will be good for all businesses big or small. The TCP and the BID gives Watford a good chance to stand out amongst other towns and cities as a safe, friendly place to shop and work. With the ever increase in rise of internet shopping, we as a business community must do all we can do to promote the town, ensuring that shoppers stay for longer, and more importantly wish to return to the town for future visits.
The Langley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking is one of the most important.
Toni & Guy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having read through the list which is quite extensive I feel all ideas are interesting and positive. • My main point would be to think of ways to encourage people from outside Watford to have access through better parking locations to service the higher end of the town.
Zizzi Restaurant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I believe all the ideas above would attract people to town. The most important for us is, are most of these events will take place on the lower high street???. The only reason we would go for BID if it assures the lower high street footfall. The biggest disappointment would be if you forget about new Met Quarter. • As I have mentioned previously, my main concern would be if the event, promotions and activities take place at the lower high street (Met Quarter).
Beaverbrooks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I was first slightly concerned when I clicked on the survey; the first question 'do you agree with these objectives?' with only positive objectives, is very biased and isn't going to give you useful data. When I showed a team member who has grown up in the local area the list of activity suggestions, a lot of these seem to have happened in Watford and Cassiobury Park in the past (like Halloween events and Summer music festivals), so it's a shame that they have stopped and need to be re-proposed. • Some ideas, like silent disco for example, are suggestions that are a little outdated and would be a tenuous link to driving footfall into and raising the profile of Watford.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What I think is really key, especially over the coming two years is managing the disruption of the Charter Place development project (so as to not affect current business' footfall and performance) and lowering Parking charges (Brent Cross' free parking makes it a preferable destination for shopping).• What I think you've highlighted that's tough to manage sustainably are empty units; without driving traffic to and the profile of Watford, any businesses that propose to fill them would not necessarily fit the Improvement brief well and enrich the offering of Watford to the public/consumer. So really it has to be about showing better businesses actions that are taking place and working following serious investment.
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Conclusions

- We can continue to progress work on the BID proposal and business plan confident that there is widespread agreement, among the engaged businesses, for what the BID is trying to do, i.e. its objectives.
- The three key themes: 'Marketing, Promotion & Events', 'In Business Together' and 'Enhancing the Look & Feel of the Town' have been widely supported and can shape the type of activities a BID would carry out. Their weighting in terms of how the BID levy income is divided by theme will be decided through our next engagement activity in May.
- In terms of the specific activities proposed under each theme, there was clear support for the majority of activities proposed. Therefore, the next step will be to select activities that were most popular, which will fit well into a calendar of activities and ensure that they are achievable within the time limits of the BID programme and what the measurable outcomes of each should be.
- The correlation between the number of businesses engaged in discussions about the BID and their propensity to vote YES is very high. Therefore considerable work needs to be carried out to engage with those businesses who are yet to get involved. Focus needs to start top down, with meetings set-up with those businesses with highest rateable values, for example M&S, BHS, Sainsburys, Iceland, Apple, Boots and Zara.
- It is also vital that those businesses with which we have already successfully engaged, remain positive about the BID and return a positive ballot paper. Their comments need to be taken note of and activities planned need to reflect their views otherwise they may not vote in favour of the BID.

BID Money Drop – May consultation event

Overview

Following the consultation event in March, we confirmed three key theme areas around which to develop the Business Improvement District Business Plan:

- 1) Marketing promotion and events
- 2) Enhancing the look and feel of the town
- 3) Securing the future of the town centre

Our next step was to give Town Centre Business the opportunity to weight each of these themes in terms of importance to their business. We created Watford BID monopoly money and asked them to divide it up among our three theme areas.

Format

We prepared a Watford BID branded money wallet, containing £300 of the Watford BID monopoly money and used it as an invitation to town centre businesses to come and talk to us and spend their money at a drop-in event we held within a vacant unit in the Intu Centre on 21st May. We were there

from 9am until 7pm and produced marketing collateral to support our key messages.

In addition we held a business meeting over lunch at John Lewis on the 22nd May and invited some of the town centre's highest rate payers to attend – with the TCP board chair, the MD of John Lewis hosting, and TCP board member, the Intu Centre manager also in attendance and taking a lead role. We invited: BHS, M&S, Zara, WH Smiths, Apple, Lakeland, Boots, Next, New Look and Sainsburys – these were businesses who were yet to engage with us at all about the BID.

Communications

21st May – Intu Centre money drop

- All the businesses within the BID area were given a hand delivered letter outlining the next steps and informed of the event on the 21st May.
- A follow-up email was sent providing further information about the event.
- In the days leading up to 21st May, each business was visited by a TCP board member and money wallet was left.
- On the day, some businesses were visited again and encouraged to attend
- Social media was used in advance of the event and on the day.

22nd May – John Lewis BID lunch

- All the invited businesses were personally visited and a letter left for the manager if he or she was unavailable.
- Follow-up emails and telephone calls were placed over the following week to establish a confirmed attendance list. In the event that the named individual could not attend, then we asked for an assistant or deputy manager to attend in the manager's place.
- On the day before, each businesses was sent a reminder email or contacted via phone to ensure attendance.

w/c 25th May – email engagement

- All the businesses that hadn't attended were emailed and asked to reply by email with their choices of where they would spend their BID money
- Personalised emails were also sent to every business that had attended previous BID engagement events.

Response levels

Intu Centre drop-in

32 businesses came into the pop-up shop to spend their BID monopoly money. Most stayed for a while and talked to us about what was planned. Each provided an email address to ensure they could be contacted to be kept up to date with the next steps. In some instances, for example Arkwrights

Solicitors and Coast, junior representatives were sent, but they had been told where to spend the BID money.

Business lunch

Representatives from BHS, Zara, WH Smiths, Lakeland, Boots, and Sainsburys attended as well as a key contact from the Arcadia Group – all seemed very supportive of the BID plans. New Look failed to engage despite being initially very interested when contact was made. The Apple manager was very interested but was advised by his manager that he wasn't to attend – a head office contact was provided for further engagement purposes. Nobody from M&S attended on the day, despite the manager promising he would send somebody even though he couldn't make it himself. Likewise the manager from Next didn't attend despite having agreed to attend.

Email follow-up

A further 24 businesses engaged with us following the event after we emailed around the businesses. Many commented on how they were grateful for the opportunity to do so as they had been unable to make the event itself.

Results

In total, 65 town centre businesses told us how they would prioritise spending across the three BID theme areas by the deadline of 1st June. These businesses together would contribute £176,627 of the overall annual BID income of £569,687, representing (31%). The full list of businesses that engaged is supplied on the following page.

The themes were given the following weighting:

- 1) Marketing, promotion and events – 35%, this represents 27% of the overall BID budget
- 2) Enhancing the look and feel of the town – 40%, this represents 31% of the overall BID budget
- 3) Securing the future of the town – 25% - this represents 20% of the overall BID budget

The activities and associated budget included within the Watford BID business plan will be written using this weighting for each theme.

The draft Business Plan – Appendix 3

14. Financial Management Arrangements

The BID levy will be collected by Watford Borough Council. Watford Borough Council will reimburse Watford BID with BID levies on a monthly basis and at a prudent level of contingency.

The BID Board will receive quarterly financial updates, as will the auditor.

Watford BID will be committed to keeping overhead costs to a minimum and directing resources to those projects and services outlined in the business plan. It will seek in-kind and pro bono support from partners to cover overhead costs, and voluntary contributions to augment the BID 2016 – 2021 budget.

Attachments

Attachment 1: Service Level Agreements

Attachment 2: Map of the proposed Watford Town Centre Area

Attachment 3: Draft Business Plan & budget