

## Bristol City Centre BID – Operational Review

## 1. Introduction

### *Overview of document*

Bristol City Centre BID (BCC BID) commissioned BAS Consultancy (BASCo) to conduct an operational review of the BID's performance during its first term, making recommendations that can inform the approach to the second term. The work was carried out in June and July of 2021 and used desk-based research, interviews, and performance assessment to contribute to a set of advisory recommendations. The recommendations are an opportunity to form the basis for the BID Advisory Board's deliberations on priorities for the second term.

BCC BID committed to carrying a review out in the BID's first-term prospectus and this document fulfils that commitment. Mid-term reviews are best practice for Business Improvement Districts and should be carried out once per term. BASCo wishes to thank Keith Rundle and the team for their cooperation during the review.

### *Bristol economic summary*

Bristol city centre has thrived in recent years as the city's economy, population and visitor numbers have grown. Following the transformative regeneration of the city's harbourside in the 1980s and 90s, Bristol's prospects as a destination for students, growth sectors, culture and tourism have propelled the economy as the primary economic centre of the West of England, hosting almost half of the region's jobs and enterprises.<sup>1</sup> The city centre has benefited from a thriving hospitality and office sector and along with other major cities has been impacted more severely by Covid-19 as a result. However, the Centre for Cities recovery tracker is registering a strong recovery in Bristol with spend already at 86% of pre-pandemic levels as of July 2021.<sup>2</sup>

### *Bristol City Centre BID*

In this turbulent period, Bristol City Centre BID has proven itself as an important force for change in the city centre. The BID launched in 2017 in a city which already hosted five other BIDs (Clifton Village, Gloucester Road, Broadmead, Bedminster and Cater Business Park). A seventh BID in Redcliffe and Temple was voted into being in 2021. Gloucester Road BID is no longer operating. Alongside Broadmead and Redcliffe & Temple BIDs, Bristol City Centre BID operates under the auspices of Visit West, the Destination Management Organisation (DMO) for the Bristol and Bath region.

The BID aspect of Visit West employs six staff engaged with the City Centre BID delivery. These are:

- Keith Rundle – Director of BIDS for Visit West
- Vicky Lee – Head of City Centre BID
- Paula Ratcliffe – Business Liaison Manager
- Beth Betts – Marketing Manager

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.bristolonecity.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/One-City-Economic-Recovery-Plan-At-a-glance.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.centreforcities.org/data/high-streets-recovery-tracker/>

- Francesca Inman – Project Manager
- Sabrina Shutters – Project Manager.
- Natalie Hendy – Streetwise Officer – employed by Bristol City Council, funded by City Centre BID.

The BID also funds a full-time police officer post, held by PC Gareth Ayers. Marketing Executive and Project Management roles are currently being recruited.

As the Redcliffe and Temple BID operation ramps up through the latter part of 2021, the above-described structure is changing, with marketing and project management functions operating across the three BIDs, along with continuing shared back-office arrangements such as HR and payroll providing further efficiencies for levy payers.

Keith Rundle has assumed the role of Director of BIDs at Visit West. This is a new post that will provide strategic oversight of the city centre economy and ensure representation of Bristol’s business community at the highest level. The Director of BIDs will also line-manage the Heads of BIDs.

The City Centre BID, in common with the other BIDs in the Visit West organisation reports to Visit West, which is funded via direct membership, BID contributions and small contributions from the Bath and North East Somerset, South Gloucestershire, Bristol and North Somerset unitary authorities.

The BID also meets quarterly with an advisory board of levy payers. The advisory board does not hold any formal powers of direction but instead guides the BID, helps design services and helps to develop new approaches to problems facing the city centre. It also agrees and monitors key performance indicators. The three Chairs of the Advisory Boards and the Director of BIDs sit on the Visit West Board where they can contribute to city strategy and vision.

The BID intends to renew its mandate via ballot in September 2022.

### *Operations and services*

In its first four years of operation, the BID has introduced a variety of vital services, projects and campaigns in the city centre on behalf of levy payers. These services were committed to in the BIDs business plan which forms the basis of the agreement with levy payers at ballot stage. For this reason, it is important to demonstrate that the projects set out in the business plan are being delivered upon in the annual report. The Bristol City Centre BID has published an annual report every year.

The projects and services delivered over the past four years by the BID across five themes include:

#### *1. Improving safety*

Police officer	Taxi safety initiative	Streetwise officer
Street pastors	Safeguarding marshals (paused)	Business Crime Reduction Partnership
Radiolink scheme	DISC database	Drug safety testing

*2. Improving 'look and feel'*

Vacant property cleaning	Deep cleaning	Graffiti removal
Cycle removal	Planters / greening	Cleaning and repair
Purple Flag accreditation	Covid disinfecting	

*3. Improving the welcome*

Ambassadors	Seasonal lighting	Campaigns (various)
Bristol Light Festival	Events (e.g Old City party)	Tap for Bristol
Rough sleeping breakfast event	Caring in Bristol partnership	Welcome events/ and networking
Festive programme	Incredible edible	

*4. Promoting success*

Neighbourhood strategies	Media campaigns	Marketing strategy
Digital platforms	Branding strategy	City centre partnerships.

*5. Always acting in your best interests*

Grand prix / Lets ride	Solomon dashboard	Waste partnership
Business events	Perception survey	Operational review
Business liaison manager	Crime newsletter	Business training
Data collection	COVID hub and weekly webinars	Levy payer focus groups

Some of these projects meet the objectives of several themes simultaneously. For instance, lighting projects improve night-time safety as well as providing cultural interest and stimulating spend in the hospitality sector.

*Impact of Covid-19 on Bristol / BID operations*

The impact of lockdown on Bristol, which employs 45,000 people in the hospitality sector, was immediate. The BID reacted quickly to the economic implications of Covid in 2019 and implemented a range of services; disinfecting of the public realm; information services; overnight security checks; liaison with levy payers and the Council on grants and loans.

The BID was a part of a city centre strategy group which was formed to react to issues as they arose. As lockdown was lifted over a number of periods, the BID also helped to develop the

approach to signage, floor decals, social distancing information, business advice and public campaigns, including the nationally acclaimed 'Bristol Hearts' and the more recent 'Love Songs to the City' trail. These have provided businesses and customers with confidence of the safe management of the city centre.

The BID continues to help coordinate action as the city recovers, but there remains considerable anxiety as to the prospects of the retail, hospitality and tourism sector in particular, with those businesses that rely on daytime trade from office workers particularly severely hit. Other changes have included the increase of anti-social behaviour in the public realm as restrictions have been lifted, and fluctuations in levels of homelessness as support services have been introduced and then discontinued. This has refocused the BID's operations and support with fewer events and increased information and support for levy payers.

## 2. Review

The scope of the operational review included interviews with senior staff and stakeholders, an online survey with levy payers and an assessment of the BID's performance against its own business plan and against two sets of national standards relating to BIDs.

### *Desk based research, staff and stakeholder interviews*

Interviews with senior BID staff and desk-based research were undertaken to understand the scope of services delivered by the BID and inform recommendations. Staff interviewed were Keith Rundle, Vicky Lee and Paula Ratcliffe. Research included key documentation such as the BID business plan, communications strategy, annual reports, marketing plan, website, social media accounts and campaign literature.

A stakeholder engagement exercise in the form of semi-structured interviews was carried out with selected, 'involved' levy payers, board members and partners to gain an understanding of current and longer-term needs, and a local view of the BID's performance. These interviews also informed the recommendations of this review.

The stakeholders interviewed were:

- Kellie Hasbury – Plaster Creative Communications (PR / comms provider)
- James Taljaard – Watershed
- Maria Crayton – Marketing and Comms consultant
- Jason Thorne – Bristol City Council
- Helen McGee – Academy Music Group / BID Advisory Board
- James Woollam – Hayes Parsons / BID Advisory Board (Chair)
- Ruth Keeley – Hargreaves Lansdowne / BID Advisory Board
- Nick Carter – Bristol City Council

No specific comments have been attributed to the individual stakeholders interviewed in the course of this review to enable them to speak freely in the semi structured interviews. Appendix A includes the interview questions that formed the basis of discussions.

### *Summary of stakeholder interviews*

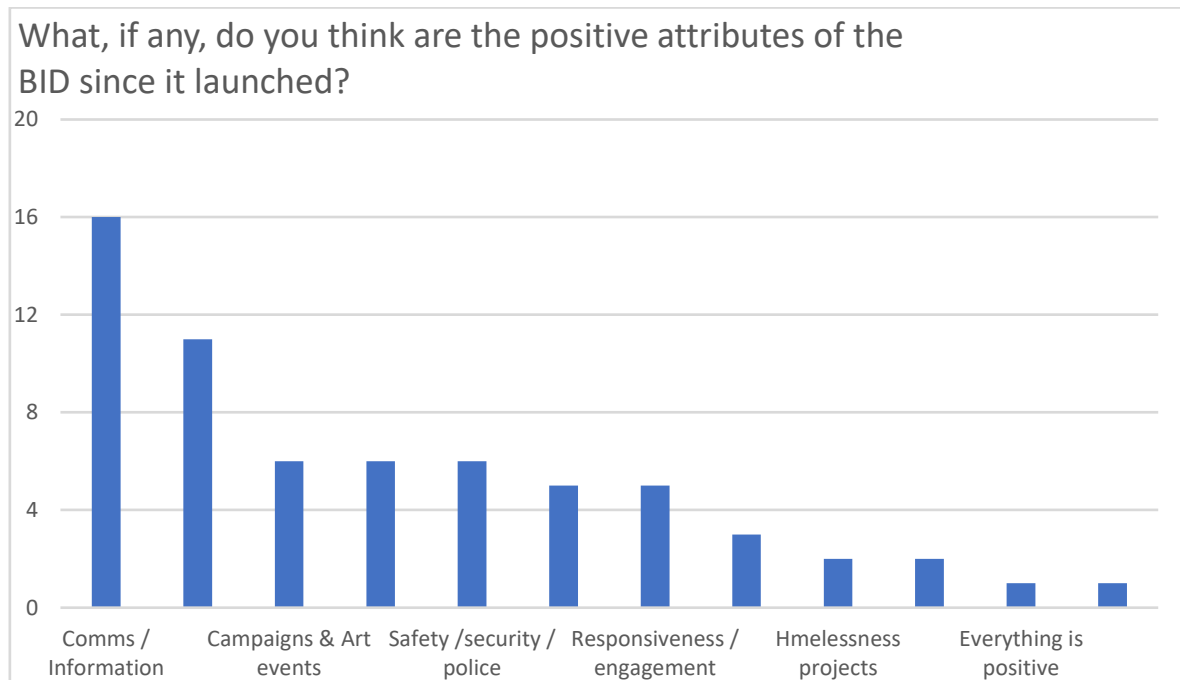
Some of the key points, echoed across several interviews include:

- The BID has hit the ground running, quickly developing relationships and creating useful networks. There is much admiration for Keith Rundle who is considered a consummate relationship builder, diplomat and problem solver.
- Institutional partners recognise that there may be fewer opportunities for direct cost savings via their involvement in the BID but that the benefits are in relationships, goodwill and a place at the strategic table. They accept that the city economy benefits in general from the BID. This is a more difficult sell among smaller businesses and there may be a need to revisit services which provide some degree of cost savings, e.g. through joint procurement.
- At this time, the BID's strengths lie in its high degree of responsiveness, good communications and visible service delivery. Members continue to rely on the BID for clean streets, security and initiatives to tackle homelessness.
- There are mixed feelings about the BID's funding of a police officer post. Whilst some stakeholders have recognised that the links into the constabulary are invaluable as a way of helping feed back the business community's priorities for city centre policing, others believe that the role has failed to deliver the necessary 'beat hours'.
- The BID needs to engage more levy payers and broaden participation in its activity, in part to close the democratic gap when it next goes to ballot. The focus on liaising with representatives of levy payers (e.g. via the Advisory Group and sub groups) should not replace regular face-to-face contact with individual businesses to gather their views.
- The BID is well positioned to become the coordinating body for a wide array of disparate individuals and ideas from within the business community and beyond. Currently there is no single body to fulfil this role and this holds back the city from reaching its potential as a globally recognised brand.
- The relationship between Visit West and the BID in branding and marketing terms is unclear. Both the BID and Visit West promote the city to a range of markets via campaigns, events and promotions using separate brands and creating a sense of confusion over who leads strategically on this issue. It is not necessarily desirable for the BID's 'corporate' brand to be used to promote the city to consumers.
- Bristol is likely to recover more quickly than many other places. However, into the medium term, the key concern is around the daytime economy, rather than the evening economy which is predicted to bounce back well. Although Bristol is resilient due to its diverse city centre uses, the lack of daytime office workers has impacted on breakfast and lunchtime trade severely.

#### *Online survey of levy payers*

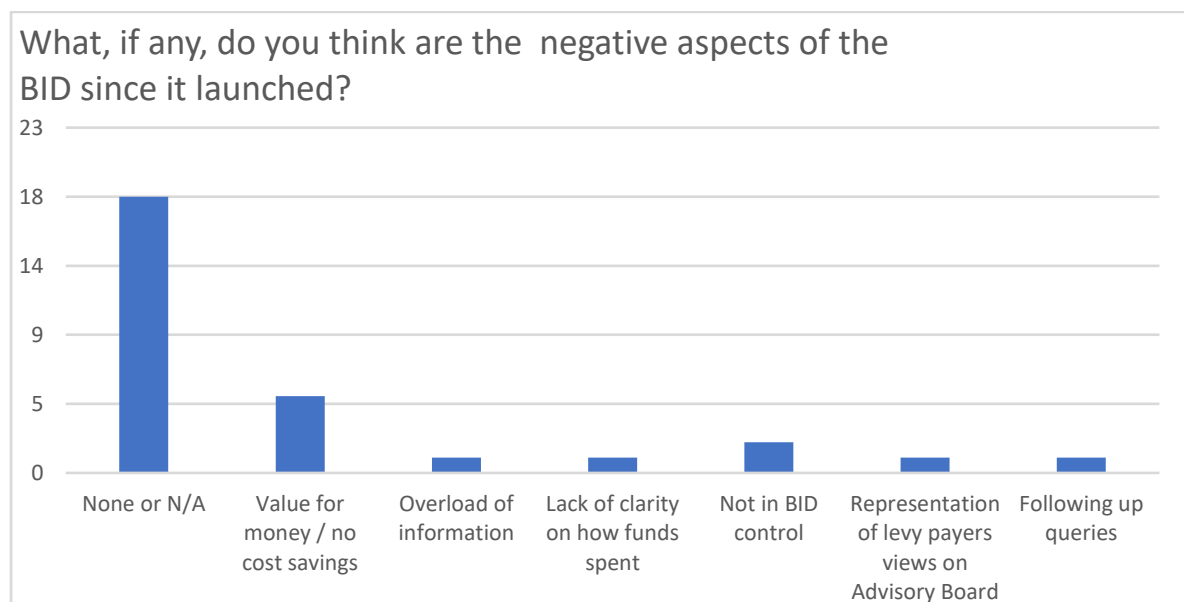
There were 30 responses to the levy payer survey and although it is indicative rather than statistically significant, the exercise nevertheless collected important insights which can inform future planning. Respondents represented a range of institutional, multiple and independent retail, office and leisure occupiers, the majority of which were generally positive about the BID over its first term. Responses to key questions are summarised overleaf.

'Free text' responses were coded and reveal some important themes. It is clear that the communications and cleanliness are important to levy payers, with elements of communications noted in other responses (e.g. positive attitude, liaison with the Council and responsiveness).



Information and cleansing were also identified as the top two activities delivered by the BID that benefited respondents' business, followed by 'improved safety' (63%), 'promotion and marketing' (60%) and 'Commercial waste disposal and recycling' (30%).

When asked what the negative aspects of the BID were (below), a clear majority thought that there were none at all, which may reflect a broadly supportive member base, or may reflect the positivity of a self-selecting group of levy payers responding to the survey:



<b>Covid recovery support</b>	<b>No</b>
Encouraging office workers back	4
Tackling homelessness	4
Encouraging mask wearing	3
Public toilets	3
Parking / transport improvements	3
Supporting arts / culture	2
Safe streets	2
Driving footfall	2
Pavement improvements	2
Tackling climate change	1
Continued comms / updates	1
Waste / recycling	1
More green space	1
Promoting businesses	1
Reduced business rates	1
Scooter enforcement	1
Increased central Govt funding	1

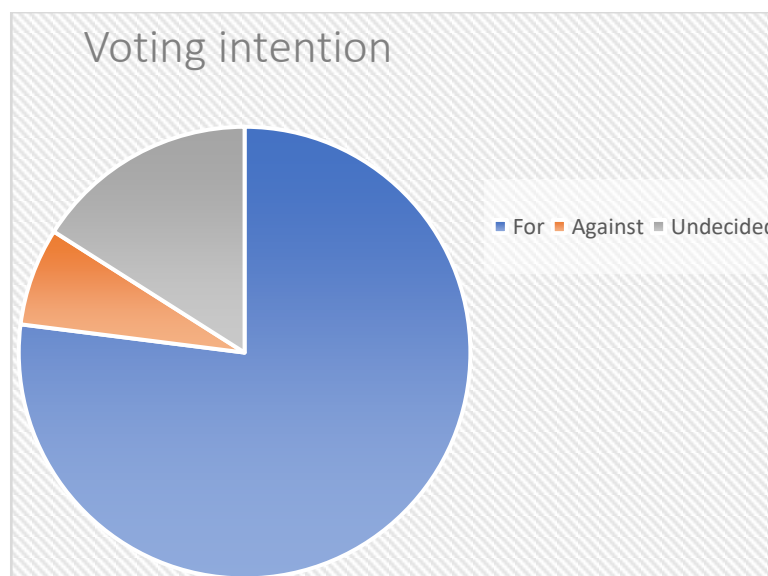
Awareness of services was generally high, but there is more work to do to promote some services, including the Collaborative Waste Contract, which only 23% were aware of, the BIDs webinars (30%) and the Business Crime Reduction Partnership (40%).

There was less of a consensus on the needs of the city centre as it recovers from COVID as the table (left) demonstrates. Many of these issues are not under the direct control of the BID but the question was more generally put to elicit open answers, and the BID is able to lobby other authorities where there a clear priority.

Additional services that the BID should provide in the next term invited few responses. Six suggestions were made, including more bins and public toilets, cost savings through collective purchasing, local supply chain development, projects to tackle shoplifting and tourism development.

#### *Voting intention*

Encouragingly, of the 30 respondents, 76% intended to vote in favour of a second term. 16% were undecided and 7% intended to vote against a second term.





## *Performance assessment*

An assessment of performance to date against both the business plan and national standards was carried out. Results are below.

### *i. Performance against business plan*

The projects set out in the BIDs business plan were compared against the delivery summaries in the annual reports, with each project ascribed to a theme and sub-theme. This review is set out in Appendix B.

The assessment shows clearly that the BID is developing and delivering projects which closely meet the thematic objectives of the business plan. In many cases, projects meet the objectives of several themes and subthemes, which is an efficient way of working.

Satisfaction in service provision is high among both stakeholders and levy payers and this suggests that the general direction of project and service delivery is good. There are some specific issues which are picked up in the recommendations section which may be considered.

No project under one sub-theme – a work experience clearing house to benefit levy payers - has been developed despite some efforts in the first year to gather intelligence and problem solve. Given the wide range of objectives set out in the business plan however, it is to be expected that a small number of projects would not be delivered in the first term due to unforeseen circumstances. It may be that there is an opportunity to revisit this theme under a second term.

The business plan also included the objective of working with Bristol University to develop research to benefit the city centre economy. There have been limited opportunities for this, but where they arise, given the presence of the University (and indeed the University of the West of England) in the city and the potential for mutual benefit, this relationship should be capitalised upon wherever possible.

The Movement Strategies movement and spend data project is a positive step for the Bristol BID. The project provides important information to the BID on the origin of visitors - including those from overseas – and their spending patterns. As such it provides the evidence base for vital targeted planning. It also enables collaboration with Bath BID which is one of only a handful of BIDs in the country also collecting data at this level.

The BID's ambition was broad for a first term, and this may be attributed to the fact that a management company with experience of delivering BIDs was advancing the proposal. It is common for first-term BIDs to focus on developing contracts and place management services (such as cleaning, wardens services and basic business services) in the first term, and the Bristol City Centre BID has provided these to a high standard in its first term.

The final section of this report includes recommendations on general matters for the BID to focus on in the second term. BID Companies in later terms often move towards assuming more strategic placemaking roles as they gain the trust of other stakeholders such as the local authority. Due in part to the relationship to Visit West and in part due to the strong early track record in service delivery, Bristol BID has already begun to assume a strategic role in Bristol which can be built upon in its next term.

ii. *Performance against industry standards*

Assessments were made against the two main sets of industry standards, from British BIDs and The BID Foundation. Performance was excellent with a few minor procedural issues to pick up, as detailed below:

BID Foundation - National Minimum Standards		Assessment	Compliance notes
1	The contact details for the CEO/BID Manager, and all other staff funded through the BID		Published on website
2	The current BID Business Plan		Published on website
3	The most recent BID Ballot Result, which should include –total number of hereditaments eligible to vote, the percentage turnout, the percentage majority by number, the percentage majority by RV		Published on website
4	The names of BID Board Directors and either the name of their business or the sector they represent		Published on website
5	Details of the BID Governance Structure. These must cover – Rules for the election of Directors, Terms of Reference for the Board		Published on website
6	Minutes of Board Meetings, A mechanism or contact details for levy payers to request minutes		Published on website
7	Feedback to the BID: An explanation of how levy payers can provide feedback(e.g. annual meeting and/or regular meetings)		Published on website
8	Procurement Policy: A procurement policy must be published and Minutes of all decisions made at Board meetings regarding expenditure of the BID levy in line with this policy.		Policy outlined in business plan
9	A Register of all Pecuniary and Personal Interests. This must be updated at every Board meeting and made available upon request		Available to view at Visit West
10	Annual Billing Leaflet must be sent to all levy payers detailing how funds have been spent and income received		Confirmed
11	Annual Report and Accounts must be produced and published		Published on website
<b>TOTAL 11/11</b>			

Governance			
1	The Board of the BID Company should be representative of those who pay and there should be a clear process on how Directors are selected together with the Board’s rotation policy. Consideration should be given to the balance between sector, size, geography, gender, equality and diversity and skill set.		Advisory board only, with representatives on the Visit Bristol Board. Board membership may benefit from diversity policy. See Bristol based organisation for help: <a href="https://beonboard.co.uk/">https://beonboard.co.uk/</a>
2	Alongside the Board there should be appropriate working groups and forums ideally chaired by a Board Director or staff member, which ensure a regular dialogue with contributors and other stakeholders		Hospitality & Leisure, Retail, Office & culture sectors chaired by the Business Liaison Manager. Also monthly retail security meeting.
3	The Board, all working groups and forums should have Terms of Reference detailing their responsibilities and decision-making procedures. It should be clear what the relationship and reporting procedures are between the Board and other groups		
4	The Board should have a process for handling known or potential conflicts of interest and for those interests to be recorded.		Managed via Visit West
5	An Operating Agreement should be in place, for the duration of the BID term, that defines the contractual relationship between the BID and the Local Authority in relation to levy collection and enforcement, and overall BID management and delivery. As a minimum, annual meetings should take place between the two parties.		

6	A Baseline Agreement must be in place, for the duration of the BID term, that sets out the baseline services to be delivered by the Local Authority and any other relevant statutory authority, which correlate with those that the BID intends to add value to within the specific BID area. As a minimum, annual meetings should take place between the two parties.		
7	The BID Company should review its Articles each year to ensure they are still fit for purpose. If necessary, changes can be made via an Extraordinary General Meeting.		Has recently occurred, but does not take place annually.
<b>Management and operations</b>			
1	A staffing structure (including both in-house staff and external consultants) with clear line management arrangements must be in place including the provision of a staff handbook, staff contracts and job descriptions and as a minimum, annual appraisal procedures.		
2	Alongside one to one staff meetings and appraisals, training or development needs of staff should be identified and provided for. New staff should have an induction.		
3	There should be clarity on the role of the Board in relation to overseeing operational management and project delivery.		Set out in business plan
4	Appropriate procurement procedures should be in place to ensure open and impartial contracting of service providers that achieves best value and delivery. These procedures should be proportionate to the value of the contract.		
5	Contracts should be issued for third party contractors and these should be monitored regularly.		
6	BID Companies should be adequately insured with public liability, buildings and contents insurance and professional indemnity insurance for its staff and Directors.		

7	Appropriate procedures should be put in place to store and manage levy payer's contact details ensuring that the BID Company complies with the latest data protection legislation including registration with the Information Commissioner.		
<b>Financials</b>			
1	Full and thorough financial procedures should be in place to ensure efficient accounting practices including independently produced end of year accounts and an annual budget setting exercise.		
2	The proportion of budget spent on management and overheads including the cost of levy collection should be closely monitored to ensure levy payers are getting best value for money.		
3	All BIDs should be VAT registered.		
4	Additional or in-kind contributions should be recorded for each financial year as a percentage of total income.		Additional income is noted in Annual Report
5	There should be a clear process in place for approval of all expenditure and payment of invoices, day to day financial reporting systems and monitoring of financial performance.		
6	A variation procedure should be in place confirming the limits and arrangements for adjusting the BID's project expenditure allocations year on year.		Detailed in business plan
<b>Performance Management</b>			
1	An annual delivery plan including objectives, key performance indicators and targets linked to the BID business plan should be prepared and reviewed against business needs.		Although assessment shows delivery meets objectives of business plan, there is no annual delivery plan prepared
2	BID outputs and results should be recorded and reported through the Board and to levy payers.		

3	Regular levy payer surveys and other relevant research should be carried out and the results used to inform any amendments to planned services.		
4	A mid-term review of the BID should be undertaken to check performance against the business plan.		
5	The BID should seek feedback on the return on investment for levy payers including benefits such as additional sales, cost savings, improved trading opportunities etc. Evidence of these benefits should be sought via testimonials.		
<b>Communicating and reporting</b>			
1	Regular communications with contributors and end users should be undertaken to provide opportunities for feedback and to inform the ongoing needs of delivery for the BID. There should be some form of contact at least quarterly.		
2	There should also be a procedure for welcoming new businesses to the BID.		
3	A marketing and communications plan should be prepared outlining how the BID communicates with its levy payers, consumers and others.		
4	Annual financial reporting should be undertaken with levy payers covering the legally required billing leaflet as a minimum. This should include how much levy income has been collected, how this was spent in the current year and how it is intended to spend the income in the following year.		
5	The BID should manage an accessible website that includes details of the staff team and the Board Directors along with appropriate contact details.		
6	There should be an opportunity at least once a year for levy payers to meet with the BID Board or BID staff via an Annual General Meeting or other open meeting or forum.		

7	Minutes of Board Meetings or Sub Groups should be made available for inspection by levy payers unless the content is commercially sensitive.		
<b>TOTAL: 30/32</b>			

### *Exemplary projects and services*

The BID Foundation, the national professional body for BIDs conducts a regular review of BID operations across the country and assembles a compendium of innovative or exemplary projects which advance the scope of the sector. Increasingly BIDs are assuming leading roles in promotion, activation and service delivery in towns and cities, with projects making demonstrable impacts on local places. Of the projects and services delivered by the BID, the following would, and in some cases have, qualified for inclusion in the BID Foundation's best practice guide.

- *Hearts of Bristol*

This project, which saw hundreds of hearts temporarily sprayed onto green spaces across central Bristol to encourage safe social distancing was nationally recognised and innovative. It was planned quickly and efficiently and demonstrated innovation through the positive messaging in the campaign that accompanied it, where many other places took a safety-driven and procedural approach. Hearts of Bristol was superseded by another effective 'Welcome Back' campaign in the Love Lyrics, which saw disco banners with lyrics from famed love songs and a disco ball installed above the streets of Bristol. Both campaigns were effective at setting Bristol's approach to the easing of lockdown apart, developing the unique place brand and engendering civic pride among the local community at a time when domestic spend is of paramount importance.

- *Streetwise officer / Tap for Bristol*

As with the Hearts of Bristol campaign, the approach that Bristol BID has taken to tackling the impacts of homelessness have been nuanced and sensitive. Guided by levy payers' direction that street population based antisocial behaviour has negative effects on the city centre, the BID developed ways of working which provided a mitigating effect without the punitive measures that are often employed. Natalie Hendy, the Streetwise offer has developed good relationships with the hospitality sector and the street population, acting as a reference point for those negatively impacted by rough sleeping and street begging.

The Tap for Bristol initiative has raised £40,000 across a number of highly visible donation points which goes to homelessness charity Caring in Bristol for their prevention of homelessness work. The remaining 50% of donations are facilitated to local frontline services to provide emergency support to enable individuals to move away from a life on the streets. This enables the delivery of appropriate support to Bristol's street population, providing a real alternative to begging and those who would directly donate to those begging. The donation terminals also provide a focus for attention in a city with a high level of homelessness and aims to reflect the brand values of a city that is innovative and socially aware.

- *Bristol Festival of Light*

Although other BIDs have organised similar festivals, the scale and ambition of the Bristol City Centre BID's first ever light festival was impressive. One of the last major city events before coronavirus related lockdown in 2020, the light festival excelled not only in its scale, eliciting 100,000 interactions in the quietest trading period in the Bristol calendar, but also in its approach to local artist and event producer procurement and impact assessment. The involvement of the University of the West of England's (UWE) Digital Cultures Research Centre was an innovative partnership that has helped develop our understanding of the economic impacts such events can have. With little extant research in this area, the Bristol Light Festival will therefore contribute to the national case for culture-led regeneration and activation.

A key attribute that links many of these (and other) projects, and that was specifically picked up in the levy payer survey is the BID's positive messaging. Tone of voice in communications and in project delivery is key where many BIDs still adopt an unnecessarily formal and municipal tone with levy payers. Bristol BID has developed a rapport with levy payers and communications are well balanced in their professionalism and their positivity.

### **3. Recommendations**

The recommendations below are suggestions that are intended for consideration by the BID's advisory board. They are based on the consultant's knowledge of BID best practice and formal guidance and informed by interviews and desk-based research.

#### **A. Improvements to existing operations**

##### *Systems and processes*

- During the pandemic, many places formed emergency planning groups which pulled together key agencies including local authorities and BIDs to focus on the response in the town/city centre. These place-based groups have been effective in developing coordinated logistics and many have continued. There are continuing gaps in Bristol between service providers, and there are groups with overlapping responsibilities and mismatched priorities. It may be possible to consolidate some groups into a single body with powers to direct service delivery across public and privately funded agencies and it is recommended that this opportunity is explored.
- Newly appointed Director of BIDs takes strategic lead on vision for the city in term two.
- The first term has been characterised by a rapid ramping up of services and project delivery. Systems and processes which measure impact and success, ensure consistency and help future planning are in evidence but could be built upon in the second term. Examples might include:
  - Better use of KPIs to measure success in delivery (e.g. additional income targets, levels of graffiti removal, closed queries, event engagement, member satisfaction scores)
  - Use of existing data (e.g. footfall and spend) to help service planning
  - Staff appraisals and development
  - Preparing the CRM system for the ballot phase
  - Onboarding process for new levy payers



## *Participation*

- The BID, in common with all BIDs, has work to do to broaden the extent of its engagement with levy payers. While it has worked well to develop an involved base, it needs to reach more businesses and more people from within businesses to raise awareness of the BID, its role in the city centre and take-up of its offer.
- There is currently no additional income from voluntary levy payers (e.g. student residences) from those businesses under the threshold or that do not qualify for services but wish to receive them. It is recommended that efforts are made to ensure that those city centre occupiers that may benefit from participating in a voluntary arrangement are aware of this.
- There should be a meeting with all incoming levy payers to set out the aims and offer of the BID and the onboarding procedure is currently too passive. A meeting should be arranged for an in-person delivery of the BID's welcome pack and a quick introduction to the area and the BIDs services. If this invitation is not responded to, the business liaison manager should drop the welcome pack off and introduce themselves quickly in any case.

## **B. New services to meet new requirements**

- The BID has done well to develop consistent services in its first term, and these are well used and appreciated. Progress on the 'basics' should not be lost in any second term, but rather it should represent a solid platform on which to build. This means that alongside delivering these services, the BID can assume an increasingly strategic role, leading on the city centre vision and pushing through its delivery. This might start in a partnership with the Council to develop a Bristol City Centre Strategy.
- The BID aims to strike a balance between projects and services which benefit levy payers and those which benefit consumers, and all BIDs fluctuate to some extent between the B2B and the B2C. Bristol City Centre BID has focused on projects and services which are publicly visible and beneficial to the highest number of both levy payers and consumers. This is a valid approach and may be guided by the 'parent' company, for whom the principal objective is the promotion of Bristol. However, it is recommended that in the second term, additional projects to focus on economic development may be considered, including:
  - Greater range of training sessions (not to compete with levy paying training companies if they are present in the BID area)
  - Networking opportunities, such as a PAs network, concierges network or sector-focused socials (rather than meetings)
  - Place-based problem solving (e.g. a continuation of strategies started with Queens Road and Park Street)
  - Developing 'position papers' to set out the BIDs views on major city centre issues such as transport, clean air, development and infrastructure in consultation with levy payers.
- BIDs can struggle to deliver a valued offer to office occupiers, where many services are delivered at street level. However, BIDs have been developing projects which focus on

employee wellbeing, which is likely to become increasingly important to employers seeking to provide incentives for office working and develop relationships within and between city centre companies. Such initiatives might include:

- Lunchtime history walks and lectures, 'netwalking' events, yoga or gardening sessions
- Intercompany competitions and challenges such as sporting tournaments
- Charitable activity - a Christmas gift 'drop box', joint wrapping day (with festive entertainment and distribution to local old people's homes in Bankside is consistently oversubscribed)
- Consumer loyalty schemes – perhaps linked to Bristol Pay, which provide office workers with local discounts and encourage local wealth building
- Negotiation of exclusive rates for local gyms, Voi scooter service etc to encourage health and wellbeing and dwell time in the city centre. Many BIDs work with HR departments to provide a BID-branded 'welcome pack' for new employees.

Supply chain development, employment/work experience brokerage and office-based recycling services are also proving an effective 'sell' for office occupiers.

- It is likely that retail vacancy will rise in the city and the BID is well placed to help develop and deliver a meanwhile strategy that helps coordinate landlords and curate the offer. Bristol City Council are already considering this issue and the BIDs involvement would contribute much due to its understanding of the commercial world. Use of vacant shops, which in Bristol range from single units to large department stores can help market test innovative new retail concepts, cultural uses, educational facilities and services.
- The BIDs should consider developing a consumer-facing brand which is separate to the corporate brands. A single brand for the city would suffice since there should be a common consumer marketing strategy across Bristol, recognising of course the distinct qualities of the city's neighbourhoods.
- The activity themes in the current business plan are vague in their terminology, and the next iteration should consider clear and distinct themes, such as 'promotion of the city', 'clean, green and safe', 'cost savings for businesses' in order that levy payers can quickly make sense of the offer.

### **C. Governance**

- On balance, the practical benefits associated with the relationship with Visit West outweigh any potential drawbacks, particularly given the changes in representation on the Visit West Board to include BID Chairs and senior staff. This relationship and the place on the One City's Economy and Skills Board places the BID in the centre of the city's strategic and administrative operation, aiding everything from major event organisation to representing levy payers' views at the highest level. However, where the membership and minutes of the Economy and Skills Board are published, the BID should also encourage similar transparency on the Visit West website, in order that levy payers have a clear understanding of the decision-making mechanisms that they in part help to fund and can contribute to.

- There is currently no legal entity for the BID (e.g. Bristol City Centre BID Ltd) and no company members. Company members are an important democratic mechanism in BIDs. Levy paying company members can vote in an Annual General Meeting (AGM) and a proportion can call an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) where a particular decision must be made that requires the broader input of city centre businesses. It should be possible to establish legal entities for Bristol's BIDs and introduce the company member structure without affecting the day-to-day governance relationship with Visit West, but technically, levy payers should have the option to sever the relationship with Visit West as delivery body for the BID, via an EGM.
- Although there are concerns around the degree to which the three BIDs operate as separate organisations representing separate area brands, there are clearly efficiencies to be made with the merger of some roles to operate across all three. Marketing and project management roles can operate across all three where care is taken to represent the unique qualities of the districts and aspirations of its levy payers.
- It is unusual for one BID area to be surrounded by another as currently occurs with the Broadmead BID. There has been a significant decline in levy income at Broadmead relating to Covid and the departure of Debenhams and it is likely there will be a change in focus over the next few years with Broadmead becoming a more mixed-use area. It may be appropriate therefore to consider subsuming the Broadmead BID into the Bristol City Centre BID. In concert with most city centre BIDs with a shopping district, Broadmead should be considered part of the Bristol City Centre offer in strategic terms with representation, branding and support offered to businesses falling under a single operation. As with the Harbourside Management Area, those Broadmead tenants that pay a service charge to the shopping centre operators can be offered a discounted levy rate.
- In preparation for the 2022 ballot, the BID should conduct a review of its BID rules, including the boundaries (e.g. it may be that new developments such as Wapping Wharf could lead to a redrawing of the boundaries), levy rate, exempt bodies, discounts, threshold and cap. This was out of scope for the operational review.

#### Recommendations: Summary and timescales

Task	Target completion
Undertake review of existing city centre meetings and groups with a view to consolidating / rationalising where possible.	Year 1, Term 2
Newly appointed director of BIDs to seek to lead strategic vision for the city centre economy.	Year 5, Term 1
Development of key systems and processes to manage BID delivery and administration	Year 1, Term 2
Set targets for increase in reach/engagement, both within and across levy paying organisations	Year 5, Term 1
Set targets for additional (i.e. non-levy payer) income, including from voluntary members	Year 5, Term 1

Develop 'onboarding' process for new members which encourages immediate engagement with targeted services	Year 1, Term 2
Seek partnership with B.C.C. to co-develop City Centre Strategy including package of economic development support for businesses	Year 1, Term 2
Develop clear and attractive package of support for office-based levy payers	Year 5, Term 1
Use relationship with levy payers to feed into / help deliver B.C.C.'s vacant shops strategy	Year 5, Term 1
In partnership with Visit West coherent consumer-facing brand and brand strategy for Bristol city centre	Year 2, Term 2
Rationalise language in communications with levy payers, particularly around activity themes – be clear about the package of support the BID offers and provide immediate ways of accessing it	Year 5, Term 1
Seek to improve access to information on Visit West website to ensure levy payers understand relationship between Visit West and BID.	Year 2, Term 2
Establish BIDs as separate legal entities and introduce company membership / memorandum and articles etc	Year 3, Term 2
Review Broadmead BID's prospects as a separate entity from Bristol City Centre BID	Year 5, Term 1
Undertake pre-ballot review of BID boundaries, thresholds, cap and special arrangements for second term business plan	Year 5, Term 1

## Conclusion

BID arrangements are still relatively new in the country's place governance landscape, and while they have been highly successful in many towns and cities, there remains a significant disparity in their impact. The setting up of the BID Foundation, in which Bristol BID played a key part, was a concerted attempt to develop a national oversight body, producing BID industry standards, exchanging knowledge and best practice, and providing research and data to underpin progress. The BIDs under the umbrella of Visit West have consistently driven forward such initiatives and are clearly committed to the principle of exemplary BID delivery.

There are always improvements that can be made and many of the issues BIDs face on the ground were baked in as BID legislation was being developed (e.g. the lack of formal interaction with property owners). However, the research undertaken as part of this operational review has confirmed Bristol City Centre BID's reputation as a vital contributor to the city's economic well being and there are few concerns for the outcome of a renewal ballot.

## Acknowledgments

BAS Consultancy would like to thank Keith Rundle and the Bristol City Centre BID staff team for their cooperation and assistance throughout the review.

## Appendix A

### Stakeholder interview questions

- 1) Please tell me a little about what you do
- 2) How long have you been in Bristol?
- 3) What's your connection to the BID and how long have you held it?
- 4) What, if any, do you think are the positive attributes of the BID since it launched?
- 5) What, if any, do you think are the less positive aspects of the BID since it launched?
- 6) How is the recovery going in the city centre in your opinion? What does Bristol need in terms of support as we move out of Covid?
- 7) What do you think the focus of the BID should be in the next term (2022 – 2027)
- 8) What would you say the reputation of the BID is amongst its levy payers?
- 9) How strong do you think the BID's partnerships with city stakeholders are (e.g. council, university)?
- 10) Do you think the BID offers good value for money? If not, how could this be improved?
- 11) How does the BID perform in
  - a. Marketing and promoting the city centre
  - b. Environmental services
  - c. Culture / events / lighting etc
  - d. Business services / training / networking

## APPENDIX 2: Assessment of activity against business plan

Activity (business plan)	Delivery 2017/18 (New projects)	Delivery 2018/19 (New projects)
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### *Improving safety*

Reducing crime and anti-social behaviour to improve perceptions of the area both day and night	Safeguarding marshalls, Ambassadors, Purple Flag, Street pastors, vacant property cleansing	BCRP, Radiolink, DiSC, police officer
Partnership - Work closely to support the police and others to ensure that appropriate response is received by businesses to issues of crime and anti-social behaviour.	Safeguarding marshalls, Ambassadors, events, Purple Flag, drug safety testing, Operation Balsa	BCRP, DiSC, radiolink, streetwise officer
Eyes and Ears - A team of uniformed BID Ambassadors to provide information and advice and to act as the eyes and ears of a caring city.	Ambassadors, radiolink	
Better management of the night-time economy – Improve the management of the night-time economy by supporting and developing the current and future initiatives (such as the radio system, marshalls, Purple Flag and Best Bar None).	Safeguarding marshalls, seasonal lighting, purple flag, Eat Drink Bristol 24/7 campaign, Operation Balsa, Taxi safety initiative, Street pastors, drug safety testing	Lighting trail, festive programme, BCRP, Radiolink, DiSC
Problem Solving – Target the areas of most concern by identifying and supporting solutions (including St James Barton/ Bearpit).	Safeguarding marshalls, Ambassadors, Street pastors, vacant property cleansing, drug safety testing	Tap for Bristol, BCRP, Radiolink, DiSC, streetwise officer
Quick and Caring – Respond rapidly to damage and graffiti demonstrating care and regard for the area.	Ambassadors, vacant property cleansing, CGRS deep cleans, graffiti removal, cleansing and repair	

### *Improving the “look and feel”*

Delivering high standards of care and management.	Ambassadors, vacant property cleansing, CGRS deep cleans, cycle removal scheme	Planters
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Cleaner – Enhance current cleansing and waste collection.	Vacant property cleansing, CGRS deep cleans, graffiti removal	
Problem solving - Identify problems and deliver a rapid and co-ordinated response.	Events, Ambassadors, Safeguarding marshalls, Taxi safety initiative, Street pastors, vacant property cleansing, CGRS deep cleans, cycle removal scheme	Tap for Bristol, business liaison manager, streetwise officer
Arts, Culture and Health – Deliver cultural events and seasonal dressing that enhance and support current activities (e.g. trails, music, sporting activity, Christmas lights).	Events, seasonal lighting, Eat Drink Bristol 24/7 campaign, Taxi safety initiative, Art is Central	Lighting trail, planters, festive programme, Old City Street Party
Greener - More planting and innovative floral enhancements (e.g. pocket parks).		Planters
Strong relationships – Care for the BID area by using networks and partnerships to rapidly identify and resolve problems.	Ambassadors, safeguarding marshalls, Street pastors, Caring in Bristol, plus partnerships with Police, Council, Bristol Waste and others	Business liaison manager, Tap for Bristol
Crime reduction – Work with police and council officers to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.	Ambassadors, safeguarding marshalls, events, Taxi safety initiative, Street pastors	BCRP, Radiolink, DiSC

*Improving the Welcome*

Create a lasting impression of a caring and welcoming city centre.	Ambassadors, safeguarding marshalls, seasonal lighting, Eat Drink Bristol 24/7 campaign, Gromit Unleashed II, Street pastors, vacant property cleansing, CGRS deep cleans, drug safety testing, Caring in Bristol partnership	Lighting trail, Tap for Bristol, planters, festive programme, Old City street party
Welcome Team – Introduce Ambassadors/ Rangers to assist levy payers and visitors and promote the care and wellbeing of the city centre.	Ambassadors, safeguarding marshalls, Street pastors	

Better wayfinding – Develop and implement ways to make moving around the city centre simple and engaging.	Gromit Unleashed II	Lighting trail
Improved parking – Champion parking initiatives that benefit, in particular, retail and leisure businesses. Pursue a helpful and positive approach to parking.	Objection to B.C.Council's Parking Proposal	
Caring – Work in partnership to reduce rough sleeping and provide pastoral support for those in need.	Safeguarding marshalls, rough sleeping event, Street pastors, drug safety testing, Caring in Bristol partnership	Tap for Bristol, streetwise officer
Raising Cleansing Standards – Transform the city centre by regular street washing, chewing gum removal and improving the environment by day and by night.	Waste contract, vacant property cleansing, CGRS deep cleans, cycle removal scheme	Streetwise officer
Tailored Services – Same day response for levy payers for cleansing services and street level graffiti removal.	Ambassadors, cleansing contracts	
Visual appeal - Provide seasonal colour through lighting art and planting.	Seasonal lighting, Art is Central	Lighting trail, planters

<i>Promoting Success</i>		
Marketing and promoting the BID area as a safe, healthy and welcoming place to work and to visit for shopping and leisure.	Digital and print media, Taxi safety initiative, website, Eat Drink Bristol 24/7 campaign, Art is Central, Ambassadors welcome events, Park Street and Queen's Road strategy	Lighting trail, planters, Old City street party, new marketing strategy, New marketing strategy, new website and digital platforms, PR
Effective Marketing – Develop professional and co-ordinated marketing strategy that will benefit levy payers across all sectors.	Grand Prix / Let's Ride sponsorship, perception survey, Eat Drink Bristol 24/7 campaign, Art is Central, Park Street and Queen's Road strategy	New marketing and branding strategy, new website and digital platforms, PR



Social media maximisation – Expand the use of social media to provide key information about the BID area and enhance its overall appeal	Social media, social media workshop	New marketing and branding strategy, new website and digital platforms, PR
Promotion – Identify and consistently promote success within the BID area	Digital and print media, Grand Prix / Let's Ride sponsorship, website, perception survey, Park Street and Queen's Road strategy	New marketing and branding strategy, new website and digital platforms, PR
Being on the front foot – Work proactively with levy payers to maximise all promotional opportunities.	Digital and print media, Grand Prix / Let's Ride sponsorship, social media events, website, Eat Drink Bristol 24/7 campaign, Gromit Unleashed II	Business liaison manager, Old City street party, Festive programme

*Always acting in your best interest*

Be the single point of contact for business queries and issues.	Solomon dashboard, social media, website	Business liaison manager, PR
Cost reduction – Develop and promote money saving schemes to reduce business costs for all levy payers.	Digital and print media, collaborative waste contract	
Represent your views – Communicate clearly and loudly the views of businesses and professionally represent the BID area.	Digital and print media, website, perception survey, street trading representations to BCC	Business liaison manager, PR, Mid-term review with member engagement
Networking – Build inter-business networks to encourage everyone to work together and keep money circulating within the BID area.	Digital and print media, Grand Prix / Let's Ride sponsorship, events, website, Eat Drink Bristol 24/7 campaign, Future of High Streets workshop	Business liaison manager, new website and digital platforms, BCRP, Radiolink, DiSC
Local first – Commission services from within the BID area wherever possible.	Waste contract, Incredible Edible Collaboration	Planters, Fiasco (branding) Sprit (PR) Duchess Media (socials)

<p>Responsive, Accountable, Reliable – Deliver a messaging and information sharing interface for immediate two-way communication between BID management and businesses.</p>	<p>Solomon dashboard, Ambassadors, events, website, perception survey</p>	<p>Business liaison manager, new website and digital platforms. BCRP, Radiolink, DiSC</p>
<p>Waste &amp; recycling – Develop and deliver a waste and recycling scheme with target savings of 40%.</p>	<p>Waste contract</p>	
<p>Work experience hub – Develop a clearing house scheme which puts those in need of work experience together with the businesses who support and want to work with young people. This will be delivered in conjunction with existing schemes such as <a href="http://www.bristol.works">www.bristol.works</a> and the wider Learning City initiatives.</p>	<p>Work experience development and engagement</p>	