

**Northampton town centre BID
BID Proposal
and
Business Plan
2016 – 2020**

1. Foreword

Message from the Chair of the Northampton Town Centre Ltd

We all know the last few years have been extremely challenging for businesses across the country but we are now emerging from the deep recession. Lifestyles are changing and the way in which towns and cities are used throughout the country is different to what it was five years ago. Northampton as a whole is rapidly growing and has started to emerge as a town with innovative ideas and new investments.

The BID itself has also undergone change over the last eighteen months with a new approach to its representation of businesses and delivery of projects but with a plan which is no longer fit for purpose. The renewal provides us with an opportunity to create a new business plan which provides a clear framework of activity across all business sectors. This can take advantage of new opportunities as they emerge from changes in lifestyles, the economy and developments in Northampton town centre itself over the next five years.

The BID should be led and driven by businesses but must be able to work collaboratively and constructively with key stakeholders such as the Borough and County Councils and the Police. A BID should be a mechanism which enables the collective voice of the businesses to be heard and influence, as well as deliver projects on its own and with the support of organisations from the public and private sectors who should be considered as real partners in shaping the future of our town. The principle of any BID is to deliver projects and results that would not have happened without it.

This new plan is the result of in-depth discussions with many of you through individual conversations, surveys and workshops by areas. I believe it will take Northampton to a new level, reflecting your business values, being recognised for quality and excellence, locally regionally and nationally, to the benefit of all businesses across all business sectors.

So please familiarise yourself with the plan, get involved in making it happen and ensure that you take full advantage of Northampton as a place to do business, by voting YES for the new BID business plan in October.

Jessica D'Aulerio
Tangerine Red
Chair of Northampton Town Centre Ltd

2. Executive Summary

BID background

Business Improvement Districts are created by businesses and organisations which come together to collaborate on initiatives that improve the location where they trade or do business. Business Improvement Districts are driven by participating businesses - who work together to draw up a business plan which is voted on and, if agreed, is then funded through a levy based on business rateable values, as well as leveraging in additional funding where possible for investment into the delivery of projects for the benefit of businesses.

This levy is collected by the council and paid directly to the Business Improvement District company: the Northampton Town Centre Ltd (the BID Company for Northampton). The Northampton Town Centre Ltd is a not for profit company which is and will be accountable to the businesses in Northampton to manage the business improvement district business plan.

The benefits of a Northampton Business Improvement District

In 2010 businesses in the town voted in favour of a Business Improvement District (BID) plan to support businesses. It was at a time when this country faced an economic recession like no other. The BID should be a mechanism to bring businesses together and act as a collective voice and develop the town as somewhere different and unique to visit and work.

There should be a vision for a BID which sets itself a clear direction and purpose to which all stakeholders in Northampton can relate and enable everyone to work together collaboratively and effectively.

There is a lot to do and there are many opportunities which a BID can exploit to the benefit of businesses and organisations across all sectors. This new business plan is different from the first one in that it has a clear goal for the town to build on its unique strengths, enable businesses to share in the promotion and celebration of Northampton's assets and attract new businesses to the town to increase its overall attractiveness as a great place to live, work and do business. It will provide benefits to all business sectors. The plan has been developed to ensure that it:

- is balanced to cover all business sectors
- builds on the success to date
- clearly defines the role of the BID
- seeks to create and take advantage of new opportunities
- has focussed activity but remains relevant for next five years
- has deliverable and achievable objectives

It takes account of the changes which have occurred over the last five years and clearly lays out a business-led programme of investment to tackle issues identified by businesses with the aim of creating a positive and more profitable trading environment to potentially benefit all business sectors. To achieve this, the BID levy will be in line with the current BID at 1% of rateable value and 0.75% for those businesses inside shopping malls with fixed levy charges for lower rateable values, rising in line with inflation each year for five years.

The Area

The Northampton Business Improvement District covers the area within the ring road bounded by St Peters Way and Victoria Promenade in the south, Horseshoe Street and Horsemarket in the west, Upper and Lower Mounts in the north and York Rd and Cheyne Walk in the east.

The Vision

Through this business-led programme of investment the vision is:

‘To develop the town into a quality destination with a clear identity, which provides opportunities for premium retail niches, specialists and independents, which respects and nurtures its professional services, celebrates its attractive, diverse leisure and cultural offer, builds upon the town’s heritage and looks to the future.’

Strategic Objectives and Projects

The programme of investment will be delivered through the three strategic objectives and their related projects.

Promotion of Northampton town centre and its businesses

1. To **develop, build awareness and promote, locally and regionally, the identity** of Northampton town centre and the strengths of its different business sectors: retail and health and beauty, culture and leisure and professional services

Develop the Northampton town centre experience

2. To **create a sense of ‘place’** for visitors and people working in the town centre to enjoy

Business Growth and Investment in Northampton town centre

3. To **encourage growth, development and investment of businesses** which complement and build on the strengths of Northampton town centre.

Costs and funding

The budgeted income over the five year period of the BID is approximately £1.5 million. The yearly income will be made up of some £300,000 from the levy revenues and a sum averaging around £25,000 from voluntary private and public sector contributions.

Subject to a successful vote in October 2015, the new BID will start on 1 January 2016.

3. What is a Business Improvement District?

A Business Improvement District (BID) is a precisely defined geographical area within which the businesses have voted to invest collectively in local improvements to enhance their trading environment.

BIDs were enabled by parliament through the Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004. This legislation was based on the experience of some twenty years of successful BID activity in America and Canada. Since 2004, over 200 BIDs have been proposed and approved by business communities in England and Wales. These include Derby, Nottingham, Leamington Spa, Coventry, Bristol, Rugby, Birmingham, Bedford and Lincoln and 11 London boroughs.

There are a number of BID areas which have been operating for more than five years and have gone through a renewal ballot. In most cases those BIDs going on to a second term have received an even greater endorsement in the vote than they did the first time. BIDs have brought significant improvements to the trading environment of the businesses based in these locations. Further details are available on the Association of Town and City Management web site: www.atcm.org.

The lifetime of the BID is prescribed by the Regulations and is set at no more than 5 years. It is possible for a BID to be extended by proposing a new Business Plan at the end of the BID lifetime for a fresh formal vote by the businesses.

The purposes of a BID are to provide new or expanded works and services or environmental enhancements within the prescribed BID area, funded via a BID Levy charge. All services/improvements will be additional to those already provided by Northampton Borough Council or Northamptonshire County Council. This charge is payable by non-domestic rate payers and is collected by the Council in much the same way as business rates. The manner in which the BID Levy charge is calculated is defined in Section 12

All works and services will be contracted by the Northampton Town Centre BID Company, Northampton Town Centre Ltd, the BID body for the BID area. The objectives and aspirations of the Northampton Town Centre BID are set out in this BID Proposal and Business Plan.

This business plan has been prepared in line with best practice and guidelines of the 'Industry Criteria and Guidance Notes' prepared for the British Retail Consortium (BRC) and the Inter-Bank Rating Forum (IBRF).

A set of definitions for terms used throughout this document is contained in Appendix 1.

The vote

In order for the proposals set out in this Business Plan to go ahead, more than 50 per cent of business ratepayers who vote have to vote 'yes'. Those in favour also have to represent at least 50 per cent of the combined 'rateable values' of those who vote. If these two criteria are met, the Business Plan is activated and all businesses in the area concerned will be required to pay the levy.

The persons entitled to vote, and be liable for the levy, are the ratepayers of non-domestic premises in the Business Improvement District. Properties with a rateable value of less than £5,000 will be excluded from the vote and levy.

The council's Returning Officer will be the ballot holder for the Business Improvement District vote, Northampton Borough Council's Chief Executive Officer, David Kennedy. Details of voting procedures and how you can confirm persons entitled to vote can be found by

contacting the Northampton Returning Officer by telephone on 0300 330 7000 or by emailing elecereg@northampton.gov.uk.

Alteration of arrangements

The Business Improvement District, its boundaries, business plan and the levy percentage cannot be altered without an alteration ballot, although its board can adjust projects and spend as they feel appropriate, provided the basic tenets and budgets are not compromised.

The levy

A levy of 1% of rateable value (RV) is proposed for businesses with an RV of £10,000 or more and a levy of 0.75% of rateable value (RV) is proposed for businesses inside shopping malls with an RV of £10,000 or more which fall within the levy criteria laid down in Section 12. Those businesses which fall within the levy criteria laid down in Section 12 with a rateable value of £5,000 or more and less than a rateable value of £10,000 will have a charge of £100 and £75 if inside a shopping mall.

This levy arrangement will generate around £1.5 million of ring fenced funding over the five year life of the BID and will also be used to lever in additional funds where possible adding a further £125,000 over the life of the BID. This will be used to fund the projects identified in this Business Plan.

Duration

Our proposal is for the Northampton Business Improvement District plan to operate for five years and to commence, on the 1st January 2016. After five years, in 2021, it can be extended or renewed – but only after being subject to a further renewal ballot.

Timescales

Action Point	Action	2015
1	Establish Register of Businesses as specified in BID proposal	End of May
2	Notice by BID Proposer to Billing Authority & Secretary of State of intention to hold ballot (at least 84 days before Ballot Holder requested to hold ballot Action Point 4)	Wed 3 rd June
3	BID Proposer requests Billing Authority to instruct Ballot Holder to hold a Ballot (BID proposals need to be completed)	Wed 26 th Aug
4	Billing Authority formally requests Ballot Holder to hold ballot	Thur 27 th Aug
5	Ballot Holder issues Letter to Business Ratepayers to give information about the ballot and identify named person to receive ballot paper (latest date is 42 days before Ballot Day)	Target date: Thurs 3 rd Sept
6	Ballot Holder publishes Notice of Ballot (latest date = 42 days before ballot day) also to send copy to Secretary of State, a copy of the published notice of ballot, as per Schedule 2 3(d) of the 2004 Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations	Target date: Thurs 10 th Sept Latest date: Thurs 17 th Sept
7	Ballot Holder Issues ballot papers (at least 28 days before Ballot Day)	Latest Date: Thurs 1 st Oct
8	Last day to appoint a proxy (tenth day before Ballot Day)	Mon 19 th Oct
9	Replacement of lost and spoilt ballot papers (from the fourth working day before the Ballot Day)	From Sat 24 th Oct
10	Ballot Day (up to 5pm)	Thurs 29 th Oct
11	Count and announcement of result	Fri 30 th Oct

It is intended that all businesses in the Northampton Business Improvement District area will benefit from the BID initiatives, regardless of whether they have voted in the ballot or not, or are due to be charged a levy, or not, assuming the ballot is successful.

4. Northampton BID - The first five years

Since 2010, some businesses in Northampton have disappeared but Northampton has not been alone. In that time across the country, over 150 medium to large national retailers have closed over 4,000 shops including familiar names such as Phones 4U and La Senza. Even in the first half of 2014, across the country, store closures outpaced store openings.

Northampton lost the House of Fraser due to challenges in securing a commitment to a long term lease but has been replaced by expanded store formats of Primark and Next in the Grosvenor Centre.

A growing influence of online shopping has led to retailers halting store expansion and we are starting to see the full effects of the digital revolution and consequent change in customer behaviour play out on the high street. Although the rate of growth of online sales is slowing, it still far outstrips store sales growth for most retailers. Fashion retailers were among the hardest hit. This change in the way in which towns and cities are used has resulted in a decline of footfall nationally between 2008 and 2013 of 26%.

Northampton BID was created in the midst of the deep economic recession with businesses coming together to use the BID in a positive way to create a business community and to try to address some of these challenges. The BID was developed from the original town centre partnership and was seen as an extension to the original town centre plan.

Northampton has seen considerable change in the last five years, much of it around the edge and outside the town-centre itself but some has occurred inside the BID area including the new bus station and changes in traffic flow with the re-opening of the middle of Abington Street.

The BID has done many things over the last four years to try and address the experience and perception of the town centre through investing heavily in Northampton in Bloom, PCSO's and events such as the Music Festival. However it is clear, that despite these activities, from the research undertaken for the new BID business plan, the town centre lacks a sense of identity and is losing out to retail parks at the edge of town and even smaller market towns such as Market Harborough as well as the more retail dominated centre of Milton Keynes.

Northampton has strengths including its cultural offer, its heritage, a strong specialist independent retail and leisure offer and a large open air market, but these remain understated and the town centre fails to tap into the opportunity provided by its relatively diverse and wealthy catchment area. Despite considerable investment and drive from the Borough Council, the lack of clarity and vision for the town centre also means that it is not easy to retain the confidence of existing businesses or attract new investors and businesses and develop and build a town centre which is distinctive and economically strong and vibrant.

This time of renewal for the BID provides a new opportunity for businesses to address this challenge and work with the Borough Council to shape the future of the town centre.

The benefits of the new BID

So, what will happen in the next five years?

Over the last year or so there has been a steady improvement in the economic situation globally and nationally. Lifestyles continue to change and influence the way in which we use our time and spend our money. Technology continues to develop and change the way we live, work and use our town and city centres both as individuals and as businesses.

In Northampton, the Borough Council has lead innovative and exciting changes to the town centre and its surrounding area with the Enterprise Zone and new investments appearing in the form of the Railway Station and the Innovation Centre and the Bus Station, the Errol Flynn film house, a new hotel on Albion Street Car Park and plans for the old Vulcan Works to become a centre for Creative Industries in the area being developed as the Cultural Quarter.

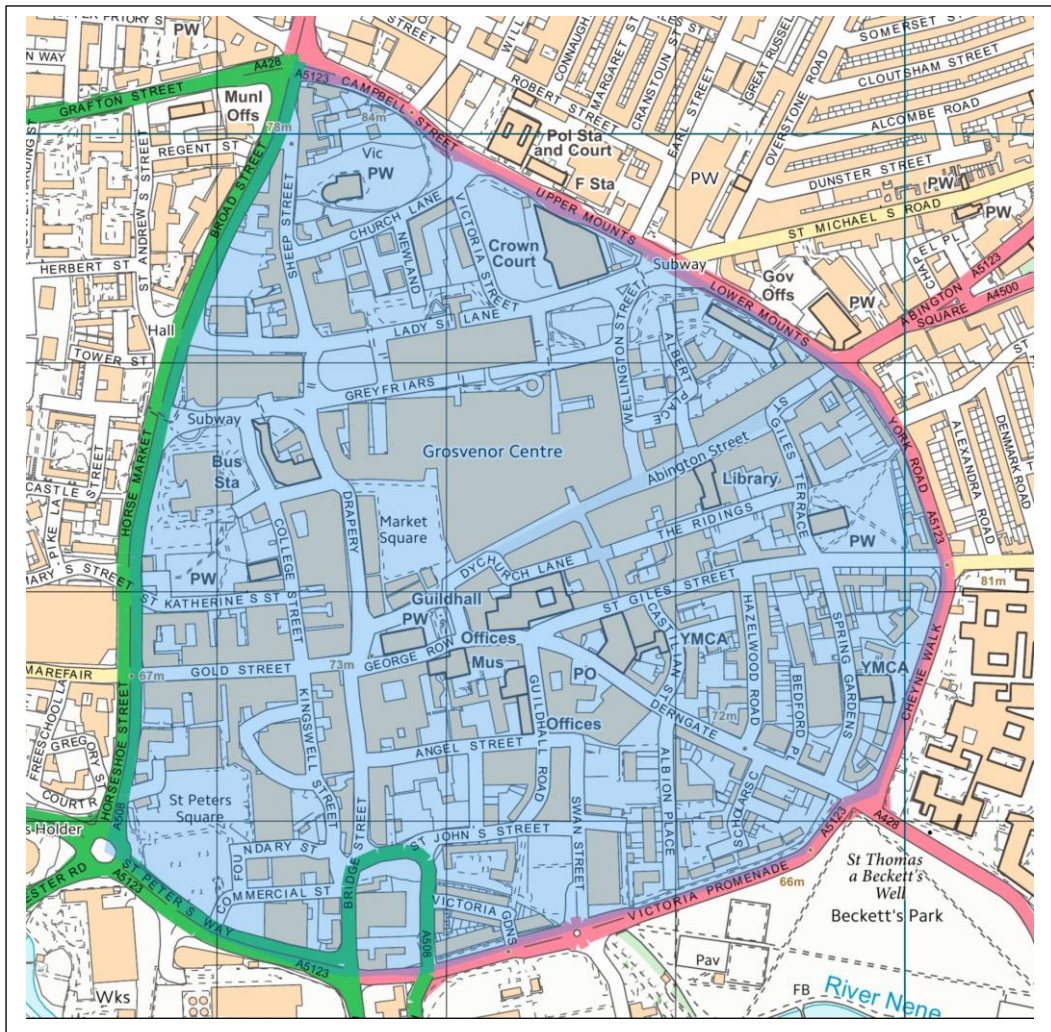
The University has completed the new student accommodation for 460 students in St Johns and the Northamptonshire County Council is well underway with its new offices for 2,000 people in the Cultural Quarter, all helping to secure the use of the town centre for office based employment and the presence of residential customers to enjoy Northampton's cultural, retail and leisure offer.

By 2018, over half the population in at least 500 towns across the country, will be frequent e-commerce users. Nationally, e-commerce already accounts for 16% of all retail sales and will increase by 18% this year against 2014. In the UK sales via mobile phone are rising dramatically, and many retailers are reporting that at least half their on-line sales are now via mobile devices.

We need to think about ways in which we can work together: to create multi-media opportunities for smaller businesses, to develop the profile of the cultural and leisure offer in Northampton, to highlight the heritage of the town centre and create an experience which is unique and distinctively 'Northampton'.

We recognise all these changes within our own businesses and make changes accordingly. However by working together through a Business Improvement District there is even greater potential to face the challenges and take advantage of the new opportunities.

5. Where will the Northampton BID operate?



The shaded area represents the full extent of the Northampton Business Improvement District. A list of roads and streets within the BID area is shown in Appendix 2.

A full list of streets within the BID area is shown in Appendix 2. All non-domestic hereditaments within the BID area will, if the BID is approved, be liable for the BID levy (as defined in section 12). The BID covers those businesses, whose rateable value is £5,000 or greater. Thus banks, building societies, car parks, Council facilities, restaurants, clubs and pubs, estate agents, leisure operators, recruitment agents, retail and health and beauty outlets, solicitors, hotels, museums, the bus station and transport and travel agents and all other non-domestic hereditaments are included within the BID and will, subject to the detailed levy criteria in Section 12, contribute to the BID's collective funding and activities flowing from the combined budget.

The BID area includes any smaller business areas located off these roads or streets that are located within the boundary of the defined BID area and any other road or street in the shaded area illustrated on the map, even if they are not listed in Appendix 2 and will include any new road or street which is developed or created during the life of the BID which is within the shaded area illustrated on the map..

6. Statutory and other services provided by Northampton Borough and Northamptonshire County Councils

Council's Support for Northampton BID

Northampton Borough Council and Northamptonshire County Council fully support the Northampton BID. In particular, they endorse the fundamental principle of additionality within the BID by agreeing to ensure that any change to existing services, due to budgetary constraints from either Council does not disproportionately effect the Northampton BID area. Thus, in line with BID legislation, BID services within the Northampton BID will be additional to (not in substitution for) those provided by both Councils.

The Council's commitment to the Northampton BID and the working relationships between the Northampton Borough Council and Northamptonshire County Council and Northampton BID Company are set out in complementary documents agreed between the Councils and Northampton BID Company.

- Memorandums of Understanding and an Operating Agreement which define the working relationship between the Councils and the BID Company, Northampton Town Centre Ltd and set out the Councils' Operational Support to the BID on a number of specific issues
- A set of statements of existing baselines services, each defining the benchmark for a specific service provided by the Councils and other public authorities to the businesses in the area

Council services for business

Thus businesses will continue to benefit from all the statutory council services provided for the benefit of all stakeholders in Northampton town centre (cleaning, lighting, access, safety and highways maintenance). In addition, the Councils deliver certain discretionary services either directly or indirectly both for businesses in general and for individual businesses. Details of these services are provided on the dedicated business pages of the Councils' web sites.

Individual Baseline Statements

In full support of the above commitments, Heads of Service within the Councils will draw up Baseline Statements on the specific services they are responsible for. These documents define the benchmarks for the provision of these services and how these will be measured.

The Baseline Services are defined below:

- Licensing
- Grounds & Trees Maintenance
- Highways & Lighting Maintenance
- Policing
- Community Safety
- CCTV Monitoring
- Business Crime prevention radio scheme
- Trading Standards
- Environmental Health and Licensing
- Signage
- Parking
- Public Transport
- Roads & Highway Maintenance

- Street Cleansing & Grounds Maintenance (fly posting, graffiti removal, street furniture maintenance, gully emptying)
- Waste Services (waste collection, trade waste)
- Christmas / Festive Lights, Christmas Marketing, Activities & Promotion
- Promotion and Events
- Markets

The process of creating the baseline statements proves valuable to both the service providers and the BID Company. The development of these partnerships and the additional focus on the services provided in the area, will give tangible benefits over and above those derived from the projects outlined below. Also by defining baseline services, it becomes possible to review their delivery, allows the BID to assess the impact upon delivery of its own services on a regular basis and provides an opportunity for the Councils to assess whether their service delivery is effective.

BID legislation requirements for the Councils

The BID regulations also determine that the Northampton Borough Council meets the following obligations:

- Conducting, through the council's Returning Officer, the formal BID vote in accordance with current BID legislation and procedures
- Assuming a positive outcome to the BID vote, collecting the BID levy defined in the BID Business Plan from Northampton businesses and transferring the levy sums direct to the Northampton BID Company. The Council will continue to make a charge for the BID levy collection and will transfer the levy sums to Northampton BID Company within 30 days of collecting it.
- Pay the appropriate BID levy set out in the Business Plan in respect of all its own hereditaments within the Northampton BID area.

The Northampton and Northamptonshire Councils' support for the BID will also take practical shape in the following specific ways:

- Continue to provide a Councillor from the Northampton Borough Council from the Cabinet to sit as a Director on the Northampton Town Centre Ltd Board
- Continue to provide Senior Council Officers to act as advisers to the Northampton Town Centre Ltd Board and to provide a business-focused dynamic link on all BID matters with senior Council staff. .

Monitoring and Review

Both Councils are committed to the regular monitoring of the operation of the BID Operating Agreement and reviewing its effectiveness in conjunction with Northampton BID Company. This will be carried out as follows:

- An annual review of each of the specific services for which a Baseline Statement is shown above. This will be led by the respective Head of Service who will provide an account to Northampton BID Company of how the service commitments have been actually delivered during the period and if necessary update the service levels to reflect the services each will provide in the following year.
- An annual review of the overall effectiveness of the Operating Agreement. This will be led by the Cabinet member with responsibility for the BID and will reflect the Cabinet's commitment to address any shortfalls and propose measures to evolve the partnerships to the mutual benefit of the Councils and Northampton BID Company. These reviews will be scheduled to best effect for the Council's and Northampton BID Company's yearly budgeting cycles.

Monitoring of basic service provision

Both Councils are committed to ensuring that their statutory and discretionary services are delivered to the area for the duration of the BID so that the activities of the BID will be totally additional and complementary. Provision of Baseline Statements will allow the BID Company to regularly appraise the delivery of core services and compare them with the details stated in the statements. From experience elsewhere we know this has an impact on delivery and helps to guarantee that money provided to the authorities via the business rates mechanism is targeted appropriately and well spent. This means that local businesses have some influence over Business Rates investment in their area and the effectiveness of local authority service provision.

7. The Research and Consultation Process

Background

This year has seen extensive research undertaken across a range of stakeholders to ensure that the plan which has emerged has an in depth understanding of the views and aspirations of the businesses in the area as well as an appreciation of the perceptions of those who visit and also work in the area.

Key activities

The research encouraged participation from all businesses across the town centre:

- All businesses (over 800 in number) in the proposed BID area were mailed survey forms and asked to complete them seeking their opinions on a variety of issues.
- All businesses were included in mail shots and publicity including BID newsletters and frequently asked questions.
- Approximately 25% of businesses participated in detailed one to one interviews.
- Besides a launch and information event at the start of the project, there were several open area meetings held for businesses across the town centre to discuss their vision for the Northampton BID and the challenges they have and opportunities they see for developing their business in the town centre.
- Businesses were invited to submit their views via letters, e bulletins and the BID website.
- The Northampton Hosts have promoted and prompted businesses to get involved in the area meetings, the one-one meetings and complete the survey.
- Active participation by business representatives from the Northampton BID Board in all aspects of the development of this plan.

The research also considered key plans and strategies which cover the town centre to inform the activities of the BID business plan.

What were the aims of the research?

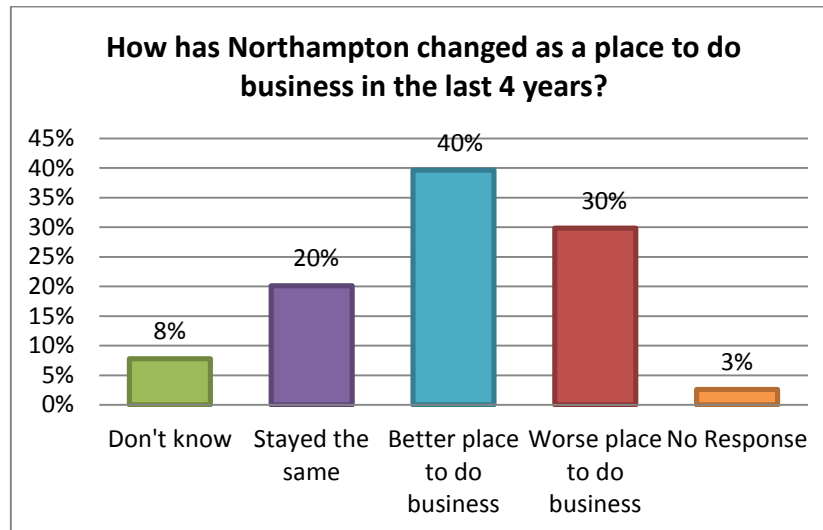
The objective of the research was to:

- Identify the key issues which directly impact upon all businesses in the area across all business sectors and to develop and achieve remedies that help businesses achieve their own internal objectives
- Identify any specific issues and opportunities by area to ensure that impacts on businesses of the different environments were fully appreciated.
- Understand current perceptions of Northampton and identify those issues which would affect how long people stay in the area and how much they might spend and then generate solutions to them.
- The survey form was comprehensive and probing, asking open questions as well as providing quantitative assessment through multiple choice answers and ranking of opportunities and challenges.

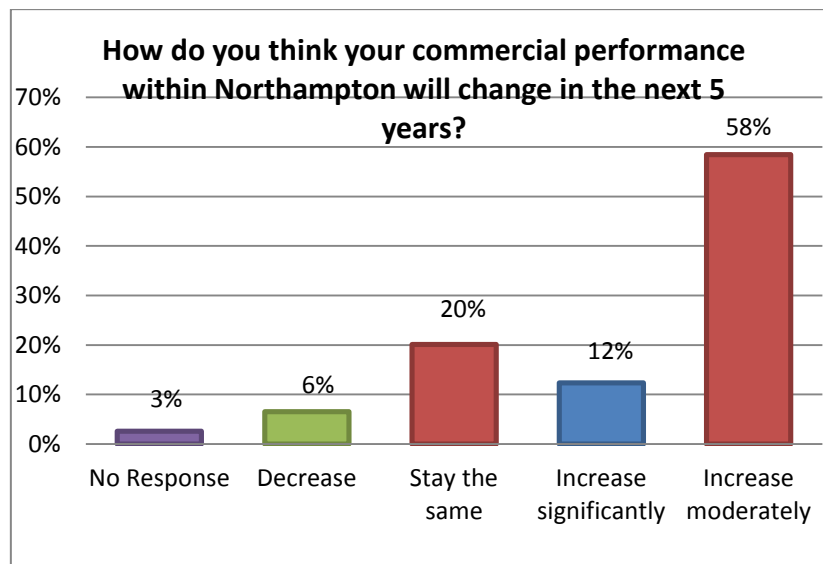
Research results

Business confidence in the town centre

Despite the deep recession and a slow recovery 40% of businesses in Northampton consider that the town centre has become a better place to do business over the last four years with 20% saying that it has stayed the same. Although this is encouraging a third of businesses still say that the town centre has become a worse place to do business.



When asked about their anticipated future trading performance there was a distinct level of confidence about their future in Northampton with 58% of businesses saying that they anticipate a moderate increase in levels of commercial performance over the next five years and 12% saying that they anticipate significant growth.



Developing the town centre's identity and influencing the future

'Developing town centre's identity and branding to attract more visitors' was the most important activity identified by 92% of businesses as having the potential to make the most difference. This was also the aspect of the workshops where there was most discussion and where businesses identified the architecture and heritage, the shoe industry and relationships with the motor industry as being particular aspects of the town centre which should be promoted and developed.

It was clear that there was a lot of passion from the businesses about the town centre but also frustration that the town centre could make more of its assets to attract more visitors, a broader range of demographic profile from the local catchment area and more businesses to the town centre.

The activity ranked seventh in terms of helping existing businesses was 'to provide support to new businesses moving in'. However it was clear through discussion with the businesses when ranking this activity, that they saw this as a way of improving and encouraging a better tenant mix rather than providing direct subsidy or business advice to new businesses. Many businesses expressed a strong view that there should not be support to new businesses which creates an unfair competitive advantage and the support should be more of a facilitation role, aimed at promoting and highlighting vacant property opportunities and targeting particular types of businesses to develop the breadth and depth of the retail and leisure offer in Northampton. This specific activity was ranked the fourth most helpful activity.

This was underlined by the fact that the highest level of all responses to the open question 'what would make the strongest contribution to improving your Northampton's business performance now and in the future' and represented 21% of all responses, relating directly to improving the quality of the tenant mix for retail and leisure in the town centre.

This is supported by key reports and studies over the last few years which are still relevant today. The first by caci in 2008 'Retail Strategy for Northampton Town Centre' which recommended that:

The town's retail needs to develop into a quality centre, with a strong retail circuit, providing opportunities for premium retail niches, specialists and independents alongside exceptional public realm and heritage that will provide Northampton's shoppers an outstanding retail experience throughout the town.

The more recent and updated 2012 report by Roger Tym and Partners' 'West Northamptonshire Retail Capacity' which recommended that:

Support the development of higher order comparison goods floorspace of up to 37,900 sq.m net in Northampton town centre in the period 2016-2026, to meet its qualitative deficiencies to ensure that the centre responds to competition from out of centre floorspace in Northampton and other regional centres. Applications for comparison goods development prior to this period within the town centre should be treated on their individual merits. Improve and develop the retail circuit, ensuring sufficient connectivity and integration between the different elements of the centre.

Although the caci Retail Strategy is potentially considered 'old' but in reality the town centre's retail mix has not moved on since 2009 and if anything it has deteriorated. Therefore there are many principles which still apply and many of the comments made by businesses today reflect the observations and recommendation made by caci.

caci's Retail Strategy made the following observations about implementing its recommendations:

Implementing the Retail Strategy

6.79 Because no single body or organisation has the power to implement the above proposed shopping strategy, implementation will necessitate a very strong partnership approach.

6.80 Implementing change through partnership working involves less top-down direction, but creating reward structure for positive participation. For this reason, the purpose of the

plan is not to prescribe and enforce change, but to provide a basis and rationale for mutually beneficial action.

This has clear resonance with the second and third most important initiatives which businesses identified as making the most difference to their business performance. They were for the BID to: 'Provide a strong collective voice to influence key strategic issues' and to 'Lobby the local authority on proposals/actions which impact on business and trading environment'. It was clear that there were many businesses who felt that their views are not being heard and that the BID should act as a collective voice to influence the local authorities in the way plans are implemented and the town centre is developed.

The caci Retail Strategy underlines the importance of this view when talking about the implementation of plans and strategies in the town centre it stated that:

6.85 there is a danger that funding is spent in a way that appears to impose change on stakeholders, rather than be applied to schemes that stakeholders pro-actively support. For this reason, it will be important that funding is directed through the TCP, and awarded to schemes that have achieved either sufficient backing from affected stakeholders and/or been proposed by the relevant stakeholders themselves.

The businesses are frustrated as they do not feel that their views have been heard and now that the Town Centre Partnership (TCP) has been dissolved, they see the BID is the route for this. There is clearly a role for the BID to play in working with the local authorities to ensure that the implementation of initiatives both consider existing business views and conform to a commonly supported plan and direction for the town centre.

Developing and promoting the experience

Ranked below the need for vision and involvement by businesses in shaping the future of the town centre were the activities which are needed to develop the sense of identity and manage and change perceptions of the town centre through improving the experience and promoting its assets and strengths.

The initiatives which ranked relatively highly from a business perspective, were the experienced based initiatives and in particular those relating to safety and security. This included the Hosts, the NRCI Rangers, PCSO's, Christmas Wardens and CCTV as key elements in the support of preventing and deterring even low levels of anti-social behaviour and crime which potentially have a detrimental impact upon the visitor experience. In fact the activities relating to crime and safety represented a third of all the top combined activities (i.e. potential new activities and current activities) below the key ones relating to the town centre's identity and influencing the future.

However it was also clear from the workshops that crime is not a general issue but was a challenge in specific areas and businesses were keen to ensure that the general situation of relatively low levels of crime and anti-social behaviour is maintained. It was also a clear view expressed both through the workshops and the surveys that the BID should be working with partners and only adding additional support where needed and not providing the core needs of tackling this issue.

In the workshops, the heritage of the town centre came out as a key aspect of Northampton which should be used to help develop its distinctiveness and identity, in particular, the boot and shoe industry. More than 53% of businesses surveyed said that 'Improving the appearance of derelict, vacant or old buildings' was either important or very important in terms of an activity seen as helping their performance and should be used as an asset in developing the town centre's identity.

Businesses also recognised that the different parts of the town centre have different needs and it was important to ensure that any BID activity took account of these differences and ensured that no-one felt 'left-out'. In turn businesses also expressed the view that these differences were also assets to the town centre as a whole which if developed could contribute to the development of Northampton's identity as a town.

Potential activities ranked by most potential benefit to businesses.	
Developing town's identity and branding to attract more visitors	92%
Provide a strong collective voice to influence key strategic issues	87%
Lobbying local authority on proposals/actions which impact on business and trading environment.	87%
Marketing to target and attract new businesses/ investors	85%
Dedicated website and social media to target more customers/clients	81%
Provide business support for new businesses moving into BID area	77%
Specialist markets	74%
Improve parking experience	73%
Extension of current CCTV monitoring and coverage	66%
More Police Support Daytime	66%
Local networking and initiatives to encourage more local trading	66%
Marketing campaigns for retailers and leisure/hospitality venues	64%
Improved business crime prevention scheme	62%
More events and animation in the streets and open spaces	56%
Improved appearance of derelict, vacant or old buildings	53%
More/improved Christmas/Festive Lights	52%
Improved bus and public transport arrangements	51%
A dedicated press facility for individual business initiatives	49%
Develop loyalty scheme and data capture for businesses	49%
Extra cleaning of the roads and streets	48%
Improved management of streets, market square and open spaces	47%
Business to business marketing campaigns for professional services	44%
Improvements to the condition of roads and footpaths	44%
Improved signage and visitor information	43%
More Police Support Night time	43%
Provide links to training providers for skills development	39%
Exchange of best-working-practice forums, workshops and training	38%
Improved lighting in certain areas	34%

Other initiatives which ranked highly in terms of helping businesses were still experienced based activities which go towards making the town centre look and feel good such as events and markets, Northampton in Bloom, keeping the town centre clean and Christmas lights and trees. However with the businesses had clear views about ensuring that the BID should not be carrying the costs for all of these activities and felt that the BID has a role in influencing partners in targeting the use of their resources in particular ways. In particular this related to policing and cleaning.

The over-riding theme which emerged from discussions with businesses, particularly in the one-to-one meetings, is that marketing and event activities need to be part of a cohesive plan. This clearly has a direct bearing on the need for clear vision and creating a sense of place which was identified as top issues to be addressed. One of the key concerns on all aspects of marketing from businesses was the opportunities to feature and receive support are open and fair to all businesses, all business sectors and parts of the town centre.

8. The BID's response

Following our extensive research three key project areas of the Northampton BID have emerged reflecting the key issues and opportunities identified by the businesses. The activities within each of the project areas have been specifically designed to address and take advantage of these.

The overriding concern from businesses was to ensure that Northampton starts to develop a sense of its own identity and through this raise its profile so that its businesses are recognised much more and the town centre can benefit from the investments already made.

Despite the fact that Northampton has a strong presence of quality specialist independent retail businesses and a solid range of mid-market national chains and a market, the retail profile of the town centre is understated. The BID is well placed to develop this, creating a coherent marketing plan and targeting, in particular those wealthier elements of the local demographic in the catchment area.

Most professional service businesses in the business-to-business market, by their very nature have a market which reaches well beyond any catchment area for a town. It is important therefore to raise the profile of these Northampton businesses at a regional and national level in a targeted and cost effective way. This in turn will benefit all businesses across all sectors being associated with Northampton's values and identity as a town.

Northampton is made up of a number of areas with their own characteristics. The Cultural Quarter is already at a point where it has its own signage and is rapidly building upon its credentials as a recognised centre for culture and leisure, surrounded by specialist retail independents. The Grosvenor Centre has also recently had some refurbishment and there has been investment in the Market Square.

However there is more which can be done to enhance and build these and other areas such as the area around Gold Street which some refer to as part of the Castle Quarter, into even more distinctive parts of the town centre. The BID has a role to play in developing the identity and awareness of these different parts of the town centre all with their own different strengths and experiences. This can be done by both using its collective voice to influence other key stakeholders in the development of these areas and direct delivery of projects as part of a cohesive BID business plan which serves the needs of the businesses in all these areas.

It was clearly evident from the comments and feedback from businesses that Northampton BID as a collective voice now needs to use its success and have more confidence in itself when negotiating and working with partners and other stakeholders in the delivery of its aims and objectives. It should also encourage collaboration between businesses across all sectors and use and build upon the assets of Northampton.

Northampton businesses have considerable confidence in the future. Many have commented that the BID now needs build upon this, working with the businesses to define a new era of collaboration and partnerships which bring benefits and add value to all those associated with Northampton and which could not have been achieved by any one business working on its own.

Your business stands to benefit from these additional projects and activities which have been identified by businesses and visitors to Northampton as crucial to the future of business success in this area.

- to build on the assets of Northampton as a destination and as a place and develop an identity which sets it apart from other towns and cities.
- To increase the awareness of all the different parts of the town centre and encouraging people to explore and discover all that Northampton town centre has to offer
- to encourage growth, development and investment of businesses which complement and build on the strengths of Northampton

How will the delivery be monitored?

Monitoring and measuring the performance and effectiveness of the BID activities is an integral and essential part of the plan. Businesses need to be confident that their levy money is being invested as productively as possible to maximise results.

The effectiveness of the measures undertaken will be gauged by key performance indicators monitored and relevant for each project area, including footfall, customer surveys, business surveys, photographic evidence, car parking usage and retail turnover movement.

9. Vision and Objectives

Assuming a positive BID vote by a majority of businesses by both rateable value and number, BID operations will start on 1st January 2016 and will continue for a total of 5 years.

The Vision

Through this business-led programme of investment the vision is:

‘To develop the town centre into a quality destination with a clear identity, which provides opportunities for good quality retail niches, specialists and independents, which respects and nurtures its professional services, celebrates its attractive, diverse leisure and cultural offer, builds upon the town centre’s heritage and looks to the future.’

Strategic Objectives and Projects

The programme of investment will be delivered through the three strategic objectives and their related projects.

Promotion of Northampton town centre and its businesses

1. To **develop, build awareness and promote, locally and regionally, the identity** of Northampton town centre and the strengths of its different business sectors: retail and health and beauty, culture and leisure and professional services

Develop the Northampton town centre experience

2. To **create a sense of ‘place’** for visitors and people working in the town centre to enjoy

Business Growth and Investment in Northampton town centre

3. To **encourage growth, development and investment of businesses** which complement and build on the strengths of the Northampton town centre.

Objectives, Activities and Results

Objective 1: Promotion of Northampton town centre and its businesses

To **develop, build awareness and promote, locally and regionally, the identity** of Northampton town centre and the strengths of its different business sectors: retail and health and beauty, culture and leisure and professional services

Amount the BID will spend:

An initial budget of £90,000 p.a, increasing to £95,000 by year 5 – a total of £462,000 over five years.

Activities

- a. Work with all stakeholders to define, develop and promote the identity of Northampton town centre which reflects the strengths, characteristics and heritage of the town centre and creates a sense of pride in the town centre by its businesses and local population.
- b. Define, develop and promote the identities of different parts of Northampton town centre which reflect the different strengths and characteristics of each part of the BID area, linked to the development of a common identity for Northampton and aimed at maximising pedestrian flow around and across the whole of the town centre
- c. Develop the use of traditional marketing, PR, digital and social media channels to increase the awareness of Northampton as a town, its business sectors, its events

and all it has to offer, in a way which is consistent with its identity, to visitors and businesses alike.

- d. Develop effective communications between businesses to promote awareness of different issues which may affect trading conditions, opportunities and their immediate environment.
- e. Act as a collective voice and represent business interests with all stakeholders to influence any aspect of marketing and promotion of the town centre and its businesses to ensure that it is in line with the BID business plan objectives.

Retail and Health and Beauty:

- f. Design and coordinate campaigns which focus on key trading periods, highlight the particular strengths of this sector in Northampton and take advantage of new trading opportunities.
- g. Develop promotional schemes for people using the town centre's businesses which captures, market intelligence, develops marketing capability for the businesses and the BID and attracts even more shoppers and clients.

Culture and Leisure

- h. Raise the profile and awareness of the quality and diversity of the culture and leisure economy in Northampton town centre increasing the numbers of visitors enjoying this aspect of the town centre at all times of day, evening and night.
- i. Work with partner organisations to ensure that there is greater integration and coordination between key events and culture and leisure businesses across the town centre to develop the visitor experience and improves benefits to businesses.

Professional Services

- j. Develop specific campaigns to enable the professional service businesses in Northampton to raise their profile locally and regionally and benefit from the association with the Northampton town centre identity.
- k. Create events to support professional service businesses to promote themselves and highlight particular sector strengths to other businesses in Northampton and beyond.

Measures and Results:

- Use of the names of the different parts of the town centre being used by other organisations, businesses and stakeholders in the media and other information about the town centre
- Footfall to the area which is stronger than national high street trends
- Increased occupancy levels in hotels in Northampton
- Increased number of active users of digital media promoting the Northampton and its businesses.
- Increased levels of sales activity across the whole of the town centre
- Positive media exposure locally, regionally and nationally measured through numbers of articles, publications, click-throughs on digital media and value through using advertising value equivalent. (a.v.e)
- Numbers of businesses actively engaged in BID activities and the use of and their association with Northampton in their own marketing and promotion.
- Increased numbers of people visiting Northampton from wealthier postal code districts within the catchment area

Objective 2: Develop the Northampton town centre experience

To **create a sense of 'place'** for visitors and people working in the town centre to enjoy

Amount the BID will spend:

An initial budget of £107,000 p.a, increasing to £113,000 by year 5 – a total of £550,000 over five years.

Activities

- a. Support and encourage the development and implementation of initiatives which protect and enhance the buildings and other physical attributes of Northampton town centre, in ways which are consistent within the different areas of the town centre and which complement and develop the different characteristics of these areas.
- b. Work with landlords, agents and others to ensure that vacant premises or derelict properties are maintained and presented in a smart and tidy appearance and do not detract from the appeal of the immediate environment.
- c. Work with others to improve pedestrian flow between different parts of the town centre and its businesses through information and improved signage which highlights the characteristics of each part of the town centre and encourages people to explore and make more use of the town centre and all it has to offer
- d. Provide cleaning services where appropriate and only additional to services provided by the local authority, with a focus on targeted street cleaning and deep cleaning.
- e. Where appropriate, support the use of additional floral displays and festive and creative lighting to improve the appearance and vibrancy of the streets and open spaces, in a way which complements and develops the characteristics of each part of the Northampton BID area.
- f. Uniformed day time Hosts to:
 - a. help promote the area, to welcome visitors and provide support for the implementation of events and animation in the streets and open spaces
 - b. support businesses in tackling and communicating issues which affect their business on a day to day basis.
 - c. work closely with the Police and other agencies in tackling antisocial behaviour and crime issues which impact upon the visitor experience
- g. Tackle anti-social behaviour and crime issues which impact upon the visitor experience and affect businesses in certain areas, by working with partners and organisations in the town centre including voluntary organisations, the Police and CCTV.
- h. Work with businesses and other organisations to organise events around the whole of the BID area, to create an animated feel to the town as a whole and build the reputation of Northampton as a great place to be entertained.
- i. Work closely with the Councils and Car Park operators to influence the provision of a 'parking experience' across Northampton for both visitors and those who work in the area, in a way which is commercially sustainable, increases patronage and meets the needs of the town centre's businesses.

- j. Act as a collective voice to constructively represent business interests with all stakeholders in all aspects of development, planning and implementation of any event or initiative which businesses consider will potentially have an impact upon their trading environment.

Measures and Results:

- Increased number of events and street entertainment and a greater perception of things happening measured through surveys of visitors
- Use of the names of the different parts of the town centre being used by other organisations, businesses and stakeholders in the media and other information about the town centre
- Footfall to the area which is stronger than national high street trends
- Increased occupancy levels in hotels in Northampton
- Increased number of locations across Northampton town centre where events and street entertainment can occur.
- Increased numbers of cars using car parks and street parking in Northampton town centre
- Improved perception of the 'parking experience' in Northampton town centre
- Improved perception of attractiveness of the town centre measured through surveys of visitors and those who work in the town centre
- Improved perceptions of visitor and business safety and feeling of welcome.

Objective 3: Business Growth and Investment in Northampton town centre

To **encourage growth, development and investment of businesses** which complement and build on the strengths of Northampton town centre.

Amount the BID will spend:

An initial budget of £40,000 p.a, increasing to £42,000 by year 5 – a total of £205,000 over five years.

Activities

- a. Influence, support and encourage plans and proposals for new buildings, signage, building refurbishments and public realm developments which build upon the town centre's strengths, serve to develop the town centre's identity and complement and develop the characteristics of each part of the Northampton BID area.
- b. Seek to secure funding for a refresh of a retail strategy for the town centre and lead its implementation with partners.
- c. Work with partners, landlords and property agents to market the town centre to potential new retailers and investors in line with recommendations from an updated retail strategy for the town centre.
- d. Work with other organisations to monitor footfall, commercial performance, parking statistics, customer perceptions and other key measures across the Northampton BID area and provide regular reports and performance updates for businesses.

Measures and Results:

- Reduced levels of vacant and derelict properties in Northampton town centre.
- Improved perception of attractiveness of the town centre measured through surveys of visitors and those who work in the town centre
- Numbers of business enquiries through commercial property agents
- Monitoring of footfall and sales performances across Northampton town centre with regular reports and feedback to businesses.

10. Organisation, Resources and Delivery

Northampton Town Centre Ltd is a not for profit BID company, limited by guarantee. It is legally and operationally responsible to the businesses in the BID area for all BID activities and acts on their behalf.

The management structure of the BID is a Board responsible for governance and coordinating activity and delivery and working groups which develop individual projects.

The Board is elected by the members of the Northampton Town Centre Ltd, drawn predominantly from those paying a levy in the area and made up of a representative cross-section of the businesses and stakeholders of the area and key agencies associated with the successful delivery of the BID project. It will be driven by the private sector and includes one Councillor from the Northampton Borough Council as a Director.

The main role of the Board is to safeguard the interests of levy payers by ensuring that the business operates in line with the BID plan, is professional and offers consistent value for money in line with its targets. The Board will ensure that the implementation of the BID will be monitored and delivered cost-effectively, through keeping overheads to a minimum and using methods which will optimise the use of the revenue budget and add real value to the delivery of the plan.

All businesses will be encouraged to be actively involved in the Board and associated working groups to represent the levy payers. Through specific working groups, the Board will be instrumental in prioritising the requirements of the levy payers into deliverable projects which address their needs, within the framework of the business plan.

The Board will continue to provide a consistent, collective and effective voice for the businesses in Northampton town centre on all matters of concern to the levy payers.

The role of 'Director' on the Board and roles on the specific working groups are voluntary and undertaken with a commitment to represent the interests of all businesses in the BID area.

In support of its vision and objectives, the BID will encourage collaboration with all key stakeholders involved in the town centre through a town centre forum. Collaborative working between businesses and other organisation in the town centre will also be encouraged to build upon the sense of the business community and ensure that the skills and resources available for delivery of the BID are enhanced and deliver best value.

There will also be hands-on dedicated Project and Contract Management to support the initiatives from the working groups. This management role will also provide administrative support and project delivery for the BID Company as well coordinating activity with partner organisations and ensuring cost-effective delivery of projects through tendering and careful management of contracts.

The Northampton BID will be annually reviewed and the effectiveness of the measures undertaken will be gauged by Key Performance Indicators for each project area, including footfall, customer surveys, business surveys, photographic evidence, car parking usage and retail turnover movement.

Besides regular newsletters and other forms of bulletins, there will be an annual report providing details on activities and performance of the company against the objectives of the delivery plan for the previous year.

All levy payers shall be entitled to be members of the BID Company. There will be an Annual General Meeting at which all members are invited to attend and vote and at which Directors will be retired by rotation and new Directors elected in accordance with the articles of the company.

11. Northampton BID Budget and Finances

“The first Northampton BID was set up in 2011, at a time when the country was facing its worst recession and Northampton was not alone in facing considerable challenges. Changing lifestyles and increased options for shopping mean that the way in which towns are used continues to change dramatically and quickly. A BID provides the opportunity for businesses to have a real influence on their local environment to ensure that collectively we can take advantage of the new opportunities these changes will bring.

In the next five years we will strive to lever in additional cash funding and value in kind to support the delivery of this plan and add to the investment made by the Northampton businesses through the BID.

We feel that the investment we are seeking from businesses in the BID is modest in relation to what can be achieved. For the smallest business in the Business Improvement District, the daily cost is less than a first class postage stamp and even for a large business the daily cost is less than the price of a single cinema ticket.”

Jessica D'Aulerio
 Director of Tangerine Red
 Chair of the BID Company, Northampton Town Centre Ltd.

With levy bands and a 1% levy, the indicative costs to a business are:

Rateable Value	Annual	This equates to: weekly	This equates to: daily
£4,999 and below	none	none	none
£5,000 to £9,999	£100	£1.92	£0.27
£20,000	£200	£3.85	£0.55
£50,000	£500	£9.62	£1.37
£100,000	£1,000	£19.23	£2.74
£250,000	£2,500	£48.08	£6.85
£500,000	£5,000	£96.15	£13.70

Northampton's BID 5 year Budget: 2016 – 2020

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total	% to total
Income							
BID levy revenue (Note 1)	£ 303,094	£ 309,156	£ 315,339	£ 321,646	£ 328,079	£ 1,577,313	92%
Other Income (Note 2)	£ 25,000	£ 25,500	£ 26,010	£ 26,530	£ 27,061	£ 130,101	8%
Total Income	£ 328,094	£ 334,656	£ 341,349	£ 348,176	£ 355,139	£ 1,707,414	100%
Expenditure							
Objective 1 – Promotion of Northampton and its businesses	£ 90,000	£ 91,253	£ 92,532	£ 93,836	£ 95,166	£ 462,787	27%
Objective 2 - Develop the Northampton experience	£ 107,039	£ 108,530	£ 110,050	£ 111,601	£ 113,183	£ 550,403	33%
Objective 3 - Business Growth and Investment in Northampton	£ 40,000	£ 40,557	£ 41,125	£ 41,705	£ 42,296	£ 205,683	12%
Central Management Costs, Administration, Office (Note 3)	£ 66,000	£ 67,320	£ 68,666	£ 70,040	£ 71,441	£ 343,467	20%
Levy Collection costs	£ 9,900	£ 10,098	£ 10,300	£ 10,506	£ 10,716	£ 51,520	3%
Contingency (Note 4)	£ 15,155	£ 15,458	£ 15,767	£ 16,082	£ 16,404	£ 78,866	5%
Total Expenditure	£ 328,094	£ 333,216	£ 338,440	£ 343,770	£ 349,205	£ 1,692,725	100%
Accrual for Renewal (Note 5)	£ -	£ 1,440	£ 2,908	£ 4,406	£ 5,934	£ 14,688	
Notes							
Expenditure by area based upon proportion of levy received from each area							
1 Assumes a 95% collection rate and 2% per annum inflation							
2 Including income from landlords, associate members of the BID and other sources (including in-kind)							
3 Central admin, office and fixed overheads							
4 Calculated as 5% of total levy billed							
5 Accrual retained from levy revenue to provide for costs of renewal of the BID for any additional term, otherwise they will be spent on additional projects in the final year							

Cost of the BID Development

The costs incurred in undertaking the research and developing the BID proposals are being met by the Northampton Town Centre BID. The Northampton Borough Council is meeting the costs of holding the ballot for which we give sincere thanks.

Sources of Additional Funding

The BID Company is committed to seeking additional funding where possible to increase the benefits that can be delivered by the BID to businesses. Other possible income sources will include grants where the criteria matches the aims of the business plan, voluntary contributions from property owners, companies and organisations outside the BID area and those not liable for the levy. It is estimated that this could be around £125,000 over the five year period.

Through discussion, developers, property owners and other stakeholders in the area will be invited to participate in the Business Improvement District and improve delivery against the business plan objectives even further.

Application of BID Funds

The BID funds will be ring-fenced and will be controlled by participating businesses. Details of the BID Company's accountability to businesses are given in Section 13.

The budget headings and the project costs can be altered within the constraints of the revenue received through the levy. The BID Company will be empowered to move funds between budget headings to provide the services which best meet the requirements of the BID area. Such adjustments will be fully accountable to the businesses through the performance monitoring arrangements set out in section 6.

Governance and management of the BID Budget

In order to ensure that the projects remain relevant and continue to address needs and priorities

of the businesses in Northampton during its five year life, the Management Group may from time to time make recommendations to the Board that budget allocations are modified for each of the main projects and the management and administration of the BID.

It will be the responsibility of the Board to assess these recommendations and make adjustments to the allocations of expenditure budget as and when they deem appropriate. It will be the responsibility of the Board to ensure that all the main aims of the BID, stated in section 9, continue to be addressed and that all BID activity contributes towards the achievement of the vision. The Board will also monitor and gauge the effectiveness of the BID operations and activities.

12. BID Levy Criteria for the Northampton BID

Every BID has to establish its own levy rules. Reference has been made to the 'Industry Criteria and Guidance Notes' prepared for the British Retail Consortium (BRC) and the Inter-Bank Rating Forum (IBRF) in developing the rules which will apply to the Northampton BID.

The Northampton BID Company Board has tried to balance the ambitions of businesses in the BID plan against the affordability of the levy and the requirement to ensure that the BID is able to deliver best value.

1. Assuming a positive BID vote by a majority of businesses by number and rateable value (R.V) of those who vote, the BID levy will be charged on all hereditaments listed in the local Non-Domestic Rating List located within the BID area. This applies irrespective of whether or how a business has voted in the formal BID ballot. Legislation within the Local Government Finance Act (2003) enables the local authority to issue a bill for the levy. The levy is collected by the billing authority, Northampton Borough Council. The Northampton BID Company will invoice the billing authority, Northampton Borough Council, for the levy collected for exclusive use of the BID.
2. All businesses which will be subject to the BID will be entitled to vote for the BID proposal in a 28 day postal ballot which will commence on 1st October 2015, with the close of ballot at 5pm on 29th October 2015. The result will be announced the following day or as soon as possible thereafter.
3. If successful at the ballot, the BID will commence operation on 1st January 2016, and will be for a fixed term of 5 years
4. The levy amounts for ratepayers who have business premises which do not fall under the management of a shopping mall or a market and who do not pay service charges to the shopping mall operator or market operator will be applied as follows:
 - a. The BID levy will be 1% of the 2010 rateable value shown on Northampton Borough Council's (the billing authority's) Capita's NNDR billing system as at 1st September 2015 for each defined business within the scope of the BID, with the exception of those premises with a rateable value of less than £10,000 showing on the billing authority's Capita system as at 1st September 2015.
 - b. Ratepayers with a R.V. of less than £10,000 but more than £4,999 will pay a fixed band charge of £100.
 - c. Ratepayers with a R.V. of less than £5,000 will pay nothing for these properties and will not have a vote for these properties although they will enjoy the benefits that come with trading in the BID area
5. The levy amount for ratepayers who have business premises which do fall under the management of a shopping mall operator and who do pay a service charge to the shopping mall operator will be applied as follows:
 - a. The BID levy will be 0.75% of the 2010 rateable value shown on Northampton Borough Council's (the billing authority's) Capita's NNDR billing system as at 1st September 2015 for each defined business (including any premises used and owned by the shopping mall operator for purposes relating to the management of the shopping mall, excluding car parks) within the scope of the BID, with the exception of those premises with a rateable value of less than £10,000 showing on the billing authority's Capita system as at 1st September 2015.

- b. Ratepayers with a R.V. of less than £10,000 but more than £4,999 will pay a fixed band charge of £75.
 - c. Ratepayers with a R.V. of less than £5,000 will pay nothing for these properties and will not have a vote for these properties although they will enjoy the benefits that come with trading in the BID area
6. The levy will be due from businesses who are liable to pay business rates, including empty properties other than those that are exempt within the criteria laid out in Section 12 of this business plan (this section).
 7. The liable person is the ratepayer liable for occupied or unoccupied premises. In accordance with the Non-Domestic Rating (Collection and Enforcement) (Local Lists) Regulations 1989 (S.I. 1989/1058) and the Non-Domestic Rating (Collection and Enforcement) (Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 1989 (S.I. 1989/1060), Northampton Borough Council will be responsible for the imposition, administration, collection, recovery and application of the BID levy. The Council will also be responsible for any enforcement action that may be appropriate in case of non-payment of the levy.
 8. There will be an annual inflationary increase of all levy charges (including fixed band charges) year on year for the duration of the Business Improvement District. This will be a minimum of 2% increase year on year or the inflation percentage as determined by the Consumer Price Index as at the 1st December of the year before the next billing process, whichever is the greater, rounded to the nearest tenth of a penny. (e.g if a levy bill is £200 the inflation applied to this at a level of 2% would be 40p per annum). Negative inflation will not apply. Inflation will not apply for the first full billing cycle in 2016.
 9. The levy will be charged annually in advance, although businesses which cease to have liability for business rates during the year will be entitled to a refund for the remainder of the period, and the new occupier will be charged on a pro-rata basis.
 10. Any changes during the life of the BID will be handled as follows:
 - a. New premises, or properties which were not on the rate valuation list but become subject to rates in the BID area or new streets raised in the BID area after the BID is in force will be expected to pay a BID Levy based on the % or fixed levy charge appropriate in relation to its new/current rateable value
 - b. Where property is split, two or more BID levies should be made on the revised premises from the date of split on the basis of the revised new/current rateable values
 - c. Where premises are merged the BID Levy should be charged at the appropriate % of the revised properties new/current valuation
 - d. Any change of use or ownership (or the creation of a new business within the BID (boundary) will be liable to the levy rate current at the time of the change.
 - e. Adjustments will be made for changes in occupation and if a property is deleted from the rating list and revised bills issued provided that the amount due on charge or refund is £50 or more. The charge or refund amount will be calculated pro rata between the date of the change in occupation and the date of the financial year end.
 - f. No amendments will be made to the rateable value of any property in the BID area as a result of any general or property specific re-valuation within the life of the BID other than for the criteria listed above.
 11. No other relief will be given to any class of non-domestic ratepayer and there is no distinction made between occupied or unoccupied hereditaments, both occupancy status attracting the full BID levy, unless it is a hereditament: -

- a. whose owner is prohibited by law from occupying it or allowing it to be occupied;
- b. which is kept vacant by reason of action taken by or on behalf of the Crown or any local or public authority with a view to prohibiting the occupation of the hereditament or to acquiring it;
- c. which is included in the Schedule of monuments compiled under section 1 of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979(b);
- d. where, in respect of the owner's estate, there subsists a bankruptcy order within the meaning of section 381(2) of the Insolvency Act 1986(c);
- e. whose owner is entitled to possession of the hereditament in his capacity as trustee under a deed of arrangement to which the Deeds of Arrangement Act 1914(d) applies;
- f. whose owner is a company which is subject to a winding-up order made under the Insolvency Act 1986 or which is being wound up voluntarily under that Act;
- g. whose owner is a company in administration within the meaning of paragraph 1 of Schedule B1 to the Insolvency Act 1986 or is subject to an administration order made under the former administration provisions within the meaning of article 3 of the Enterprise Act 2002 (Commencement No. 4 and Transitional Provisions and Savings) Order 2003(e);
- h. whose owner is entitled to possession of the hereditament in his capacity as liquidator by virtue of an order made under section 112 or section 145 of the Insolvency Act 1986.
- i. where it is a place of religious worship, a hostel, a place of refuge or a place of rehabilitation.

in which case the hereditament will be exempt.

12. For clarity a hereditament which is the subject of a building preservation notice within the meaning of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990(a) or is included in a list compiled under section 1 of that Act will be subject to levy unless its use is covered by any of the other exemptions listed in Section 12 of the business plan (this section).
13. The BID levy contribution will not be reassessed if the rateable value is amended after the end of the BID. New or altered properties entered into the valuation list will become liable for the levy from the date they appear in the list.
14. Businesses with a rateable value of less than £5,000 will be exempt from the levy and will not be permitted to vote in the ballot. Any business with an R.V which falls below this will be encouraged to enter into a voluntary arrangement direct with the BID Company so that they can benefit from the full range of services provided by the BID.
15. Any hereditament where the occupier which is a charitable organisation in receipt of 80% mandatory charitable rate relief (awarded under section 43 - part 5 and 6 - of the Local Government Finance Act 1988), except those identified in section 11 i above, will be liable for a levy at 0.5% of their R.V. for all properties of a R.V. of £10,000 or more up to a R.V. of £50,000. Any hereditament where the occupier is a charitable organisation with an R.V of more than £50,000 will only pay a levy calculated on the basis of a R.V of £50,000. Any hereditament where the occupier is a charitable organisation with an R.V of less than £10,000 but of £5,000 or more will pay a fixed band charge, which in year 1 will be £50.
16. The BID financial year will start on 1st April and last for 365 days (366 in a leap year). The BID charge is a daily charge based on rateable value. It is to be paid in full in advance, the payment date being the 1st April of that year. The daily BID levy charge for each individual ratepayer is to be calculated by multiplying its rateable value by the BID

percentage levy or levy charge from either of the fixed bands and dividing the result by the number of days in the financial year.

17. Subject to this criteria stated above and within the BID boundary as defined in this document, the BID levy is a statutorily compulsory payment regardless of whether the business exercised its vote or voted against the BID.

13. Risk analysis

The responsibilities of Northampton Town Centre Ltd

Northampton Town Centre Ltd is a legal entity and a significant business in its own right. It not only has all the attendant risks and responsibilities that go with this but also, subject to the vote in favour of the BID, has a mandate from the businesses in the area to deliver the BID Business Plan. This is a significant responsibility which has an influence over the commercial prosperity of the Northampton town centre, the businesses in the area and their staff who rely upon it for their living.

It is important therefore, to articulate some of the external and internal issues that have a direct bearing on the ability of the Company to trade successfully, as well as highlight the consequences of not adopting the principles of the BID and the benefits that accrue from the delivery of the plan.

BIDs have been proving their worth and commercial value across the UK over the last seven years as effective mechanisms to improve trading environments for all sorts and types of businesses. Where BIDs have reached the end of their first term the majority have seen even greater votes in favor and larger turn-outs than the first time of voting. They are seen as providing businesses with very effective returns on investment. All other towns and cities in the east midlands region now have Business Improvement Districts. Nottingham has just announced that its Leisure and Retail BID will be merged as one, Northampton also has a BID.

BIDs in other places

BIDs have been proving their worth and commercial value across the UK over the last ten years as effective mechanisms to improve trading environments for all sorts and types of businesses. Where BIDs have reached the end of their first term the majority have seen even greater votes in favor and larger turn-outs than the first time of voting. They are seen as providing businesses with very effective returns on investment. Most major towns and cities in the south and east midlands now have Business Improvement Districts. These include Derby's Cathedral Quarter which successfully went through a renewal ballot and started its second BID term two years ago, Derby's St Peters Quarter and Loughborough are about to start their renewal process and Nottingham which had two BIDs merged into one and most recently, Wellingborough and Bedford have both gone through renewal and Luton became a Business Improvement District at the start of this year. The closest BID to Northampton town centre is Brackmills Industrial Estate which went through a renewal last year.

Working with key partners

In order to deliver exceptional value for money within the framework of the aims and objectives of the plan, the BID will work closely with other key stakeholders such as property owners, developers, the Borough and County Councils and the Police. It will seek, wherever possible to influence and shape larger projects to the benefit of its own aims while supporting others to achieve their own objectives.

In working with others, the over-riding principle of the BID should not be compromised i.e that the BID is providing services and benefits additional to those which would have happened if the BID had not been in existence.

Sustainable mechanism for the development of Northampton

The BID is a unique mechanism which combines solid business support with a compulsory payment scheme which creates benefit for all on an equitable basis. It also guarantees constant cash flow to deliver the projects and priorities identified by the businesses. It provides a solid platform for the BID Company to control costs, plan over the longer term and rise to the expectations of its stakeholders.

A contingency is contained within each of the project areas, meaning, that should the income from the additional voluntary contributions fall short of those budgeted for any period, costs can be adjusted accordingly.

In the unlikely event that circumstances beyond the control of the BID Company mean that it fails to bring about the benefits envisaged, the business electorate will have the final say. At the end of the 5 years, if no discernable difference is detected then a vote against renewal can simply “switch off” the BID and with it all business contributions.

There is no plan to rely upon bank or other financial support other than the levy and so there is no prospect of financial insecurity. In any event, the Company will produce regular management accounts and financial forecasts for information of the Board, nominated by the levy payers. Appointed auditors will produce end-of-year accounts, made available to all contributors and the local authority and these will be filed at Companies House in the normal way.

The Company is VAT registered to ensure that the tax can be reclaimed on expenditure. It also benefits from mutual trading status meaning that it is exempt from any Corporation Tax liability.

Final thoughts

“I have been very privileged, over the last five years to work closely with businesses who have had a passion to see Northampton grow and prosper and realise its true potential. There have been challenges along the way as we have tried to represent business interests amidst dramatic economic change and with a business plan which was designed with an eye on the past rather than the future.

This new business plan provides us with a unique opportunity to build upon the work we have done and ensure that the business community plays its part in the creation of a town centre in which we can all be proud.

Business confidence for the future of Northampton is strong. This plan provides us with a clear direction and new exciting era for Northampton. Take this opportunity to play your part and vote YES for this new BID business plan“

Alan Harland
Watts the Furnishers
Director Northampton Town Centre Ltd

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Definitions

- The following terms, used throughout this Proposal document, shall have the same meaning as provided in the Local Government Act 2003 and the Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004.
- This document is a BID proposal for the purposes of the Act. If approved it will become the BID arrangements which govern the way in which the BID levy can be used.
- “the 2003 Act” means the Local Government Act 2003.
- “the 1988 Act” means the Local Government Finance Act 1988.
- “BID” means Business Improvement District.
- “BID ballot” means a ballot under section 49(1) of the Local Government Act, 2003.
- “BID body” means, the body (whether corporate or not corporate) responsible for the implementation of the arrangements: the Northampton Town Centre Limited.
- “BID proposer” means a person who draws up BID proposals: the Northampton Town Centre Limited. .
- “commencement date” subject to regulation 9(12) of the Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004, means the day, pursuant to section 53 of the 2003 Act, the BID arrangements are to come into force.
- “hereditament” means anything which is or is treated as being a hereditament by virtue of the provisions of or any provisions made under section 64 of the 1988 Act including any hereditament to which regulation 6 of the Non-Domestic Rating (Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 1989 applies but otherwise excluding any hereditament to which regulations made under section 64(3)(b) of the 1988 Act apply.
- “renewal ballot” means a ballot under section 54(2) of the 2003 Act.

Appendix 2 – Streets included in the BID Area

Property - Major St	Definition
Abington Street	
Adelaide Place	
Albert Place	
Albion Place	
Angel Street	
Bedford Pl	Residential at the moment, no businesses
Bradshaw Street	
Bridge Street	from Junction at George Row/Mercers Row/Gold Street up to the A508 / A5123 junction
Broad Street	Town (east) side only
Campbell Square	Town (south) side only
Campbell Street	Town (south) side only
Castilian Street	
Castilian Terrace	
Cheyne Walk	Town (west) side only
Church Lane	
College Street	
Commercial Street	
Derngate	
Dychurch Lane	
Fetter Street	
Fish Street	
Foundry Street	
Gas Street	
George Row	
Gold Street	from Junction with Mercers Row/George Row up to A508 junction
Gold Street Mews	
Greyfriars	
Greyfriars Bus Station	
Greyfriars Car Park	
Grosvenor Shopping Centre	
Guildhall Road	
Hazelwood Road	
Horse Market	Town (east) side only
Horseshoe Street	Town (east) side only
Kingswell Street	
Ladys Lane	
Latymer Ct	Residential at the moment, no businesses
Lower Mounts	Town (south) side only
Market Square	
Market Walk Shopping Centre	
Mercers Row	

Property - Major St	Definition
Newland	Residential at the moment, no businesses
Notre Dame Mews	
Princes Walk	
Scholars Ct	Residential at the moment, no businesses
Sheep Street	
Silver Street	
Spencer Parade	
Spring Gardens	
St Giles Square	
St Giles Street	
St Giles Terrace	
St Johns Street	
St John's Terrace	
St Katherine's Street	
St Katherine's Terrace	
St Peters Square	
St Peter's Walk	Both sides (runs from Gold St to St Peters Square)
St Peters Way	Town (North) side on stretch from Bridge Street to Horse Shoe St / Towcester Road Junction
Swan Street	
The Drapery	
The Parade	
The Ridings Arcade	
Upper Mounts	Town (south) side only
Venton Centre = York Street	
Victoria Gardens	
Victoria Parade	
Victoria Promenade	Town (north) side only
Victoria Street	
Wellington Street	
Wood Hill	
Wood Street	
Woolmonger Street	Residential at the moment, no businesses
York Road	Town (west) side only

The BID area includes any smaller business areas located off these roads that are located within the boundary of the defined BID area and any other road or street in the shaded area illustrated on the map in Section 5 of this proposal, even if they are not listed above and will include any new road or street which is developed or created during the life of the BID which is within the shaded area illustrated on the map in Section 5 of this proposal.

Acknowledgements

The BID Company, Northampton Town Centre Ltd would like to acknowledge the support of the following in preparing this Business Plan:

Northampton Borough Council
Northampton County Council
Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership
Northamptonshire Constabulary
Partnerships for Better Business Ltd

Further information

For more information about the BID or to discuss any aspect of this business plan please contact Chris Barker by calling 01604 837766 or e mailing on info@northamptonbid.co.uk

Postal Address:

Northampton Town Centre Ltd
Citizens Advice Bureau Offices,
2nd Floor Town Centre House,
7-8 Mercers Row,
Northampton
NN1 2QL

A downloadable copy of this Proposal and Business Plan is available at www.northamptonbid.co.uk