



CABINET REPORT

Report Title	Northampton Town Centre Business Improvement District renewal
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AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Cabinet Meeting Date:	20 January 2021
Key Decision:	Yes
Within Policy:	Yes
Policy Document:	No
Service Area:	Economy and Assets
Accountable Cabinet Member:	Cllr Tim Hadland, Regeneration & Enterprise
Ward(s)	Castle

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To consider a proposal for the renewal of the Northampton Town Centre Business Improvement District.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet are recommended:

- 2.1 To instruct the Ballot Holder (the Local returning Officer) to conduct a ballot of local businesses in accordance with legislation, in order to determine whether the proposal for the renewal of Northampton Town centre Business Improvement District may proceed.
- 2.2 To delegate to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Councillor Hadland, the authority to exercise the council's rights to vote in the ballot on behalf of the Borough Council.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 Northampton Town Centre Business Improvement District (BID) was established in January 2011 following a ballot of businesses in the town centre. A renewal ballot took place in 2015 in accordance with the legislation and the BID was renewed.
- 3.1.2 Legislation requires that for a BID to continue after 5 years, a new proposal to renew the BID must be subjected to a ballot. Should such a ballot approve the proposal then the BID can continue for a further five years. A further renewal ballot is required every five years.
- 3.1.3 Northampton Town Centre Limited (the BID) have indicated they wish to ballot for renewal and in accordance with the regulations have produced a new Business Plan on which they have requested the Council conducts a ballot.
- 3.1.4 The Business Plan has been produced by the BID, following extensive consultation with town centre businesses. The Plan has been discussed at a number of meetings between officers and representatives of the BID and a meeting between the Leader, Cabinet Member and the BID.

3.2 Issues

Compliance with legislation

- 3.2.1 The council has responsibilities under the BID legislation to ensure that before any ballot is instructed, the relevant regulations have been complied with by the BID proposer.
- 3.2.2 The submission from the BID is attached. This contains the BID proposal, details of the consultation undertaken, details of the finances and financial management of the BID, and the BID has demonstrated it has the finances available to meet the cost of the ballot if this is required. Officers have also been provided with relevant background documents.
- 3.2.3 The Council has received the required request to the Council to instruct the Ballot Holder (Returning Officer) to conduct a ballot.
- 3.2.4 Officers have assessed that the BID proposals provide all the relevant information required under the regulations.
- 3.2.5 Therefore, it is advised to cabinet that it would be within the law to instruct the ballot holder to hold a ballot on these proposals.

Content of the BID proposals

- 3.2.6 The BID proposal is attached for cabinet to read. Some key points to note are:

- The proposed BID levy will be 1.1% of rateable value (RV) for businesses with an RV of £10,000 or more and a levy of 0.82% of RV for businesses inside shopping malls with a RV of £10,000 or more.
- Those businesses with a RV value of £5,000 or more and less than £10,000 will have a charge of £110 and £82.50 if inside a shopping mall. (Further details can be found in Section 16 of the BID's Business Plan) (see pages 34-38)
- The area covered by the BID is proposed to be unaltered. (see page 15)
- Through the business led programme of investment, the vision is *“continue to work with all stakeholders to define, develop and promote the identity of Northampton town centre which reflects its strengths, characteristics and heritage and is a sustainable and vibrant place which generates pride for its businesses, local residents and visitors.”*
- The programme of investment will be delivered through the three strategic objectives and related projects. The three strategic objectives are; *promote and celebrate Northampton town centre and its businesses; develop the Northampton town centre experience; and business growth and investment in Northampton town centre.*
- The BID should receive £1.6m income over the next five years and will start on the 1st April 2021. (see page 32).
- The BID proposals highlight the proposed objectives, activities and outcomes for the five years and further details can be found on pages 26-29 of the proposal.
- The BID will continue to be delivered by a not-for-profit, limited by guarantee, company Northampton Town Centre Ltd (NTCL). NTCL have engaged specialist support from Partners for Better Business Ltd (PfBB) to deliver their proposals.
- The Board of NTCL is made up of local businesspeople and includes a representative of the Council in the Cabinet Member for Regeneration. This position is held ex-officio. All levy payers may be members of the NTCL.
- The proposals emphasise the importance of working collaboratively with local authorities and other partner agencies to ensure the proposals are successfully delivered.

The Council's right to veto proposals

- 3.2.7 The Council should satisfy itself the BID proposal does not conflict to any material extent with any existing adopted council policy, published by the Authority.

- 3.2.8 The Council should ensure the BID proposal does not propose a disproportionate burden on particular persons or businesses by way of an unfair levy charge on certain 'class' of levy payers.
- 3.2.9 The Council should be satisfied with the extent of consultation with the Authority in preparing these proposals.
- 3.2.10 The work undertaken between officers and the BID did not highlight any areas which would require the Council to consider veto-ing the proposals.

Ballot

- 3.2.11 Subject to Cabinet approving this report recommendations and the expiry of the call-in period, the ballot process will commence in February.
- 3.2.12 After the ballot, there is a 28-day period during which requests may be made to the secretary of state to void the ballot result. Assuming, that no such issue arises, the BID will be able to operate on this renewed basis from 1st April 2021.
- 3.2.13 It is proposed that the Cabinet member for Regeneration exercises the Council's right to vote on these proposals in a ballot.

3.3 Choices (Options)

- 3.3.1 There are no proposals within the BID proposal where the Council would consider exercising its veto, therefore Cabinet should issue the instructions to ballot.
- 3.3.2 Cabinet could decide to defer consideration at this time, but this is not recommended due to the tight ballot timetable.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

- 4.1.1 The BID proposal represents the policies of Northampton Town Centre Limited as the BID proposers and does not represent NBC policy.
- 4.1.2 The BID proposals do not conflict with any existing council policy.

4.2 Resources and Risk

- 4.2.1 The Council as a business ratepayer will continue to pay the BID levy for all town centre premises and this is within existing budgets.
- 4.2.2 The levy will provide additional spending within the town centre, supporting local businesses and improving the town centre.
- 4.2.3 Some of the BID proposals may require collaboration with the Council or financial collaboration. In such instances, the Council and the BID will discuss these on an individual basis, and it will be at the discretion of both parties.

4.2.4 The Council have informed the BID the current baseline expenditure by the Council within the town centre may vary in the future based on the council's future budgetary plans. The BID is aware the Council approve all budgets annually but will discuss relevant matters with the BID.

4.3 Legal

4.3.1 The relevant legislation requirements are being complied with.

4.4 Equality and Health

4.4.1 There are no anticipated negative impacts on any section of society raised by these proposals.

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

4.5.1 All consultation was undertaken by the BID and is summarised in the proposal. The consultation process and feedback from town centre businesses played a significant part in the production of the proposal. The Council did not carry out an independent consultation.

4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

4.6.1 The proposals contained within the BID Business Plan will help contribute to the Council's priority of a stronger community and supporting local businesses.

4.7 Other Implications

4.7.1 No other implications have been identified at this time.

5. Background Papers

5.1 Northampton Town Centre BID Proposal 2021 – 2026.

6. Next Steps

6.1 The council supports the BID in delivering the BID's ballot.

Kevin Langley - Acting Director Economy and Assets