

WTF69  
FOR DECISION  
WARD(S): ALL

WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM

18 January 2006

WINCHESTER BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

REPORT OF CITY CENTRE MANAGER

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RECENT REFERENCES:

LE11 – Progress Through Partnership – the Role of Winchester City Centre Partnership and the Opportunity Offered by Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) are a recent Government initiative for improving town centres.
- Winchester City Centre Partnership is leading the process of a BID for Winchester Town, working with key partners such as Winchester City Council, Hampshire County Council and the University of Winchester.
- To establish a BID in Winchester town, an extensive programme of consultation with businesses needs to be carried out, alongside writing a business plan for the area.
- A successful BID proposal could see £2.5M of new private sector funding to enhance the local town economy over a 5 year period.
- A contribution to establishing a BID in Winchester is requested.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Town Forum consider whether to request Cabinet to approve the contribution of £5,000 from the Town Account to undertake the BIDs process.

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## WINCHESTER BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

### REPORT OF CITY CENTRE MANAGER

#### DETAIL:

#### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) are a method for businesses to take responsibility for improvements to their local area. Businesses covered by the BID will contribute an extra sum on top of their business rates (usually around 1% of their Rateable Value). This money is ring fenced by the collecting authority and used by the BID Partnership to improve the area of the BID, as previously agreed by the businesses involved.
- 1.2 The proposals for improvement projects and enhanced service delivery will be identified in a business plan, developed through extensive consultation with the business community and public sector partners. In Winchester, it could contribute up to £2.5m of new private sector funding into service delivery and physical infrastructure improvements.

#### 2 Benefits of a BID

- 2.1 The BID is a method by which business contribute equitably to improvements in their area. Everyone in the BID area has to pay, so no business will be able to benefit from the scheme and not make a contribution. Due to the way in which payments are calculated, businesses pay an amount proportional to their Rateable Value.
- 2.2 The BID contributions provide a sustainable mechanism for funding improvements. The BID will last for up to five years, so there is continuity, and the spending can be planned in advance. The money collected can lever in further funds from voluntary contributions from landlords, to grant funding which requires match funds to be in place.
- 2.3 The BID contributors decide what the money will be spent on, how much they will contribute, and by means of referendum, whether the BID takes place or not. The process is therefore driven from the businesses themselves.
- 2.4 The BID money can be spent on anything which benefits businesses in the BID area, and which the businesses agree to. This can include a marketing campaign, increased street cleansing services or more police officers on foot in the area, for example.

#### 3 Process of Establishing a BID in Winchester

- 3.1 The BID proposal is likely to take around 18 months in total. If the BID is agreed at referendum, it will last for a maximum of five years.
- 3.2 The current stage of Winchester BID is familiarising businesses with the process, establishing baseline data from service providers such as Winchester City Council, and a Memorandum of Understanding will shortly be signed by key partners.

### 3.3 Next steps include:

- Launch event for the process
- Writing the business plan
- Extensive consultation with businesses
- Identifying the geographical area the BID will cover
- Identifying the amount collected from businesses, and method of collection
- Publication of a final business plan
- Taking the project to a referendum
- If agreed at referendum, delivering the actions of the business plan

## 4 Conclusion

- 4.1 This process will incur expenses including staff time, events, publications and consultation exercises. The requirements of the project are expected to be met by the current City Centre Manager, supported by a new, seconded post.
- 4.2 Other funding and support services are anticipated from Winchester City Council. A growth bid of £50,000 has been made for the Economic Development budget, but has not yet been formally approved. Officers recommend £15,000 from this budget be allocated to the BID project (subject to approval). Negotiations are also taking place with Hampshire County Council and the University of Winchester.

### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

#### 5 CORPORATE STRATEGY (RELEVANCE TO):

- 5.1 Winchester City Centre Partnership is a key partner of the City Council, and reflects the Aims and Values determined in the Council's Corporate Strategy. The Partnership's mission is 'to make Winchester the preferred place to shop, work, live and visit'.
- 5.2 The BIDs project contributes to the Council's objective of Economic Prosperity; "to achieve a strong and diverse urban and rural economy which builds on local strengths and offers opportunities for all".

#### 6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 6.1 £5,000 is requested as a contribution to the BIDs work in consulting businesses as to their aspirations for Winchester town, and writing a Business Plan to meet those aspirations.

### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Further information about BIDs is available from:

<http://www.atcm.org>

<http://www.ukbids.org>

<http://www.kingstonfirst.co.uk>

<http://www.lincolnbig.co.uk>

<http://www.local.odpm.gov.uk/finance/busrats/busimp.pdf>

APPENDICES: None