

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Cabinet	Date:	4 May 2022
Subject:	Re-ballot for Gloucester BID second term		
Report Of:	Leader of the Council		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	Yes	Budget/Policy Framework:	No
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Appendices:	1. Gloucester BID re-ballot prospectus		
	2. Gloucester BID geographic coverage		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

Note: The special circumstances for non-compliance with Access to Information Rule 5 and Section 100B (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) (items not considered unless the agenda is open to inspection at least five days in advance of the meeting) were that the BID business plan was still under consultation and review and not available at that point in time.

Note: The special circumstances for non-compliance with Access to Information Rule 13 and Part 3, paragraph 9 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access To Information) (England) Regulations 2012 (that a Key Decision may not be taken unless a document containing information specified by the Regulations been published at least 28 clear days prior to the meeting at which the decision will be taken were that the BID business plan was still under consultation and review and not available at that point in time.

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To note the intention of Gloucester Business Improvement District (BID) to re-ballot for a second term and to consider the Cabinet's support for this.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** to:

- (a) note the Gloucester BID's plans to re-ballot for a second term, and
- (b) delegate authority to the Director of Policy and Resources to cast a vote in favour of extending the BID for a second term through any qualifying rate-paying properties owned by the Council.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) are business-led partnerships which are created through a ballot process to deliver additional services to local businesses. They can be a powerful tool for directly involving local businesses in local activities and allow the business community and local authorities to work together to improve the local trading environment.
- 3.2 A BID is a defined area in which a levy is charged on all business rate payers in addition to the business rates bill. This levy is used to develop projects which will benefit businesses in the local area. There is no limit on what projects or services can be provided through a Business Improvement District. The only requirement is that it should be something that is in addition to services provided by local authorities. Improvements may include, but are not limited to, festivals and events, extra safety/security, cleansing and environmental measures. The relevant local authority (Gloucester City Council in this case) manages the billing and the collection of the levy, and holds the levy in a ring-fenced revenue account on behalf of the BID body.
- 3.3 During 2016-17, a proposal to create a Gloucester BID was developed and submitted to the Council, and a ballot of qualifying businesses took place. Each person entitled to vote in the BID ballot has one vote in respect of each hereditament (business premise) in the geographical area of the BID on which non-domestic rates are payable. The ballot has to meet two tests. First, a simple majority of those voting must vote in favour. Second, the aggregate rateable value of the hereditaments of those voting in favour must exceed the aggregate rateable value of the hereditaments of those voting against.
- 3.4 In July 2017, 85.8% of voting businesses voted in favour in the first ballot for a Gloucester BID, and 87.7% of the Rateable Value voted in favour. As a result, Gloucester BID was established and has been in operation since July 2017. The BID collects an annual levy from 572 hereditaments (business premises), each of whom pay an annual levy derived from 1.6% of the rateable value of their premises.
- 3.5 BIDs may be established for a term of up to five years. Every five years, businesses are able to vote to continue the BID for a subsequent term, based on a set of proposals. Gloucester BID aims to build on its success in delivering a safer, attractive and supported city for a new potential five-year term, and has developed a business plan or prospectus for a second term (Appendix 1), on which it has consulted with all potential BID members.
- 3.6 The Vision for Gloucester BID set out in this prospectus is: 'Working in partnership to deliver a safer, more attractive, vibrant and supported city.' To achieve this vision, Gloucester BID is proposing to focus on three key themes:
- Priority 1 – A Safer City
 - Priority 2 – An Attractive and Vibrant City
 - Priority 3 – A more Supported and Promoted City
- 3.7 Some key elements in the prospectus for a second term include:
- Continuing to co-fund and manage a team of City Protection Officers in association with Gloucester City Safe, Gloucester City Council and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

- Continuing to co-fund and deliver with Gloucester City Council a team of Night Safe Officers who patrol Eastgate Street and the city centre.
- Continuing to work in partnership with the Council and other partners to maintain and develop Gloucester's Purple Flag status.
- Promoting the Best Bar None awards alongside Gloucester City Council's management of them.
- Supporting the work of Street Medics in helping make Gloucester's night time economy a safe place.
- Continuing to install summer planters and hanging baskets, and maintaining existing wooden planters in partnership with Gloucester City Council.
- Working in partnership with Gloucester City Council to ensure city cleansing and appearance is a priority, including introducing additional hot-spot cleansing that is not delivered by the Council.
- Partnering to deliver footfall driving events to attract visitors, encourage return visitors and promote local businesses.
- Helping member businesses sign up to the Gloucester Gift Card programme and the national Mi Rewards app, and promote this.
- Promoting and amplifying local businesses and events in the BID area, holding regular networking opportunities and acting as a voice for businesses.
- Working in partnership with the University of Gloucestershire and Gloucestershire College to support education and activities in our city.

3.8 The BID proposal includes some minor changes to the geographic boundaries of the BID area, and these are illustrated in Appendix 2 (more details are available on request). Gloucester BID has submitted its notice to hold a re-ballot to the relevant Secretary of State, with a proposed ballot date of 30th June 2022, and has asked the Council to administer the ballot and declare the result. In the view of officers, all necessary documents and procedures have been produced/ followed by Gloucester BID to enable a re-ballot to take place, and the business plan meets the legislative requirements.

4.0 Social Value Considerations

4.1 The BID is not under the control of the Council but an independent body, hence the provisions of the Council's Social Value policy do not apply in connection with any procurements undertaken by the BID.

5.0 Environmental Implications

5.1 The BID business plan contains a number of proposals that would enhance the attractiveness of the city, for instance through the provision of planting.

6.0 Alternative Options Considered

6.1 Cabinet could choose to instruct officers to cast votes against the proposed continuation of the Gloucester BID. This is not recommended as the Gloucester BID has delivered many benefits for its member businesses since its establishment in 2017, and has produced a good plan for its continuation over the next five years.

6.2 There are no apparent legal grounds for vetoing the holding of a re-ballot, as formally requested by the BID proposer (Gloucester BID).

7.0 Reasons for Recommendations

7.1 The Gloucester BID has delivered many benefits for the member businesses of Gloucester since its establishment in 2017 and has produced a good plan for its continuation over the next five years.

8.0 Future Work and Conclusions

8.1 If the resolutions are agreed, the Director for Policy and Resources will take steps to ensure that Council-owned business premises vote in favour of the BID's continuation. If the re-ballot is successful, other officers will continue to work closely with the BID to deliver baseline and enhanced services as set out in the prospectus.

8.2 If the BID's re-ballot is not successful, the Council's role in wrapping up the affairs of the BID and resolving the ownership of its assets is prescribed in Regulations.

9.0 Financial Implications

9.1 As part of its business plan, Gloucester BID has asked the Council to:

- Reduce its levy administration fee from 3% to 2%.
- Increase by £5,000 its annual contribution towards the salary costs of the City Protection Officers
- Cover the costs of administering the re-ballot.
- Continue its contribution to other partnership activity, in line with any agreed baselines.

9.2 In the view of officers, and following consultation with the Leader of the Council, these all appear to be reasonable asks that can be accommodated within existing budgets.

9.3 If the re-ballot is successful, the Council will continue to contribute to the levy as a member of the BID, being the owner of many business premises within the BID area. This will be in line with existing budgets.

(Financial Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report)

10.0 Legal Implications

10.1 The rules governing the creation, ballot, funding and administration of BIDs are largely set out in The Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004.

10.2 There are no significant implications arising from this report.

(One Legal have been consulted in the preparation of this report)

11.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

11.1 If the re-ballot is unsuccessful, a number of the good works and activities that the BID fund contributes towards could fall back onto the Council to provide or resource, which would have revenue implications. These include such activities as resourcing the City Protection Officers.

11.2 The benefits and opportunities that would arise if the BID ballot is successful are summarised above.

12.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA)

12.1 A PIA is not applicable.

13.0 Community Safety Implications

13.1 The BID business plan contains a number of proposals that would improve community safety through the City, including:

- Ongoing provision of City Protection Officers, Night Safe Officers and support for the Street Medics team.
- Support for Purple Flag status for the City Centre, and support for the Best Bar None awards for responsible licensing.

14.0 Staffing and Trade Union Implications

14.1 None.