

NEWS RELEASE

13 December 2021

Businesses Vote ‘Yes’ to Renewal of BID in Weston

Weston-super-Mare town centre businesses have voted once again in favour of a Business Improvement District (BID) for a third term, that will see more than £1.2 million invested on projects and services over a five year period.

Businesses took part in the independently managed postal ballot for a BID3 in Weston. Of those voters, 68% were in favour of the renewal; an even bigger percentage than the last renewal in 2017.

Paul Batts, Chair of the BID and owner of Outdoors & Active, said: “The yes vote is fantastic news for Weston and I’m thrilled that the business community have shown their support for the BID with a mandate to take forward our future plans. The next few years will be really important for Weston as the businesses work with the BID, both Councils and Weston College to really make Weston ‘super’, a great place in which to to work, live and visit.”

The BID will now run until March 2027, with the new term beginning on 1st April 2022 and will generate around £247,000 per year to deliver the BID’s new Business Plan. After an extensive consultation period with the 450 BID businesses since April this year, the projects and services to be delivered have been prioritised by the businesses in the town.

The Business Plan details three key themes to be delivered within the five-year plan:

- **Safety, Security & Streetscape** - To provide a safe, secure and attractive town centre environment for visitors and business owners through tackling crime and anti-social behaviour, assisting partners to keep streets clean and tidy and providing seasonal planting with the team of dedicated BID Wardens.

- Marketing & Events – To raise the profile of Weston as a visitor destination, increasing footfall and spend through marketing campaigns and vibrant events, delivered with key partners under the ‘SuperWeston’ initiative.
- Business Support – To help BID levy paying businesses with cost reduction initiatives and collaborative working and support with promotion to ensure money generated locally is spent in Weston.

Steve Townsend, Town Centre and BID Manager said of the renewal: “The last couple of years have proven to be a real challenge for our businesses and traders, but I’m delighted that our business community has spoken with their voting rights to renew the BID in Weston once again.

“By voting yes, we will now be able to continue our important work to revitalise Weston and our shopping and visitor experience to support our local economy with significant investment from the BID, and other funders until 2027.

Weston BID is part of Weston Town Centre Partnership Ltd., a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee that was formed in 1998, and is overseen by a Board of Directors that are business people from within the town, alongside members from North Somerset Council and Weston’s Town Council.

A dedicated Steering Group of local businesses and key partners will be responsible for the direction of BID3 in Weston to ensure the Business Plan is delivered in accordance with the businesses requirements.

Nigel Briers, Director of Proud Bar on the Boulevard and BID Steering Group member said: “I am ecstatic that Weston’s BID has been renewed. It’s so important for Weston that we will retain our BID team, including our Street Wardens. This is a significant step forward for our town as we begin to emerge from the effects of the pandemic and showcase even more what Weston has to offer everyone.”

Further information, including the new Business Plan can be found on www.superweston.org/westonbid

- ENDS -

NOTES TO EDITORS

For more information, or for an interview with one of the BID Team, please contact:

Karen Morledge

Morledge & Co. PR, Marketing & Communications (on behalf of Weston BID)

karen@morledgeandco.com / 07717 756644

Image 1: The BID team and businesses celebrating the renewal of the BID inside the Sovereign Shopping Centre.

About Weston Business Improvement District (BID):

The **Weston BID** is funded by the local business community in a designated area of the town centre and sea front of Weston-super-Mare, as part of the Business Improvement District (BID), a scheme introduced by the UK government in 2004 to strengthen and regenerate town centres.

The BID in Weston-super-Mare is managed by the Town Centre Partnership commenced in 2012 with the objective of enhancing and improving the trading environment in the town centre and sea front areas to attract more business and investment as a result of profile-raising campaigns and other initiatives.

The BID was previously renewed in 2017 following a majority 'yes' vote that took place with all businesses within the BID area to continue with projects and services that were identified as a priority by, and for, businesses.

BID Fact File

A Business Improvement District (BID) scheme is a business led initiative supported by government legislation which gives local businesses the power to 'raise funds locally to be spent locally' on improving their trading environment or trading prospects. There are now over 320 BID schemes operating across the UK.

BID schemes are 'business led for business benefit' and operate in clearly defined geographical areas, often but not exclusively, town centres. They are not local authority led schemes although North Somerset Council are responsible for running the ballot and collecting the levy on the BID Company's behalf if the BID is approved. Unlike business rates, all the money collected remains in Weston to be spent on the priorities identified by businesses.

The process of developing a BID involves extensive consultation with businesses to establish what improvements they want and may be prepared to pay for. Weston BID ran this process throughout Spring and Summer 2021.

The BID programme is primarily funded by the private sector although any non-domestic rate payer will be eligible to pay including organisations in the public or voluntary sector that have premises over a rateable value of £7,500 within the defined Weston BID boundary.

The BID is funded through a levy on rateable value which for Weston BID is 1.5% of the rateable value of the premises against the 2017 ratings list creating circa £247K per year each year for five years from the levy alone; supplemented by additional contributions the BID will secure.

BIDs are viewed by many organisations as a fair and affordable way of creating a ring-fenced fund for 5 years that is managed by business for business through a private sector led, not-for-profit company.

BIDs are about new investment, not about placing additional tax burdens on businesses. Where BIDs are successful, businesses will see a return on their investment. There is clear evidence of the success of BID schemes which have led to increased footfall, higher spending, cleaner, safer and more vibrant towns.

Following consultation with businesses, a Final Proposal or 'BID Manifesto' is published which outlines what benefits the businesses will receive if the BID proceeds. Weston BID's business plan was published during October 2021. A 28-day ballot is then held where each business has the opportunity to vote 'yes' or 'no' to the BID. For the BID to be approved, of those who vote, two tests must be met:

- More than 50% of those who vote must vote 'yes'
- Of those 'yes' votes, they need to represent more than 50% of the total rateable value of all votes cast

If these conditions are fulfilled, payment of the levy becomes mandatory for all businesses regardless of how they voted.