

Management Committee

12th December 2017

Weymouth BID – Request for funds to support a re-ballot

For Decision

Briefholder

Cllr Farquharson

Senior Leadership Team Contact:

M Hamilton, Strategic Director

Report Author:

Trevor Hedger, Senior Economic Regeneration Officer

Statutory Authority

Local Government Act 2000

Purpose of Report

- 1 To consider a request from Weymouth BID Ltd for an interest free loan of £10,000 to fund the development of a BID proposal intended to be put to ballot in mid 2018 in order to deliver a new 5 year BID term from September 2018.

Recommendations

- 2 a) That a loan of £10,000 is made at zero interest to Weymouth BID Ltd to fund preparations for a new BID proposal which is intended for ballot in mid-2018.

b) That, only in the event of a successful BID ballot during 2018, the loan is repaid in full within three months of the start of a new BID period.

Reason for Decision

- 3 To determine a request for loan funding received from Weymouth BID Ltd.

Background and Reason Decision Needed

- 4 In 2003 Government passed the Business Improvement District (England) Regulations which allowed for the establishment of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs). There are now over 200 BIDs nationally and 6 operate currently in Dorset.

- 5 BID regulations determine that a BID ballot only mandates a BID to operate and deliver its business plan for a period of up to 5 years. To continue beyond a 5 year term, a BID must repeat the process of consultation to develop a new set of proposals, which are then required to be the subject of a ballot of all the businesses in hereditaments likely to pay the levy. The BID can only continue if the ballot result is positive and meets the dual by majority criteria for votes cast and rateable values. In the event of a successful ballot, the BID levy is a statutory charge on all hereditaments defined as eligible in the BID proposition. The Borough Council is required in law to collect and to take enforcement action for non-payment of the BID levy.
- 6 Weymouth BID was established in 2013 following a lengthy process to consult develop and promote both the Business Improvement District concept and the specific Weymouth BID business plan and proposal to businesses who may have become liable to pay the BID levy. The process was supported by the Borough Council through a grant of £46100.
- 7 Weymouth BID Ltd submitted an application (attached at appendix 1) for a loan of £20,000 *“to deliver a Campaign for the BID to continue with a new Business Plan through a campaign to achieve a “Yes” vote in May 2018 and take Weymouth BID into a second 5 year term.”* The BID has subsequently written to the Council and reduced its request for a loan from £20000 to £10000 (appendix 2) following a review of its finances and work already undertaken.

The current Weymouth BID business plan makes provision for the renewal process as follows:

From January 2017 the BID Board will allocate funds to manage the required consultation for the re-ballot in 2018. . The key challenge in delivering a successful renewal ballot will be resourcing all of the activities needed whilst continuing to deliver on the current BID projects. Team roles are likely to be restructured in the period from mid 2017 in order to consult with local businesses to ensure that a new Business Plan truly reflects the needs of local businesses while maintaining delivery.

The application indicates that £5000 from BID funds has been set aside for this process and proposes that the BID repay the loan, in the event of a successful ballot, in equal instalments over five years.

- 8 In order to meet the regulations requirements and prescriptive timescales for formal notifications and ballot administration, Weymouth BID has had to commence the renewal process and preparatory work. It has undertaken an initial telephone survey of all BID levy payers and recently produced and issued an “interim Business Plan” from which to further consult and develop the final BID proposal. This proposal will then be the subject of the BID ballot and campaign, and issued to every potential levy payer.
- 10 Members are invited to consider this request in the light of the recently “minded to” decision on Local Government Reorganisation in Dorset. Reorganisation will change the responsibilities of the successor councils and inherited liabilities will need clarification. For simplicity, and to restore

funds to the originating council prior to the reorganisation, it is proposed that the BID is made an advance of £10000 subject to repayment in full within three months of a new BID term and once sufficient levy income has been achieved. If the re-ballot is successful, the loan funds are likely to have been repaid to the Borough Council by end of December 2018.

- 11 Members may be aware of the BID loan fund, a Government initiative to support the development of new BIDs. It is not however open to BIDs such as Weymouth, which are in a process of renewal.

Implications

Corporate Plan

Building a Stronger Local Economy
Empowering thriving and inclusive communities

Financial

The loan would be required to be met from budget underspend or reserves. This will be repaid by the BID, subject to a successful ballot, within 3 months of the start of the new BID period.

Equalities

No implications

Environmental

No implications

Economic Development

Business Improvement Districts are business led initiatives working to improve trading conditions within a defined area.

Risk Management (including Health & Safety)

There is a risk that a loan to Weymouth BID will not be repaid if the BID does not secure a mandate at ballot to continue. The engagement of both the Tourism and Economy brief holders with the BID Board will allow monitoring of the appropriate use of the Councils loan investment.

Human Resources

No implications

Consultation and Engagement

Economy Brief holder
Finance
Legal

Appendices

Weymouth BID Application form and subsequent email

Background Papers

None

Footnote

Issues relating to financial, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.

Report Author: Trevor Hedger, Senior Economic Regeneration Officer

Telephone: 01305 252378

Email: thedger@dorset.gov.uk

Date: 30 November 2017

**Weymouth Business Improvement District Ltd
Application for Funding to Weymouth & Portland Borough
Council**

ORGANISATION APPLYING

Weymouth BID Ltd

Name and address of your organisation and correspondence address:
(Including email address and contact telephone number if possible)

Weymouth BID Ltd
15 St Alban Street
Weymouth
Dorset DT4 8PY
Company Registration Number 07953027
Vat No GB 134 5299 08

Tel 01305 779410
chair@weymouthbid.co.uk
www.weymouthbid.co.uk

Describe your organisations activities and objectives:

Weymouth BID Ltd is a business-led initiative supported by Government legislation which, subject to ballot, gives local businesses the power to raise funds locally to be spent on improving the local trading environment.

The BID works to a 5 year business plan

<http://www.weymouthbid.co.uk/fcimages/files/Weymouth%20BID%20Business%20Plan.pdf>

How will your project benefit the Town?

The BID since its formation and official start in September 2013 has already delivered a number of projects which included the set up and promotion of Weymouth under the We are Weymouth Branding which has become a leading website and online presence promoting the area to a wider audience both nationally and internationally.

The BID has invested over £90,000 per year since 2013 in Events and Festivals which have attracted over 500,000 visitors in that period. This has either through funding new events managed by the BID such as its flagship event Weymouth BIG Christmas a month long promotion of Weymouth based around a real Ice Rink and providing funding to other organisation to support their events such as Pommery Seafood Festival, Lions Motocross, Fayre in the Square, Wessex Folk Festival and Ironman.

Investment has also be made in partnership with other organisations such as the

Police, WPBC to improve the town environment including, shop wraps, best bar none, repairs to signage and improved Christmas lighting.

The BID has also installed Footfall Cameras and other Data collection equipment which monitors the weekly numbers into the town.

The BID volunteer Weyfarer programme has proved popular with the increasing Cruise Ship programme coming into Portland Harbour and working with the Port has created a popular welcome to visitors who come into Weymouth.

The BID is also seen as one of the main consultees in the town and is represented on the Night Time Economy Group, Tourism Partnership, Economic Leaders Groups and regularly meets with WPBC, DCC, Police Commissioner and other Dorset BIDs.

The BID has been successful in raising additional funds through sponsorship, grants and lottery funding that helps benefit the town. In addition to contributing to larger funding applications by other groups such as Activate and B-Side bringing events like the Cirque de Platznik.

The Office based in the Town Centre has also taking on the role of a Tourist Information Point when the TIC closed. In addition it has been successful in working with Healthy High Streets a national campaign and through this has set up a Multiple Retailers Forum in the Town.

The BID sponsor many of the information maps and annual publications that help provide a service to visitors and residents on events and activities and creates community family events around Easter and Halloween.

The BID has committed £20,000 for projects supporting the recently appointed Town Centre Manager and subject to a successful ballot will invest further. The BID is also committed to the Installation of WIFI in the Town and has allocated £15,000 towards this project

In financial terms the BID with its Levy and additional income invests over £350,000 into the local economy with at least £200,000 directly supporting local companies.

Describe how your project fits within the aims of WPBC

All these activities and projects helped to improve the local economy and tourism offer which is fundamental to the Councils aims.

Where do you get the majority of your funding from each year to run your organisation?

The majority of the funding is from the BID Levy raised on all businesses within the BID area with a rateable value of £6,000 and above.
Currently there over 550 business that contribute with approximately 51% paying between £99-£200 per annum.

This brings a total of just over £300,000 per annum with additional income as highlighted from Sponsorship, Match Funding, Christmas Sales and Grants giving and income of £350,000

The Council contribution is £19,000 for 2017/18

What do you aim to achieve with the funding you are requesting in this application?

The aim of this application is to provide additional funding separate to the BIDs regular income to deliver a Campaign for the BID to continue with a new Business Plan through a campaign to achieve a "Yes" vote in May 2018 and take Weymouth BID into a second 5 year term.

This also prevents the BID from having to divert funding from its current projects to the renewal campaign rather than continue to invest in its current projects.

As an example the BID has already had to reduce:

- Funding for Halloween, and Easter Promotions and Community Events such as Freaky Streets and Dino Egg Hunt. All events to encourage increased footfall.
- Match Funding to other Event Organisations and Community Groups has been reduced
- No funding has been allocated for Night Time economy Projects
- Events Funding has been reduced including Christmas Lighting up ceremony. No funding has been allocated for Waterfest in 2018
- Sponsored support for annual publications is reduced including Council publications, Maps and Events programmes.
- We have reduced Marketing and Promotion and no attendance at any Trade Shows for 2018

How much will your project cost in total?

The anticipated budget is £25,000

How much funding are you asking for?

£20,000

What percentage is this of the total project costs?

80%

Where will the rest of the funding come from?

This will be from the BIDs current budget for 2017/18.

In the original budget request to set up a BID in 2012 the figure of £46,100 was requested this is not required this time round as the BID already has administrative staff and, office and is already established. The £5,000 allocated by the BID is to cover the existing staff additional workload to support the renewal.

Financial Information

Accounts can be viewed on line with Annual reports and other BID information:

: <http://www.weymouthbid.co.uk/go.to/Documents>

How will you spend the funds you are asking for?

The £20,000 will cover all aspects of a renewal

- Consultation – This will be to all 550 Levy Payers and will be by mail, on-line, forums and other public meetings.
- 1-2-1 Meetings with Levy Payers and contact with Head Offices and BID Voters of larger organisations.
- Publication of Literature, on-line surveys.
- Data Collection on support for the BID
- Production of a draft Business plan and then production and distribution of the final business plan to 550 Levy papers.
- Additional Staffing resources for administration and meetings with Levy Payers.

What benefits do you aim to achieve with this project? List at least three benefits.

It is in the Councils interest to consider this as support for a new BID and if successful will mean a continued investment in the area of over £1.5 million over 5 years to 2023

1. An established BID now in its 5th Year is the only Organisation if successful with sufficient funding to deliver projects and support events which WPBC are not in a position to deliver with the continued reduction in local Government Funding.
2. The sole purpose of the Company is to promote the Area and support the Businesses within the area. One of WPBC main aims a strong local Economy.
3. Will continue to invest in Event support and Projects many in Partnerships. Over £100,000 invested each year
4. Has worked with over 100 local companies in supplying services to the BID (35 of these Levy Payers)

Additional Information you wish to submit in support of your application for consideration:

The proposal is that this is a loan and is subject to a successful "Yes" vote in 2018. If successful the loan would be paid back as part of the Levy Collection Feed over the 5 years of the Second Term (£4,000) per year.

If the BID renewal is not successful and fails to meet the ballot criteria then the BID needs to have sufficient funding to deal with closing the Company down.

This will include

- Staff redundancy payments
- Termination of other Contracts including premises
- Removal of Equipment such as Footfall Cameras
- Ensure all outstanding payments and commitments are met

Other BID Areas any BIDs are well supported by their Local Authority and in many cases take up the renewal process by putting funding and staff resources into the renewal.

Great Yarmouth who visited recently explained that at renewal Great Yarmouth Council put funding in and use Consultants to deliver the renewal as well as other Staffing

Bournemouth BID also use Consultants investing £70,000

Bromley BID employed Consultants and appointed a Project Manager from within the Authority to Manage the Renewal.

Date : 20th October 2017

BID2 Renewal Budget 2017/18

Income					
WPBC Loan			20,000.00		
BID Staffing Cost			5,000.00		
	Total Income			£25,000.00	
Expenditure					
BID Contractor Support			4,000.00		Includes Expenses, Travel Costs
Consultation			10,250.00		
	Publications Desgn	1200			
	Printing	4000			BID Plan
	Postage & Mailshots	1500			
	Meetings	800			Hire of Rooms
	Surveys & Feedback	750			Survey Monkey
	Voter Contact	2000			Direct Mail or Telecalls
Marketing & PR			4,000.00		
Advertising			3,000.00		
Website updates			2,000.00		Weymouth BID Site updates
Consultation Advice			600.00		
Contingency			1,150.00		
	Total Expenditure			£25,000.00	
	Income over Expenditure			£0.00	

Trevor Hedger

From: Weymouth BID <info@weymouthbid.co.uk>
Sent: 21 November 2017 15:01
To: Cllr Jeff Cant (WPBC)
Cc: Trevor Hedger; Martin Hamilton; 'Steve Newstead'
Subject: Weymouth BID renewal

Hi Jeff,

After analysing the BID finances, I can confirm that I would like to revise the amount of money requested from the Council, towards the BID Renewal Ballot to £10,000.

Kind Regards

Steve Newstead
The Chairman

Weymouth Bid Ltd, 15 St Alban Street, Weymouth, Dorset DT4 8PY

Tel: 01305 779410
www.weymouthbid.co.uk
www.weareweymouth.co.uk

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