

BELFAST

ONE

BUSINESS
IMPROVEMENT
DISTRICT

BUSINESS PLAN 2016 - 2021

LET'S MAKE IT HAPPEN TOGETHER

Driving Footfall • Increasing Sales • Reducing Costs

OUR MISSION

The City Centre is the heart of Belfast, a place to enjoy, and a catalyst for growth, change and innovation. We want it to be the place to visit and a place to aspire to. In many ways it already is. Belfast One BID is the mechanism we need to take Belfast to the next level, to enable the City Centre to collectively respond to new challenges and allow all businesses to grow and prosper. With a BID in place, Belfast City Centre will;

- Create a high quality experience!
- Be the destination of choice for visitors and shoppers
- Attract and excite new investors and businesses

Working together we will innovate, create, develop and support a better Belfast for everyone.

Belfast One BID will continue to work in partnership with key organisations to improve Belfast City Centre by making it a safer and more welcoming place for visitors and businesses to invest, work and play in – both day and night. Belfast One BID will also act as an agent for change, to create new opportunities for growth and employment, and help sustain the City Centre as a major engine of the Belfast economy.

The next five years in Belfast are shaping up to be exciting times. Picture what our future could look like. The University of Ulster development will be complete by 2018, bringing with it 14,000 students and 1,500 staff! Plans for Royal Exchange and current private sector investment in shop front improvements demonstrate the confidence of the private sector to invest in Belfast. New, increased powers and an expanded boundary for Belfast City Council make it an important stakeholder in supporting the City Centre. Finally, there are other emerging BIDs within the broader City including a BID in our neighbouring Cathedral Quarter focusing on culture, heritage and the arts. The Belfast One BID is part of, and will lead and provide stability to, this ever changing jigsaw, which will help to direct and achieve this vibrant vision for the future.

A Business Improvement District (BID) will help to achieve Belfast City Centre's full potential. This Business Plan sets out how a BID for Belfast City Centre would operate and the benefits on offer. This is your opportunity to shape the future of Belfast City Centre. Let's make it happen together!

“ The BID in Belfast will act as a powerful voice for the business community. As a local business proud of Belfast's heritage we believe that the BID's existence is vital to help provide an environment in which business can thrive and prosper. ”

John Lunn, Lunn's Jewellers



OVER
1,000
BUSINESSES

20 Person
Business
Led
Board

5 Year BID
Plan

Over
60 Streets

14 Different
Sectors

3 Main Priorities:

Promote

Enhance

Support



30 %
RETAIL



15 %
HOSPITALITY



15 % OFFICE
& COMMERCIAL

OVER £6M WILL BE
INVESTED BY THE BID



WHAT IS A BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID)?

A BID is a specific area where businesses work together and invest in agreed services, projects and special events.

The remit of Belfast One BID has been determined and will be controlled by you, the businesses involved. As you control the BID, you play a key role in deciding which projects and initiatives go ahead. The BID is financed by a levy of 1.5% made on the basis of your rateable value (NAV), with the agreement to set up a BID made on the basis of a postal ballot. You must vote to have your say. A BID cannot replace core public sector services and must offer clear return on investment for the levy payers.

Your OPPORTUNITY.

This is your chance to invest over £6 million into Belfast City Centre over the next five years. Full details of the budget can be found on page 17.

Your PRIORITIES.

The BID will be dedicated to delivering projects, programmes and services to businesses in Belfast City Centre. Our consultation to date has found that businesses across all the different sectors have many similar priorities and needs. You have told us you would like the BID to focus on the following three key priorities:

01

Promote: £2.5 million over 5 years

Promoting Belfast City Centre to increase the number of people who visit – for business, for retail and for leisure.

02

Enhance: £1.85 million over 5 years

Developing and delivering projects that ensure everyone who visits Belfast City Centre has a first class experience, cultivating an environment in which existing business can thrive and that new businesses want to be a part of!

03

Support: £962,500 over 5 years

Programmes and projects to drive down business costs and provide practical support and help to all businesses within the BID area.

Your COMPANY.

The BID will be run as an independent, not-for-profit company. It will be controlled through a Board of Directors that represent and are elected from businesses and stakeholders in the City. BID staff will be appointed to deliver the business plan.

Your INVESTMENT.

Belfast One BID will be funded by a levy on each property in the defined area with a rateable value of and exceeding £10,000. Properties below this threshold are exempt but can join voluntarily and receive all benefits. The levy will raise over £1 million each year to be spent exclusively on improving business in the City Centre. The BID can also generate additional funding through voluntary contributions, grants and sponsorships. Please see page 6 for examples of how much this will cost your business.

Your DECISION.

This is a democratic process. By casting your vote in the ballot, you decide whether Belfast One BID will go ahead.

Your VOTE.

If you are eligible to vote, a ballot paper will be posted on 17th September 2015 and you will have until 29th October 2015 to cast your postal vote.



BIDs are run by Business and for Business

BIDs drive spend and footfall

BIDs enable collective investment to achieve cost savings to individual businesses

BIDs create a real business voice to influence change

BIDs attract match funding to make your money go further

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

I am absolutely delighted to introduce this Business Plan for the Belfast One Business Improvement District. In this document the BID Task Team are setting out very clearly the opportunity to create a new and exciting future in Belfast City Centre. It is the culmination of a years' worth of work which has involved an extensive and comprehensive **process of consultation and engagement with businesses** in Belfast City Centre. Now we have a Business Plan for the next five years developed using surveys, business meetings and face-to-face discussions with Belfast One businesses. During this time I have had the pleasure of working with businesses who have all signed up to support the BID process. The Belfast One Task Team represents the diversity of businesses in the City Centre. The Team has reached out to capture **creative ideas and progressive suggestions** outlining how we can develop our City Centre to meet the challenges and opportunities in the future.

The BID's purpose is collaboration and working together to create improvement. We will work together to make our vision possible, and with Belfast One BID over the next 5 years, the City Centre will receive **an investment of over £6 million**. With this level of investment the Business Improvement District presents us with a huge opportunity to take the next step in managing, promoting and **supporting Belfast City Centre's diverse mix of businesses**. This model will ensure that **all businesses contribute and everyone benefits**; the funding will be sustainable; and businesses, i.e. **YOU, will have control over what the BID spends its money on**.

Experience tells us that BIDs, amongst other things, **increase footfall, increase spend, reduce vacancy rates and drives down business costs**. We know we can achieve this because it has been done elsewhere with great success! There are now more than 200 BIDs operating across the UK and there are countless examples of the positive impacts BIDs are already having. Now we have the opportunity to see the same happen in Belfast - together, we can make this happen and shape and even better future.

In this BID Business Plan we have endeavoured to bring together the ideas and thinking that emerged during the consultation

process. The Belfast One Task Team are committed to helping our City achieve its full potential as a trading and business centre. We believe that the business community now has the opportunity to act collectively in order to **attract new ideas and investment and enhance business profitability**. I strongly urge you to carefully consider this Business Plan and ensure that your organisation votes "Yes".

The Belfast One BID is the **best chance** we have to make sure we give the business community the best opportunity to succeed – both now and in the future. Now is the time to act collectively and **say 'yes' to a BID in Belfast One** and start delivering more for business and **creating a successful City Centre**.



Chris Suitor,
Suitor Menswear and Chair of the Belfast One BID Task Team
and **Clare Maguire**,
Belfast One BID Development Manager

“ The BID offers particularly good value for money to the small independent businesses in Belfast. A really affordable contribution will mushroom into a huge fund, with a payback worth many times what it will cost us independents. ”

Chris Suitor, Suitor Menswear



BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS EXPLAINED

A Business Improvement District (BID) is a **local, democratically elected organisation** that focuses on delivering specific improvements needed by local businesses in a defined area. BIDs invest in and deliver projects to improve the local trading environment, drive down business costs and raise the area's profile. BIDs are led and controlled by businesses; they are independent, not-for-profit organisations with ring-fenced resources and finances.

The projects are funded by raising finance, principally, through a levy. This levy is an investment by businesses.

BIDs operate for five years. Throughout the term they **are accountable to their levy-paying businesses** and must demonstrate how they make a difference. After five years, a re-ballot must be held to enable the BID to continue.

In order for a BID to be established, a ballot of all eligible businesses in the BID area is held. For the ballot to be successful, conditions must be met:

1. Over 50% of businesses that vote, must vote in favour of the BID.
2. Of the businesses that vote, those voting yes must represent a greater total rateable value than those who vote no.
3. There must be at least a 25% turnout both in number of voters and rateable value.

If these conditions are met, the BID will be established. The **BID levy will be mandatory** for all liable businesses in the BID area regardless of whether they chose to vote. If the BID is established, it will not be possible for a business to 'opt out'.

BIDs are lean organisations, designed to be flexible, agile and responsive to local circumstances and areas of priority, as well as carry the credibility and resources to get things done in a cost effective and efficient way. The BID Company monitors results and performance.

There are more than 200 BIDs operating all over the UK, including for example London, Birmingham, Liverpool, Leeds and Sheffield. BID legislation was introduced in Northern Ireland in the summer of 2014. Since then the Northern Ireland BIDS Academy has been established and Northern Ireland has had its first successful BID, Ballymena Town Centre, in March 2015. Figures demonstrate that businesses within Business Improvement Districts boast increases in footfall and trading figures, more inward investment, and better communication between business and local government.



After their first term, nine out of ten BIDs continue after a re-ballot - with a higher turnout and a stronger mandate. This demonstrates the power of BIDs and how they are regarded by the businesses that fund them.

“ I welcome the opportunity to work in partnership with my local business community and authority to collectively deliver our vision and grow Belfast as a destination of choice for shoppers and tourists. It's our responsibility to lead, to make a local difference, and I believe that Belfast One BID with specific, shared objectives, can make a measured difference to all businesses. ”

Aileen McGroggan, Boots





BELFAST ONE BID - YOUR QUESTIONS: ANSWERED

Am I eligible to vote?

All businesses with a rateable value of £10,000 or more are eligible to vote in the ballot.

Why are businesses with a rateable value below £10,000 exempt and why are the Shopping Centre tenants getting a 0.3% discount?

The overhead cost in order to provide a tangible service and high quality projects would exceed what these businesses would pay. Exempt businesses are not eligible to vote but may opt to make a voluntary contribution and receive the same benefits.

About a third of the projects identified in the Business Plan are already provided to shopping centre tenants through their service charge hence the discount.

How will I know if the BID is delivering on its promises?

The BID will focus its resources on delivering the three objectives outlined in this Business Plan. **It will communicate its activity throughout the five-year term and report on a variety of performance indicators, as outlined on page 20.** The Business Plan is binding and any proposed significant changes would require another ballot.

Is this a way for the Council to save money?

No. Indeed the Council will be a levy payer too. All projects and services delivered by the BID will be new, or in addition to, the statutory Council services covered by your business rates. Indeed the BID has agreed Baseline Statements with all public agencies. These statements capture the level and extent of statutory provision in the City Centre. Legally, a BID can only deliver projects over and above existing statutory services and part of the BID's role will be to make sure local public agencies are delivering.

The Belfast One BID will be an independent, private, not-for-profit company. The BID will be formed for and monitored by the levy-paying businesses and will operate solely to deliver projects they need.

Baseline Statements have been established for statutory services i.e. those covered by your business rates:

Services Areas:

- Street Cleansing
- Street Lighting
- Policing
- Refuse Collection
- Highway Maintenance

Isn't this what I pay my business rates for?

No. Rates are a property tax used to fund both local and regional services in Northern Ireland. They are collected by Land & Property Services on behalf of the Northern Ireland Executive and the District Councils. There are two different rates, a domestic rate for residential properties and a business rate for non-domestic properties. Businesses have little say in how the business rates for non-domestic properties are distributed or spent. The BID levy is calculated by reference to the rateable value of the business unit and the funds will be kept in a separate bank account to be invested within the BID area. The Local Authority will also pay a BID levy as a property owner in the BID area.

Isn't this a bad time to be increasing businesses' outgoings?

Actually this is a great time to be investing in Belfast City Centre and striving to ensure our City fulfils its potential. BIDs aim to drive footfall to the City, increase sales and improve the trading environment. Furthermore, BIDs provide the opportunity for businesses to work together to find cost savings such as trade waste collection and insurance.

How much will this cost my business?

To calculate your annual BID Levy based on a 1.5% charge, divide your rateable value (RV) by 100 and multiply by 1.5. For example:

RV £10,000 / 100 x 1.5	= £150 BID Levy
RV £50,000 / 100 x 1.5	= £750 BID Levy
RV £250,000 / 100 x 1.5	= £3,750 BID Levy
RV £500,000 / 100 x 1.5	= £7500 BID Levy

What happens at the end of the 5 year BID term?

A BIDs mandate is for a maximum of five years. A BID wishing to continue beyond that must reaffirm its mandate through re-ballot, based on a new business plan. In the UK nine out of ten BIDs that have gone to re-ballot have been successful, a testament to their success.

“ Belfast is on the verge of a great opportunity that we hope city centre businesses will embrace. We are pleased to support the BID in Belfast which we believe is a key tool in ensuring the city's competitiveness in the coming years. ”

Gary Rocks, Donaghy Carey





THE BID AREA

The BID area has been carefully defined after months of consultation.

Over £6 million of BID funds will only be invested in projects to benefit the businesses within this area, in line with statutory regulations.

If you are unsure whether your business falls within the BID boundary, please get in touch with a member of the BID Team. Contact details are at the back of this Plan.

“ The city centre is the economic driver of Belfast – indeed all of Northern Ireland. Belfast City Council recognises this and has committed to a substantial programme of investment to maximise the development of the area and support further economic growth. ”

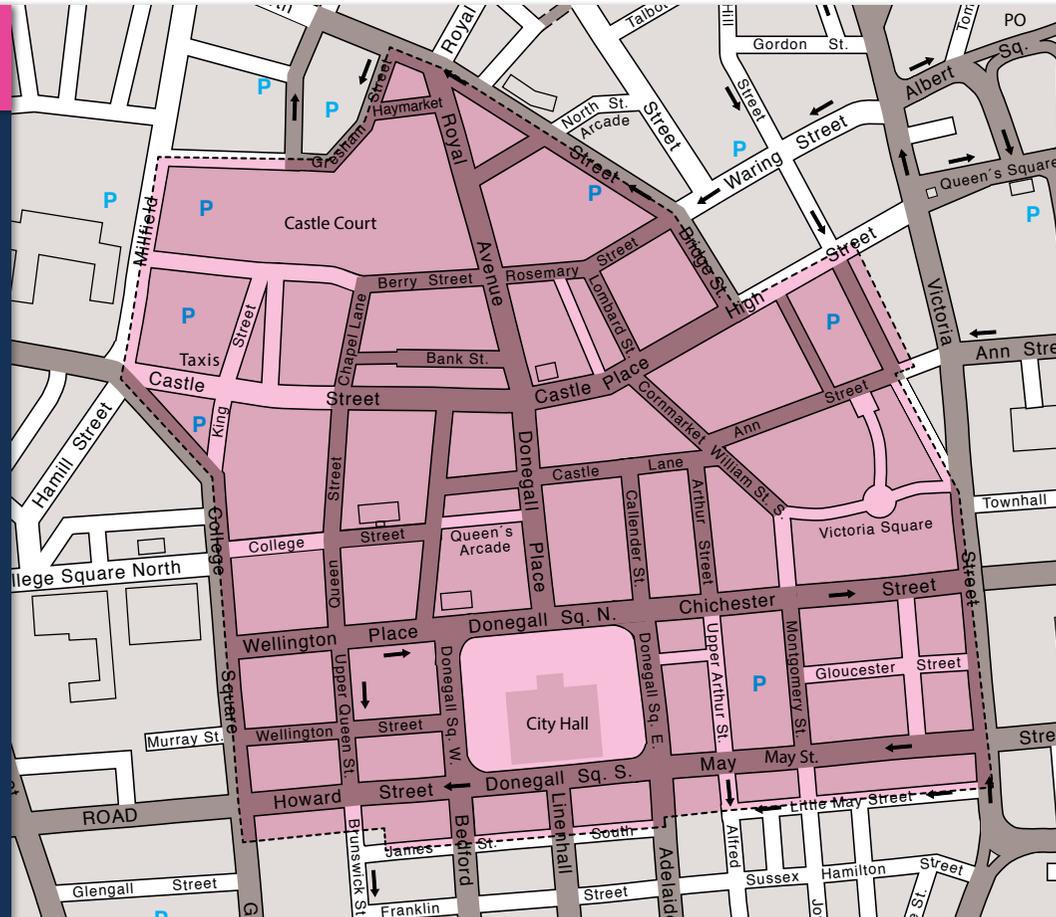
Peter McKay, City Hall Manager



Street List - Belfast One BID area

Streets included within the BID area are:

- | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Adelaide Street | Donegall Arcade | Queens Arcade |
| Ann Street | Donegall Place | Rosemary Street |
| Arthur Lane | Donegall Square East | Royal Avenue |
| Arthur Place | Donegall Square North | Seymour Street |
| Arthur Square | Donegall Square South | Seymour Row |
| Arthur Street | Donegall Square West | Upper Arthur Street |
| Bank Street | Fisherwick Place | Upper Queen Street |
| Bedford Street | Fountain Lane | Victoria Square |
| Berry Street | Fountain Street | Victoria Street |
| Bridge Street | Francis Street | Wellington Court |
| Callender Street | Gloucester Street | Wellington Place |
| Castle Arcade | Great Victoria Street | Wellington Street |
| CastleCourt | Gresham Street | William Street South |
| Castle Lane | High Street | Wilson's Court |
| Castle Place | Howard Street | Winecellar Entry |
| Castle Street | Joys Entry | |
| Chapel Lane | King Street | |
| Chichester Street | Lombard Street | |
| Church Lane | Lower Garfield Street | |
| College Avenue | Marquis Street | |
| College Court | May Street | |
| College Square East | Montgomery Street | |
| College Street | North Street | |
| College Street Mews | Pattersons Place | |
| Cornmarket | Pottingers Entry | |
| Crown Entry | Queen Street | |





THE BELFAST ONE BID BUSINESS PLAN – DESIGNED BY YOU!



For the past 10 months, the Belfast One BID Team has facilitated consultation in many ways and listened to your views on a BID for Belfast City Centre. The consultation process has included surveys, business workshops and face-to-face meetings. The development of this Business Plan has been shaped by individual and group meetings with City Centre businesses, public agencies and stakeholders at local and national headquarters. As a result of this engagement hundreds of businesses have had their say and have told us what they want for the City.

June 2014

Belfast is selected as part of the Northern Ireland BIDs Academy supported by the Department for Social Development.

November 2014

BID Development Manager begins work in Belfast One and organises a round of face-to-face meetings and conversations with local businesses.

December 2014

The website is up and running letting all City Centre businesses know about the Belfast One BID. Analysis begins on our first tranche of Rates data from Land and Property Services.

December 2014

The BID Team visit City Centre businesses for face-to-face meetings and the BID Task Team is formed. The Task Team is representative of the BID study area both by sector and geographically. The BID Team continue the consultation, including meetings with the Heads of Service of Public Agencies who currently provide services within the City Centre. Baseline statements are drawn up.

January 2015

A City Centre Improvement Survey is developed and distributed to over 1,000 businesses. Initial survey analysis is undertaken and the survey findings are looking interesting! First meeting of the Belfast One Task Team.

January 2015

Our first newsletter is circulated via email and is uploaded to the website. Hard copies are delivered to all businesses in the BID study area. As a result we had lots of enquiries about the BID and some new Task Team members.

February 2015

The last of the survey work is collected up and we begin more analysis of all our data including refreshed data from Land and Property Services. The BID Manager joins a study trip to other UK BIDs with representatives of the Task Team, and gives a presentation to the Belfast Business Forum. We have a Twitter account set up.

March 2015

Yes, more consultation is organised! This includes one to one business meetings, presentations to the Executive Council of Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce and the Board of Directors of Belfast City Centre Management. A Programme of six workshops is organised to enable businesses to engage with the process in more depth; all City Centre businesses are invited to attend. The second newsletter is well received and the Belfast One Task Team meet for the second time.

April 2015

It was a busy spring with another five BID Development workshops in April. Additional outreach work was vital to ensure as many businesses as possible have a full picture of the benefits a BID can bring. Work begins on pulling together the Draft Summary Business Plan – there are so many ideas!

May 2015

Four drop-in sessions were organised by the BID Team in Belfast City Business Hub to update on all the work so far. Based on the consultation feedback the BID Task Team make some important final decisions about the boundary of the BID area and the Levy charge. BID Manager attends the Visit Belfast Members Day. A third newsletter is produced and distributed across the BID area. Belfast One Task Team meet for the third time.

June 2015

It's all coming together! There's a fantastic turn out for the launch of the Draft Summary Plan on the 30th June 2015 in Ten Square Hotel. Great enthusiasm for the Belfast One BID! Fourth meeting of the Belfast One BID Task Team.

July 2015

Consultation feedback on the Draft Summary Business Plan closes. Task Team meet for the fifth time.

August 2015

Drafting begins on the Final Business Plan incorporating everything we have learnt so far and the final consultation comments on the Draft Summary Business Plan. The Belfast One Task Team meet twice this month.

September 2015

Final Business Plan is produced, launched and circulated to all businesses in the City Centre BID area eligible to vote. BID Postal Ballot opens on 17th September. Two Task Team meetings again in September.

October 2015

The Belfast One Task Team will meet at least twice this month and will be in regular contact via email. BID Postal Ballot closes on 29th October 2015 with the declaration of result on 30th October 2015.

“ Our business is passionate about Belfast and its opportunity to be a more vibrant city that offers its visitors a great shopping experience. To raise Belfast's potential, businesses need a BID to work together to make a difference. ”

Brian McKeown, Primark



THE BELFAST ONE BID PROJECTS

01

PROMOTE

02

ENHANCE

03

SUPPORT

“ This is a fantastic opportunity for the retail sector to drive the standards and presentation of Belfast to every visitor. By directly influencing how this money is spent we can best utilise it, to make the biggest impact, and where visitors will see the biggest difference. By having a budget to deliver targeted advertising and promotional activities the city centre will be able to compete and promote the benefits of visiting Belfast. ”

Michelle Greeves, Victoria Square



“ I believe we need to work together towards a clean, managed and animated city centre with a vibrant commercial heart. The BID provides a stable, tried and tested mechanism for us all to contribute towards this end. ”

John Doherty, The Bible Society



01



PROMOTE

£2.5 million over 5 years



You said:

- Increasing footfall should be our top priority.
- A visit to Belfast City Centre should be promoted as an experience. Within the BID area the variety and quality of retail, business services, food and entertainment is unrivalled in Northern Ireland. So let's shout about it!
- Belfast should be the city destination of choice for our domestic market, our promotional campaigns should focus in part on changing people's perception of our City, be that around access, safety or cost.
- We want to know more about our customers and how we can help them to enjoy our City Centre.
- Events should be focused on getting customers into the City Centre and allowing businesses to capitalise on increased footfall.

We will:

- Deliver the following:

- **Belfast City Centre Branding Strategy**
- **Events**
- **Promotional Campaign**
- **Market research and Measuring Success**

Belfast City Centre Branding Strategy

- Brand the City Centre in a recognisable and cohesive way so that our visitors know they are within a managed area and can expect high standards.
- Create and manage an up-to-date City Centre website and seamless social media presence.
- Brand all promotional materials, including internal and external communications.
- Give our brand substance by ensuring that it's not just about our logo – it's about our logo being associated with positivity and change – essentially everything described in the this business plan!

Events

- City Centre events calendar to draw people into and around the City Centre. Smaller, more focused and more frequent events will familiarise visitors with the City Centre, and create a positive, welcoming atmosphere e.g. Sunday in the City.
- Invest in existing events to enhance what we already have and avoid duplication.
- Deliver a number of signature events every year – these will be designed to showcase the best the City has to offer in terms of food, fashion, culture, music, film, and so on.

Promotional Campaign

- Establish a consistent, year round promotional campaign – conveying the Belfast City Centre message to our target audience, using a variety of media resources. We will ensure we promote our BID events, and that the campaign becomes even more focused at the key times of year such as Christmas.
- Promote the routine issues that have an impact on each and every visitor, such as how to get to the City, where to park, best times to visit and so on.

Market research and Measuring Success

- Conduct continuous market research and use this information to create our BELFAST ONE EXPERIENCE; an experience tailored to our visitor, and ultimately dedicated to driving footfall into the City Centre.
- Use consultation results to determine areas for growth and find out why people do/don't come to the City Centre. We want to know what people expect from a City visit and how this differs depending on the visitor – then we can make sure our City Centre experience is up there with the best!



“ A Business Improvement District in Belfast provides a tremendous opportunity for business to take the lead in making a real difference to their trading environment. Business Improvement Districts across the UK have effectively demonstrated that through collective action, a town or city can be more competitive, increase footfall and dwell times and reduce costs to businesses. ”

Julie Hodgen, Marks and Spencer



PROMOTE



Developing and delivering projects that ensure everyone who visits Belfast City Centre has a first class experience, cultivating an environment in which existing businesses can thrive and that new businesses want to be a part of!



You said:

- The City Centre is good but we want to make it great!
- Visitors should know that they are within a defined and managed area, where they can feel safe, secure, relaxed and enjoy the City atmosphere.
- The City Centre should be ready each morning to receive its visitors and its workforce; it should be clean, litter free and attractive which in turn creates a welcoming atmosphere.
- Visitors should be able to access and navigate the City Centre easily, with a particular emphasis on accessible and affordable car-parking.

We will:

Deliver the following projects to ensure visitors to Belfast have the best experience possible. We need to get the basics right because if we take pride in our City, visitors will too. If you are in Belfast to shop, relax, eat, socialise, do business, we want you to feel welcome, to soak up the atmosphere and to be able to relax because you feel safe.

3 Key Priority Areas: **Safe City, Accessible City, Clean & Attractive City**



Safe City

Belfast One BID Ambassadors - a team of on the ground, BID branded staff dedicated to enhancing safety and security in the City Centre. The BID team will provide a warm welcome, a hub of information, a point of contact for businesses and become the faces of our City Centre

Partnership Working - a number of existing agencies are already working hard to ensure the safety of visitors to our City Centre, these include:

- PSNI
- Welcome Organisation
- Night-time Volunteers – e.g. Street Pastors
- Belfast City Council
- Belfast City Centre Management
- Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce

We want to work alongside these agencies and do what we can to facilitate enhanced services, be that providing additional resources or putting forward new ideas. Belfast One BID will be fully committed to Partnership Working in order to find solutions and strategies to manage City Centre safety both during the day and at night.



Accessible City

If we want to encourage and attract more visitors we need to make it as easy as possible for them to access and navigate our City Centre. We want to ensure first and foremost that accurate and complete City Centre information is readily available, including:

- How to get to Belfast City Centre;
- Where to park;
- Cost of parking;
- Opening Hours;
- Navigating the City Centre; and so on.

Lots of this information is already available so the BID can work to consolidate, promote, and indeed fill any gaps – we don't want people to have any excuse not to visit our great City!!

We will also look at how we can enhance signage from the main access routes into the City, and enhance the information points in the City Centre so that visitors can navigate their way around and not miss out on anything we have to offer!

The BID will support Car Parking Initiatives, working with the main providers, including Belfast City Council, to come up with strategies to enhance the current offer and when appropriate provide funding to subsidise customer parking offers.



Clean & Attractive City

How the City Centre looks is key to the feeling people get when they visit – if its litter free with additional decoration (flowers/lights) visitors will feel welcome and positive.

The BID will employ a Responsive Cleansing Team – an on the ground team who will be able to respond to business needs and provide cleansing over and above what Belfast City Council are already doing. This team will also be able to liaise with the Council, reporting concerns they cannot deal with themselves.

The level of service currently provided by the Council will not diminish and the BID will aim to work closely with the Council to help businesses to get best value out of the services they currently receive as part of their rates.

The BID will carry out additional planting and lighting initiatives to improve the atmosphere and enhance the City Centre brand.



“ It is absolutely right that the private sector should become even more actively involved in shaping the environment in which we do business. We are very supportive of the Belfast One BID and are optimistic that it will make a big contribution to the future prosperity of the City Centre. ”

Bob McCoubrey, Mourne Seafood



03

SUPPORT

£962,500 over 5 years



Programmes and projects to drive down business costs and provide practical support to help all businesses within the BID area.



You said:

- It is essential that businesses see a return on their BID investment by saving money on overheads.
- Belfast City Centre needs a collective voice and mechanism through which businesses can work together.
- We need to lower vacancy rates in the City Centre as this has a negative impact on footfall and perception of safety.

We will:

- Save your business money!



“ Belfast is a unique retail area that deserves investment and a strategic focus that is managed locally. Belfast One BID will significantly enhance the area for retailers and create a better place for everyone that shops, visits, works and lives in Belfast City Centre. ”

Ciaran Donnelly,
Department for Social Development



BIDs are all about businesses and so supporting the businesses of Belfast City Centre is a high priority for Belfast One BID. The BID will support its existing businesses by:

- Conducting centralised procurement of **SERVICES and UTILITIES** such as electricity, insurance, trade waste collection, and window cleaning – the BID will have the purchasing power of 1000 businesses and so the ability to negotiate lower prices!
- Carrying out Monitoring, Data Collection and Reporting – checking and reporting on the health and vitality of the City Centre.
- Becoming a collective voice for the City Centre business community.
- Facilitating partnership working with the Public Sector in order to maintain the baseline standards; the BID can then ensure its work is additional.
- Working to reduce vacancy by supporting start-ups and pop-ups – support may be financial or by providing information and guidance.

Belfast City Centre has been chosen to be a part of the BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY HEALTHY HIGH STREETS PROGRAMME. The Healthy High Streets programme’s Founding Partners Boots UK, the Co-operative Group, Marks & Spencer and Santander are collaborating with local town teams and BIDs all over the UK to develop and implement activities such as:

- Enabling access to landlords to address empty and unsightly property issues
- Prioritising accessibility and safety
- Creating and enabling high profile events to drive footfall
- Creation of relevant pop up shops and markets to support start ups
- Helping to improve customer service
- Providing expert help and resource to market and celebrate the high street.

These activities are fundamental to the proposed work of Belfast One BID. Three locations in Northern Ireland have been chosen to be part of the Healthy High Streets Programme; Newry, Ballymena and Belfast, it is no coincidence that all three locations also have proposed Business Improvement Districts in the pipeline!

For more information on BITC Healthy High Streets visit www.bitc.org.uk/programmes/healthy-high-streets.



“ Being part of a Business Improvement District shows real collaboration between businesses and a commitment to improving the city centre experience for both locals and visitors alike. A great opportunity to have a say in the management of our local environment and a welcome initiative for Belfast. ”

Tracey Morrow, Ulster Bank





THE BID LEVY

Belfast One BID will be financed through an annual levy of 1.5% of the the rateable value (NAV) of your premises. The levy will apply to all business rate payers with a rateable value of £10,000 or more. Eligible levy paying businesses located in shopping centres will pay a BID levy of 1.2%. This takes the payment of their existing service charges into account.

Over the five-year term, the BID will therefore result in an investment of over £6 million into business in Belfast City Centre.

The annual levy is an investment. In return for your investment, your business benefits from additional projects and services. The BID company will be accountable for every £1 it receives or generates.

Voluntary Membership and Additional Income.

The BID will also run a voluntary membership scheme for businesses in the BID area with a rateable value of less than £10,000. This will enable them to invest and share in the benefits of the BID. A board position can be allocated for voluntary contributors who are members of the BID Company. The BID can also seek additional income, grants and project match funding to deliver further value for money. In addition, the BID potentially has the power to run commercial services or other income generating activities.

“ The direct benefits of Belfast One becoming a Business Improvement District are clear – the increased footfall will allow retail businesses an opportunity to increase their sales and many retail and non-retail businesses will be able to offset the cost of the levy by making use of the collective purchasing power of the BID to drive down costs. However, the indirect benefits associated with making improvements to the city centre should also be welcomed - an attractive, well managed city centre with increased footfall will help to increase the up-take of empty space, both retail and office, accordingly improving the vibrancy of the city and resulting in investment in the built environment, improved perception of Belfast as a place to live and work, and better business for all. ”

Nigel Skillen, Diamond & Skillen





BID BUDGET INCOME EXPENDITURE- 2016-2021

Proposed Income & Expenditure Accounts - 2016-2021

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	5 Year Totals
Income	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	
BID Levy	£1,100,000	£1,100,000	£1,100,000	£1,100,000	£1,100,000	£5,500,000
Additional Income *	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000	£750,000
Total Income	£1,250,000	£1,250,000	£1,250,000	£1,250,000	£1,250,000	£6,250,000
Expenditure	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	
Projects and Services						
Promote	£500,000	£500,000	£500,000	£500,000	£500,000	£2,500,000
Enhance	£370,000	£370,000	£370,000	£370,000	£370,000	£1,850,000
Support	£192,500	£192,500	£192,500	£192,500	£192,500	£962,500
Staff						
Training	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£5,000
Office and IT Support	£15,000	£15,000	£15,000	£15,000	£15,000	£75,000
Insurance	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000	£10,000
Levy Collection Costs	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	£100,000
Legal	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£5,000
Bank Charges	£500	£500	£500	£500	£500	£2,500
Contingency	£33,000	£33,000	£33,000	£33,000	£33,000	£165,000
Total Expenditure	£1,250,000	£1,250,000	£1,250,000	£1,250,000	£1,250,000	£6,250,000
Surplus / Deficit	0	0	0	0	0	0

* subject to confirmation

All of the funding for the BID will be ring-fenced and can only be spent on additional projects and services that businesses have agreed to in this Business Plan. The BID Company decide on the apportionment of its management and overhead costs. In Belfast One BID management and overhead costs will be under 20% of total income.

As an independent, private company, the BID can also seek additional financial contributions and match-funding on projects. Experience from other BIDs suggest that on average a BID can lever in additional resources of around 20%. This ensures local businesses can get even better value for money and that we can invest in exciting opportunities for Belfast City Centre.

“ A BID puts decision making directly into the hands of those who will benefit, and it puts in place an equitable process for businesses to make financial contributions. Our City is at the beginning of a new phase of its life cycle with significant regeneration and public realm works programmed, and it is critical that we put in place a mechanism to best support this, and as seen in other locations BIDs have a proven track record for delivery. ”

Paul McMahon, CastleCourt





BID RULES EXPLAINED

The BID legislation regulates BID ballots and the framework under which BIDs must operate. Key points are:

BID creation and the BID Ballot.

- Each business ratepayer that would be liable for the BID levy will have one vote for each of their eligible properties, provided they are listed on the Non-Domestic Rates list as provided by Land and Property Services on 27 July 2015.
- None of the costs incurred through the development of the BID and before the formal ballot will be paid for by the BID levy.

The BID Levy and who contributes.

- The BID levy rate will be fixed for the full term of the BID (five years) and will not be subject to inflation or alterations.
- The BID levy will be applied to all businesses within the defined area with a rateable value of or exceeding £10,000, provided they are listed on the Non-Domestic rates list as provided by Land and Property Services.

The following will be exempt from paying the levy:

- Organisations with a Rateable Value of below £10,000.
- Religious organisations with non-trading operations.
- Non-retail charities with no trading income, arm or facilities and are entirely volunteer based.
- Non-Profits with an entirely subscription and volunteer-based set up.

- New businesses will be charged from the point of occupation based upon the rateable value at the time they enter the rating list.
- If a business ratepayer occupies the premises for less than one year, the levy paid will be on a daily basis.
- Vacant properties, or those undergoing refurbishment or being demolished will be liable to pay the BID levy by the property owner or registered business ratepayer.
- The BID levy will not be affected by the small business rate relief scheme, exemptions, reliefs or discount periods provided for in the Rates (Northern Ireland) Order 1977 and subsequent secondary legislation thereunder.

- The BID Levy will not be affected by service charges paid to landlords.
- VAT will not be charged on the BID levy.
- Eligible ratepayers within a shopping centre and paying a service charge will pay a discounted rate of 1.2%

BID Operations and Management.

- The Billing Body is authorised to collect the BID levy on behalf of the BID Company.
- Collection and enforcement regulations will be in line with those applied to non-domestic business rates, with the BID Company Board of Directors responsible for any debt write-off.
- The BID funding will be kept in a separate BID Revenue Account and transferred to the BID Company.
- BID projects, costs and timescales may be altered by the BID Board of Directors, provided they remain in line with the overall BID objectives.
- The BID Board of Directors will meet at least six times a year. Every levy paying business will be eligible to be a member of the BID Company. Company members can vote at annual general meetings.
- The BID Company will produce a set of annual accounts made available to all company members.
- BID staff will be appointed, will be based in the City Centre and will work with the appropriate agencies to deliver the programme of projects.
- The BID will last for five years. At the end of the five years, a ballot must be held if businesses wish the BID to continue.



Your BID levy is tax deductible

17th
SEPTEMBER
2015

BALLOT
OPENS

“ The BID can give much needed support to owners of independent businesses. Through the initiatives that will be made possible by the funding, SME’s will have the opportunity to help shape the future of their business in Belfast. ”

Alice Sykes, Utopia





BID GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

A new independent, non-for-profit company limited by guarantee will be established to govern the BID.

This organisation will have a Board of Directors, directly accountable to BID levy payers for:

- Effective delivery of the projects and services as set out in the BID Business Plan.
- Upholding and promoting the BIDs vision and objectives.

The Board will serve voluntarily and will be composed to reflect the make-up of the BID area businesses and organisations. Belfast One BID will have the following board composition:

Members of the board

-  x3 Independent Retailers
-  x3 Multiple Retailers
-  x3 Hospitality
-  x2 Professional Services/Offices
-  x1 Shopping Centre
-  x1 Retail Finance
-  x1 Charity
-  x2 Public Sector
-  x1 Belfast City Centre Management
-  x1 Belfast Chamber of Trade
-  x2 Voluntary Contributors/Investors

The BID Task Team, who have worked hard to develop this plan, will form an initial and interim Board of Directors. During the first year, a formal board election will be held in which any levy paying business will be eligible to stand for BID Board Director. There will also be places for co-opted board members to ensure 'joined-up working'.

As a levy payer, you will have a stake in the BID Company. You will control what the BID funds are spent on and you can hold the BID Company to account throughout the term. The BID company will not be able to make a profit – any surplus must be spent on projects and services agreed by you and the Board of Directors.

The BID will also fund dedicated, full-time staff resources to ensure the projects outlined in this business plan are delivered effectively and efficiently. BID staff will be responsible for:

- Communication between levy payers and the Board;
- Delivery and management of the BID Business Plan; and
- Seeking additional financial contributions towards the BID Company.

If successful at the ballot, Belfast One BID will formally commence on 6th April 2016. It will run for five years and then be required to seek renewal through a new ballot.



“ I think it can be easy and even tempting during the current climate to find reasons not to contribute to an initiative like the BID. However, as a business, I see the BID as an exciting way of pulling interested parties together and I am confident that the power of a single, united voice, will improve Belfast in many ways. It’s refreshing to be part of a solution and to have an input.

Michael Stewart, The Hudson Bar





MEASURING PERFORMANCE AND REPORTING BACK

We believe true accountability comes from asking those levy payers who help create and fund the BID to tell us on a yearly basis how they feel the BID Team and Board Members have delivered versus the annual business plan.

Belfast One BID will need to show it is delivering against its objectives and for your business. The Board will set the key performance indicators (KPIs) and criteria upon which to measure the BID's performance. Examples of the criteria the BID will use include:

Town Performance Data

- Footfall figures
- Occupancy rates
- Car parking data
- Crime data
- New business activity

Annual Surveys

- Business feedback
- Consumer feedback

Value for Money and Town Profile Measurements

- Media coverage
- Website and social media visits and interaction
- Service take up rates and cost saving initiatives calculated

These activities will be carried out at appropriate regular intervals and will be reported back to you via:

- Direct Communications (for example: e-bulletins, letters and face-to-face meetings)
- Group Forums and Briefings
- Annual Meetings
- Annual Reports



“ The BID is one of the most important and exciting developments in Belfast in recent years. This will make a huge difference to our city, region and to our economic future. The BID creates a fund for businesses and is completely under business control. This means we can direct those funds to where ever businesses in the city feel that we need extra resources to be focused. ”

Andrew Irvine, Belfast City Centre Management





WHAT HAVE OTHER BID AREAS ACHIEVED?



Dublin Town

www.wearedublintown.ie

- 2,500 businesses across all sectors
- Budget - €3 million per annum
- In second 5 year term
- Core projects include:
 - Marketing & Promotional Activity
 - Visitor Assistance & Hospitality
 - Capital Projects & Improvements
 - Cleansing, Maintenance & Landscaping.



Birmingham Westside BID

www.westsidebid.co.uk

- 300 businesses including offices, hotels, pubs, clubs, restaurants & leisure
- Budget - £650,000 per annum
- In second 5 year term
- Core projects include
 - Reducing crime & anti-social behaviour
 - Environmental Improvements
 - Marketing
 - Improving Transport Links
 - Cleansing, Maintenance & Landscaping.



Liverpool

www.liverpoolbidcompany.com

- Represents 1,500 businesses via two separate BIDs – City Central & Commercial District
- Total Budget - £1.3 million
- Commercial BID projects include:
 - Environment & Security
 - Marketing and Communications
 - Development & Investment
 - Transport & Access
- City Central BID focuses on
 - Safe & Clean City
 - Promotional Activities
 - More Vibrant City
 - Business Support

The many BIDs now in operation around the UK have demonstrated the diverse benefits you can expect to see if you vote 'yes' to a BID in Belfast City Centre. We will work to achieve the same successful results.

These benefits include:

- Increase in footfall throughout the year.
- Initiatives to reduce business costs.
- Professional, planned and sustained up-to-date marketing and promotion.
- A strong, business-led voice to get things done and solve problems.
- A better managed City Centre, day and night, with more communications and more information shared amongst businesses.

With over £300 million being generated via more than 200 UK BIDs, there are many examples of BIDs delivering for local businesses. Here are some examples of other successful BIDs in cities in the UK and Ireland.

MEET THE TEAM

To discuss any aspect of this Business Plan, please contact:

Clare Maguire

BID Development Manager, 2nd Floor, Sinclair House
95 - 101 Royal Avenue, Belfast. BT1 1FE

Tel: 028 9024 2111

Mobile: 07736 294047

E-Mail: c.maguire@belfastcentre.com

Visit: www.belfastone.co.uk

Twitter: @BelfastBID

You can also contact any member of the Belfast One Task Team:

Name	Business/organisation
Chris Suitor (Chair)	Suitor Menswear
John Lunn	Lunn's Jewellers
Alice Sykes	Utopia
Gary Rocks	Donaghy Carey
Julie Hodgen	Marks and Spencer
Aileen McGroggan	Boots the Chemist
Michelle Greeves	Victoria Square
Bob McCoubrey	Mourne Seafood Bar
Paul McMahan	CastleCourt Shopping Centre
Michael Stewart	The Hudson Bar
Catriona McGirr	Bank of Ireland
John Doherty	The Bible Society
Nigel Skillen	Diamond & Skillen
Peter McKay	Belfast City Council
Andrew Irvine	Belfast City Centre Management
Ciaran Donnelly	Department for Social Development
Alan Robinson	Treat Boutique
James Clarke	East Belfast Mission



www.belfastone.co.uk



@BelfastBID



VOTE YES!



VOTE TO SECURE FIVE YEARS OF INVESTMENT IN BELFAST CITY CENTRE

This is an exciting time for Belfast City Centre and over the next five years we plan to build on the solid foundations that have now been created. We will introduce new projects and initiatives that will take the City Centre to the next level, seamlessly linking all sectors across the City Centre. This integrated approach will create major opportunities.

BIDs have a proven track record of improving towns and putting control into the hands of businesses. This is a unique opportunity to invest in Belfast City Centre and your business.

During the past year, Belfast businesses have had the opportunity to tell us what really matters to them and communicate their vision for our City Centre. This five year business plan reflects these aspirations and offers value for money.

Belfast is a great place to live, shop and relax. By investing a relatively small amount individually, collectively we create an even brighter future for Belfast City Centre and for its businesses.

WHAT IF I VOTE NO?

If there is a 'No' vote we will not have the resources to fund the activities in this Business Plan. External investors are investing in Belfast City Centre as they see its potential, but the changes they are making could take longer if things stay as they are and the City doesn't do something for itself.

We need to demonstrate we can all work together to make a difference and that we care enough about our City Centre to invest in it ourselves. Public sector cuts and reduced spending are part of every UK city and town's challenge. A 'Yes' vote opens the door for the public sector and private sector to work together with a meaningful resource that can make change happen and to make the best of what we have already and invest in improvements.

Other cities have already benefited from a BID and businesses have taken that leap to invest in their own future and are now reaping the rewards with increased footfall and greater spend. Belfast One BID is about making the City Centre better for those living here as well as those visiting. A 'No' vote takes away any choice we have and will leave Belfast trailing behind. Do you want to let that happen?

“ For Belfast to compete in today's diverse and changing market place it requires a business community which can plan for, or react to, challenges within the business environment. A successful BID will allow the Belfast business community to identify challenges and propose solutions which will be beneficial to the whole business community, and will assist Belfast to continue to be a vibrant hub in which business and banking can adapt and flourish. ”

Catriona McGirr, Bank of Ireland





WHAT HAPPENS NOW? KEY DATES

10th
SEPTEMBER
2015

BALLOT NOTICE

14th
SEPTEMBER
2015

BUSINESS PLAN
DISTRIBUTED

17th
SEPTEMBER
2015

POSTAL BALLOT
OPENS

29th
OCTOBER
2015

CLOSE OF BALLOT

30th
OCTOBER
2015

FORMAL
DECLARATION OF
BALLOT RESULT



THE BALLOT

The BID ballot will take place from **17th September 2015** and you will have until **5pm on 29th October 2015** to vote.

The ballot will be carried out independently, via the Electoral Reform Services. Businesses occupying more than one eligible property will be sent one ballot paper per property.

If your organisation is entitled to multiple ballot papers please complete all of them; don't waste your votes.

The ballot will be carried out via post. Voting by proxy is available.



**REMEMBER, THE BID BALLOT WILL TAKE PLACE
FROM 17th SEPTEMBER 2015 AND YOU HAVE
UNTIL 5PM ON 29th OCTOBER 2015 TO VOTE**



VOTE YES!

**PROMOTE • ENHANCE • SUPPORT
LET'S MAKE IT HAPPEN TOGETHER**



To discuss any aspect of this Business Plan, please contact:

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