

# **BIDDING FOR BRIDGEND:**

## **Business Improvement District (BID)**

### **information event**

## **Carnegie House, Wyndham Street**

### **20<sup>th</sup> November 2014**

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Following the successful completion of the initial feasibility study, the BID steering group were eager to organise an information event to discuss the proposed development, and to highlight the opportunities available to the wider business community. This event – Bidding for Bridgend – was held at Carnegie House on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> November.

The evening began with a speech from Rotimi Adegoke, chair of the steering group, who welcomed attendees and provided background information on the role of the steering group, and of his personal journey towards supporting the BID. Rotimi highlighted that:

- The Bridgend BID steering group was first formed following a presentation to the traders' forum by members of the Swansea BID 12 months ago.
- Funding for the development of a BID was awarded by Welsh Government following an application from Rhiannon Kingsley, town centre manager, at the request of the traders' forum.
- Bridgend was one of nine towns awarded funding by the Welsh Government. They were awarded a grant of £25,000 (with 20% match funding from Bridgend County Borough Council).

Rotimi also noted the role of the steering group in leading the process, and the importance of implementing correct organisational and governance procedures for the success of a BID. Rotimi encouraged businesses to come together and collaborate in the development, to share their skills and their vision for Bridgend town centre.

**For a more detailed summary of Rotimi's speech, please click this [link](#)**

Tom Evans, Project Manager at *The means* – consultants appointed by Bridgend CBC to assist the businesses in the proposed development – followed Rotimi's speech with a presentation. The presentation offered an introduction to BIDs, including a breakdown of the phases necessary to implement a BID. Tom also provided an account of the feasibility study conducted by *The means* in early 2014, in which businesses were asked to highlight the key issues affecting trade in the town centre, and to suggest possible improvements. The presentation included the following points:

- BIDs are business-led & business funded bodies formed to improve a defined commercial area. BIDs are funded by a 'levy' on all eligible businesses.
- BIDs can only be set up after a ballot of all eligible businesses in the area, and have a maximum term of 5 years in the UK.
- There are 184 BIDs in the UK and Ireland, and 11 currently in development across Wales.
- The feasibility study involved consultation with 85 businesses in the town centre, who were asked a range of questions regarding the current trading conditions in the town, the key problems affecting trade, and what improvements would benefit the commercial environment.
- The feasibility study identified the following key issues:
  - Vacant premises
  - Parking (cost, spaces, location)
  - Marketing and promotion of the town
  - Perceptions of the town
- Businesses identified the following possible improvements:
  - Cheaper parking
  - Easier parking
  - Increased promotional activity
  - Increased availability of public toilets
  - Reduced anti-social behaviour
  - Improved interactions with the Council
- The next steps for the Bridgend BID steering group are to:
  - Map the BID boundary
  - Detail the levy rate
  - Specify the programme of improvements, including the lifetime budget of the BID
  - Set out governance structure and how performance will be managed
  - Agree baseline and operating agreement with the local authority

**To see Tom's PowerPoint presentation, please click this [link](#)**

The final activity of the evening was a group exercise, focused on identifying possible improvements for Bridgend town centre achievable by a Bridgend Business Improvement District.

Topic	Suggestions
Connectivity & Accessibility	Entry into the town <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Better signage from the motorway</li> <li>- Filter MacArthur Glen customers from the motorway past and towards (or through) the town</li> </ul> Parking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased awareness of available parking facilities</li> <li>- More parking spaces available</li> </ul> Traffic Management <p>Improve gateways into the town – first</p>

	impressions are key!
Marketing & Promotions	<p>Promoting Bridgend outside of the town</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Advertisements on buses in the surrounding area</li> <li>- Banners/ advertising over the motorway</li> <li>- Collective advertising initiative would reach wider audience, including possibly TV &amp;/or radio</li> <li>- Promoting town from McArthur Glen</li> </ul> <p>Sunday shopping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- businesses could collaborate on opening hours – “Bridgend: open for business”</li> </ul> <p>Advertising in windows of empty shops</p> <p>Promoting Bridgend’s assets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- invite celebrities born in Bridgend to promote the town</li> <li>- Merthyr Mawr Nature Reserve</li> <li>- Close to Ogmores beach</li> </ul> <p>Weekly street markets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- increase footfall in the town</li> </ul>
Business Support	<p>Business mentoring</p> <p>Incentives for new businesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- start-ups given grants and packages to encourage take up of empty units</li> <li>- grants for new businesses</li> <li>- mentoring and possibly financial support for businesses on a knife’s edge</li> <li>- Tidying up ‘tatty’ units and streets around to make units more appealing</li> </ul> <p>Encourage more multiples into town</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ‘Hit list’ of empty shops; regularly promote to multiples</li> </ul> <p>Loyalty scheme for those who work in Bridgend</p>
Perception, Safety & Attractiveness of the town centre	<p>Changing perception of the Bridgend before people come here, (see marketing and promotions above)</p> <p>Clean up and maintenance of the town</p> <p>More public conveniences</p>

	Wardens to manage anti-social behaviour
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