

A BID for Bridgend Town Centre
Steering Group meeting
Thursday 7th January, 2016 5.15pm – 6:30pm
Carnegie House, Wyndham Street

Attendees

Rotimi Adegoke, Bridgend Osteopath (chair) (RA)
Rachel Bell, The Rhiw Shopping Centre (RB)
Beth Daniel, Beth Daniel Hair Design (BD)
Steve Watkins, Watkins Menswear (SW)
Steve Bletsoe, Ella Riley's Sweet Shop / Bridgend Traders' Forum (SB)
Freya Sykes, Ella Riley's Sweet Shop / Bridgend Town Council (FS)
Steve Easterbrook, Fizzy Foam (SE)
David Easterbrook, Fizzy Foam (DE)
Anne Easterbrook, Fizzy Foam (AE)
Felicity Ladbroke, Felicity's (FL)

Cllr Bob Burns, Bridgend Town Council (BB)
Cllr Diane Burns, Bridgend Town Council (DB)
Cllr Olivia Byrne, Bridgend Town Council (OB)
Rhiannon Kingsley, Bridgend County Borough Council (RK)
Cllr Charles Smith, Bridgend County Borough Council (CS)
Cllr Gareth Phillips, Bridgend County Borough Council
Cllr David White, Bridgend Town Council / Town Mayor / Bridgend County Borough Council (DW)
Cllr Edith Hughes, Bridgend Town Council / Bridgend County Borough Council (EH)

Peter William, The means (PW)
Mandy Jenkins, The means (MJ)

Apologies

Natalie Gordon, Bridgend Cycles (NG)
Megan Bailey, Top Spot (MB)

Item	Detail	Action
1.0	Welcome and introductions RA opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees.	
2.0	Apologies for Absences	

	<p>Apologies were given as above.</p>	
<p>3.0</p>	<p>Minutes of the last meeting (Thursday, 26th November 2015)</p> <p>3.1 Confirmation of approval</p> <p>RA said that there had been some queries to the minutes with regards to Cllr Smith’s comments at the last meeting and he asked the group to comment.</p> <p>SB raised two proposed changes to the minutes.</p> <p>The first was that CS had stated at the last meeting, ‘No BID, no depedestrianisation’ and this had not been recorded in the minutes.</p> <p>CS said that his intent was to acknowledge that the BID was critical to moving the relaxing pedestrianisation debate forward.</p> <p>FL suggested that those who had attended the last meeting should agree that a line be drawn underneath the discussion so that the meeting could move on. This was agreed.</p> <p>RK then gave an update on the timeline and order of events. Capita had been commissioned in mid- December and that there had been an inception meeting with the 2 heads of service (Zak Shell and Satwant Pryce) and the initial report would be completed it is hoped by the end of January. An interim report had been requested and Will be reviewed by officers in the week following this meeting.</p> <p>CS said that the report would be discussed at the Cabinet and that these meetings were open to the public.</p> <p>RA asked for the date when this meeting would take place and CS said that he wasn’t able to say which meeting the report would be discussed at.</p> <p>RA asked RK – when/during which meeting will relaxing pedestrianisation be put to the vote? what are the next stages to follow if relaxing pedestrianisation is approved?</p> <p>I am not clear at this stage when or which meeting changes to pedestrianisation will be approved. Following the signing off of the Capita report, a report will be sent to Cabinet containing the findings. Cabinet will then make a decision regarding consultation</p>	

<p>of the report.</p> <p>The results of consultation would then influence how the scheme looks and would enable a detailed cost analysis.</p> <p>RK said that this was just the first stage of the process and that there would be a second phase. If this second phase was approved BCBC would need to seek funding from elsewhere to make it viable.</p> <p>RA asked, if the BCBC were able to identify funding, what would be the next stage?</p> <p>CS said that timescales relating to roads are long.</p> <p>SW asked if traders would be able to send a representative to the Council meeting.</p> <p>CS said that he had not seen this happen in the past.</p> <p>SW asked if a discussion could happen in the second phase about how much the BID could contribute towards the relaxing predestrianisation process.</p> <p>CS said that he felt that this was a good idea as BCBC had already found £10,000 to pay Capita.</p> <p>FS said that the Town Council had a contingency fund and asked if BCBC had a similar fund that could be used.</p> <p>CS said that he was not aware of any funds but if the worst case scenario was £100,000 potentially a combination of funds from BCBC, the EU, the Town Council and the BID could be considered.</p> <p>PW said that it was obvious that this was a key issue for the campaign and the town as it had been discussed at the last three meetings. He said that other BIDs had formed separate theme groups/sub committees on important issues to monitor progress and suggested the discussion be delegated to a theme group to progress, at least whilst steering group managed the ballot.</p> <p>SB's second point was that, his statement about the Free After 3 footfall data being inaccurate, because the camera had been moved, (from outside Blockbuster where it had been situated when the October 2014 data had been recorded to Caroline Street where the October 2015 data had been recorded), had not been included</p>	
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<p>in the minutes.</p> <p>The group agreed that the minutes should be updated to reflect this comment.</p> <p>3.2 Matters arising (Action plan updates)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing HQ <p>Not discussed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pedestrianisation timeline <p>As above.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bags to cover parking machine <p>RK said that there was no update on this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Free After 3 November Footfall Data <p>RA confirmed RK had circulated these to the group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Baseline agreement <p>As discussed in 7.0 below</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amended BID proposal <p>Not discussed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Threshold options paper <p>PW took the group through the different options. He explained what the threshold was and that anyone below the amount decided by the group would not be liable for the levy and couldn't vote in the ballot. The threshold set had an effect on the costs of collection and the scale of the campaign work. He said that 99% of BIDs had a threshold and that these ranged from widely from c £5000 to £50,000.</p> <p>He said that £6k was a significant figure in Wales in rating terms as it coincided with the Welsh Government rate relief threshold, but that in itself was insufficient reason to place it at that level. He said that Aberystwyth, Neath and Llanelli had chosen a £6k threshold. He then presented the following figures in relation to Bridgend:</p>	<p>MJ: Update the minutes from the November meeting to reflect SB's comments.</p>
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Effects on income and numbers of applying a levy

Threshold	Levy income at 1.25%	No. of hereditaments
£0k	142,593	521
£5k	137,516	356
£6k	135,316	325
£8k	131,444	280

So e.g. by applying a threshold of £6000 there would be 196 less businesses to canvass and reduced revenue of £7,277

Impacts of introducing a flat rate for those below £8k

Average levy rate. A £100 flat rate would represent an average % levy of 2.69% - i.e. more than twice the 1.25% rate

Some specific examples of impact

RV £3000 at 1.25% would have been paying £67.50

Flat rate of £100 = an effective levy rate of 3.3%

RV £182 – 1.25% would have been paying £2.27

Flat rate of £100 = an effective levy rate of 54.94%

SB said that this figures provided were very helpful. He said that if the group decided on the £6k threshold he would not be paying into the BID and proposed businesses around the table gave their thoughts on the matter.

SW said that he wanted to see contributions from all traders and that the £6k threshold meant that certain people would not be able to sit on the board once the BID was formed.

PW said that those below the threshold would be able to enjoy some of the benefits that the BID would bring but not all. In addition he said that other BIDs offered voluntary membership (for example, £100 a year) but these would need to be recruited and would be given the opportunity to join the BID company.

RA said that people needed to be aware of the different rates and benefits if a £100 flat fee was charged for all those below the threshold.

<p>SE pointed out that it would cost more than £100 a year for businesses to advertise.</p> <p>BB asked if there was a value to cost of collection. He said that all market traders would have an RV of below £6k and that large levy payers wouldn't get back the value that they put in.</p> <p>SW suggested £5k might be a better threshold amount.</p> <p>FS said that the BID should be a cohesive and not divisive and that the threshold could create and in/out divide.</p> <p>SW said that he felt the BID should include all traders if possible.</p> <p>RK said that there was still a lot work to be done to convince people to vote yes.</p> <p>SW said that setting the threshold at £5k would make a difference for Nolton Street.</p> <p>BB said that he thought the ballot would fail if a threshold was added.</p> <p>PW said there was a difference of over 200 businesses to canvass with a threshold of £6k and no threshold at all. He said that BCBC ratings department had given a cost of collection based on less than 300 heriditaments paying in one installment and that this estimate would be revised upwards if the number of heriditaments rose to 500.</p> <p>RA said that the decision shouldn't be made on constraints imposed by BCBC.</p> <p>RK said that they were not constraints but reality – it was what the Council could achieve with the resources they had.</p> <p>SB said another organization could collect the money on behalf of the BID.</p> <p>PW said that the regulations only allow for the ratings authority to collect.</p> <p>SE gave some facts he had read about the Bedford BID.</p> <p>RB said it was about making a fair and honest decision and that it would be difficult if a no voter found out their neighbour was paying less. She said she was in favour of a threshold and a</p>	
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<p>voluntary contribution.</p> <p>SB said he felt that there was no right answer.</p> <p>FS stated that the Town Council could be exempt from voting on this issue as it was local government and not a business/ trader.</p> <p>CS asked if the Town Council had a vote. PW confirmed that it did.</p> <p>It was agreed that the traders present, (maximum of 1 single vote per business present), vote on whether they wanted a threshold. They voted in favour.</p> <p>RB said that she thought the group shouldn't take the decision at this meeting but needed to wait on exact figures She asked PW if the threshold was normally set first. He confirmed that it was.</p> <p>FL suggested the group go for a levy of £5k and not £6k.</p> <p>SW said he felt the threshold should be lower as that would be the right thing to do.</p> <p>RB said the group should bear in mind that they only had 6 weeks.</p> <p>FL asked if the levy could be lowered during the lifetime of the BID.</p> <p>PW said that the law prevented businesses being asked to pay more. An alteration ballot could be held but it was a complicated process.</p> <p>RA asked the group to vote on the threshold amount.</p> <p>SB said that if the group decided on £6k, most of the businesses around the table would not be able to vote in the ballot.</p> <p>SW asked who would then form the board.</p> <p>RB said she felt the group needed to come to a decision and asked if those traders excluded by the threshold would still come to steering group meetings.</p> <p>SB said that he and FS would.</p> <p>SW said that others could question the input into the steering group of people who were not able to vote.</p> <p>RB said that it could be a way to ensure businesses aren't being ripped off.</p>	
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<p>SB said that he felt he was making a decision that would benefit him as he would be making a voluntary contribution and wanted to be involved in the process.</p> <p>The group took a vote and decided on a £6k threshold.</p> <p>BB said that the voluntary contribution still had to be collected.</p> <p>RK said that these could be paid by cheque into a bank account.</p> <p>PW suggested one of the group volunteer to try and convince businesses to pay voluntary contributions.</p> <p>Length of BID term</p> <p>PW talked the group through some examples of different BID terms and said that most places choose 5 years. Currently only Lancaster, were running for 3 years and that some places had chosen a shorter term for particular reasons.</p> <p>RA asked what the minimum period could be.</p> <p>PW said that the legislation did not specify a minimum period, only a maximum one.</p> <p>BB suggested a term of less than 5 years.</p> <p>SB said that if the BID worked well for 3 years, it would be easy to get a yes vote in the second ballot. Also, three years would be an easier sell as it was a shorter period of time for people to commit to.</p> <p>SW said that 2 years would be enough time so see what happened with relaxing pedestrianisation.</p> <p>CS said that the BID was all about investment and that they should avoid the short term. He thought 4-5 years seemed like a better timeframe.</p> <p>SW asked how long it would take BCBC to come back on relaxing pedestrianisation.</p> <p>CS said that 2 years would seem about right.</p> <p>FS said that 2 years would seem to be too short but 3 years would focus the mind of everyone on the achievements.</p> <p>FS said that Bridgend was not a large area compared to Swansea</p>	
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<p>and Cardiff.</p> <p>RK said that Swansea had taken a year getting things started and that the second ballot would take up 5-6 months of the third year. So a three year term was short in order to achieve anything</p> <p>FS said that she felt traders were being underestimated and that they could get things done very fast as they did not have the same restrictions as the public sector.</p> <p>RA asked the Councillors that hadn't spoken what they thought.</p> <p>David said that things were not always straightforward on the ground and that he would support whatever the traders decided.</p> <p>CS asked PW what the general timeframes were.</p> <p>PW said that the vast majority of BIDs were 5 years. He said that the multiples were not easy to engage or get to vote in favour. Their guidelines did not require that a BID last for five years. However it was evident that they had voted in favour in other areas based on a 5 year term. He said that they might ask the question why the BID term was 3 and not 5 years. He also pointed that the BID would have to fund the cost of another ballot (which could be around 4k) in three years' time.</p> <p>CS suggested the BID run for 4 rather than 3 years.</p> <p>SB said that he and FS had been engaging with the 'No' campaign who had a website with a similar domain name. He thought it would be easier to convince the campaign if the duration was three years, it would make is more marketable.</p> <p>The group voted to have a 3 year BID term.</p> <p>SE said that he thought it was important that the town didn't have a BID it didn't want.</p> <p>CS said that he thought the group had made a mistake.</p> <p>SB said that in terms of the sales/proposal document that was being produced, a shorter period would convince those on the fence to support it and it would also concentrate minds.</p>	
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	<p>BID boundary</p> <p>PW said that The Means would be in Bridgend on Monday 18th January identifying which businesses were inside the boundary. MJ would email the group to let them know a time and location to meet and they should respond confirming attendance.</p> <p>RA said that the main boundary issues had been considered in previous meetings, and this was fine tuning at the edges.</p> <p>SB asked if The Means had approached the two most prominent landlords in the town.</p> <p>PW said this hadn't been done yet but would happen, and any help to engage would be welcome.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threshold effect on first part of Nolton Street <p>Partly discussed above.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exemptions list <p>Not discussed but covered in BID arrangements/Operating agreement.</p>	<p>MJ: Email the group with time and location of the boundary meeting/walk</p> <p>All: Respond confirming attendance on Monday 18th January</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p>Pedestrianisation update</p> <p>Covered under item 3.1 above.</p>	
<p>5.0</p>	<p>Ballot date</p> <p>Not discussed in detail but PW went through the timeline in the proposal document.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday 18th February - official notification of ballot received • Thursday 3rd March – voting pack and ballot papers received • Thursday 3rd March - Thursday 31st March – ballot • Thursday 31st March, 12pm - ballot close • Thursday, 31st March - ballot results announced • April 1st 2016: CF31 starts 	
<p>6.0</p>	<p>Draft Proposal</p> <p>Not discussed. MJ to circulate updated document to the group.</p>	<p>MJ: Circulate updated BID proposal to the group</p>



<p>7.0</p>	<p>Baseline agreement</p> <p>RA asked if the group thought the baseline agreement was complete enough. He thought it needed to be much more comprehensive.</p> <p>BB asked where the agreement had come from.</p> <p>PW said the baseline agreement would not come into effect until 1st April and it was a statement of fact. He said that additional services could covered/included as opposed to changing the factual content currently contained within specific services.</p> <p>SW pointed out that in the document the wording was, ‘Our aim is to...’ and asked if there could be more of a commitment.</p> <p>SB also pointed out that the document did not say, ‘We will...’</p> <p>RA commented on the time it had taken to get the baseline agreement from BCBC and the document was still not acceptable so asked did the group really think they would get a more comprehensive document produced in the short time left.</p> <p>BB asked if more in depth information could be given.</p> <p>PW said that the agreement was a typical baseline agreement and no baseline agreements had ever been tested in court. He told the group that in asking for more detail, they could be asked to justify the purpose.</p> <p>RA commented this still doesn’t mean we don’t set high standards for stakeholders, as it is all we have to go by.</p> <p>PW said that the Council were only obliged to tell you what they were currently doing.</p> <p>SB asked if the BID could challenge if BCBC weren’t doing what they said they would do in the document.</p> <p>RA asked, with the short timescale left before ballot, if there was any point in holding another meeting to discuss the document and gather the further details we need to request.</p> <p>PW suggested it might be good to allow extra time to get more information from BCBC and to ask some BCBC officers to come along to the meeting.</p>	
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	<p>CS suggested that RK and RA meet with an officer.</p> <p>SW suggested that the traders meet up separately first to come up with a list of questions for the Council.</p> <p>The group felt that this would be the best idea.</p>	<p>RA: Convene a separate traders' meeting to discuss the baseline agreement</p>
8.0	<p>BID arrangements and operating agreement</p> <p>PW said he's noticed one or two things in the document that needed to be updated on page 6 and 7 on the inflation question and the levy collection.</p> <p>SB asked if the levy would be collected in April or October.</p> <p>PW said it would be April but that BCBC had to order, install and train staff on the software so invoices would not be issued until as late as August/September in the first year.</p>	
9.0	<p>Ideas for reaching night time traders/businesses</p> <p>Not discussed.</p>	
10.0	<p>Town centre update</p> <p>Partly discussed under 3.1.</p>	
11.0	<p>AOB</p> <p>Not discussed.</p>	
12.0	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>No date agreed.</p>	