



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

### **A summary of activities leading up to 2015 ballot**

Prior to establishment in April 2016, the York BID undertook a year long consultation as part of a promotional campaign over the period of 2015 to validate its proposal in accordance with government BID Regulations (2003). The campaign intended to engage with business and the local business community, identify a need for specific areas of improvement and to develop support for the programme going ahead.

The York BID was led by local businesses (fronted by City Team York Group – now the interim BID Board) with the process of engagement verified by the local authority. A loan was applied for from British BIDs to fund a project manager (ex Press journalist Steve Hughes) and an assistant to run the process. The actual ballot was conducted by the independent Electoral Reform Services.

Some key stages to highlight are;

#### ***October 2014***

A letter was sent to businesses identified in City of York Council business rates database as residing within the proposed BID area (within the city walls) inviting them to take part in a survey asking businesses to rate the level of demand for specific improvements in the city centre. 12% of those invited took part and on average the results indicated that the following four areas were those with the greatest need for improvement:

- Increased policing of antisocial behaviour & drunkenness
- Improved street cleaning, enforcement & emptying of refuse bins
- Improved marketing & promotion of York
- Reduce the costs of doing business in York

#### ***November 2015***

From these results a feasibility study was then conducted identifying York as a vibrant city with many unique factors that contribute to its success, however still vulnerable to the continually growing stresses on UK highstreets. The main challenges identified being online shopping, out of town developments as well as the levels of investment from local government quickly diminishing (as outlined by Portas and Bill Grimsey reports).

#### ***April 2015***

Publication of a brochure designed to help inform the business community of prospective plans to develop a BID for York City centre containing another survey inviting businesses to comment on priorities for city centre improvements. 93 businesses took part in the survey, results showed a substantial preference for the following areas of improvement:

- Appearance and environment
- Tackling anti-social behaviour and drunkenness
- Events and festivals
- Represent city businesses on policy decisions

The official BID website was launched in April of 2015 which is used to highlight BID activity as well as make available documents on the BID's articles of association and operating agreement with the local authority.

### ***Summer/ autumn 2015***

Throughout the entire campaign Steve Hughes the appointed Project Manager made continuous efforts to consult with members of the proposed BID community to inform them of plans to establish a York BID and to rally support for the project. Consultation was performed at a number of levels;

- Speaking and networking at a number of events, such as the Retailer's Forum, Hotelier's Forum, Chamber of Commerce, York Professionals, and Federation of Small Businesses etc;
- Hosting a number of drop-in events based in levy payer hereditaments across the city;
- Making direct contact with levy payers via mail, telephone, email and visiting their business premises;
- Publicising the BID with the York Press / other media outlets;

### ***September 2015***

The publication and distribution to businesses of the York BID prospectus outlining the programme's proposed areas of activity formed out of consultations. An event to disseminate the release of this document was held in September 2015 at the Merchant Adventurer's Hall on Fossgate.

### ***October/ November 2015***

A public ballot to determine the establishment of the York BID was scheduled and carried out by the Electoral Reform Society on behalf of City of York Council. Notices and voting papers were sent to all eligible businesses in time for the ballot to open on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2015 which then closed on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2015. Out of the 1,089 eligible businesses in the BID area valued at £85,064,300 worth of rateable value, 457 voted (42% of total population) equating to £43,989,950 worth of rateable value (52% of total) with 13 ballot papers unsigned, unmarked or void for uncertainty. Of those 346 voted in favour (a majority of 76%). For context the Leeds BID had a 38% turnout with 85% voting in favour and the Sheffield BID 39% turnout with 78% in favour.

### ***(Please refer to Annex A for a timeline of the formal consultation)***

The York BID is now established until March 2021 when another ballot will be conducted. All businesses within the BID area are subject to a 1% levy of their rateable value. This is collected each April and is a mandatory levy. Like business rates if a levy is not paid, it is pursued through the courts and this process is handled by City York Council on behalf of the BID.

The interim voting Board of Directors are made up from retail, professional services, hospitality and culture sectors. There will be an AGM in June 2017 where this Board will stand down and there will be the opportunity for new Board members to take seats.

In the meantime, the BID will continue to focus on delivering against the prospectus priorities.

## Annex A – Formal Consultation

Event	Method of Communication	Date
Invitations to business improvement survey sent	Letter to all levy payers from business rates database	01 October 2014
Letter with survey results and proposal for a York BID sent	Letter to all levy payers from business rates database	15 October 2014
York Press article published	York Press	20 October 2014
York BID feasibility study completed	N/A	27 November 2014
York Press article published	York Press	07 February 2015
York Press article published	York Press	25 February 2015
York BID information brochure and survey published	Ongoing distribution	06 April 2015
York BID website goes live	Website	06 April 2015
Project Manager attended Retailers Forum meeting	HSBC Boardroom, Parliament Street, York	16 April 2015
York BID project launch Event	Aviva Boardroom, Wellington Row, York	21 April 2015
York Press article published	York Press	21 April 2015
York BID drop-in event	Monkbar Hotel, St Maurice's Road, York	12 May 2015
York BID drop-in event	Monkbar Hotel, St Maurice's Road, York	21 May 2015
Project Manager attended York Chamber of Commerce event	The Grand Hotel & Spa, Station Rise, York	22 May 2015
York Press article published	York Press	10 June 2015
Project Manager attended York Networking Breakfast	National Railway Museum, York	11 June 2015
Project Manager attended Festival of Ideas	University of York, York	19 June 2015
Project Manager & Officer attended ATCM Expo	Leeds Beckett University, Leeds	02 July 2015
Project Manager interviewed on BBC Radio York	BBC Radio York	06 July 2015
Project Manager attended Retailers Forum Meeting	HSBC Boardroom, Parliament Street, York	16 July 2015
York BID drop-in event	Your Bike Shed, Micklegate, York	21 July 2015
Project Manager attended Hotelier's Association	Hotel Du Vin, The Mount, York	22 July 2015
York Press article published	York Press	27 July 2015
York BID drop-in event	Walmsgate Ale House, Walmsgate, York	05 August 2015
York Press article published	York Press	19 August 2015
York BID drop-in event	Next, Coney Street, York	22 August 2015
York BID drop-in event	Coppergate Centre, Coppergate, York	26 August 2015
York BID prospectus published	Mixture of post/ hand delivery	01 September 2015
York Press article published	York Press	09 September 2015
York BID drop-in event	York Cocoa House, Blake Street, York	09 September 2015
Project Manager interviewed on BBC Radio York	Radio York	14 September 2015
York Press article published	York Press	14 September 2015
York BID Campaign Event	Merchant Adventurer's Hall, Fossgate, York	15 September 2015
York Press article published	York Press	15 September 2015
Project Manager attended Retail Forum Networking Event	Kennedy's Bar, Little Stonegate, York	23 September 2015
Notification of Ballot sent by Electoral Reform Services	Letter to all levy payers from business rates database	12 October 2015
Project Manager attended Retail Forum Meeting	HSBC Boardroom, Parliament Street, York	15 October 2015
York BID drop-in event	Golden Slipper, Goodramgate, York	15 October 2015
Project manager attended Federation of Small Business meeting	York St John University, Lord Mayor's Walk, York	21 October 2015
Call to vote letters sent	Post and email (email where data available)	Early to mid October 2015
Ballot open (Electoral Reform Services)	Letter to all levy payers from business rates database	26 October 2015
York Press article published	York Press	26 October 2015
Ballot closed (Electoral Reform Services)	N/A	25 November 2015
Ballot result announced (Electoral Reform Services)	Thor's Tipi, Parliament Square, York	26 November 2015
York Press article published	York Press	27 November 2015