



Fleet

The place to **meet**
The place to **greet**



Vote
Yes!



Fleet
Business
Improvement
District
Business Plan
2017–2022

10 reasons

for
voting
Yes!

1

Attracting more people into Fleet

Increasing footfall means more potential customers for businesses in Fleet helping those businesses to thrive.

2

Raising the profile of Fleet locally and further afield

Fleet has so much to offer and many people even those living locally aren't aware of what's on offer. Raising the profile of Fleet will attract more people into the town.

3

Supporting businesses to recruit and retain staff

Making information available and having offers for people working in Fleet will support staff recruitment and retention.

4

Bringing businesses together to create opportunities to work together.

5

Being a united voice for businesses in Fleet representing the views of local business.

6

Saving money for businesses

By coming together we can leverage the collective buying power of a group of businesses.

7

Sustained activity over a 5 year period, enough time to make a real difference.

8

Run BY local businesses FOR local business delivering projects prioritised by you.

9

More co-ordinated activities providing more opportunities for businesses.

10

Benefits for everyone

Whether you are an independent business or a large national retailer, restaurant or a business providing services to other businesses, the BID will support your business.



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Introduction

In April 2015, a group of Fleet business leaders came together to form the *Fleet Business Forum*. Their aim is to deliver projects that will encourage people to visit and invest in the town. As they explored various ideas, the notion of a Business Improvement District (BID) for Fleet was discussed. One of the things that convinced the Forum that the idea of a BID was worth pursuing was the knowledge that there are now over 260 BIDs in the UK and the message from those towns has been that BIDs really work!

This business plan outlines the proposal to take forward the Fleet BID and details the projects and services that the BID might deliver. This plan is being put forward by the members of the Fleet Business Forum who are managers or owners of Fleet Town businesses. If the BID is agreed a formal board will be set up by election at the AGM early in the BID and final projects agreed.

Fleet is the main town in Hart District and offers a wide range of commercial businesses, retail and leisure experiences. It hosts both independent and multiple businesses, a performance centre and a surprising number of popular events, including a Food Festival, a Christmas Festival, summer Carnival, a Half Marathon and Fireworks Event (all organised currently by very active voluntary bodies).

However, competition from neighbouring towns is increasing. Camberley and Basingstoke have already established successful Business Improvement Districts and Waverley Council has recently announced a £100m investment to regenerate Farnham town. Farnborough and

Aldershot have been identified by the M3 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) as of strategic importance. A growth package has been developed for Aldershot, with investment of £54-£63 million in the town up until 2021, of which, £7.3-£8.3 million will be funded by the LEP. We also know that the last few years have seen the rise of online shopping, as well as out of town shopping offering easy access and free parking. So pressure is increasing on Fleet retailers and businesses. Fleet Town Centre must respond by offering something unique and special to ensure that it continues to succeed even in difficult economic times.

There are now over 260 BIDs in the UK and the message from those towns has been that BIDs really work!

Your BID



"Any initiative to raise the profile of Fleet and bring more people into the town is good for all businesses. I believe that a BID will bring much needed investment into Fleet town benefiting businesses, our employees and customers."

**Bruce Bulgin, Partner
Chadney Bulgin**



So, business owners and landlords of Fleet, this is your opportunity to invest over £750,000 into your town over the next 5 years. With a BID in place, you can take control of and improve your trading environment by contributing to town centre projects, such as those listed below but YOU will be making the final decisions on where the money is spent.

Marketing, promotion and events¹

- Developing a clear 'brand' for Fleet which is distinctive from other towns locally and establishes Fleet's unique character.
- Advertising Fleet (and reasons to come to Fleet) to visitors who would not otherwise be aware of what the town has to offer.
- Bringing more events to the local community and visitors to establish Fleet as a destination.
- Creating closer links between events and businesses in the town to enable businesses to benefit more from the extra footfall that the events encourage.
- Extending seasonal events with additional offerings.
- Creating a visitor map of Fleet showing the location of the businesses, shops, restaurants, cafés, community centres etc.
- Influencing the structure and focus of markets in Fleet by working with the licence holder for the weekly market, or possibly introducing additional markets to bring more people into the town.
- Campaigning to encourage people in Fleet to Buy Locally.
- Creating a Website to showcase Fleet Town Centre as a unique place to do business.
- Establishing a strong social media presence for the town.
- Developing apps to promote the town.

Improving the experience in Fleet

- Parking discount schemes for shoppers.
- Parking discount schemes for businesses and their staff.
- Improving signage for car parks and other attractions in the town.
- 'Zoning' areas of Fleet to make it easier to direct people ('cultural quarter' etc).
- Introducing Information points for people to find out where things are in the town.
- Funding additional street cleaning.
- Introducing street art to create focal points and a visual impact in the town.
- Providing town centre wide wi-fi.

Business support

- Support for start-ups, e.g. low cost office space.
- Advice for start-ups e.g. mentoring.
- 'FleetWatch' scheme to reduce theft from retailers and improve night time safety.
- Taxi marshals in the evening.
- Business Awards scheme.
- Mystery shopping service.
- Offers/discounts for staff working in Fleet to encourage them to shop and eat in Fleet.
- Offers/discounts for businesses in Fleet to encourage them to use the service businesses in Fleet.
- Obtaining discounts, e.g. for utilities or trade waste.

¹Promotional activity will relate to the town of Fleet and business categories in general not individual businesses. Whilst the BID may be able to negotiate discounts for businesses to advertise, BID funding will not be available to subsidise or replace individual businesses' marketing or advertising activity.

A Business Improvement District in Fleet



How will the BID be managed?

The BID will be managed by the **Fleet BID Company**. This will be an independent, not-for-profit company and will be governed by a Board of Directors elected by you. The Board will oversee the delivery of the projects outlined in the business plan, in the best interests of you and the town centre.

How will it be paid for?

The BID will be funded by a 1.5% levy of the non-business rate on each retail, professional services and leisure business within the defined BID area. As an example, and dependent on size, some businesses will pay as little as 21p per day. The chart below illustrates the range of the levy:

Who will make the decision?

YOU will decide whether Fleet will become a Business Improvement District by voting in the BID ballot. If you want to see the projects that you vote for become reality, you should make sure you vote YES on the ballot paper.

Rateable value	Annual levy (at 1.5%)	Weekly cost	Daily cost
£5,000	£75	£1.44	£0.21
£7,000	£105	£2.02	£0.29
£10,000	£150	£2.88	£0.41
£25,000	£375	£7.21	£1.03
£50,000	£750	£14.42	£2.06
£100,000	£1,500	£28.85	£4.11

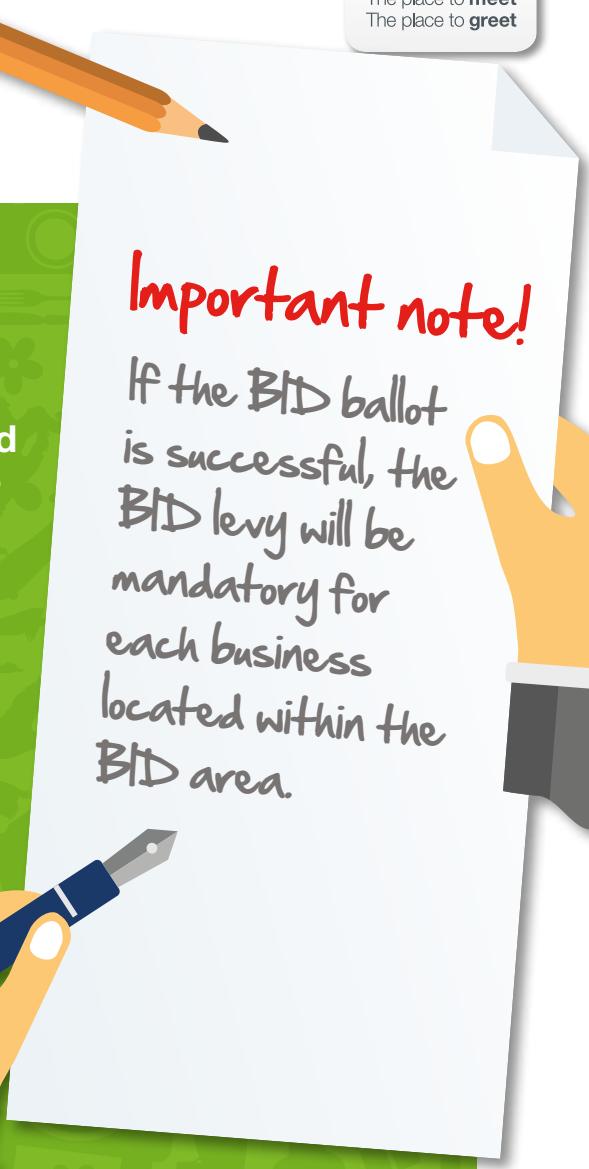
Over half the businesses in the BID area will be asked to pay less than £299 a year, with 69% of businesses paying less than £399 a year and the total fund will be £150,000 a year to be spent exclusively in the town centre. It is anticipated that the BID will also generate additional funding through voluntary contributions, grants and sponsorship.

How do I vote?

Full details about the vote and what it means will be sent out to all businesses on 9 February – six weeks before the ballot and then ballot papers will be sent to all eligible voters on 23 February 2017. You will have until 23 March 2017 to vote. This will be an official and independent ballot carried out by the electoral services for Hart District Council.

For the ballot to be successful, it must meet the following conditions:

- ✓ More than 50% of the businesses which vote must vote YES.
- ✓ Of the businesses that vote, the YES vote must represent more than 50% of the total rateable value of all votes cast.



“During the Christmas Festival we had over 300 people through our doors and did as much business in 4 hours as we sometimes take from Monday to Friday.”

Paul Shilling
Owner of Serendipity and Daisy’s Tea Rooms



Note from the Chair of the Fleet Business Forum

My family owned business has been in Fleet for over 20 years. During that time we have seen much change in Fleet as the nature of the High Street has changed – the increase in online shopping and out-of-town shopping, the High Street becoming an area where people come to eat and socialise as well as shop, work and live.

Fleet also has a number of challenges with competition from neighbouring towns increasing. Camberley, Basingstoke, Guildford, Reading and Winchester have established successful Business Improvement Districts which provides significant funding for their towns and Waverley Council has recently announced the regeneration of Farnham town centre. Farnborough and Aldershot have been identified by the M3 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) as of strategic importance, with significant investment planned.

In April 2015 we founded the Fleet Business Forum whose members are managers or owners of Fleet Town businesses. A Business Improvement District is a business-led and business-funded initiative which creates sustainable funding to deliver the projects that have been prioritised by businesses in Fleet. We identified this as the activity with the potential to make the biggest difference in Fleet and many businesses in the town have already pledged their support.

This business plan outlines the proposal to take forward the Fleet BID and details the projects and services that the BID might deliver based on what you have told us is important.

Voting YES for a Business Improvement District in Fleet is a way to take control of our trading environment.

Voting YES for a Business Improvement District will identify projects to secure the economic development of our town.



Emma Molyneux
Chair, Fleet Business Forum

This business plan outlines the proposal to take forward the Fleet BID and details the projects and services that the BID might deliver based on what you have told us is important.

Business Improvement Districts

What is a BID?

A Business Improvement District (BID) is a business-led and funded partnership working to implement projects that benefit an area and its businesses. It is set for a period of 5 years, which can be renewed by a vote of the members. A BID in Fleet would:

- Provide services to local businesses in addition to those provided by the District Council, the Town Council, the Police and other service providers.
- Be owned and run by local businesses.
- Only start after a successful ballot of businesses in Fleet.
- Be funded by a small levy on all businesses in the area.

YOU will decide if a BID will make Fleet a better place to do business.

Are they successful?

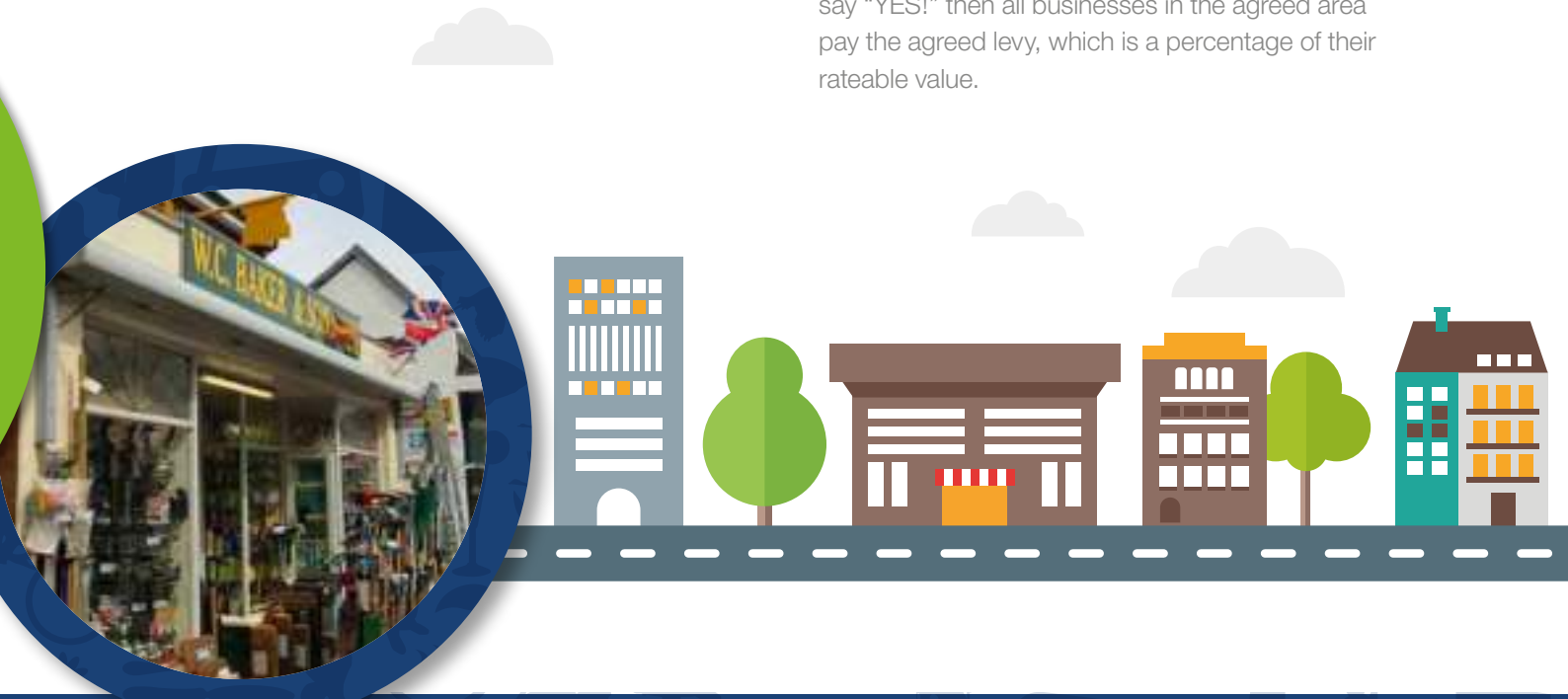
BIDs were first introduced as a pilot scheme in 2005 and since then over 260 have been established in the UK.

Why does Fleet need a BID?

Although the local Councils provide Fleet with the baseline services, a BID would generate additional funding for projects and schemes to benefit the town, e.g. more events, better marketing of the town and better business support. We are also in the position of being surrounded by neighbouring towns, with additional funding, who are seeking to attract people from Fleet and the surrounding areas to their towns to shop, eat and enjoy leisure activities.

Who pays?

All businesses within the BID area have the opportunity to vote for the Fleet BID. If the majority say "YES!" then all businesses in the agreed area pay the agreed levy, which is a percentage of their rateable value.





Your questions answered



Am I eligible to vote?



All businesses within the BID boundary will be eligible to vote

REMEMBER – THE BID CAN ONLY COME INTO BEING IF YOU VOTE “YES”.



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



No. Business rates are collected by Hart District Council and then re-distributed at a national level. Hart District Council spends the allocated funds on services that are statutory and discretionary and businesses have little say on what these services are. BIDs differ from this as the money is collected locally and ring-fenced and is then controlled and managed by you. It can only be spent on projects you have agreed to within the BID area. The BID levy does not pay for anything covered in your business rates.



Does this mean that the Local Authority will stop providing services?



No. As a BID company we will establish early in the BID process the baseline service provision from the local authorities and work on baseline statements for the following example areas:

- Street lighting
- Highway maintenance
- Car parking (off-street and on street)
- CCTV operations
- Economic development
- Christmas lights
- Flowers and hanging baskets in the summer
- Street cleaning
- Markets.

BIDs can only carry out services or improvements that are additional to anything that is already provided. The local authorities will also contribute to the BID as they own property within the BID area and will therefore be treated in the same way as any other levy payer.



How will the BID levy be collected?

The BID levy will be collected through the current Business Rates system administered by Hart District Council. It will be a separate bill payable on top of Business Rates. There will be regularly updated information about income and expenditure available to all members of the BID.



Isn't this a bad time to be asking businesses for money?

Quite the opposite! We know that we have to offer something unique to keep customers and visitors coming to Fleet. BIDs aim to increase footfall in the town and improve the trading environment. They are not designed to put additional financial pressure on businesses. Although the notion of paying out additional money can raise concerns initially, BIDs have a great track record of improving trading environments, bringing more customers into an area and increasing employment opportunities.

For example, in the first two years of the Winchester BID, footfall to the high street increased by over 37%.



Can I get involved even if I do not automatically qualify to pay the BID levy?

Yes! Businesses who are just outside the BID area will still be able to get involved by paying a voluntary contribution. The level of contribution will be determined by the BID company.



How long will the BID last and how will I know if it is working?

The BID will last for five years. This means that there will be guaranteed funding for Fleet Town Centre projects and improvements until 2022. In this time the BID will be measured in numerous ways:

- Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) managed by the Board of Directors to ensure that the BID is delivering on the projects outlined in the business plan.
- Annual performance reports will be produced by the BID company detailing what the BID is delivering.
- Footfall figures will continue to be measured, which will allow us to measure how the BID is impacting on this.
- Customer satisfaction surveys will be carried out, along with annual BID levy payer surveys to gauge the business confidence of the Town Centre.
- National comparisons will be assessed on data concerning vacant units, footfall and retail sales index.



Q

Where else is doing this?

A

Since the BID pilot scheme in 2005, over 260 BIDs have been established in the UK. The closest BIDs to Fleet are Camberley, Basingstoke, Winchester, Chichester and Guildford.

Q

Why should I vote “Yes”?

A

Voting YES to a BID in Fleet will mean that you are contributing to funds of £750,000 which will work to improve the town over the next five years. You can expect to see the benefit of collective marketing and promotion of the town, more events and other projects to increase footfall and drive business efficiency.

Q

What happens if I vote NO?

A

If you vote NO to the BID in Fleet you are saying no to additional, sustained funding which would otherwise help to increase footfall and support projects to ensure our businesses thrive. Without this investment, we will be unable to differentiate the town from the surrounding centres and reduce 'leakage'. We will be unable to deliver a quality programme of events and services, and you will lose the opportunity to make a meaningful difference to the town. If Fleet fails to offer people what they want, they will go elsewhere and the town centre will not prosper. BIDs are becoming more prominent right across the UK. The competition is tough and doing nothing is not an option. We need to take this opportunity to manage and invest in the future of our town.

What benefits can I expect to see?

Footfall is critical to the success of a town centre. The footfall in Fleet is below that for small South East towns. This translates to fewer customers than comparable towns. We need to address this and do everything we can to encourage people into the town. BIDs have a great track record of increasing footfall and retail sales.

Professional service businesses have seen the benefits of more attractive better advertised town centres and activity to support staff, thus helping with recruitment and retention. The time has come to take control of our trading environment and offer something special so that we can secure the future of Fleet.

The BID area

The proposed geographical boundaries of the BID are businesses in the following areas:

- Fleet Road from the Waterfront Business Park to the Oatsheaf Crossroads (both sides)
- Waterfront Business Park
- Albert Street from Reading Road South to Kings Road (both sides)
- Reading Road South (both sides) to Glen Road
- Reading Road North to Harlington Way along Harlington Way to Victoria Road
- Victoria Road from car park entrance to Fleet Road (both sides)
- Upper Street between Fleet Road and Albert Street (both sides)
- Kings Road from Albert Street to Fleet Road
- Crookham Road (both sides) to St James Road
- Branksomewood Road to Birchayes car park, across through Church Road car park and down Church Road to Fleet Road.



"Voting YES for a Business Improvement District in Fleet is a real chance to make decisions about the way in which our town develops and have a say in the future success of Fleet."

Steve Barrett
Partner Hurst Warne



I'm voting Yes!



What has happened so far?

April 2015
The Fleet Business Forum was formed and meets monthly

Summer 2015
Fleet becoming a Business Improvement District was identified by the group as the most important project to improve the trading environment in Fleet

Early 2016
A Feasibility study was undertaken which looked at potential projects and interest in a Business Improvement District in Fleet

January 2016
The Fleet Business Forum website was created and an A5 leaflet printed to explain the proposal for Fleet to become a Business Improvement District

JUNE 2016
A survey was sent to all businesses in the proposed BID area

Invitations and a leaflet were hand delivered to over 330 businesses to invite them to an open meeting in February and May to explain a BID and for businesses to identify priority projects

The website has been updated and regular emails have been sent to those businesses inviting them to meetings and providing them with updates

since October 2016
Zone Ambassadors have been making visits to businesses in the BID area.

121 meetings have been held, businesses have been revisited, and called along with regular email updates being sent to businesses.

I'm voting **Yes!**



"A BID has a fantastic potential to make a difference in Fleet."

Simon Clarke
Owner, Tackle Up

What could the BID investment be spent on?

As mentioned in YOUR BID on page 5, there are 3 areas that the Business Forum have considered, but the final decisions will be up to YOU! Here is some more information about these initial suggestions:

Marketing, promotion and events

What needs to be addressed?

The events calendar for Fleet is impressive for a town of our size – but we can still do more to ensure we offer potential visitors and customers what they are seeking and let them know that we can meet their needs in our town. We are also missing a trick with our social media and internet presence, so should be building on those to enable us to attract visitors from outside the area.

What are the possible solutions?

(a) *Create an identity for the town*

The BID will create an identity for a Fleet Town Centre ‘brand’ to be used in all BID projects and services. This will expand and maximise the social media presence to give Fleet businesses the coverage they deserve.

(b) *Develop an internet and social media presence*

The BID could develop and introduce a Fleet Town Centre app that will have real time information on events and activities.

(c) *Improve current events*

As advised by the Town Plan and recent surveys, the BID will pump more funding into additional events which are key to attracting people into the town and could also act as a boost for many small rural businesses.

(d) *Showcase local businesses*

Introduction of new events and greater support for campaigns to encourage people to Buy Locally such as Independents Day and Small Business Saturday to showcase and celebrate the large number of small and independent businesses that make Fleet unique. This will give them a chance to shine and let everyone know how great their businesses are through special marketing campaigns funded by the BID and extra events in the town centre. Promotional activity will be designed to raise the profile of the town of Fleet and business categories and these campaigns will enable individual businesses to benefit from participating in a wider campaign.

(e) *Keep spend local*

A voucher system to publicise offers and give added value to customers shopping in Fleet could be compiled and distributed by the BID company. Some businesses already offer vouchers or discount codes to customers but costs could be driven down if they were all in one place. Keeping people spending money in Fleet is good news for the town and its businesses!



Improving the town

What needs to be addressed?

Fleet is a successful town but recent surveys have identified that many residents are not aware of all that there is to offer and travel outside of the town to purchase items that are readily available.

What are the possible solutions?

(a) *Improve signage in the town centre*

Introduce consistent and useful signage to make access around the town centre easier for visitors. Publicise the amazing range of shops, cafés, bars, restaurants and professional services in the BID area.

(b) *Access to sustainable funding to continue to improve the customer experience*

The BID offers a unique opportunity to pump funding directly back into the town centre. The contribution of a small levy on each business annually realises a significant and sustainable funding stream to create something special for years to come.

(c) *Offering parking discounts*

To consider the provision of parking vouchers, for example, free parking on one day/evening a week to encourage people to come into the town.

(d) *Allowing local businesses to take the lead on improving our town*

The BID will provide the chance for our local businesses to determine what improvements will raise the attractiveness of the town centre. You will decide what improvements need to be made, how they will be managed and delivered. The ring-fenced money can only be spent on the projects you direct.

(e) *Getting the best deal for trade waste and refuse collection*

The BID will explore the opportunities presented by the use of collective purchasing and negotiate with key suppliers to reduce the cost of trade waste and refuse collection.

Business support

What needs to be addressed?

We have many successful businesses in Fleet but they are not connected. The formation of the Fleet Business Forum has begun to demonstrate what can be achieved when businesses work together. There is a need to extend business support and mentoring to all existing businesses in Fleet, as well as attracting new businesses to locate in our town.

What are the possible solutions?

(a) *Provide a united voice for town centre businesses*

The BID will provide a powerful and representative voice working on behalf of town centre businesses to ensure that your views are heard at the highest levels. This will be your BID and it will work in your best interests where you need it to.

(b) *A dedicated BID manager*

A part-time BID manager will focus on the delivery of the projects that are chosen by you, to raise the profile of the town and to provide the professional support to help the town flourish.

(c) *Achieving better links with the local authorities through the BID*

The BID company will be a strong voice in discussions with the local authorities and other bodies to make sure that the business community is always at the table when key decisions affecting the town centre are made. The Business Forum has already been asked to provide representatives at meetings to develop Fleet's Neighbourhood Plan.





BID figures

The figures below provide an example of how the BID Levy might be spent over a 5 year period. It is simply for illustration. It cannot be stressed too much that the final decisions on how the Levy is spent will be YOURS!

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Income	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000	£750,000
PROJECTS						
Marketing promotion	£68,900	£69,600	£71,100	£71,600	£74,100	£355,300
Improving the town	£46,300	£31,500	£26,000	£26,000	£24,500	£154,300
Business support	£13,600	£12,950	£18,450	£16,450	£19,450	£80,900
Measurement	£3,000	£7,000	£3,000	£7,000	£3,000	£23,000
MANAGEMENT						
Staff	£6,000	£6,000	£6,000	£6,000	£6,000	£30,000
Accounts/bookkeeping	£2,500	£2,500	£5,000	£2,500	£2,500	£15,000
Admin costs	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000	£15,000
Levy collection costs	£2,200	£12,950	£12,950	£12,950	£12,950	£54,000
Contingency	£4,500	£4,500	£4,500	£4,500	£4,500	£22,500
TOTAL	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000	£750,000
Admin costs as a percentage of income	9%	16%	18%	16%	16%	15%



The BID company

The BID will be managed by an independent not-for-profit company limited by guarantee.

The BID Board shall comprise a minimum of 9 directors and a maximum of 11 directors of which:

- a minimum of 5 directors and a maximum of 7 directors shall be Nominated Directors appointed by Levy Members;
- up to 2 directors shall be Nominated Directors nominated and appointed as representatives of the local community; and
- up to 2 directors shall be directors co-opted from the local authorities (Hart District Council and Fleet Town Council); *PROVIDED THAT if at any time and for any reason the board is unable to fill all vacant posts the board shall nevertheless have full power to act.*

Although the local Councils provide Fleet with the baseline services, a BID would generate additional funding for projects and schemes to benefit the town...

The BID Company will engage a part time BID manager to deliver the projects defined by the Board. The BID Manager will be the main liaison point between the BID Board and the businesses.

As levy payers, all businesses within the BID area have a stake in the BID company. They control what the BID fund is spent on and can hold the BID company accountable throughout the duration of the five years. The BID company cannot make any profit – all funds must be spent on projects and services agreed by the BID businesses and the Board of Directors.





**I'm
voting
Yes!**



"The Business Forum has brought many businesses together who have already worked collaboratively on a number of projects. A BID will provide sustained funding enabling businesses in Fleet to work together and deliver many initiatives to improve our trading environment."

Emma Molyneux
Chair of the Fleet Business Forum





Fleet

The place to **meet**
The place to **greet**

Important dates


February 2017 – BID Business Plan provided to all businesses in the BID area. More detailed BID Proposal also available.

February 2017




9
February

Notification of ballot sent to all businesses.



15
February

Drop in session to find out more about the BID proposal in Fleet.



23
February

Postal ballot opens. Ballot papers sent out.

March 2017



13
March

Last date to appoint a proxy to vote.



23
March

Close of ballot.



24
March

Formal declaration of ballot result.

The supporting BID Proposal Document which sets out more detail relating to the BID are available by emailing us: info@fleetbusinessforum.com or by visiting our website: fleetbusinessforum.com

All information relating to number of businesses, likely income and costs is based on the best information available at the time of going to press (January 2017).



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Fleet Business Improvement District Business Plan 2017–2022

V1.1 – BID Map updated to clarify boundary area.