

Report subject	Christchurch Business Improvement District
Meeting date	1 September 2021
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>Christchurch Business Improvement District (BID) Steering Group is preparing to take its BID Proposal to a postal ballot from 2 September 2021 – 30 September 2021. Result of the Ballot will be announced on 1 October 2021</p> <p>If successful at ballot the 5-year BID Term will run from November 2021 to 31 October 2026. This report seeks Cabinet approval for the Council to support Christchurch BID for the first term.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <p>Cabinet agree BCP Council's support of the Christchurch Business Improvement District (BID); and agree:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) To endorse the BID proposal that will be submitted to BCP Council on 26 July 2021 by the Christchurch BID Steering Group. ii) To note that the BID ballot will be run by CIVICA at a cost of £3,000. This cost would be paid for by the BCP Council Economic Development team through existing budgets. iii) To note that if the ballot is successful, the Council will pay any BID levy due in relation to the Council's hereditaments within the BID area (totalling £16,211 per annum) for 5 years. The service units that own the liable premises will pay the levy for their site(s). iv) To authorise the Director of Economic Development to complete the ballot papers on behalf of the Council in favour of the BID proposal. v) To authorise the Head of Legal Services to complete any necessary legal agreements required for the operation of the BID Levy, Ballot and service arrangements and any other necessary matters for the proposed BID in consultation with the appropriate officers.

Reason for recommendations	BCP Council is fully supportive of BIDs and the significant benefits and investment that they bring. The Christchurch BID proposal will help deliver the Council's strategic aims and objectives including the Dynamic Places objectives in the Corporate Plan. It is therefore recommended that BCP Council supports the Christchurch BID for its first 5-year term.
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Philip Broadhead
Corporate Director	Adam Richens, Chief Finance Officer and Director of Finance
Report Authors	Adrian Trevett, Head of Economic Development Paula Sales, Economic Development Officer
Wards	Christchurch Town;
Classification	For Decision

Background

1. Business Improvement Districts (BID) are business led partnerships, created through a ballot process to deliver additional improvements and services for local businesses. BIDs have a defined geographical area in which a levy is charged on all business rate payers in addition to their business rates bill. The funding is ringfenced to provide additional improvements and services identified by the businesses. BIDs are typically run as not for profit companies and are controlled by the businesses that fund them.
2. For a BID to be successful it needs to meet the two criteria of achieving a majority (over 50%) of eligible businesses voting yes (each hereditament has one vote, irrespective of size), and also for all of those voting in favour to represent a majority of the total rateable value of all businesses voting. If these two criteria are met, then the levy becomes mandatory across all eligible businesses in the area.
3. BCP Council fully supports 3 existing BIDs in the BCP region – Bournemouth BID, Bournemouth Coastal BID and Poole BID.

Christchurch Business Improvement District (BID)

4. The Christchurch Business Engagement Group (Christchurch Chamber of Trade and Commerce, Christchurch Businesses and Christchurch Borough Council) carried out several Public Engagement Meetings with businesses and stakeholders

in 2017 and 2018. A result of these meetings was the agreement to carry out a Feasibility Study to see if a BID could be viable in Christchurch Town Centre.

5. The Feasibility Study was carried out in 2018 with detailed business consultation and the results presented at a Public Meeting in April 2019. The result of the Feasibility Study confirmed that it was feasible to develop a BID in Christchurch Town Centre.
6. The Christchurch Business Improvement District (BID) Steering Group was established from the former Business Engagement Group. The Steering Group includes Christchurch Businesses, Christchurch Town Council, BCP Council and Dorset Police.
7. The Steering Group was successful in July 2019 in its application to the Governments BID Loan Fund to develop a BID in Christchurch. The Loan Fund covers the required Stages of a BID Development.
8. In October 2019 the BID Development Stage began with businesses being consulted with and surveyed. There were also a series of business information sessions and workshops. The results were presented in March 2020 showing a continued support for a BID.
9. The Steering Group have also set up a dedicated Christchurch BID website www.christchurchbid.co.uk and social media pages. There has been distribution of 5 business information sheets to date which are also available on the website.
10. The COVID 19 Pandemic created an enforced break in the face to face business engagement. The Steering Group has had to meet virtually from March 2020 to July 2021. The Information Sheets have continued to be produced and information updated on the website and social media pages.
11. The BID Business Plan will be launched at a Public Meeting on the 12 August 2021 following extensive further business consultation. It will also be available on the BID Website www.christchurchbid.co.uk
12. The area of the Christchurch BID is outlined on the Map in **Appendix 1** and is also included in the Business Plan.
13. The BID Steering Group is preparing for the start of the postal ballot on 2 September 2021 to seek a 5-year term until end October 2026, which will start on 1 November 2021.
14. Key Dates:
 - Notice of Ballot issued – 19 August 2021
 - Ballot papers issued – 2 September 2021
 - Ballot end – 30 September 2021
 - Ballot Decision – 1 October 2021
 - New term – 1 November 2021
15. The rate of the levy being proposed for the ballot is 1.75% of a business's rateable value (RV).

16. Any tenant of a managed centre who are subject to a service charge would pay a reduced rate of 1.3% to reflect the fact that their service charge covers some of the services which would be provided by the BID.
17. All Non-Domestic Ratepayers within the proposed boundary, as outlined within this Business Plan, would be liable to pay the BID levy, with the exception of 1) Any hereditament with a rateable value below £5,000,2) Any School or 3) Any Day Nursery.
18. The number of eligible businesses (hereditaments) in the defined area is 271. The sum expected to be raised from the levy is £124,500 per annum for a period of 5 years, totalling £622,500 of investment into the town centre. This figure does not include any additional sponsorship or match funding that the BID would inevitably secure.
19. The BID has produced a draft Business Plan for 2021-2026 (which will be available on the BID Website from August 2021) which outlines the areas that it will seek to address including a:

Christchurch ENHANCED - Businesses have prioritised:

- Car parking discounts
- Improving the appearance of empty shops
- Car parking arrangements to provide additional spaces
- Increased floral planting or landscaping
- Street cleansing & washing, including chewing gum removal
- Town Centre Wi-Fi for visitors
- Physical improvements to paving, landscaping or street furniture

Christchurch ANIMATED - Businesses have prioritised:

- More major town centre events or festivals
- New seasonal events, including more Christmas activities

Christchurch PROMOTED - Businesses have prioritised:

- Marketing & promotion to project the town to a far wider audience
- Projects to encourage investment into Christchurch
- Social Media campaigning
- Visitor website
- Business to business communication

Christchurch SUPPORTED- Businesses have prioritised:

- Projects to encourage investment into Christchurch
- Schemes to save businesses money on their overheads

- Business to business communication

Options Appraisal

20. Option 1:

Council fully supports 3 existing BIDs in the BCP region as they bring significant benefits and investment to the BCP region.

Option 2:

If support is not offered for the Christchurch BID there could be reputational damage to the Council. If the BID is not voted in there would be a loss of over £622,500 of investment into Christchurch Town Centre. This would be very harmful to the town centre and would be contrary to the aims and objectives of the BCP Council Strategy.

Summary of financial implications

21. It has been agreed in consultation of officers, that on behalf of BCP Council, the Stour Valley and Poole Partnership (SVPP) Revenue and Benefits service will undertake the task of billing the levy to all businesses, and then pass the funding across to the BID Company. This is at no cost to the Council as the costs of undertaking this role (£8,871 in Year 1 and £7,984 per annum in Years 2-5) will be funded from the levy collection sum.
22. The payment will be taken prior to passing on the remainder of collected funds across to the BID company.
23. There are however two financial implications for the Council:
 - The Council are a landowner for 17 liable hereditaments in the BID boundary (see Appendix 2). As such, the Council are liable for £16,211 per year (£81,055 over 5 years) if the ballot is successful. The service units that own the liable hereditaments will pay the levy for their hereditament as they will benefit from the BID.
 - The ballot will run by CIVICA at a cost of £3,000. The cost of the ballot is paid for by the local authority and it has been agreed this cost would be paid for by BCP Council Economic Development through existing budgets.

Summary of legal implications

24. Christchurch BID as a company, would be limited by guarantee.
25. Christchurch BID would be run by a Board of Directors, all of whom would represent businesses from the private sector or organisations paying the BID levy. Members of Christchurch BID elect their Board of Directors. The Board of Directors will be responsible for the delivery of projects, ensuring that they are delivered on time, in budget and to the highest standards possible.

26. An Operations Agreement has been drafted by the Stour Valley and Poole Partnership (SVPP) Revenues and Benefits Service that outlines the terms of the relationship between the BID company and the billing authority.
27. Baseline Agreements have been drawn up with relevant Service Unit Heads covering: Regulatory Services; Cleansing; Car Parking; CCTV; Market; Tourism and Events. The Baseline Agreements determine the current commitments of the Council in the BID area to ensure that there is no duplication of activities from the BID funds. Legislation states that BID activity is not to replace services provided by the local authority.

Summary of human resources implications

28. There are no human resources implications.

Summary of sustainability impact

29. Christchurch BID supports businesses and employment in the town centre. A thriving and vibrant town centre has sustainability benefits as the town centre is well served by public transport.

Summary of public health implications

30. There are no public health implications.

Summary of equality implications

31. The BID would make a positive contribution to the town centre. It would continue to improve the vitality and viability of the town centre thereby creating (and retaining) employment opportunities. It would also fund safety measures to make the town centre a safer and more welcoming environment.

Summary of risk assessment

32. The financial risks have been identified above. There would be a reputational risk if the Council do not support the Christchurch BID ballot (whilst supporting other BIDs).

Background papers

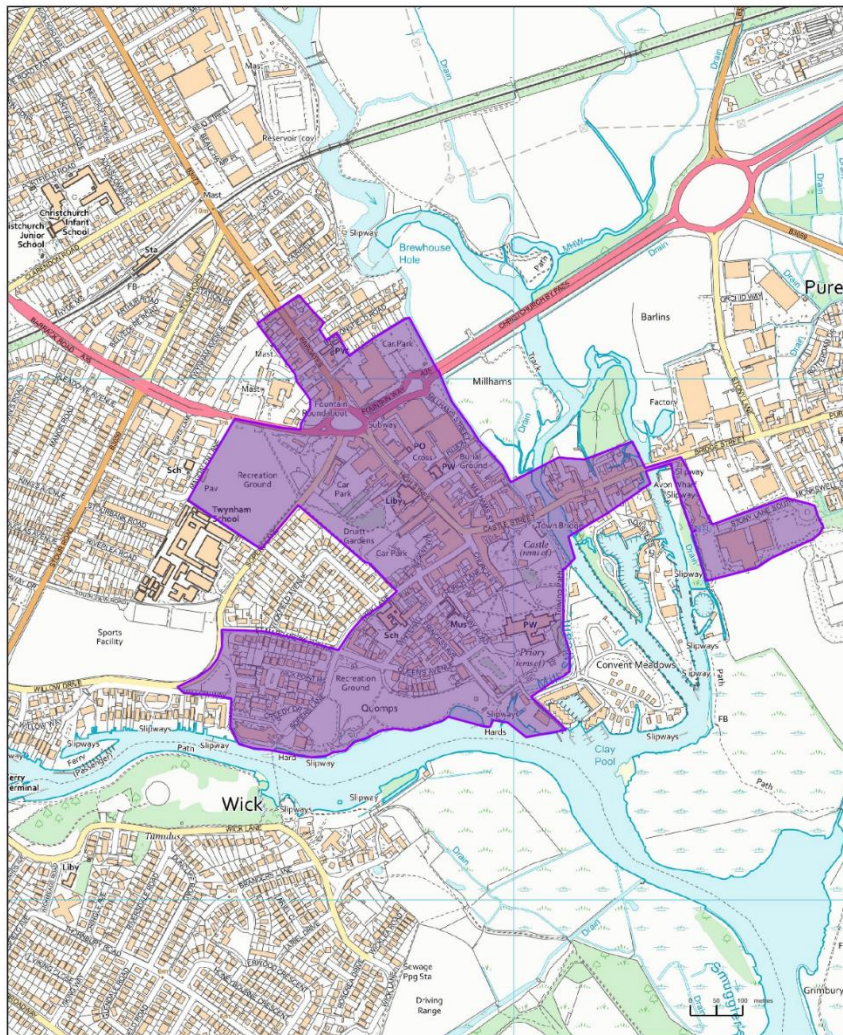
None. Link to Christchurch BID - www.christchurchbid.co.uk

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Christchurch BID Area

Appendix 2 - Council owned sites

Appendix 1 - Christchurch BID area



Christchurch BID Area

Christchurch_BID

Scale: 1:8192 @ A4
Date: 01 June 2021

Creator: Economic Development

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Appendix 2 - Council owned sites

BCP COUNCIL	COUNCIL OFFICES	BRIDGE STREET	CHRISTCHURCH
BCP COUNCIL	2 RIVERSMEET LEISURE CENTRE LTD	STONY LANE SOUTH	CHRISTCHURCH
BCP COUNCIL	SAXON SQUARE CAR PARK	SAXON SQUARE	CHRISTCHURCH
BCP COUNCIL	CHRISTCHURCH LIBRARY	DRUITT BUILDINGS	CHRISTCHURCH
BCP COUNCIL	CAR PARK	R/O 11-13 HIGH STREET	CHRISTCHURCH
BCP COUNCIL	PRIORY CAR PARK	QUAY ROAD	CHRISTCHURCH
BCP COUNCIL	WICK LANE CAR PARK	DRUITT GARDENS	CHRISTCHURCH
BCP COUNCIL	BY-PASS CAR PARK	BARGATES	CHRISTCHURCH
BCP COUNCIL	TWO RIVERS MEET LEISURE CENTRE CAR PARK	STONY LANE SOUTH	CHRISTCHURCH
BCP COUNCIL	MARKET	HIGH STREET	CHRISTCHURCH
BCP COUNCIL	MAYORS MEAD CAR PARK	WICK LANE	CHRISTCHURCH
BCP COUNCIL	ADJ CIVIC OFFICES CAR PARK	BRIDGE STREET	CHRISTCHURCH
BCP COUNCIL		27 HIGH STREET	CHRISTCHURCH
BCP COUNCIL	C V KEYNES QUOMPS	WICK LANE	CHRISTCHURCH
BCP COUNCIL	PIT SITE CAR PARK	BARRACK ROAD	CHRISTCHURCH
BCP COUNCIL	SOPLER LANE CAR PARK	WILLOW WAY	CHRISTCHURCH
BCP COUNCIL	PUBLIC CONVENIENCES	SAXON SQUARE	CHRISTCHURCH

