

Harrow Town Centre
BID



Consultation Draft
September 2008





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Shadow Board Foreword

Welcome from the Shadow Business Improvement District (BID) Board.



It gives us great pleasure to introduce the proposal for a BID in Harrow town centre. The BID is an initiative run by and for businesses that allows businesses a unique opportunity to take control of the security, promotion and future management of the town centre through a collective contribution.

While this initial proposal marks the culmination of an extensive process of preparation and consultation, the town centre is everyone's concern so we will be visiting your organisation in the near future to get your views.

If Harrow town centre businesses vote a majority yes in the BID ballot in February 2009, the BID levy will become mandatory for every business within the BID boundary. It is therefore important that we gather as much input from all businesses as possible.

We look forward to receiving your views and working with you to create a prosperous, safe and vibrant town centre. Should you have any other questions or queries regarding this document, please contact in the first instance, David Sklair on 0208 736 6084 or e-mail: bids@harrow.gov.uk



What is this document about?

The Harrow BID Company is consulting all town centre businesses on the establishment of a BID in the town centre. The Harrow BID Company is now asking for your comments on this initial Business Plan before a final version is completed in December 2008.

The rest of this document gives some examples of projects and ideas that have been put forward by businesses so far, but it is essential that you let us know if we are covering the right issues. You will be asked to vote on the proposals in the finalised document in early 2009.

This is the summary version of the BID Proposal/Business Plan. A full version of the plan will be available online by December 2008. We are seeking comments from both the business community and the public service providers to ensure that the proposals are relevant to offices and retailers in the proposed BID area.

THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO HAVE YOUR SAY

Why do we need a Business Improvement District?

The last ten years has seen a decline in investment in the town centre.

We also recognise that shoplifting is a key problem and other activities such as DVD selling deter shoppers.

As a consequence, people who have a choice, may choose to shop elsewhere. Our research has also shown that some town centre based offices are also unhappy with these issues, as they create a negative impact on both staff and business retention.

Therefore to address these issues and to improve Harrow Town Centre's image as a vibrant, safe and competitive metropolitan centre, we need a permanent and sustainable solution in the establishment of a Business Improvement District – an initiative, which is led and run by **businesses** for **businesses**.





BID aims and objectives

The main aim of the BID is to create a safe, vibrant and prosperous town centre. This would be achieved by:

Safe and Secure

- Targeting safety and security in the town centre by managing policing to ensure that shoplifting is tackled as a priority and illegal trading is stamped out.

Promotion and Marketing

- Promoting the town centre by creating a regular well publicised and well organised calendar of events and entertainment to increase footfall, dwell time and create a vibrant town centre

Clean and Green

- In partnership with Harrow Council, taking control of the town centre to ensure the new improvements are maintained to a high standard and that the town centre retains a clean, prosperous and vibrant image to residents, office workers and shoppers.

Partnership Working

- Creating the voice between town centre businesses, the Council and Police to ensure that town centre problems can be dealt with swiftly and efficiently and that additional services can be obtained as and when needed.

did you know?

A recent event at the St George's Shopping Centre attracted an increase in footfall of 49% elsewhere in the town centre. A BID could co-ordinate a regular calendar of events to increase footfall further and put Harrow town centre back on the map.

BIDs explained

A BID is a business arrangement through which the local business community, the Council and other statutory service providers can implement plans and improvement projects that directly benefit their area. The improvements must be in addition to services already provided by the public sector.

These proposals must be agreed by a majority of ratepayers in the BID area before the BID can go ahead. The cost of the proposal is met by a supplement on the rate bills of the businesses within the BID area along with other voluntary contributions.

All businesses that pay the supplement levy are entitled to a vote in a ballot conducted by the Local Authority to determine if the BID proposal should go ahead. Although the vote is led by the Local Authority, a BID is **not** part of the Council and the projects and services that a BID delivers do not replace existing Council services.

After a fixed period (for Harrow, we are proposing the usual BID length of **5 years**), the success of the BID must be reviewed and businesses will decide whether it should continue through consultation and another ballot.

How do BIDs operate?

BIDS operate on a basis of statutory contributions. This means that all eligible businesses in the BID area are obliged to contribute to the scheme if the majority of businesses have supported the BID in a ballot. This means that there is no “free-loading” – everyone contributes.

The great thing about a BID is that the level of investment via the BID levy has been set by businesses, through a series of consultations.

The money is kept locally, and spent locally, for the benefit of the local area.





The BID levy is nothing to do with business rates. It is based on the rateable value of the business unit (hereditament) and is a direct investment in the town centre. The funds collected through the BID levy will be kept in a separate BID bank account, held by the BID Company. The total income from the levy, and from extra funds attracted, will be used to fund local activities and services, **as decided by businesses.**

What do business rates cover?

Business rates are a national tax collected by the Council and then redistributed at a national level. There is no relationship between the money you pay to the Council and the services that your Council provides. The Council's income is spent throughout the borough on statutory and discretionary services for residents and businesses.

How the ballot process works

Businesses in the BID area will vote on the proposal. Each property that pays Business Rates in the BID area shall receive one vote. For example, in the case of Boots the Chemist, which has two stores in Harrow, a vote will be allocated to each store. To be successful, a BID proposal must gain a simple majority of those voting, plus a majority of the rateable value voting.

Harrow town centre BID area



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It is proposed that the BID area will cover the streets shown in the figure above. Upper floor units will also be included in the BID area.

The BID covers:

- All units St Georges Shopping and Leisure Centre
- All units St Ann's Shopping Centre
- All units St Ann's Road
- Nos 276 – 380 (Evens) Station Road
- Nos 249 – 381 (Odds) Station Road
- Nos 2 - 132 (Evens) College Road
- Nos 15 - 79 (Odds) College Road
- Harrow Bus Station
- Harrow on the Hill Station
- Clarendon Road
- Kymberley Road
- Havelock Place
- Nos 5 - 9 Headstone Road

The future development of Harrow Town Centre

St Ann's Road Improvements

Harrow Council is investing approximately £4 million to upgrade St Ann's Road.

The BID Company has already represented the concerns of retail businesses by ensuring that the improvements to St Ann's Road were delayed by several months to avoid the critical lead-in time to Christmas. It is vital that the BID Company continues to influence the plans for the other major developments outlined in this document.

Key Improvements:

New paving, lighting and a water fountain will be installed in St Ann's Road from January 2009.

Further improvements including the remodelling of Station Road are currently being considered.

Proposals for the refurbishment of the Bus Station are currently being developed with Harrow Council, Transport for London and London Buses. The improvements will be partially funded by the private sector through a number of legal agreements when redevelopments are approved and financially viable.

Other Town Centre Proposals

Harrow College is looking to consolidate its two sites in the Borough into a new college building next to its current site in Lowlands Road.

Harrow College proposal



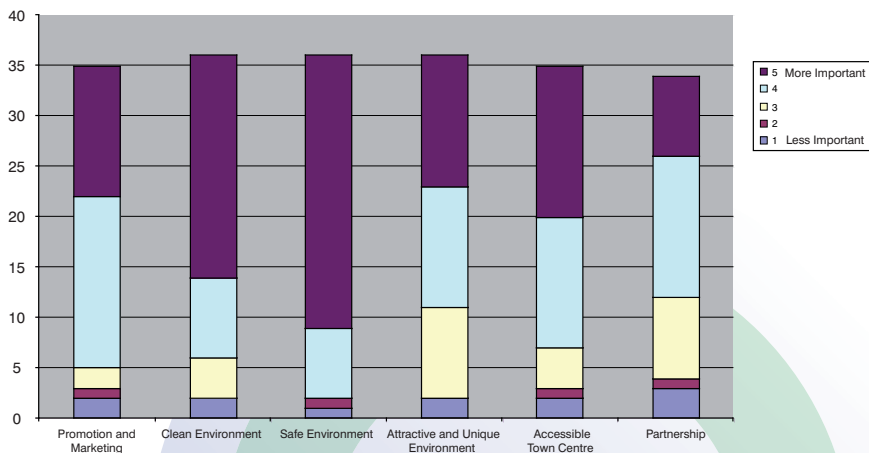
Before and after – proposed improvements to St Ann's Road

St Ann's Road/Station Road Junction



What businesses told us

The Harrow BID Company undertook an initial survey of town centre retailers in February and March 2008 to identify what businesses felt were the key issues facing the town centre.



These issues were then presented via an introductory BID event, staged on the 21 May in Harrow's Vue Cinema to promote further discussion and feedback.

Following on from this, an event for the office sector was held on 31st July to which all offices within the proposed BID area were invited to discuss their particular aims and objectives.

In addition, a number of businesses have attended meetings of the BID Shadow Board in order to provide input into the proposals.

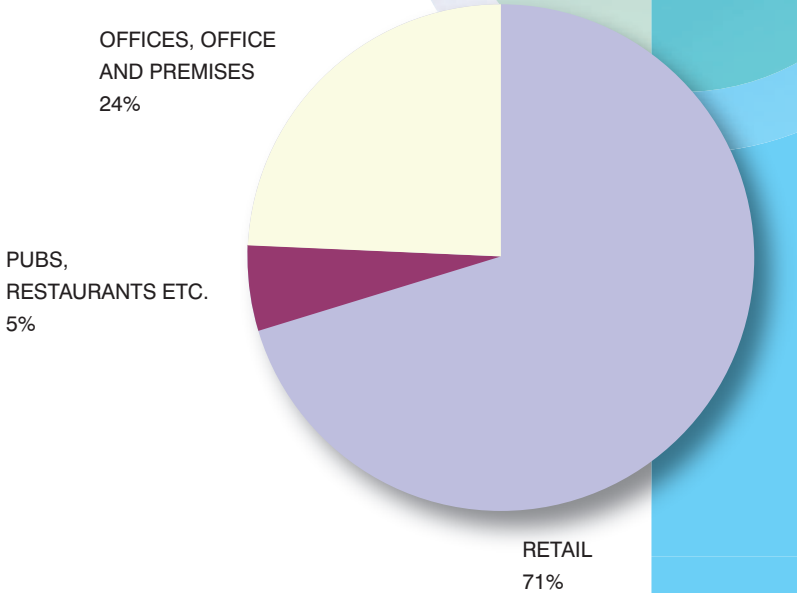
As a result of this work, the BID Company believe that this draft Business Plan provides a range of services that will benefit all the businesses in Harrow.

The key issues that came across as part of the consultation process focussed on:

- Safety and Security
- Promotion and marketing
- Clean and green environment

Within this area, there are the following proportions of businesses by rateable value.

Land Uses by Proportion of Rateable Value



“ In terms of our staff retention, it is very important that the town centre is a safe and attractive area where people can enjoy events and relax during their lunch-break. The Business Improvement District will be a great step forward in achieving this aim and we are supporting it 100%. ”

David Gray, GE Money





1. Harrow Town Centre Vision

The Business Plan aims to build on Harrow's position as a metropolitan centre so that it is able to stand on an equal footing with its competitors. Through effective partnership working, the BID aims to ensure that Harrow town centre becomes a safe, vibrant and prosperous town centre and the clear destination of choice for new and existing businesses, employees and visitors to the area.



“For too long, businesses have had very little say in what happens in the town centre. The Business Improvement District will allow businesses to shape the future of the town centre and bring real business acumen to the table. The BID will also ensure a voice for business within the Council to ensure that any day-to-day problems are resolved swiftly and efficiently.”

Steve Kent, Manager St George's Shopping Centre

2. Action Plan

The key projects and services to be provided by the Harrow BID will be within four themes:

Safe and Secure

- Tackling and deterring shoplifters by using targeted police measures to reduce the unacceptable levels of stock loss.
- Stamping out illegal street trading, particularly pirated DVD sales.
- Putting additional resources into crime prevention with the Retail Crime Partnership.
- Ensuring residents, office workers and visitors feel safe after dark in order to encourage trade in the evening economy.
- Keeping a tight control on town centre traders and in particular street-based charity representatives.
- Introducing day to day management of St Ann's Road by providing a dedicated link between the town centre businesses and the relevant Council/Police departments.

Promotion and Marketing

- Implementing regular themed markets and street entertainment throughout the year to increase footfall and vitality and encourage higher quality shoppers.
- Early evening shopping and increased trading hours to provide after work leisure opportunities for office and shop employees.
- Increasing investment in innovative Christmas, Eid, Diwali and Hannukah festivities to maximise footfall during the important period around the festive season.
- Attracting a greater retail mix through advertising and marketing vacancies to fill the gaps in the area's retail offer.
- Providing discounts and loyalty schemes to benefit town centre based office and retail employees.

Clean and Green

- Introducing collective town centre recycling and transport schemes to help offices and retailers save money and boost their green credentials.
- Ensuring that the new improvements to St Ann's Road are safeguarded and that the town centre retains a modern, clean and vibrant feel into the future.
- Working in partnership with Harrow Council to monitor baseline activity and ensure additional measures for cleansing and maintenance are obtained as and when necessary.

Partnership working

- To be a collective voice for businesses in the town centre and a focus for individual business issues.
- To bring in additional funding for the area to support priority projects.
- To build on the existing relationships between the Police and Harrow Business Against Crime (HBAC) to tackle the major issues of stock loss and shoplifting.
- To work with town centre hotels to stage marketing and events during periods of high hotel occupancy.
- To forge a link between businesses and the local community to develop projects with young people as part of the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) agenda.

“ Too many people are choosing to shop in other areas such as Watford and Brent Cross. We need to entice these shoppers back with a safe, modern and vibrant town centre where people can enjoy a complete shopping experience – the BID will provide us with the resources to do this.”

Suzy Wood, Manager of St Ann's Shopping Centre



Harrow BID Company

Harrow BID Company will exist in its own right as a company with its own legal identity and control. A Shadow Board was established in April 2008 to develop this proposal and business plan. The proposed Board Composition is shown in the box below.

Currently, the BID Shadow Board comprises of

- Nick Pinder (Debenhams)
- Steve Kent (St Georges Shopping and Leisure Centre)
- Suzy Wood (St Ann’s Shopping Centre)
- Kurt Jansen (McDonalds Franchisee – Station Road and St George’s)
- Fay Keating (Lloyds TSB)
- David Gray (GE Money)



PROPOSED BID BOARD STRUCTURE

6 Representatives from the Retail/Leisure/Restaurants sector

3 Representatives from the Office Sector

1 Representative from HBAC Board (non voting)

1 Representative from Harrow Police (non voting)

1 Representative from the Local Authority (non voting)

TOTAL 12 Members

Estimated Income and Expenditure Plans

The Harrow BID estimated income and expenditure have been based on a 95% collection rate of the BID levy.

SOURCE	INCOME
BID Levy (NET income)	£206,000
Freehold Owners Contributions	Owners of St Ann's Shopping Centre c£15,000 Owners of St George's Shopping and Leisure Centre c£11,000 To be confirmed
TOTAL BID INCOME	£232,000

EXPENDITURE	
Projects by Theme	Proposed Proportions
Safe and Secure	35%
Promotion and Marketing	25%
Clean & Green	15%
TOTAL	
Staff and Administrative Costs	
Staff Costs	20%
Admin, Levy Collection and Monitoring	5%
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	100%

None of the costs incurred in developing the BID proposals or to hold the ballot are to be recovered through the BID levy. This includes substantial Council Officer time and £20.000 in costs that Harrow Council has paid to cover the new software system.

Once the BID is operational, minor variations within budgets will be managed by sub-groups, major variations will be reported to the main Harrow BID Board for agreement.

The BID Company will agree on an annual basis how funds for subsequent years will be allocated. This will be based on business feedback during the previous year and priorities for the coming year, which allows the BID the flexibility to respond to changing business needs and requirements.

The BID will seek to secure other sources of funding over the course of the BID's lifetime. These may be from businesses, property owners or developers. The BID Company will also apply for public funding for specific projects.



Interesting Facts

- **17 BIDs already exist in London**
- **They cover areas such as the South Bank, Ealing and Paddington**
- **No London area has voted against a BID**

“As a town centre leisure attraction, we feel that the Business Improvement District will provide a great opportunity to attract both old and new residents, shoppers and employees into the town centre. A revitalised town centre is in the best interest of every business and we very much want to be part of that.”

Ivan Carlse, Manager of Fitz Health Club





How do we ensure we get additional services?

The Harrow BID will bring new initiatives to the town centre and enhance Local Authority services not replace them. The BID Company will therefore benchmark all existing Police and Council run services, and will closely monitor pre-prescribed Service Level Agreements to ensure that standards are always met.

The Local Authority Service Level Agreements will guarantee a level of core service provision in the BID area that cannot be reduced following the introduction of BID funded services.

The Harrow BID Company will benchmark the following services:

- Street Cleansing, Graffiti & Litter Removal
- Police (Harrow Town Centre Team), Harrow Business Against Crime
- Management of St Ann's Road/Kiosks and pitches
- Festivals & Events
- Community Safety /Closed Circuit Television

With benchmarks in place, it will be possible for the BID Company to ensure with no ambiguity, that all services introduced by the BID will be over-and-above those services already provided by the Local Authority.

Where BID projects are undertaken in conjunction with the Police or the Council, Service Level Agreements will legally oblige these organisations to use the BID funds exclusively for the services agreed by the BID Board, and only within the BID area.

The additional services delivered by the BID will be governed by contractual service level agreements established prior to commitment of expenditure by the BID Board. The BID Company can undertake services either through the Police and Council's contractors or by employing alternative external contractors directly.

The Levy Details

Key Facts

Most BIDs set a levy between 1 and 1.5%. The BID Board however recognises that the current trading environment is uncertain.

The BID Board is therefore recommending a maximum levy rate of 1% over 5 year period to take account of these trading conditions and not put undue pressure on resources.

The Proposed levy rates are therefore:

- TOWN CENTRE RETAIL PREMISES INCLUDING BANKS & BUILDING SOCIETIES 1.0%
- RETAIL PREMISES THAT PAY A SERVICE CHARGE TO A SHOPPING CENTRE 0.75%
- OFFICE PREMISES 0.75%
- CAR PARKS 1.0%
- LEISURE FACILITIES 1%

If you want to know your rateable value, please contact David Sklair, 0208 736 6084 or e-mail bids@harrow.gov.uk

- The total amount payable each year will be subject to up to a 3% increase in line with inflation or the Retail Price Index (RPI), whichever is lower.
- Premises with a rateable value of less than £3000 will be exempt from paying the levy and therefore will not be eligible to vote in the ballot. We recognise the impact of the levy on a small business. The cost of collecting the levy from smaller businesses outweighs the income generated from them.
- The BID levy will be chargeable to the property owner where a property is vacant at the start of the charging period.
- The BID levy is charged on a daily basis. There will be no refund where a property enters or leaves the ratings list, or a split or merger occurs.



How will the BID be monitored?

To ensure that the BID Company and projects are achieving results in the town centre, we will provide a number of measurable outputs by which you can judge us and your own business performance. The key indicators are listed in the box below

Key Performance Indicators	
Qualitative Annual satisfaction Surveys	Town Centre Satisfaction
Quantitative	Annual town centre health check <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Pedestrian flow counts– Car park usage– Town centre monitoring Pedestrian Flowcounts Town Centre Footfall Average Based on St George's/St Ann's/ Debenhams Footfall Monitoring levels of shoplifting/ stock loss on a monthly basis



“McDonalds is delighted to be involved in the Harrow bid. We value our position in the community and truly believe the benefits of the BID will have a positive impact on the town and its businesses”

Kurt Jansen, McDonalds Franchisee

Next Steps

September 2008:

Launch of BID Proposal

October 2008:

End of consultation and feedback

25 October 2008:

Launch of festive season events in the town centre

December 2008:

Launch of full business plan

12 January 2009:

Start of improvements to St Ann's Road

January 2009:

Pre-ballot campaign

February 2009:

BID ballot

April 2009:

BID established following a successful BID vote

Contact us

To speak to a member of the BID Board or request any documents please get in contact:

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