

Barrow Borough Council
Overview and Scrutiny Committee
7 December 2022
Barrow Business Improvement District

Report from: Director of People and Place

Report Author: Helen Houston

Wards: Central; Hindpool;

1.0 Summary and Conclusions

1.1 This report provides an update of the work of Barrow Business Improvement District since their re-election for a second term in 2021.

2.0 Recommendation

It is recommended that Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the contents of this report and the update provided on Barrow BID and forward any comments to Executive Committee who will be receiving a report to a future meeting.

3.0 Background and Proposals

3.1 Barrow BID was established in 2016 as a result of a democratic vote of the businesses within the defined BID area, 77.5% of the businesses voted for the creation of a Business Improvement District for Barrow Town Centre.

3.2.1 The levy is used to deliver projects which will benefit the businesses in the BID area and during the first term successfully delivered a range of events and projects within the town centre.

3.2.2 The second term for Barrow BID commenced 1 September 2021, following further ballot process where businesses voted to continue the Business Improvement District. At this time arrangements were confirmed for a BID Liaison Officer for the Council which is currently undertaken by the Head of Regeneration and Planning Policy.

3.2.3 To support the collaborative working relationship between Barrow BID and the Council regular BID Liaison meetings are held and the BID Liaison Officer meets

regularly with the BID Manager. Since September 2021 the following activities have been undertaken:

BID Liaison

Regular liaison meetings are held between Barrow Borough Council and Barrow BID these present the opportunity to provide an update on the BID Levy collection undertaken by the Councils Revenues & Benefits Team and any other activities which are relevant to the work of the BID or the Council.

In addition to the formal meetings which occur bi monthly the Head of Regeneration & Planning Policy has informal meetings with the BID Manager when required. The relationship between the Council and the BID has improved following the formalisation of this relationship through the liaison meetings.

Levy Collection

Barrow Borough Council collects the BID levy from businesses within the BID area and issues bills and reminders at appropriate times. The payment of levies is reported through the Liaison Meetings.

Events, Marketing and Promotion

A number of events and activities have been held during 2022 which have been a great success and welcomed people back to the town centre. Events include Santa Dash, Dino Day, Soapbox Challenge, Shop Barrow Day, Festival of Transport, Piano Trail. A full list of events will be circulated prior to the meeting.

The BID and Council have worked together on numerous occasions, publicising events and undertaking joint promotional campaigns.

Welcome Back Fund

Following the pandemic Barrow Bid and the Council worked together to deliver a package of activity funded by the Welcome Back and Reopening High Streets Safely Funds. This work was intended to support local businesses 'bounce back' from the pandemic and welcome visitors and residents back to our high streets and centres by giving them confidence that they would be met by a safe and welcoming environment. Activity included a promotional campaign through Visit Barrow, promotional material including videos, leaflets and a map/guide to local businesses and attractions, enhanced social media coverage, temporary public realm enhancements on Dalton Road and delivery of a bespoke event to support retailers.

HSHAZ

Barrow BID have supported the Re:discover Barrow High Streets Heritage Action Zone on Duke Street with match funding in years 1 and 2. They sit on the

steering group and cultural consortium along with other stakeholders and work in partnership on heritage projects within the town centre.

High Streets Task Force

Barrow BID, along with other town centre stakeholders, were invited to work with High Street experts from the High Streets Task Force who have now held two sessions in the town centre one in 2021 and one in 2022. Following a workshop in October 2022, the BID and the Council will work collaboratively to deliver some of the suggestions put forward by the experts to revitalise the town centre in the short term, whilst the long term regeneration plans take place.

Levelling Up Fund

Barrow BID have been working collaboratively with Council officers to support the successful Levelling Up Fund application for the redevelopment of the Market Hall and surrounding space. A number of BID levy payers including market traders are affected by the redevelopment work and the BID are supporting traders through this process and supporting events and activities in the Market, Forum, Town Square and Market Square.

4.0 Consultation

4.1 This is an update report so no consultation has been undertaken however where appropriate consultation exercises have taken place as part of town centre activities where appropriate.

5.0 Alternative Options

5.1 This is an update report for noting no alternative options are presented.

6.0 Contribution to Council Plan Priorities

6.1 The work of Barrow BID in partnership with the Council supports the Place and Prosperity priorities of the Council Plan, as it delivers investment in the town centre and local businesses and works to create a vibrant, safe and welcoming place where people want to live thus supporting the economy to thrive.

7.0 Implications

7.1 Financial, Resources and Procurement

7.1.1 This is an update report for noting and there are therefore no financial implications. The local authority manage the billing and collection of the levy and hold the levy in a ring-fenced revenue account.

7.2 Legal

7.2.1 A business improvement district is managed by a Business Improvement District body, for Barrow BID this is Barrow BID Limited. The Council collect the levy on behalf of the BID who provide additional or improved services guided by

businesses' needs. The BID body is responsible for developing and implementing its business plan which sets out how the Business Improvement District will operate.

7.3 Local Government Reorganisation

7.3.1 The second term of the BID extends to 2026 and therefore past the life of Barrow Borough Council. The relationship with Barrow BID and other Business Improvements Districts within Westmorland and Furness will be established going forward. Officers working in Barrow will continue with the established relationship with Barrow BID as we move to Westmorland & Furness Council in April 2023

7.4 Equality and Diversity

7.4.1 This report has no direct Equality and Diversity implications.

Contact Officers

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Appendix to report

1. Business Improvement District – Business Plan

Background Documents Available

Name of Background document	Where it is available
1 Previous Reports to Executive Committee on Barrow BID	https://barrowbid.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/T2_Business_Plan.pdf