

Report of: Head of City Centre Management

Report to: Licensing Committee

Date: 8th March 2016

Subject: Leeds City Centre Night Time Economy and Leeds Business Improvement District

Are specific electoral wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of ward(s): City and Hunslet	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. In December 2015, License Committee expressed a desire to be updated on the progress of the Leeds Business Improvement District (BID), a private sector led initiative, supported by Leeds City Council. The update was sought in relation to aspects of Leeds city centre night time economy which the new BID would seek to improve as part of its business plan over the next 5 years.
2. In January 2016 an interim report was produced and circulated to members of Licensing committee on the current approach of the BID, setting out proposals within the BID business plan and the Council's position on the Late Night Levy in relation to the formation of the BID.
3. The interim report recommended that Licensing committee welcome the attendance of the Chief Executive of Leeds BID at the March meeting where a more detailed overview will be presented, with the opportunity for a Q&A session with the incoming Chief Executive of Leeds BID and the Head of city centre management of Leeds City Council.

Recommendations

4. Licensing Committee is recommended to:
 - (i) Note the update attached on the progress of the BID which forms the basis of the presentation by the Chief Executive of the BID at the March meeting;

- (ii) Engage with the Chief executive of the BID and take the opportunity to explore what Leeds BID can and are proposing to do in their business plan in support of the city centre's night time economy.
- (iii) Support the approach being taken by the BID and partners to explore the attainment of the national accreditation for the night time economy - Purple Flag, which will make it necessary to examine the issues in detail that affect how the night time economy operates.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report provides members of Licensing Committee with an update on the development of the Leeds Business Improvement District, since its inception in early 2015. The main points are covered in the attached appendix 1.0 and also covers reference to the Night Time Economy (NTE) in Leeds city centre. Licensing committee will receive a full briefing at the March meeting where the subject matter will be covered with the Chief Executive of Leeds BID.

2 Background information

- 2.1 In 2011, The Council and major stakeholders in the city centre agreed to develop a Business Improvement District (BID) to achieve a step change in the ability of Leeds to improve and promote its city centre as a leading European business location, a top UK retail destination, and a source of new jobs and economic growth. In 2014, the private sector, supported by the Council, formed the BID4Leeds company to develop proposals for a BID for Leeds City Centre. This would generate around £2.3million investment annually from business contributions into a singular pot of investment.
- 2.2 A BID is where businesses vote to levy additional business rates on occupiers to create funds earmarked for improvements to an area. The Leeds BID proposals put forward a levy of 1.25% of rateable value. Occupiers of premises with a rateable value of below £60,000 would be excluded from paying the levy, ensuring most small firms would not incur additional costs.
- 2.3 In February 2015, businesses in Leeds city centre balloted successfully and agreed to establish the Leeds BID, to begin operating from April 1st 2015. It's geographical area of operation will be the boundary of the city centre specifically. It would not operate beyond this boundary nor raise revenue from those businesses outside the boundary.
- 2.4 It's focus is to invest its membership levies in 3 key areas of operation in order to add value to the existing operations in the city centre. These are: The Leeds Welcome; The Leeds Experience and Leeds Business Voice. Further detail is set out in the BID business plan, attached as Appendix 2.0

3 Main issues

- 3.1 One of the areas that city centre stakeholders and businesses wanted the BID to support and help manage was the night time economy in the city centre. As well as helping to promote its advantages, there was consensus that it should also

help to create a safer, and more welcoming environment in promoting Leeds. This ambition is reflected in the BID business plan under the main theme of Leeds Experience; Appendix 2.0, Page 21, point 3, and referenced as:

“Acting as a one stop shop for businesses to ensure a clean and safe city centre. Working with the various existing initiatives such as Radio Link, Pub Watch, Taxi Marshalls and Street Angels that are run through partners including Leeds City Council, the Police and BACIL (Business Against Crime in Leeds) to ensure a well-managed city both day and night.”

- 3.2 Consideration had been given to the Late night levy as one of the potential tools to help manage night time economy issues. The Council after due consideration, concluded that the BID will be its preferred route, as applying both models together would involve duplication, and businesses would not pay twice. Scrutiny Board (Resources and Council Services) held an inquiry in late 2013 into a possible Late Night Levy on licensed premises. The report of Scrutiny Board (Scrutiny Inquiry Report: Late Night Levy, Scrutiny Board – Resources and Council Service, November 2013) recommended “that the Executive Board reiterates its openness to support a BID which includes an element of initiatives to manage the night time economy.” The Feasibility Study into a city centre Business Improvement District recommended that licensed premises are included as levy payers, and that a BID could include initiatives to manage the night time economy.

4 Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

- 4.1.1 In forming the BID, consultation took place with nearly 200 stakeholders, through 30 meetings, five presentations and three consultation workshops. There was strong support for the BID for Leeds to progress to a ballot in February 2015. The Leeds City Centre Partnership Board was consulted on the BID and were supportive. The Council was also consulted including, the Leader of the Council, the Executive Member for Transport and the Economy, the Deputy Executive Member for Transport and Economy (and Chair of the City Centre Partnership Board), the Directors of Environment and Housing and City Development and senior Council officers in appropriate related services in Cleansing, community safety, Highways, Culture and Sport and Economic Development.
- 4.1.2 Licensing committee received presentations on the BID’s formation in advance of the BID ballot being held
- 4.1.3 Briefings were also held with Councillors from City & Hunslet ward.
- 4.1.4 In developing its business plan the Leeds BID consulted businesses on their views, to form the basis for the BID’s operating plan. All businesses likely to be subject to the levy, and therefore have a vote, were contacted during June 2014 to August 2014. A variety of means were utilised including email, telephone, face to face and meeting presentations. The survey was available online and by hard copy and was distributed to 100% of businesses. Direct contact was made with named individuals for a total of 709 out of the probable 1,097 voters (65%).

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.2.1 There are no specific implications for equality and diversity as a result of the Leeds city centre BID and this update. The Leeds City Centre BID exempts small business from paying a BID levy and continues to provide small and independent establishments with the opportunity to grow their business, be involved with the BID and benefit from its investment and enable a diverse and vibrant Leeds city centre economy.

4.3 Council policies and best council plan

- 4.3.1 The Leeds city centre BID supports the delivery of the best Council Plan 2013-17 objective of “Promoting sustainable and inclusive economic growth” and the city Priority Plan objective, “Best city for business” by raising the profile of Leeds nationally and supporting the sustainable growth of the Leeds economy.
- 4.3.2 Specifically, it will support the delivery of the following City Priority Plan priorities and Core Strategy Objectives: Support the sustainable growth of the Leeds’ economy; Raise the profile of Leeds nationally; Support the continued vitality, economic development and distinctiveness of the City Centre as the regional centre; and
- 4.3.3 Promote the role of town and local centres as the heart of the community which provide a focus for shopping, leisure, economic development and community facilities and spaces. The Leeds BID is aligned with our planning framework for managing towns and districts and the city centre.

4.4 Resources and value for money

- 4.4.1 The Leeds BID has generated circa £2.2m in its first year in levy collection to be spent according to the agreed business plan priorities. It will generate over £12m in its 5 year term to be invested in the BID area.

4.5 Legal Implications, access to information and call In

- 4.5.1 There is a baseline services agreement in place that ensures that the BID delivers genuine additionality to current public services. Partners will continue to work together to reduce any negative impact of night time economy issues. An Operating Agreement also sets out how the Council will support the BID by collecting the levy, and ensuring the income is passed over as per the BID legislation.

4.6 Risk management

- 4.6.1 There are no anticipated risks as a result of this update and the BID supporting the late night economy.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 The Leeds BID has made progress and is engaging well with stakeholders in the day time as well as night time economy, in its short term of operating.

- 5.2 The BID is working with the Leeds city centre community safety partnership board to conduct a detailed assessment of the Leeds night time economy offer. This is in the form of a feasibility project that could lead to the attainment of the national accreditation scheme for night time economy – **The Purple Flag**. Work on this is already underway, though we are at an early stage of the process.
- 5.3 Success of Purple Flag will require a detailed analysis of the issues in the night time economy and proposals implemented to resolve them. It is also a recurring assessment, so it ensures continuous monitoring and resolution of issues for the accreditation to be sustained. This will enable all partners to be galvanised towards one approach, agreed solutions and joined up thinking and resources.

6 Recommendations

Licensing Committee is recommended to:

- (i) Note the update attached on the progress of the BID which forms the basis of the presentation by the Chief Executive of the BID at the March meeting;
- (ii) Engage with the Chief executive of the BID and take the opportunity to explore what Leeds BID can and are proposing to do in their business plan in support of the city centre's night time economy.
- (iii) Support the approach being taken by the BID and partners to explore the attainment of the national accreditation for the night time economy - Purple Flag, which will make it necessary to examine the issues in detail that affect how the night time economy operates.

7 Background documents¹

- 7.1 Appendix 1.0 PDF Presentation
- 7.2 Appendix 2.0 BID Business Plan

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.