

## TRAFFORD COUNCIL

**Report to:** Executive  
**Date:** 29 June 2015  
**Report for:** Decision  
**Report of:** Executive Member for Economic Growth and Planning.

### Report Title

Altrincham Business Improvement District (BID) Proposal.

### Summary

The report provides an update on the progress to deliver a Business Improvement District (BID) in Altrincham and seeks endorsement of the Altrincham BID Proposal, and approval to manage the ballot and collect the BID Levy. The Altrincham BID Proposal does not conflict with current published Council policies.

### Recommendation(s)

That the Executive:

- 1) Endorses the Altrincham BID Proposal on the basis that it does not conflict with any policy formally adopted by and contained in a document published by the authority.
- 2) Approves that Democratic and Performance Services formally manages the ballot process in accordance with the BID regulations.
- 3) Approves that Exchequer Services, subject to a 'yes' vote at ballot, manages the billing and collection of the BID levy, and its transfer to the BID Company.
- 4) Agrees to pay for the one-off purchase cost of software to collect the BID levy;
- 5) Authorises the Corporate Director for Economic Growth, Environment and Infrastructure; in consultation with the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, to prepare and enter into the appropriate legal agreements (including but not limited to a suitable operating agreement) to give effect to the above.
- 5) Authorises the Executive Member for Economic Growth and Planning in consultation with the Corporate Director for Economic Growth, Environment and Infrastructure to cast vote(s) in the event of a BID ballot.
- 6) Authorises the Executive Member for Economic Growth and Planning to be the Council's representative on the BID Company Board of Directors who shall consult with the Corporate Director for Economic Growth, Environment and Infrastructure before casting any votes on the BID Board.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Tony Fitzgerald / Martin Ledson  
Extension: 4844 / 4137

Background Papers: None

Implications:

Relationship to Policy Framework/Corporate Priorities	<p>The successful implementation of a Business Improvement District in Altrincham town centre will support the Corporate Priority for 'Economic Growth and Development' and aligns with the Vision and Objectives of the Altrincham Strategy and the emerging Altrincham Business Neighbourhood Plan.</p>
Financial	<p>The set up costs of the BID are funded by a loan secured from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) of c£46k, repayable by the BID Company if the vote to establish the BID is successful. In the event of a "no" vote, the loan is written off by DCLG.</p> <p>The increase in rates levy following the establishment of the BID will have a financial impact relating to Council properties within the BID area (e.g. car parks, the let estate). Where premises are let, the lessee or tenant will pay the levy, however the Council will be liable for the levy where properties are vacant. The maximum cost in a financial year if all properties were vacant is estimated to be c£7.4k plus 3% inflation per annum. This will have to be covered from existing budgets.</p> <p>There is a one-off cost of c£4k for the Council to administer the BID ballot. This will be met from existing budgets.</p> <p>There is also a one-off software cost of £20k, plus annual maintenance. The proposal is that the Council meets this one-off cost to assist with the viability of the BID. The cost of collecting the BID Levy is estimated to be c£14k per annum (to be reviewed after the first year) and will be covered from the BID Company.</p> <p>In the event of a "yes" vote, an independent BID Company would be set up as a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee and be subject to all formal company and accounting procedures as required by Companies House. The Company would be responsible for all income and expenditures associated with the BID Proposal. It is anticipated the Council will have a place on the BID Company Board of Directors but would have no liabilities for the BID Company.</p>

Legal Implications	<p>The proposed action is pursuant to the statutory provisions relating to the establishment and operation of a BID under the Local Government Act 2003 and the Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004.</p> <p>In order to establish the proposed BID for Altrincham, the majority (by value and number) of the business ratepayers within the designated area must vote in favour of the proposals in a ballot held for this purpose. As the rateable occupier of a number of buildings within the BID area, the Council is entitled to vote in the ballot.</p> <p>If the Council exercises its corporate vote in favour of the proposed BID, it is exercising its property rights and this is entirely independent of the Council's statutory role as the billing authority responsible for collecting the BID levy and statutory functions in relation to the delivery of standard baseline services within the BID area, which cannot be delegated to the BID Company.</p> <p>If the ballot results in a 'yes' vote, the BID Regulations require that the Council collects the BID levy into a ring-fenced account called the BID Revenue Account. The operating agreement relates to the arrangements for the setting, collection, enforcement and monitoring of the levy, the accounting for it and reimbursement of costs relating to collection.</p>
Equality/Diversity Implications	An Equalities Impact Assessment is being produced.
Resource Implications e.g. Staffing / ICT / Assets	See Section 5.
Risk Management Implications	These are considered at Section 5 below.
Health & Wellbeing Implications	Not applicable.
Health and Safety Implications	Not applicable.

## 1. Background

1.1 A Business Improvement District (BID) is an effective way for businesses to take control and improve their trading environment. BIDs are a well-established model and some 200 are now active across the country with the majority in town centres. Key components of a BID include the following:

- it is business led.
- it can only be formed following consultation and a ballot in which businesses vote on a BID Proposal for the area.
- the BID Proposal sets out businesses priorities for improvements for the area and area services, as well as how the BID will be managed and operated.

- the BID is funded through the BID Levy which is a small percentage on the Rateable Value (RV) of each hereditament<sup>1</sup> (normally between 1.5% and 2%).
- all businesses and public sector landowners eligible to pay the Levy are balloted.
- the ballot is run by the local authority or outsourced by the local authority to a third party.
- the ballot must be won on two counts – a straight majority in terms of number of hereditaments and majority of rateable value (there is no minimum turnout threshold).
- following a successful ballot, the BID Levy is mandatory for all eligible businesses and public sector landowners in the BID area (unless exemptions are written into the BID Proposal).
- it is best practice for the bid levy bills to be issued at the same time as the rates bills.
- a BID is established for three to five years and is a mandatory levy on all business rate payers in the defined area.
- initiatives delivered by the BID are additional to those delivered by the local authority.
- the vast majority of BIDs are not-for-profit companies limited by guarantee.

1.2 The BID Proposal is the key document on which businesses vote at the ballot. It sets out how the BID will function (proposed income, expenditure, BID area and performance measures) and how the BID Levy will be spent in the town. There are no restrictions on how the funding must be spent but common areas for BID expenditure include:

- marketing, events and promotion.
- physical and environmental improvements.
- crime reduction initiatives.
- access initiatives, i.e. car parking and way finding signage.
- added value in procurement and collective training opportunities.

## **2. Altrincham BID – Rationale**

2.1 Altrincham experienced a period of decline for a number of years which resulted in businesses moving out of the town, vacancy levels increasing and a sense that the town ‘had lost its way’. This resulted in the Council and private sector coming together to create Altrincham Forward to lead the transformation of the town and focus investment and improvement activity. This model has proved successful with the Council making significant financial investment which has facilitated, and helped stimulate further investment, including the Town Team, extensive public realm improvements, Market House refurbishment, the new Interchange, Hospital, and the Altair development scheme.

2.2 Real change is taking place in Altrincham to benefit local residents, businesses and attract visitors. However, the considerable financial investment made by the Council is finite while the momentum created by the partnership of the public and private sectors to regenerate the town must be maintained. Declining public sector budgets mean that a different approach to the future transformation and sustainability of Altrincham is required. A BID provides the only mechanism to achieve the long term prosperity of the town.

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<sup>1</sup> An item of property such as land or a building.

### 3. Altrincham BID Proposal

- 3.1 The Altrincham Bid Proposal (see Appendix 1) has been developed following extensive consultation with local businesses from February to April 2015, to address their key issues and deliver measures to improve the town as a place to shop, visit, relax, work and live. A BID's core focus is a programme of projects which improve the trading environment for businesses. For retailers and hospitality businesses this can be higher footfall, repeat visitors, increased spend and dwell time. For offices and other business types it can mean increased staff retention, easier recruitment based on a more attractive place to work, and networking with other businesses. The main point to note is that all BID projects should be additional to those services already provided within the area by the local authority. The Altrincham BID focuses on the following themes:
- **Business Altrincham:** Improving working life for businesses in Altrincham as well as starting to create a business community that feels responsible and able to affect long term change in the town centre through collaborative leadership.
  - **Rediscover Altrincham:** Putting the heart back into Altrincham to ensure that shoppers and local residents feel welcome in the town and to provide them with reasons to keep coming back.
  - **Experience Altrincham:** Creating a strong and stylish consumer identity for Altrincham; promoting the breadth of retail and leisure offer across the town, including the strong independent sector; delivering a high quality cultural offer through events and festivals to attract and retain visitors.
- 3.2 The consultation process also generated project ideas to tackle specific issues and improve the general vitality and viability of the town centre. Twenty three project areas were consulted on and the resulting order of priority, identified by local businesses, can be found in Appendix 3 and include car parking issues (better promotion and working with the operators), improving the general appearance of the town, innovate ways of using existing vacant units and enhanced marketing and promotional activity.
- 3.3 The proposed BID area for Altrincham (see Appendix 1, page 21) covers the core area of the town centre and has been defined following consultation with local businesses. It includes Barrington Road to the north, Market Street to the east, Lloyd Street to the south and Regent Road in the west. The total number of businesses in the BID area is 447.
- 3.4 It is proposed that the Altrincham BID runs for a period of 5 years to provide enough time to deliver real change 'on the ground'. The BID Levy will be set in year 1 at 1.5% of the RV of each business and only those businesses with a RV above £7,000 will be liable to pay the Levy. It has been set at this level since it is not economically viable to collect the BID Levy for businesses below this RV due to the associated administration costs. This also means that smaller businesses are not adversely affected by an additional financial charge that could affect their business operation and cashflow.
- 3.5 Based on this, 56% of businesses will pay £365 or less (less than £1 a day), and 88% will pay less than £1,000 a year. The BID document has set a maximum Levy payment at £15,000 for a single hereditament. Taking into account annual inflation costs, the BID levy will increase by 3% each year, however the maximum Levy payment

will be set at £15,000 per annum and will not increase by inflation during the lifetime of the BID (from 2016/2017 to 2020/2021).

- 3.6 Each of the 447 Levy paying businesses will be eligible to vote to establish the BID when it goes to ballot, closing on the 5<sup>th</sup> November 2015. Subject to a 'yes' vote, it is estimated that the Levy, over a five year period, will generate a total of c£1.4m to deliver the BID Proposal. Any new developments that take place in the BID area after the vote has been cast will be liable to pay the BID Levy as per the 'Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004'.
- 3.7 The Regulations also place a duty on the Council to consider whether the BID Proposal conflicts with a formally adopted and published policy of the Council. It is not considered that any conflict exists since the BID Proposal is complementary to the Council's Corporate Objectives, and the initiatives/projects proposed add value to existing Council service provision in the town centre.
- 3.8 The attached BID proposal may be subject to minor amendments/variations following further consultation with all business in the proposed BID Area over the next four months. However, the general themes and issues to be addressed by the BID will not change and will not affect the Council's obligation under the BID Regulations 2004 to ensure there is no conflict between the BID Proposal and current Council policies. Following this consultation period, the BID Steering Group will approve the BID Proposal which will then be subject to a vote.

#### 4.0 Financial Issues

- 4.1 The estimated income and expenditure for the BID is detailed below. It must be noted that these figures may change following further consultations with businesses before the Proposal is issued for the ballot. The majority of the expenditure is set against delivery of the three main Themes and their related initiatives (see Appendix 1 pages 15-17).

<b>INCOME</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-2021</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>
<b>BID levy (96% collection rate)</b>	£265,971	£273,050	£280,286	£287,837	£295,546	<b>£1,402,690</b>
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>£265,971</b>	<b>£273,050</b>	<b>£280,286</b>	<b>£287,837</b>	<b>£295,546</b>	<b>£1,402,690</b>

<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-2021</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>
<b>Rediscover Altrincham</b>	£25,500	£24,500	£54,500	£54,500	£54,500	<b>£213,500</b>
<b>Experience Altrincham</b>	£80,000	£80,000	£65,000	£70,000	£70,000	<b>£365,000</b>
<b>Business Altrincham</b>	£38,000	£38,000	£56,000	£51,000	£41,000	<b>£224,000</b>
<b>Office and overheads</b>	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	<b>£50,000</b>
<b>Levy collection charge</b>	£17,222	£17,222	£17,222	£17,222	£17,222	<b>£86,110</b>
<b>Staffing</b>	£55,360	£57,021	£58,732	£60,494	£62,308	<b>£293,915</b>
<b>Renewal costs</b>	£0	£0	£0	£0	£20,000	<b>£20,000</b>
<b>Loan repayment</b>	£23,805	£23,153	£0	£0	£0	<b>£46,958</b>
<b>Contingency</b>	£16,084	£23,154	£18,832	£24,621	£20,516	<b>£103,207</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>£265,971</b>	<b>£273,050</b>	<b>£280,286</b>	<b>£287,837</b>	<b>£295,546</b>	<b>£1,402,690</b>

- 4.2 The Levy income has been set at 1.5% of the RV for the first year, which will generate sufficient income to deliver the activities contained within the BID Proposal. It will increase by 3% per annum thereafter to take account of inflation i.e. the Levy will rise to 1.545% in 2017/18 and will rise to 1.688% by the final year 2020/21. The estimated collection rate has been set at 96%, which is typical of collection rates in other BID areas and therefore makes an allowance for potential non-payments of the Levy. The overall level of overheads is being reviewed, through the BID Steering Group, with the aim to bring them closer to other BIDs which have overheads of around 25%.
- 4.3 The BID Loan figure is the amount of loan funding secured by the Council from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to drive forward the BID process in terms of specialist consultancy support, consultations, marketing and promotion etc. This is repayable by the BID Company if the BID is established; if the BID does not secure a 'yes' vote then the loan is written off by DCLG.
- 4.4 Although it is anticipated that the first phases of the Altair scheme will be substantially complete within two years' time, the potential Levy generated by the scheme has not been included within the total BID Levy income figure in case of unforeseen delays to the scheme starting on site. Therefore, the level of income generated by the Levy could increase, further assisting the delivery of the BID Proposal. The owners of the site have been fully engaged in the BID process and are supportive of a BID for Altrincham.
- 4.5 The Council owns 13 properties including two car parks in the proposed BID Area (see Appendix 2) which will be eligible to vote in the ballot and be liable to pay the Levy if the BID is established. Seven of these have tenants who would be liable to pay the Levy, rather than the Council, therefore the estimated amount of BID Levy to be paid by the Council would be c.£3,200 per annum (+3% inflation per annum in 2017/2018 to 2020/2021). The two Council-owned car parks are included in the BID Area and this also applies to large privately owned car parks such as the Stamford Quarter. Over the 5 year BID period, any Council properties being sublet to private tenants or car parks sold as development sites will reduce the Council's liability to pay the BID Levy. Conversely, Council properties becoming vacant will increase the BID Levy liability. The maximum amount of BID Levy that the Council would be required to pay if all its properties were vacant would be c£7,400 per annum, plus 3% inflation per annum from 2017/2018 to 2021/2021.
- 4.6 Costs of £4k for the administration of the ballot and £20k for the purchase of the necessary software for the collection of the levy will be incurred by the Council. It is not intended to pass these one-off costs onto the BID company.
- 4.7 The Council will send a single bill with the annual cost due to all liable ratepayers as at 1<sup>st</sup> March before the start of the relevant financial year, and payment must be made by 30<sup>th</sup> April each year. The bill will be based on the RV that existed in 2010 and will remain fixed throughout the 5 year period. Therefore if a ratepayer was successful in their appeal against their RV this would have no impact on the Levy; similarly the national revaluation due to come into force in April 2017 will have no impact on the Levy. The only exception to this is where premises are split into a number of valuation assessments, or when a number of valuations are merged into a single assessment; in such cases the value arising from the split or merger will be used from the following financial year.

4.8 If a ratepayer moves out or sells the property during the course of the year, there will be no refund of any part of the Levy paid. Equally any ratepayer moving into a property after 1<sup>st</sup> March will not be liable to pay the BID Levy for that financial year. Enforcement action for non-payment will be the same as for business rates bills and will incur costs in accordance with the legislation.

## 5. Delivery

5.1 A BID is led and managed by the private sector and Altrincham's business community has formed a BID Steering Group to champion the BID, oversee the process and ensure it conforms to all legal requirements. The BID Steering Group, under the BID Regulations, is the 'proposer' of the BID Proposal and is chaired by Martin Duff of Randall's Jewellery, and includes representatives from multiple and independent businesses across the town centre (see Appendix 1 page 23).

5.2 The Terms of Reference for Steering Group Members are to:

- a) Attend and contribute to meetings; representing their own views and/or those of the organisation they represent; bringing their own particular skills into play.
- b) Consult others within their range of influence and contacts, in order to gain a range of views to inform discussion and help delivery.
- c) Report back on the information from those consultations/discussions.
- d) Act as a critical friend and provide challenge throughout the process.
- e) Assist with focus groups and workshops that may be necessary as part of the consultation process.
- f) Be prepared to operate by consensus and allow the Chair to resolve any disagreements.
- g) Act with integrity to ensure fairness, transparency and inclusivity.

5.3 To implement the BID vote, the Council is required to manage the ballot process and carry out the billing, collection and transfer of the BID Levy to the BID Company for the life of the BID i.e. 2015/16 to 2020/21. Following discussions with Democratic and Performance Services and Exchequer Services, the cost of delivering these functions is estimated at c£4,000 (one off cost for the ballot). The BID Regulations stipulate that the local authority should bear the cost of the BID ballot. The exception is if fewer than 20% of eligible voters vote in favour and the ballot fails, or if the Secretary of State receives an appeal against the BID, in which case the cost may be recharged to the BID 'proposer'. The cost of collecting the BID Levy is estimated to be c£17,000 per annum and is covered by the BID Company.

5.4 The format of the ballot paper and the question is set out in the BID Regulations, the Council would count the votes and the result would be announced by the Returning Officer. The BID Ballot question would be:

*"Are you in favour of the Business Improvement District proposals for [insert a list of the names of the streets in the geographical area covered by the BID proposals]?"*

5.5 Further ballots need to take place to continue BIDs once its period ends, therefore the Council would be required to cover the cost of further ballots in Altrincham if requested by the BID Company.

5.6 If the BID is established following the close of vote on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2015, the Steering Group will become a Shadow Board prior to the launch of the BID Company and formal election of the BID Company Board of Directors through an AGM



(potentially twelve Directors but the exact number will be determined by the Shadow Board). The BID Company would be set up as a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee and be subject to all formal company and accounting procedures as required by Companies House. The BID Levy will be collected by the Council, placed in a ring-fenced BID Revenue Account and transferred to the BID Company via a formal agreement. As is standard practice, it is expected that the Council would have a seat on the BID Company Board and be represented by the Executive Member for Economic Growth and Planning. It would also be expected that the Executive Member is supported at the Board meetings by the Corporate Director for Economic Growth Environment and Infrastructure (or nominated representative) as an observer.

## 6.0 Risks

6.1 The key risks identified are as follows:

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation Measure</b>	<b>Owner</b>
Ballot Not Successful (Operational Risk)	Allowing necessary time and resource to carry out final stage consultation on the BID Proposal and promote positive messages.	BID Team
Opposing businesses initiate a 'No' Campaign (Operational Risk)	Early liaison with opposing businesses to dispel any inaccurate information is ongoing. Targeted approach to tackling these and the 'don't knows' to prevent them from becoming 'no's'. Counteract with accurate reporting of positive messages about the benefits a BID might bring and successes elsewhere.	BID Team
Legal challenge in relation to process (Operational Risk)	Good project planning and external technical support from the specialist consultant to ensure correct processes are followed as outlined in BID Regulations 2004 ie. correct notices submitted to Secretary of State, ballot carried out to guidelines etc..	BID Team/ Democratic Services
National Retailers vote 'No'.	Many national retailers base their support on British Retail Consortium Guidelines including the breakdown of costs, particularly the level of overheads costs. The financial profile in the report / BID Proposal is an estimate and will be subject to consultation with national retailers and the other businesses in the BID area. Therefore the financial profile maybe subject to change before the Proposal goes to ballot.	BID Team/ Trafford Council

## 7.0 Next Steps

7.1 To take the BID process forward and meet the Ballot and proposed launch date, the following milestones will need to be met:

<b>No.</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Status</b>
1	9 <sup>th</sup> May 2015	84 Day 'Notice of Intention to hold a ballot' Submitted to Secretary of State	Complete
2	29 <sup>th</sup> May 2015	Agree Ballot Costs	Complete
3	29 <sup>th</sup> May 2015	Agree Levy Collection Cost	Complete
4	12 <sup>th</sup> Jun 2015	4 Page Summary Proposal Document produced for further consultation with 'undecided' businesses	
5	26 <sup>th</sup> Jun 2015	Agree Baseline Agreement	
6	4 <sup>th</sup> Sep 2015	Publication of Final BID Proposal	
7	23 <sup>rd</sup> Sep 2015	Operating Agreement Signed	
8	23 <sup>rd</sup> Sep 2015	Go ahead decision	
9	24 <sup>th</sup> Sep 2015	42 Day 'Notice of Ballot' submitted to Secretary of State	
10	24 <sup>th</sup> Sep 2015	Final voter list complete	
11	8 <sup>th</sup> Oct 2015	Ballots distributed	
12	26 <sup>th</sup> Oct 2015	Last day to appoint proxy (10 days before ballot)	
13	2 <sup>nd</sup> Nov 2015	First day for replacement ballot papers to be sent out	
14	5 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2015	Close of Ballots	
15	6 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2015	Result Day	
16	3 <sup>rd</sup> Dec 2015	Appeal period ends	
17	Feb/Mar 2016	Send out BID Levy bills	
18	1 <sup>st</sup> Apr 2016	Formal BID start date	
19	Jan 2017	Produce billing leaflet to go out with bills (summary of work during previous year)	

7.2 The Altrincham BID ballot process will run from 8<sup>th</sup> October to 5<sup>th</sup> November 2015, with eligible businesses in the BID Area voting on the BID Proposal. If the vote is successful, the BID would be operational from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016.

## 8. Other Options

8.1 The Council could choose not to support the Altrincham BID. However, in so doing it would risk a significant potential opportunity cost in terms of the economic benefit that a BID can bring in a way that is funded equitably between both the private and public sectors.

8.2 The Council could continue to support the town centre through the Town Team and Altrincham Forward. This will keep the status quo but will be in no position to deliver the range of initiatives that the BID will be able to deliver, nor generate the budgets required. Also, it is uncertain whether the current level of funding provision for the Town Team can be maintained in the long term.

## 9. Consultation

9.1 See Appendix 3 for full consultation report. Two major surveys have been carried out to date which has helped to shape the BID Proposal and indicate the support of the business community:

- 9.2 Survey 1 –154 responses were received which asked businesses what changes they would like to see in Altrincham. The response rate was perceived to be very positive by the consultant. The results showed that reducing business costs, improving the street environment and marketing of the town were the overall priorities, equally weighted at 30% each. Along with the qualitative information collected this provided a secure basis for developing project ideas for the next stage of consultation.
- 9.3 Survey 2 – This was conducted with over 500 town centre businesses to identify support for various project areas and priorities as well as gain feedback on the suggested boundary. Of the 201 forms completed and returned, 160 respondents have a business in the proposed BID area and 41 are just outside. This amounts to 40% of the eligible hereditaments over the proposed BID area. Further details of how the proposed BID projects have been rated in order to compile the BID proposal are contained in Appendix 3.

**10. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 10.1 The BID will provide a fully funded mechanism for the private and public sectors to invest together in Altrincham town centre guided by an agreed and clear BID Proposal. The Council should support the BID Proposal and the BID overall as it is the only body that can deliver the funding to continue the regeneration of the town centre, and secure its long term sustainability and growth.

**Key Decision:** Yes  
**If Key Decision, has 28-day notice been given?** Yes

**Finance Officer Clearance** (type in initials)...ID.....  
**Legal Officer Clearance** (type in initials).....JLF.....

*Helen Jones*

**CORPORATE DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE** (electronic)  
 To confirm that the Financial and Legal Implications have been considered and the Executive Member has cleared the report.

**ALTRINCHAM**

**BID**

—  
MODERN MARKET TOWN  
—

**BID Proposal**  
**April 2015**

## Message from the Steering Group

Altrincham is about to reach a real crossroads. After years of decline over the last few decades, the result was a dated "look and feel", empty shop fronts, and shoppers going elsewhere. We are now being given the opportunity to take the future into our own hands.

Things have greatly improved over the past two years and Trafford Council is spending £6.5million on comprehensive public realm improvement works across the town centre, the town centre has a new interchange and hospital, Stamford Quarter will be modernised and the first phase of the Altair development is due to be complete in 2017. However significant these are, they alone will not be enough to bring customers back and keep them coming back, in the future.

That is why we are proposing a Business Improvement District (or BID) for Altrincham town centre. A BID would raise around £1.4million over a five year period to be spent exclusively within the town centre. It would also place Altrincham in a great position to use this income as leverage to attract other funding.

- A BID would increase your business profile both locally and further afield.
- A BID would work with other agencies to continue and complete the transformation of Altrincham.
- A BID would mean private sector taking the lead on issues that are important to your business.
- A BID would help Altrincham punch above its weight.

56% of businesses will pay £365 or less, that's less than £1 a day for most businesses, and 88% will pay less than £1,000 a year - less than a cup of coffee a day. We think that's a pretty good investment into an annual fund of around £270,000 to deliver all the projects contained in this proposal.

We've been working hard over the past nine months to ensure that businesses in Altrincham have had a chance to have their say on whether a BID could work here. We've had a great response from you and we're excited to present you with this Proposal, which sets out the projects that you said were priorities for Altrincham and for your business, to be delivered over the next five years.

We would urge to you to ensure you have received your ballot paper, complete it and return it - your voice is important and together we can make a difference.

Thank you for reading!

**"The BID is the only group dedicated specifically to furthering business interests in Altrincham. As an independent business, I am proud to be chairing the Steering Group that has led on the development of the BID. We have the rare opportunity now, to help shape our own future and we must not waste this chance. That is why I will be voting "yes" and I hope you will join me."**

**Martin Duff, Owner, Randalls Jewellers, Chair of the BID Steering Group**

## **What is a BID?**

A Business Improvement District, or "BID" for short, is a defined area, such as a town centre like Altrincham, where businesses come together to collectively invest to improve their trading environment. A BID can be voted in by a majority vote in terms of overall number of businesses and by rateable value, through a secret postal ballot, for a maximum term of five years. During this term occupiers of all business properties defined within this Proposal will be required to pay the mandatory levy irrespective of whether they cast a vote in the ballot. The levy is usually set at between 1% and 2% of the rateable value of each rateable business property. You can read more about the ballot on page 23. BIDs are governed by the Business Improvement District Regulations (2004) to ensure fairness and transparency.

## **Where are they already working?**

There are already over 200 BIDs operating around the country, from small shopping parades to town centres, city centres and industrial estates. The first BID started in 2004 and is still running. Of the BIDs that have reached the end of their first five years, 90% have successfully been renewed through a second ballot. Of the few BIDs that have been running for ten years, all have been successfully renewed so far, proving that they can and do make a real difference to businesses.

Nearby, Chester has a BID that has been running since June 2014 and Northwich has a new BID. Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham also have a number of very successful BIDs.

Business cost reduction - In Kingston, 200 businesses have saved an average of £1,250 each through a joint recycling scheme. In Mansfield, a collective £40,000 has been saved through joint procurement schemes. This could be money straight back into your business in Altrincham.

Crime reduction - In Kingston, the radiolink scheme has 150 members, combined with a 78% bar and pub accreditation in the Best Bar None awards, and a fantastic relationship with the Police, crime has fallen by 11%.

Additional funding - over 5 years Mansfield has reinvested £1.4m back into the town centre via the BID levy, plus an additional £255k funding from other sources. The Mansfield BID projects have resulted in an increase in retail ranking from 137 to 112.

## **Why does Altrincham need a BID?**

The town centre has suffered over the years and as a result has lost shoppers to more desirable towns and cities nearby. However, it remains extremely accessible, and with the improvements to the pavements and streets by Trafford Council, plus the new Interchange, Altrincham Hospital, revitalisation of the Stamford Quarter and the planned Altair development, it will start to become more attractive and vibrant again. This investment is significant and will undoubtedly make a big difference. However, visitors will not return, and keep returning, without added incentives, such as those a BID could bring. A BID would boost the potential and put the "heart" back into Altrincham, as well as ensure it remains a destination into the future. A BID in Altrincham would concentrate on the finer detail and the "people and business" issues, lobbying on your behalf and promoting the town centre outside the immediate area.

As an independent private company, led by business for business, a BID is flexible and innovative, not bound by the same amount of red tape as Council initiatives can be, meaning quick responses on the things that matter to you.

A BID would put businesses in the driving seat to make sure your priorities are being met and ensure that the modern market town of Altrincham is the first choice to shop, relax and work.

**“The BID will be a vital tool in fast tracking Altrincham's regeneration. It will fund vital town improvements, generate publicity for the town and encourage more shoppers to visit Altrincham as a destination for all their retail and leisure needs.”**

**Charlotte Atkinson, Store Manager, Boots**

### **Your top issues**

All businesses within the town centre have had an opportunity to contribute to this Proposal through consultations carried out online, face to face and via telephone. It is clear that there are a number of key issues which you have identified are holding the town centre back from fulfilling its full potential in being an attractive destination to shop, relax and work.

- A large number of empty shops, limiting the commercial offer
- A perception that car park charges are unreasonably expensive
- General appearance of the town centre and lack of colour
- No distinct identity, mixed information available
- A lack of co-ordination, collaboration and voice

### **What will the BID deliver?**

Three key themes of roughly equal priority have emerged from our conversations with businesses, which will address your issues and the challenges of the town centre and shape the work of Altrincham BID over the next five years.

**1 Business Altrincham: Improving working life for businesses in Altrincham at a day to day level as well as starting to create a business community that feels responsible and able to affect long term change in the town centre through collaborative leadership.**

How the BID will deliver this:

- Improvements to the general appearance and environment of the town centre, including management of “grot spots”, particularly those on private land and those “forgotten areas”, which the Council is not able to easily access.
- Ensure that the Council adheres to its statutory level of service provision for cleaning standards in the town centre via a Baseline Agreement.
- Investigate the possibility of staff parking discounts with car park operators such as an annual ticket at a reduced price, as well as the possibility of a bike park.
- Reduce business costs through advertising on the website and newsletter, plus joint procurement of training such as First Aid or customer service, utilities and recycling or waste collection for example. Altrincham BID will also share information regarding possible rate reliefs going forward.
- Operate a business loan scheme to attract new businesses to vacant units in Altrincham or to smarten up existing shop fronts. We will ensure that new businesses will add to the town centre offer rather than detracting from it.

- Work to improve the safety of Altrincham during both the day and night-time by building relationships with night-time economy businesses via a Pubwatch scheme and reinvigorating the Radiolink scheme.
- Lobby for more police at peak times and link up existing security arrangements to share intelligence on repeat offenders and potential troublemakers in the area.
- Undertake a CCTV audit to map out who owns each camera, when it is operational and how to access the images.
- Act as a “business voice” to lobby on your behalf at a strategic and an everyday level, on everything from planning proposals and developments to cleansing and maintenance.
- Partnership community projects with local community groups, charities and schools to brighten up the town centre and provide an easy way for businesses to “give back” through volunteer time as part of a Corporate Responsibility policy

**“We look forward to being part of a connected business community, with a strong voice and financial backing that can effect positive change in Altrincham. We will be voting “yes” for Altrincham BID and we think you should too.”**

**Hannah Rowbotham & Scott Wakefield, Directors, Club Studio - Brand & Web Design**

## **2 Rediscover Altrincham: Putting the heart back into Altrincham to ensure that shoppers and local residents feel welcome in the town and to provide them with reasons to keep coming back.**

- Bring vacant units to life in the short term, through a combination of pop-up shops and art installations to banish the “closed” look that greets visitors to the town centre. Longer term we will work with landlords and agents through a Landlords Forum to help decrease vacancy rates across the town centre.
- Production of a local visitor map and/or app available from the Interchange and from businesses, helping staff to highlight the key points of the town centre including the office sector, shopping centre, market, eating and drinking spots, independent retail and hidden secrets, to encourage people to explore off the beaten track.
- Work with the car park operators to help promote their locations, reasonable prices and payment facilities such as pay on exit, pay by phone/text etc to change the perception that car parking is expensive in Altrincham.
- Ensure the town centre is accessible for all, and is welcoming to every member of the community, including supporting the Shopmobility scheme.
- Investigate supporting free town centre-wide wi-fi, either as part of one large project (beneficial for your business if you decide to terminate your own wi-fi contract), or by linking together the businesses that already offer wi-fi access.
- Encourage cafes, pubs and restaurants to sign up to a visible free “charge whilst you recharge” laptop/mobile charging point scheme to encourage people to stay longer in the town centre.



“As an independent business, we will be voting “yes” for Altrincham BID because we recognise the need to collectively invest in the future of our town centre. The BID will help animate the town and inject some energy into it, through festivals, events and on-street performances. A more enjoyable experience for customers means that they will keep coming back to our shops.”

Anthony Josephson, Optometrist, Maskells Opticians

### **3 Experience Altrincham: Creating a strong and stylish consumer identity for Altrincham; promoting the breadth of retail and leisure offer across the town, including the strong independent sector; delivering a high quality cultural offer through events and festivals to attract and retain visitors.**

- Work with businesses to develop a stylish and distinctive brand for Altrincham, giving it a strong identity and consistent set of messages to appeal to the local catchment area as well as further afield.
- Create more reasons to visit, via high quality and well marketed year-round public events, including Christmas, festivals and celebrations to draw in visitors, including a major annual event to put Altrincham on the map. Ideally many of the events would utilise local businesses, and could include a summer night-market combined with collective late night opening of shops and cafes, a food festival “tastebud tour” drawing on the range of dining offers in the town centre, or a jazz festival on Goose Green, for example.
- Developing and delivering a robust marketing strategy, including a regular e-newsletter for businesses, workers, shoppers and visitors promoting local businesses, discounts available plus a comprehensive “What’s On” event calendar and “Where to Eat” campaigns. We will also have a strong social media presence.
- Improvements to the major access points and gateways into the town centre including signage and planting, in partnership with other organisations.
- Building a comprehensive and user-friendly website and online business directory to promote Altrincham town centre and all of its businesses.

“We are part of the BID in Chester and have seen the difference that it can make over the last 18 months. We will be looking to Altrincham BID to support the night-time economy; we want people to have a safe and enjoyable time here, but we need great links between businesses to make that happen. We are voting “yes” for Altrincham BID.”

Anthony Prophet, Tiki Bar

## Budget

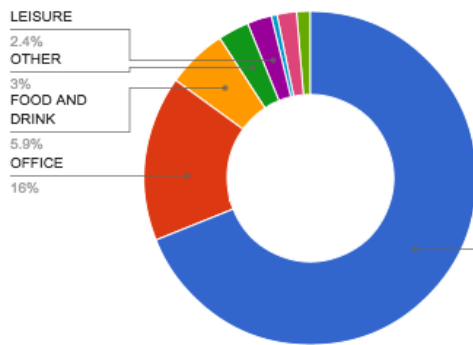
An indicative budget based on the ratings list at the time of writing is shown below. Where Altrincham BID can work with other agencies to avoid duplication of effort or resources, it will seek to do so. If projects mentioned within this plan are delivered by other organisations Altrincham BID funds will be re-allocated to other priorities that businesses have identified. The budget must remain relatively flexible to allow for changes in the area that may arise from time to time.

<b>INCOME</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-2021</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>
<b>BID levy (96% collection rate)</b>	£265,971	£273,050	£280,286	£287,837	£295,546	£1,402,690
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>£265,971</b>	<b>£273,050</b>	<b>£280,286</b>	<b>£287,837</b>	<b>£295,546</b>	<b>£1,402,690</b>

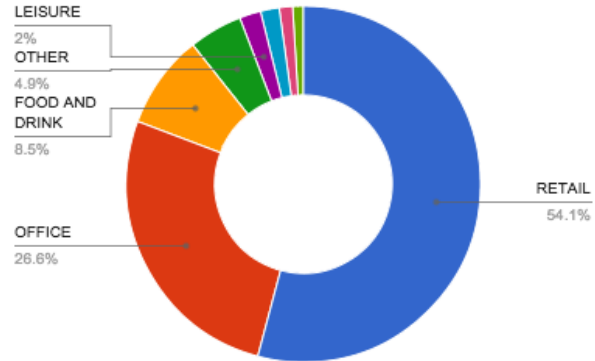
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-2021</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>
<b>Rediscover Altrincham</b>	£25,500	£24,500	£54,500	£54,500	£54,500	<b>£213,500</b>
<b>Experience Altrincham</b>	£80,000	£80,000	£65,000	£70,000	£70,000	<b>£365,000</b>
<b>Business Altrincham</b>	£38,000	£38,000	£56,000	£51,000	£41,000	<b>£224,000</b>
<b>Office and overheads</b>	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	<b>£50,000</b>
<b>Levy collection charge</b>	£17,222	£17,222	£17,222	£17,222	£17,222	<b>£86,110</b>
<b>Staffing</b>	£55,360	£57,021	£58,732	£60,494	£62,308	<b>£293,915</b>
<b>Renewal costs</b>	£0	£0	£0	£0	£20,000	<b>£20,000</b>
<b>Loan repayment</b>	£23,805	£23,153	£0	£0	£0	<b>£46,958</b>
<b>Contingency</b>	£16,084	£23,154	£18,832	£24,621	£20,516	<b>£103,207</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>£265,971</b>	<b>£273,050</b>	<b>£280,286</b>	<b>£287,837</b>	<b>£295,546</b>	<b>£1,402,690</b>

- Expenditure figures are based on BID levy income only, and will not include any additional income unless previously guaranteed.
- Based on BID industry standards, we have budgeted for a collection rate of 96%.
- The annual inflation rate on the BID levy has been set at 3% per annum i.e. 2017/2018 to 2020/2021.
- Any new incoming funds or funds from contingency will be allocated to projects by the Board.
- We have planned for repayment of the BID development loan fund over years one and two, to allow for greater spend within the town centre in later years.
- Although we hope the Altair development to complete in 2017, we have not accounted for an expected increase in income through the BID levy, in case of delays.
- The BID Board will agree the annual business plan projects and budget ahead of 1st April each year.
- Any variation greater than 15% will be subject to ratification at a Board meeting.

## Sector breakdown by number



## Sector breakdown by rateable value



### How much will it cost me?

In Year 1, the BID levy is set at 1.5% of the rateable value of the hereditament (or business unit) that you occupy. Hereditaments will be charged at 2010 rateable values for the lifetime of the BID. Across the country, BIDs usually set their levy between 1% and 2%. In principle, Altrincham businesses have backed a 1.5% levy to achieve the level of income required to be able to deliver the priority projects in a cost-effective way. It can be simply calculated by multiplying the rateable value of your business premises by 0.015. The levy will be collected by Trafford Council, the easiest and most cost-effective method due to the existing business rates system. The BID Levy will be payable in one lump sum by the end of April each year and will be ring-fenced by the Council as the 'BID Revenue Account' and paid over in full to the BID Company. For illustration purposes, the table below shows a breakdown of the BID levy on an annual and daily basis.

#### Basic Cost Breakdown of BID Levy 1.5%

Rateable value	Annual cost	Daily cost
£10,000	£150	£0.42
£25,000	£375	£1.05
£50,000	£750	£2.11
£75,000	£1,125	£3.16

The BID levy will also need to take into account inflation, therefore 3% will be added to the BID levy per annum after the first year as follows:

- Year 1 = 1.5%
- Year 2 = 1.545%
- Year 3 = 1.591%
- Year 4 = 1.639%
- Year 5 = 1.688%

An example of the actual BID levy to be paid per annum based on an RV of £10,000 with 3% inflation is:

Year	Annual cost (based on £10k rateable value)
1	£150.00
2	£154.50
3	£159.10
4	£163.90
5	£168.80

## BID levy rules

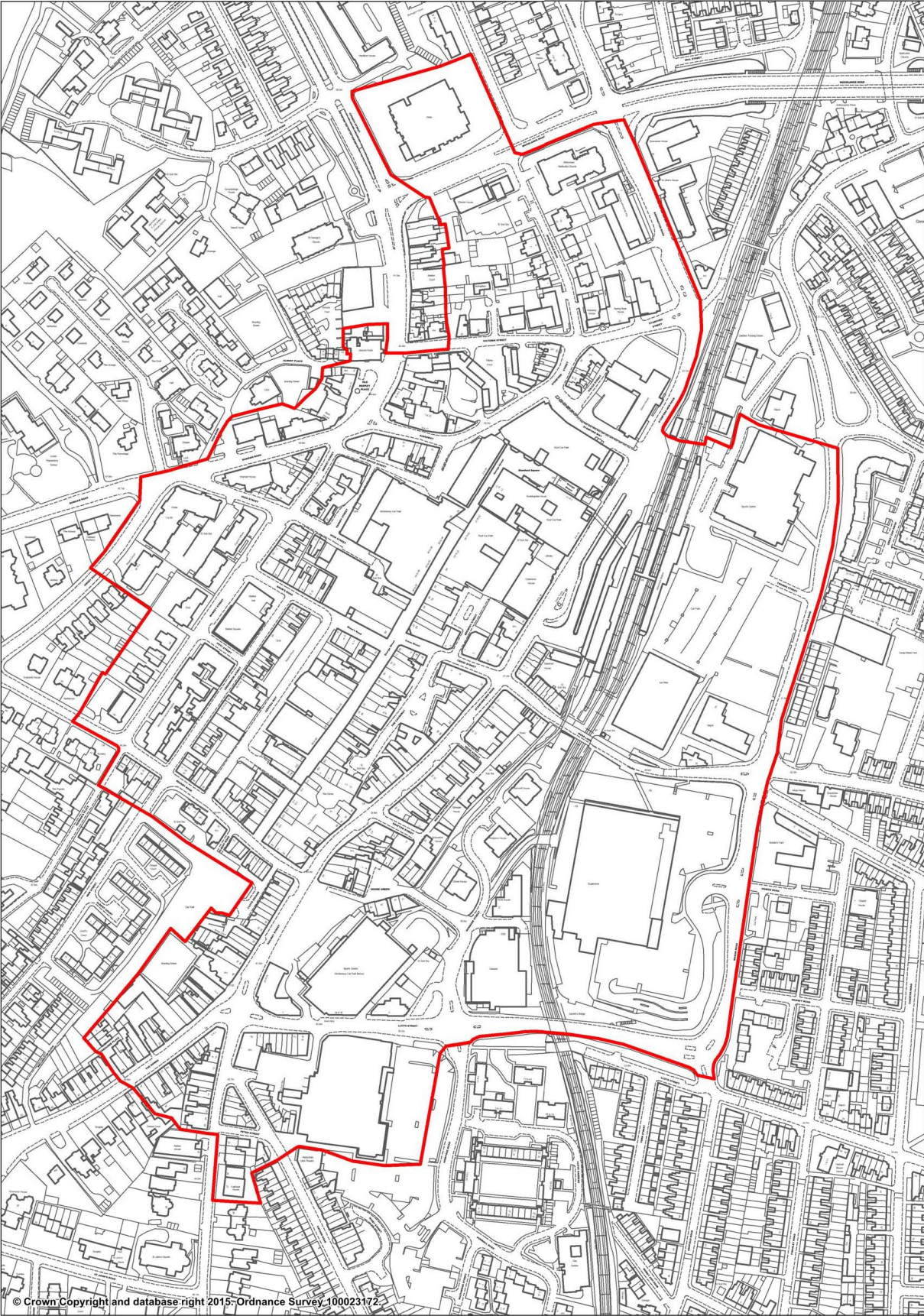
- 1 If the majority of businesses that vote in the ballot vote "yes", both by number and by collective rateable value, Altrincham BID will formally begin on 1st April 2016 for a five year term.
- 2 The occupier of each hereditament (rateable unit of property) will be charged an annual levy based on 1.5% of the rateable value. The levy will increase by 3% each year to allow for inflation. For example in year two the levy will be charged at 1.545%, in year three 1.591% and so on.
- 3 Hereditaments with a rateable value of less than £7,000 will be exempt from the BID levy.
- 4 Advertising hoardings, telephone masts and ATMs will be exempt from the BID levy.
- 5 Hereditaments will be charged at 2010 rateable values for the lifetime of Altrincham BID ie. 5 years from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016. Where new properties come into the ratings list, or mergers or splits occur, the hereditament will be charged as per the current ratings list at that time (the national revaluation due to come into force in April 2017 will not affect the levy).
- 6 Hereditaments will receive a single bill for the BID levy as at 1<sup>st</sup> March before the start of the relevant financial year, and the levy must be paid by 30<sup>th</sup> April each year.
- 7 If a ratepayer moves or sells a property during the course of the year, there will be no refund on any part of the levy paid. If a ratepayer moves into a property after 1<sup>st</sup> March, they will not be liable to pay the levy for that financial year.
- 8 Where a property is empty, the levy liability will transfer to the property owner.
- 9 There will be no discount for shopping centre tenants, for hereditaments given discretionary relief or for charities This is because all Altrincham businesses have an equal need for improvements in the way the town centre is run.
- 10 The maximum annual levy for which any one hereditament will be liable is £15,000
- 11 Businesses below the £7,000 threshold or outside the BID boundary may make a voluntary contribution.

If you are not sure of your rateable value, please contact the BID Team on 0161 912 1599.

**"The BID will be a cost-effective way for businesses to reap the maximum potential from all the regeneration and development work which is happening here and to change people's perceptions of Altrincham. It will allow us to become more competitive against nearby town centres and win back a loyal customer base to ensure a good economic future for us all."**

**Ann Johnson, Branch Director, Santander**

**Proposed Altrincham BID area**



**(Indicative map only)**

Ashley Road	part	Manor Road	all
Back Grafton Street	all	Market Street	all
Barrington Road	all	Moss Lane	part
Bentinck Road	all	Oakfield Road	all
Brewery Street	all	Old Market Place	all
Central Way	all	Oxford Road	part
Cross Street	all	Peter Street	all
Denmark Street		Police Street	all
Dunham Road	part	Post Office Street	all
Garden Lane	all	Railway Street	all
George Street	all	Regent Road	all
Goose Green	all	Shaws Road	all
Grafton Street	all	Springfield Road	all
Greenwood Street	all	Stamford New Road	all
Groby Road	all	Stamford Way	all
Grosvenor Road	all	Tabley Mews	all
High Street	all	The Causeway	all
Impasse de la Fidelitie	all	The Downs	part
Kings Court	all	Thomas Street	all
Kingsway	all	Victoria Street	all
Lloyd Square	all	Wood Street	all
Lloyd Street	all	Woodlands Road	all

The BID area will include the Interchange, the superstores and the site of the Altair development.

A full list of streets within the BID area can be downloaded from [www.altrinchamBID.com](http://www.altrinchamBID.com)

### **Management and governance**

Altrincham BID will be set up as a separate private not-for-profit company, limited by guarantee. It will not be part of the Council, nor will it be run by the Council. Before the five year term is up, Altrincham BID may choose to run another ballot to extend the term for an additional five years.

The current BID Steering Group is made up of businesses from the town centre, representing all sectors. If the BID ballot is successful, some members of the Steering Group may carry on to form the voluntary Altrincham BID Board. Like the Steering Group, it will be chaired by a local business and will direct the strategy and finances of Altrincham BID over the next five years, as well as ensure that the BID is delivering as it should be. Board members will be nominated and elected at the Annual General Meeting of the BID.

## Your Steering Group

Randall Jewellers (Chair)  
Boots  
Thomas Cook  
Marks & Spencer  
LMP Law  
Stamford Quarter shopping centre  
Club Studio  
Maskells Opticians  
Sands Hairdressing  
Santander  
Traders Tiki Bar

The Altrincham BID Company will be accountable to the business-led BID Board and to you as a BID levy payer, and will ensure that communications are open and transparent at all times.

The Board make-up will be representative of the town centre. From time to time the Board may choose to co-opt new Directors or to invite observers to Board meetings.

Business sector	Number of Board places
Retail (multiple)	2
Retail (independent)	2
Office	2
Food and drink	2
Leisure	1
Public sector	1
Trafford Council	1
Other	1

It is likely that Altrincham BID will set up business working groups for specific projects from time to time. If you are interested, please contact us.

Altrincham BID will be run by a small staff team with occasional secondments and contractors where necessary, to ensure the right mix of skills and experience.

## How will the ballot be run?

- The Council will run the ballot on behalf of the proposed Altrincham BID, to ensure transparency.
- The eligible voter for each hereditament (or business unit) with a rateable value of over £7,000 will receive a ballot paper and pre-paid envelope for each hereditament they occupy.
- The voting period will last for 28 days, between 8<sup>th</sup> October and 5<sup>th</sup> November 2015, during which time you should complete and return your ballot paper.

## **I still have a question...**

*"Isn't the Council supposed to deliver these kinds of projects?"*

The Council delivers statutory cleaning and maintenance services in Altrincham town centre. The projects that Altrincham BID would deliver are over and above this.

*"Why are the superstores in the Altrincham BID area?"*

They bring people to the town centre and the financial contributions that would be made by the superstores to Altrincham BID will be valuable additions to the annual income, allowing us to do more to keep shoppers here.

*"How will I know my money is being spent wisely?"*

Altrincham BID will be accountable to its levy paying businesses and be governed by a business-led Board. It will publish an annual review and have annual audited accounts. Altrincham BID will conduct a mid-term review at the beginning of year three to assess the effectiveness and appropriateness of the projects.

*"What will happen to Altrincham Forward?"*

Altrincham Forward is the Council-funded body that has been managing some aspects of the town centre. Altrincham Forward has not, and will not have, the guaranteed annual income that a BID could bring, instead relying on voluntary contributions from businesses (for Christmas lights, for example) and Trafford Council. It is also not solely business-led, like Altrincham BID would be. If the BID ballot is successful, the future of Altrincham Forward will be discussed.

*"How can I get involved?"*

Please contact the team using the contact details at the back of this Proposal.

## **Key reasons to vote YES!**

- 1** Led by businesses - the only representative business voice for the town centre
- 2** A collective investment of c£1.4m - to be spent on business priorities within the town centre
- 3** Cost savings to businesses - the BID projects could save your business money
- 4** Increasing the vitality and mix of the town centre - without duplicating existing efforts
- 5** Additional funding - a BID can attract significant additional funding into the area

**Vote "yes" to secure five years of ring-fenced funding for Altrincham**

**8th October 2015 - 5th November 2015**

The result will be announced on 6th November 2015 and will be deemed successful if:



**1** A simple majority of those voting, vote in favour AND

**2** Those voting in favour must collectively represent a simple majority by rateable value

### Contact details

Altrincham BID  
12-14 Shaws Road, Altrincham  
e: altrincham.forward@trafford.gov.uk  
t: 0161 912 1599

### Appendix 2. Eligible Council Owned Properties in the BID area.

<b>Council Owned Properties</b>	<b>Rateable Value 2016/2017</b>	<b>BID Levy (@ 1.5%) 2016/2017</b>	<b>Liability Council/Tenant</b>
Altrincham Town Hall	£16,733	£251	C
Altrincham Library	£88,000	£1,320	C
Altrincham Forward Office (12-14 Shaws Rd)	£34,000	£510	C
16 Shaws Rd, Altrincham	£9,200	£138	T
18 Shaws Rd, Altrincham	£12,750	£191	T
20 Shaws Rd, Altrincham	£9,600	£144	C (Vacant)
38 Greenwood St, Altrincham	£9,800	£147	T
52 – 54 Greenwood St	£26,250	£394	T
9-11 Market St (Ground Floor)	£19,500	£293	T
9-11 Market St (First Floor)	£14,750	£221	T
Regent Rd Car Park	£27,000	£405	C
Leisure Centre Car Park (Oakfield Road)	£36,400	£546	C
Altrincham Sports Centre (Oakfield Road)	£187,000	£2,805	T
<b>Total Council Liability</b>	<b>£211,733</b>	<b>£3,176</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>Total Tenant Liability</b>	<b>£279,250</b>	<b>£4,189</b>	<b>T</b>
<b>TOTAL COUNCIL LIABILITY IF ALL ITS PROPERTIES WERE VACANT IN 2016/2017</b>		<b>£7,365</b>	<b>C</b>

(Note - the total liability would increase by 3% per annum in 2017/2018 to 2020/2021)

## Appendix 3. BID Stage 2 Survey Report

# Altrincham BID BID Consultation Summary April 2015

### Executive summary

- Of the **201** forms completed and returned so far, **160** respondents have a business in the proposed BID area and **41** are just outside. Three businesses skipped this question. This amounts to **40%** of the eligible hereditaments over both the proposed and the suggested larger BID area (with a £5,000 threshold).
- In terms of the three proposed “themes” for the BID, **50%** stated Altrincham Business as their top priority, **33%** stated Altrincham Community, and **30%** stated Altrincham Style. More details on each of these themes are given in section 3 of this report and more detail on the responses in section 4.
- **79%** considered the proposed BID boundary to be about right, **21%** thought it was not appropriate. More detail is given in section 4.
- **69%** considered the proposed 1.5% BID levy to be about right, and **30%** felt it was too high and **1%** thought it was too low.
- When asked “In principle, would you vote for a BID in Altrincham?”; **64%** said yes, **9%** said no and **27%** said they needed more information.

### Recommendations

1. To accept the positive response from business so far and continue with development of a BID for Altrincham with a revised boundary.
2. To consult on a summary proposal with all businesses but following up a response from those who require more information to decide on their voting intentions, Head Offices and those who have not yet responded.

### 3. Method

The survey aimed to cover what a BID is, in simple terms, and what it could do for Altrincham. It set out the national context of BIDs and a proposed timeline for the development of an Altrincham BID. The consultation questions and projects were put together following two previous business surveys carried out by Altrincham Forward.

The suggested projects were consolidated into three overarching “themes” and aimed to address issues which businesses had highlighted that they were particularly affected by. As a reminder, the theme descriptions and projects are below. Businesses were invited to indicate their preference for projects in order of priority, as well as which of the three themes were their highest, medium and lowest priority. Businesses were also asked to include any other projects they thought would benefit Altrincham.

## 1. Altrincham Style

Creating a strong and stylish consumer identity for Altrincham; promoting the breadth of retail and leisure offer across the town, including the strong independent sector; delivering a high quality cultural offer through events and festivals to attract and retain visitors.

- Place branding and PR – developing a collective and distinctive identity to appeal to the local catchment area
- Producing a calendar of high quality and widely marketed public events, festivals and celebrations
- Bringing vacant units to life through a combination of pop-up shops, art installations or window vinyls
- Building a comprehensive website and online business directory to promote Altrincham
- Improvements to the major gateways into the town centre
- Improved Christmas lights in gateways to and the main areas of the town centre

## 2. Altrincham Business

Improving working life for businesses in Altrincham at a day to day level as well as starting to create a business community that feels able to affect long term change in the town centre through collaborative leadership.

- Improvements to the general appearance and environment of the town centre, including management of “grot spots”
- Management of town centre in terms of site agreements for buskers, promotions and performance spaces
- A regular e-newsletter for businesses
- Reducing business costs through advertising and joint procurement of utilities and waste collection for example
- Greater awareness and better management of the existing Radiolink scheme
- Working to improve the night-time economy via a Pubwatch scheme
  
- Business loan scheme to attract new businesses to Altrincham or to smarten up existing shop fronts
- Mystery shopper and business awards to promote and reward individual businesses
- Acting as a “business voice” to lobby on your behalf
- Investigate the possibility of staff parking

## 3. Altrincham Community

Putting the heart back into Altrincham to ensure that shoppers and local residents feel welcome in the town and to provide them with reasons to keep coming back.

- Ensuring the town centre is accessible for all, including supporting Shopmobility
- Production of a local visitor map
- A regular e-newsletter for visitors promoting local businesses, “What’s On” and “Where to Eat” campaigns, for example
- Community projects in partnership with local community groups, charities and schools
- Free town centre-wide Wi-Fi
- Laptop/mobile charging points for town centre visitors
- Working with the car parks on parking promotions

The consultation has been carried out by means of a link to an online survey via an e-newsletter and direct email to the business mailing list. Importantly, all businesses have been visited in person and either spoken to on a one-to-one basis or had a paper survey left for the manager. This is just the start of the process, and although the formal consultation will finish at the end of the March, it is vital that engagement and communication is ongoing from now on.

## 4. Detailed results

In terms of the three proposed “themes” for the BID, **50%** stated Altrincham Business as their top priority, **33%** stated Altrincham Community, and **30%** stated Altrincham Style.

Themes ranked in order of priority:

It can be seen from the figures below that some of the suggested projects can clearly be put on hold or cut entirely from a potential BID Proposal as there are other, higher priorities. Others, such as regular newsletter for business, were not classed as high priority but are very low resource, so probably worth including in a BID Proposal to continue to keep businesses up to date.

The projects, ordered in terms of priority are as follows:

#### Altrincham Community

- 59%** Working with the car parks on parking promotions
- 47%** Ensuring the town centre is accessible for all
- 38%** Free town centre Wi-Fi
- 25%** A regular e-newsletter for visitors
- 24%** Production of a local visitor map
- 15%** Community projects in partnership with local community groups, charities and schools
- 14%** Laptop/mobile charging points for town centre visitors

#### Altrincham Business

- 71%** Improvements to the general appearance of the town centre
- 40%** Investigate the possibility of staff parking
- 40%** Reducing business costs
- 38%** Business loan scheme
- 20%** Working to improve the night-time economy via a Pubwatch scheme
- 19%** Management of town centre in terms of buskers etc
- 17%** Acting as a “business voice” to lobby on your behalf
- 8%** Mystery shopper and business awards to promote and reward individual businesses
- 7%** A regular e-newsletter for businesses
- 7%** Greater awareness and better management of the existing Radiolink scheme

#### Altrincham Style

- 60%** Bringing vacant units to life
- 42%** Producing a calendar of high quality public events
- 36%** Place branding and PR
- 29%** Improvements to the major gateways into the town centre
- 17%** Building a comprehensive website and online business directory to promote Altrincham
- 10%** Improved Christmas lights in gateways to and the main areas of the town centre

Other priorities stated by businesses obviously include some ideas which the BID will have little or no control over, or be beyond the means of the BID financially, however it may be that the BID will be a strong lobbying voice for business and work with relevant stakeholders to be able to put some of these into effect. These suggestions include:

- More money spent on The Downs
- A new facelift to the whole town
- Encourage National retailers. Move Tesco out of town
- Help to ensure premises on George Street are occupied quickly
- None of the above, a waste of money
- Problem with parking, develop a cheap year parking permit
- A major advertising campaign for night time trade

- Late metrolink open for staff
- More parking at accessible locations and prices
- The stocks, tree and paving flags need to be maintained in Old Market Place
- Consider advertising in empty unit windows to promote other local businesses
- Lower rents to ensure sustainability / Actively working to secure new office openings / a quality hotel and improved rail / tram connections with the airport
- To support Manchester Phoenix and the Ice Rink as they bring business into the town
- Business rates + rent reduction. Drug dealer watch, shoplifter watch. Better CCTV
- Removal of traffic lights
- A major annual event to put Altrincham on the map
- More effort into “this” end of George Street
- Returning Stamford New Road to the main shopping strip
- A central map to make people aware of shops outside the Stamford Quarter
- Digital information screens
- A bike park
- Ensure that social media is included in marketing
- A more considered product (business genre) mix throughout the town will have the potential to attract a wider and more diverse visitor base. Incentives should be put in place to attract entrepreneurs / owners of different business types into empty units so that

Altrincham becomes a destination with a difference.

- Help existing retailers stay in Altrincham and support new retailers coming in
- Reduction in business costs (business rates)
- Collective late night opening to capture 9-5 workers
- The highest priority should be given to accessibility and costs available to frequent and permanent (staff/volunteers) users of services.
- More affordable parking. Offer reductions/incentives for staff/ volunteers to park more local to CBD/shops based at the bottom end of the precinct.
- No idea what the radiolink scheme is. Suggest more is done to promote it / educate users.
- Better signage.
- Multistory car park
- Resolve the parking issue! The biggest disincentive to visiting Altrincham is the threat of a parking ticket should you find something interesting to do and decide to stay longer. All car parks should be payment on exit

Comments about the proposed BID area were conflicting, as expected, however the majority felt there were some key parts of the town centre that should be in the area and currently are not, including some businesses that want to be part of the BID going forward:

- Include dunham road please, between high street and regent road
- Public houses around Stamford st not included
- High Street and Market Street have a number of businesses which would be unrepresented service industries are need in the mix of business. An area to the north west of your boundary should be included.
- My property sits on Market Place so would like inclusion
- Providing allocation of spend is spread evenly, not just in market and Goose Green. New parking site, St Johns Road
- We are not included in the area a public house has been on the site for hundreds of years. The Old Market Place is an historic area of Altrincham.
- Expand the area to the north west to encompass the area of my business based in the Warrant House.

- We are situated on platform 1 at Altrincham Train Station. We believe the train station should be included in the boundary as we are in a pivotal position for people travelling in. We have been active in providing visitors with directions and welcoming them to Altrincham. We have also taken great pride and gone to great effort to ensure that our premises are attractive to make sure that people from outside Altrincham receive a warm welcome when they arrive.
- The businesses along Dunham Rd should be included as should the corner that has been cut to exclude Myerson Solicitors and the businesses at the end of New St.
- Too large an area. More focus on central shopping area / empty shops.
- Should be a larger boundary, more businesses included.
- Why are you including the super markets? Why visit small shops in Alty when Tesco sell it all!
- The boundary should not turn left after Rackhams but should continue straight on to the A56 then turn left at the top before turning left again into Market Street
- It should be enlarged all round to include the businesses on the edge of the Town Centre, e.g. the Altair site, Victoria Street, Kingsway, High Street, both sides of Market Street, Oxford Road, etc.
- We would fall outside the boundary - 7 Market St and are keen to contribute particularly to joint procurement and better access to centre and parking for staff and visitors. Altrincham needs a competitive advantage in the battle for top quality staff / people.
- It seems to stop at the old Partington's shop on the Downs.
- Oxford Road to be included
- The area should include area bounded by Market Street and Kingsway. (Refer to plan on questionnaire). These areas have heritage and character which are important to the overall feel of Alty.
- Auditel is not included (36 Stamford Street)
- Needs to include train station
- Retail shops on Regent Rd, Market Street and Church St not included
- I would argue it needs extending to the Malt Shovels, Roebuck, Old Market Tavern extension to top of image
- Can't tell. Does it include The Downs?
- Why are Sainsbury and Tesco included within the boundary (apart from potential financial contribution)? I can think of many reasons why they should not be.
- If you are going to promote Altrincham as a place to come and shop, why would you leave out the train station /bus/metrolink? Stamford New Rd needs to be more appealing to invite people into the town centre.
- It's hard to see how any investment in the town centre will bring any great benefit to The Downs as we are so cut off