



The Borough Council of Wellingborough

Both Wellingborough Chamber of Commerce and Wellingborough Town Centre Partnership wholly support the BID initiative for Wellingborough.

It was the BCW that approached the TCP in the summer 2009 asking it if it would be prepared to work up proposals for a new BID in the town. The reason for this was that whilst the TCP offered assistance to town centre businesses, it had a very limited budget born out of voluntary financial contributions. The formation of a BID would mean that contributions would be compulsory and of significant value to make a real difference to the delivery of initiatives to help improve the town centre offer.

The BID has indeed delivered many initiatives since its formation and re-election.

It is well known that BIDs not only deliver independent financial investment for towns, along with medium term structured initiatives (born out of majority votes by the BID membership) but also convey a positive, pro-active approach to running and investing in their towns, to those based in the town and those based outside of the town. A BID sends a clear message that its town has confidence in itself and is willing to take ownership of its future and invest its own money in that future. Such a demonstration encourages others to invest in that town and indeed demonstrates to Central Government and the National Lottery that they should include that town in national grant investment initiatives. In Wellingborough's case, these would include initiatives such as the Historic High Street Funding and Heritage Shop Front Grant Scheme.

A town without a BID will inevitably be at a disadvantage in funding opportunities.

A town where the Local Authority effectively closes down a BID will be seen as taking a backward step and possibly a location to be ignored in terms of future public funding and investment.

The Chamber is both concerned and surprised that the BCW decided to oppose the renewal of the BID for a 3rd term.

When one considers the challenges facing Wellingborough Town Centre, which include the evolution of retail towards on-line shopping, competition from Rushden Lakes, Brexit and the future unification of Northamptonshire's Councils it seems incredible that the BCW chose to oppose the BID's renewal. With the challenges referred to above, in circumstances where a town centre did not have a BID, most towns would jump at the initiative.

The BID will commit £900,000 over the next 5 years. Given the imminent transfer of local government power to a new unitary authority and the financial pressures that will present, the Chamber is concerned that the Borough Council will not be able match this commitment. Furthermore, the independent structure and application of a BID is very much seen by many as preferable to a local authority adopting the role of driving the sustainability and evolution of a town centre. Local Government rarely has the same skill sets, ambition, vision and resource to match those of the private sector.

The Chamber would urge Wellingborough Council to support the renewal of the BID and work with it in guiding the town through the future challenges that it inevitably faces, rather than opposing it.