

News Release



Media information from Middlesbrough Council

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BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA PROPOSED FOR MIDDLESBROUGH

BUSINESSES in Middlesbrough are being invited to play a major role in helping to drive-forward the future of the town centre.

Their views are being sought on the creation of a Business Improvement District to help increase footfall by making the town centre more attractive to shoppers and visitors.

Business Improvement Districts – or BIDs - enable businesses to work together to deliver improvements, giving them a greater say in shaping the town centre and in turn helping them grow and expand.

Under the scheme, businesses decide what projects they want to see, how they will be managed and what the cost will be.

The proposals form part of a detailed business plan, with the investment funded by a small levy on business rates, which is then voted on by every business within the proposed BID area. Allied to the BID are agreements with public sector bodies about the quality of services they will continue to deliver in the area.

BIDs have operated successfully in the USA and Canada for many years, while more than 100 are now established in the UK, leading to the investment of millions of pounds.

In the North East, a BID was established in 2008 to improve the Longhill and Sandgate industrial estate in Hartlepool, and in Newcastle Business Improvement District NE1 was set up to drive forward the city centre.

Middlesbrough Town Centre Manager Alan Weston said: “

We talk to many town centre businesses and they have lots of ideas about the improvements that need to be made.

“A BID is a way of giving the whole town centre business community an opportunity to share their views and opinions on the key issues and propose a solution to solving them for the benefit of the town as a whole.”

Following the adoption of the Middlesbrough Town Centre Strategy, the Town Centre Management Team has canvassed initial feedback from the business community. Three main priorities for a BID have been identified:

- **Promoting Middlesbrough** – raising the profile of the town centre and encouraging more and higher-spending visitors
- **Protecting Middlesbrough** – ensuring a cleaner, safer and greener town centre
- **Progressing Middlesbrough** – improving and diversifying the town centre offer

Cllr Charlie Rooney, Middlesbrough Council's Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development, will consider the proposal on at a meeting on Tuesday, July 27.

He said: "We know these are difficult times for businesses in Middlesbrough, but this represents a positive approach to the future and one worthy of detailed discussion and debate.

"We are committed to working with all our partners to support the local business community and move the town centre forward as a key part of the Middlesbrough economy.

"The BID will not take the place of Council investment in the town centre – it is about businesses working together and making a small investment in those things which will benefit them and the town as a whole.

"They have been shown to work elsewhere – it would be remiss of us not to explore whether that model will work here in Middlesbrough."

Father Glyn Holland, who chairs the Middlesbrough Town Centre Partnership, said: "Businesses in the town centre have given a clear indication of the priorities they see as essential to helping the town grow and expand.

"The Partnership has debated this issue and we're supportive of the principle of a BID.

"Now is the right time to engage with every business in the town centre to discuss this as a way of bringing investment into the town and taking Middlesbrough on to the next level."

Consultation and engagement with businesses will explore the key issues in detail, and a leaflet outlining the Middlesbrough BID proposals will be distributed to all town centre businesses.

A web page will also be set up to provide news and information as the consultation evolves and the Town Centre Management Team will hold a series of discussions and BID surgeries. Further details will be available in the near future.

ENDS

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Issued by Angus Hoy, Senior Press Officer on 01642 729502.

Notes to Editors:

Details of other existing BIDs can be found on the UK BIDs website:

<http://www.ukbids.org/BIDS/index.php>

BID money can only carry out projects/services additional to those that public agencies have to provide. Prior to the BID Business Plan being produced, the current services being delivered by all public agencies including the Local Authority and Police are benchmarked. The local authority has to continue to deliver the same level of service for the period of the BID.