

<b>Committee</b>	Full Council / Agenda item 8
<b>Month</b>	May 2023
<b>Report Title</b>	Update on the work of the Business Improvement District (BID)
<b>Report Author</b>	Lisa Courtney, Town Clerk
<b>Attachments</b>	None

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## Context / Background Details

BIDs are established through legislation, provided for under the Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004, a copy of the legislation is here: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2004/2443/contents/made>

The primary purpose of a BID is to improve a defined commercial area, it is a business-led and business funded body. Further information regarding the establishment and purpose of a BID can be found here: <https://britishbids.info/>

There is a Business Improvement District (BID) in Saffron Walden, first established in 2018 building upon the work of the former SW Town Team.

The Saffron Walden BID area broadly covers the town centre, including Emson Close, High Street and properties up to the war memorial. Further details of the SW BID are found here: <https://www.saffronwaldenbid.co.uk/>

In June 2023 (dates to be confirmed) there will be a further referendum regarding continuance of the BID in Saffron Walden.

SWTC is a BID levy payer, with four SWTC properties being subject to the BID levy being:

<b>Property</b>	<b>BID Levy (based on rateable value of the property/service)</b>
Town Hall	£ 371.25
Tourist Information Centre	£ 300.00
SW Market (it is a rateable activity)	£ 168.75
Nos 3 and 5 Market Place	£ 500.00 (estimated)
Property Totals	£1,340.00
Assume 5% increase for 2023/24	£ 67.00
Total due 2023/24	£1,407.00

## Purpose of Report

Council is requested to consider its position regarding the referendum due in June 2023 and to mandate an Officer to vote on behalf of the Town Council in this referendum; this is included as a later item in the agenda to be considered as a confidential item (it would be inappropriate for the Town Council to publicly state its intentions in relation to the BID referendum as this could bias further voting patterns).

At the Full Council meeting in April 2023 and as recorded under Min Ref FC054-23, Councillors raised a series of questions and queries in relation the work of the BID.

As directed by Council, these questions were posed to the BID and the response is contained within this report.

## Response from the BID to Questions Posed

The question as posed by the Town Clerk are given below, followed by the BID response in italics

Question 1:

What will be the next term of office if successful?

*1<sup>st</sup> Dec 2023 – Nov 2028 – current term ends 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023.*

Question 2:

How many levy payers are there?

*Based on Invoices sent for 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022 there were 262 invoices. Based on updated mailing list for the ballot, we have 265 ballot cards to be issued.*

Question 3:

What is the total amount of levy received by the BID?

*£85724.14 for 2022*

*£89608.75 for 2021*

*£59256.72 for 2020 (we made a decision to give a discount due to the pandemic)*

*£91395.75 for 2019*

*£91923.75 for 2018*

Question 4:

How do you measure success generally?

*We measure success a variety of ways: regular online surveys with BID members and customer/visitor surveys, media coverage and social media stats and analysis. We also collate regular feedback face to face with local businesses.*

*Please note that in the new plan we have included numerous quotes from a variety of local businesses and organisations.*

Question 5:

What metrics do you use to measure and evaluate success?

*We use the metrics from social media and we can share these with you at the meeting 15<sup>th</sup> May.*

*We regularly collate feedback face to face with our BID members and conduct online surveys with them.*

*Footfall figures remain a challenge for us but we are working with UDC on better reporting and analysis.*

*We also keep abreast of occupancy levels and note that as of today's date we have 28 vacant units. At the start of the BID in August 2018 there were 27 vacant units.*

Question 6:

How could an individual levy payer measure or evaluate the benefit of the BID to them?

*The BID works collectively for the whole town and we focus on business by sector rather than individually.*

Question 7:

What are the BID plans for the forthcoming term (assuming successful) and how were these priorities reached? Ie – could you send me a copy of the draft business plan please?

*We will bring a final copies of plan at the meeting.*

Question 8:

What is the current financial position of the BID?

*We are coming to end of our financial term, all our remaining funds take us up to end of November and have been allocated accordingly – projects/events and their associated costs, administration including BID Manager salary, subcontractor costs and fixed operating costs.*

Question 9:

In earlier iterations of priorities, BID was looking at corporate buying (an example given that all businesses could benefit from economies of scale if they committed to a collective refuse collection). Is this type of corporate bulk-buy still an option and if not, why not?

*To be responded to at the meeting*

## Recommendation

To note the contents of this report along with a verbal update/presentation from BID Members at the meeting.

Under agenda item 17 and as a part 2 confidential item, Members are further requested to consider its position regarding the referendum due June 2023.