



Committee	Full Council / Agenda item: 12
Month	September 2023
Report Title	Business Improvement District
Report Author	Lisa Courtney, Town Clerk
Attachments	None

Summary

At the July 2023 Council meeting, Council noted the BID referendum was in favour for a second five-year term.

At this meeting, a series of questions were posed by Councillors to the BID and responses are given below with the original questions shown in black text and the BID responses in blue text.

Questions and Answers

1. There are 250 eligible business to vote for the BID Referendum and 118 votes were cast, returning a turnout of 47%. Is the BID content with this turnout and how does it compare nationally with other BIDs?

263 ballot papers were issued, and 120 votes were cast, returning a turnout of 45.63% This is above the average for UK BID ballots. The average turnout for BID ballots for this year is 41%. As with all types of ballot or election we would all like to see more of those entitled to vote use them but we are happy with this above average turnout.

2. Do we presume the balance of 132 (250 – 118) abstained?

We received 118 votes (an additional 2 were spoilt ballot papers). 263 ballot papers were issued.

3. Do you know why a significant number appeared to have abstained from voting?

No, we do not know that.

4. Of 118 votes cast, 70 were in favour of the BID leaving a balance of 48 who presumably voted against continuance of the BID – please confirm.

Yes, that is correct.

5. Does the BID know how individual businesses voted? If yes, how will you address firstly the considerable minority who voted 'No' but more importantly, how will you address those that abstained?

The results were issued by UK Engage following the Saffron Walden BID ballot and publicly declared by the BID Holder, Peter Holt on behalf of Uttlesford District Council.

We are not given that information under the Electoral Board rules and regulations. All ballots are cast in secret.

Now we have received a new 5 term, we will endeavour to work with all businesses in the BID district.

6. The narrative on the BID website announcing the result advises that 60% who cast a vote, voted 'yes' and that there are 250 votes possible. If that is the case, then the total percentage of the whole who voted 'yes' is just 28% (ie $60/250 \times 100$). Will you issue this as a narrative or retain that as written?

We received 118 votes (an additional 2 were spoilt ballot papers) and 70 of those were in favour of the BID, this equates to 59% of those who voted in favour of a BID. The details can be found on our website.

Recommendation:

- a) To note the contents of this report, specifically the responses from the BID.
- b) To consider any further action or questions in relation to the contents of this report or the Council's relationship with the BID.