

Blackpool TBID : Ballot to establish Business Improvement District

Statement of consultation undertaken

Background

Driven by the desire for progress and the need to respond to the effects of COVID-19, Blackpool needs new ways of working that can quickly adapt to the fast-changing environment. As part of this process Blackpool is seeking to establish a second Business Improvement District (BID), focused on tourism and complementing the existing Town Centre BID company, that has delivered outstanding results for the retail economy for more than a decade.

The purpose of the Blackpool TBID is to take a lead role in navigating the recovery from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and over a five-year period restore Blackpool's visitor economy to its market-leading position and enable it to continue to thrive and prosper.

The ballot for the proposed new Tourism BID will take place during May/June 2021.

Business Engagement (2020/21)

COVID-19 has provided significant difficulty in engaging with the businesses embraced within the TBID area, indeed the ballot of businesses was postponed to May/June from its initial planned date of February/ March 2021 in order to make contact with businesses following the relaxation of the third government-imposed lockdown. Communication has been sought with 100% of the voting constituents from both the TBID project group and Civica, who acts on behalf of Blackpool Council, the returning officer in the Ballot.

Business engagement was undertaken during 2020 with businesses accessible and important to the success of a Tourism Business Improvement District. A good level of positivity was received from this series of meetings and the dialogue helped understand better the appetite for the establishment of a Tourism BID and identify priorities and themes moving forward which appear in the TBID business plan and proposal.

A full programme of engagement and formal communication with the voters was put in place for when the Government imposed lockdown was relaxed in 2021.

- A COVID-19 recovery press release was circulated at the end of lockdown which incorporated the launch of the TBID initiative and plan to seek the establishment of a TBID for Blackpool;
- A website was launched to outline the TBID opportunity and how to get involved;
- All TBID constituents were sent a voter canvass to advise of their key contact and name & address of the business voter;
- The canvass communication was followed up by the project team to seek a positive response from those businesses showing an interest in the project;
- A Notice of Ballot was sent to 100% of business constituents by Civica, on behalf of the returning officer in the ballot;
- The Business Plan was sent to 100% of TBID constituents;
- Each voting business was contacted on 3 separate occasions to follow up the distribution of the business plan and on contact offered an opportunity to meet and discuss the proposal.

Ballot (May - June 2021)

- Ballot papers will be sent to all voters in the TBID constituency providing a 28-day period for return of the ballot paper;
- An opportunity of appointing a proxy voter is provided for those not available during the process;
- The project team will be available throughout the voting period to answer questions and provide support to those businesses requiring further information and insight into the TBID;
- A walk in session at the Wintergarden was organized and all voters invited to attend and speak to a member of the team;
- Supporting documentation is available on the TBID website to help inform the voting decision which includes the Business Plan, list of voters, summary of consultation, Operating Agreement and Baseline Agreement;
- Electronic version of business plan available to businesses taking part in the ballot.

The Blackpool TBID ballot result is announced on 25 June 2021