

Acocks Green Village BID Proposal 2011



Developing the BID

The journey to develop this Proposal started in October 2010 with a series of workshops led by BID experts to help us deliver the best BID Proposal we can. Around the same time, a business-led working group was formed to keep our work focussed on local needs and to promote it to the business community.

In March we secured the funding to keep our town centre manager up to the BID Ballot result in October. At the same time we provided every business with a BID survey. The results were staggering. 93% of

respondents said that they support the idea of a BID and a consistent message came back on businesses burning issues. The survey results underpin this Proposal and can be found in full at www.acocksgreenbid.com. Then, individual business consultation began with visits, letters, emails and newsletters to spread word about the BID and get the right contact details for your company. We'd like to thank you for your patience, for digging out names and addresses of your head offices and for letting us know your thoughts.

In June we held our first 'drop in' session and despite us promising to take only 5-10 minutes of your time, some businesses stayed hours! These sessions will continue during the Ballot. You can of course phone or email us anytime.

In between all of this we have been scrutinising other BIDs; borrowing ideas, costing up projects, looking for lessons learned and simply making sure our BID Proposal is the best it can be and we think you will agree that we have accomplished exactly that.

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10 reasons to vote **yes**

- Our **only realistic opportunity** to collectively and effectively respond to the 500,000 sq ft of new commercial space emerging around us.
- **Additional investment** on a scale unachievable by businesses working alone and targeted where you want it.
- A **better image** for the Village to attract more custom.
- **Smart investment** that creates a **legacy of rejuvenation** long after the BID concludes.
- A **better connected** business community that can **reduce crime** and anti-social behaviour.
- **Collective marketing** campaigns that deliver better value and results.
- **New trading opportunities** between BID levy payers.
- A long term plan that gives businesses the **skills and confidence to invest and grow**.
- An effective business voice that can lobby to **prioritise investment in our streetscape**.
- **No 'free-loading'** all businesses make a fair and proportionate investment.

Summary

Business Improvement Districts

A Business Improvement District (BID) is a defined area within which the local business community invest together to improve the local trading environment. BIDs run for five years, so allowing long term decision making and they can be renewed.

The Opportunity

Your opportunity to invest £500,000 over five years into growing business capacity for change, better kerb appeal, more going on, a stronger image, better promotion, being better connected and reducing crime.

Funding

All businesses in the BID area pay a Levy. This is based on the rateable value of your premises so that everyone makes a fair contribution.

Management

An independent, not for profit and limited by guarantee company will be led by a nominated Board of Directors from the Levy paying community with representation from statutory agencies and the community. A BID Manager will be appointed who will be directly accountable to the BID Board.

The Ballot

The Ballot will decide whether or not the BID goes ahead and only BID Levy payers (business rate payers on the day the 'Notice of Ballot' was issued) are allowed to vote. It will be a postal Ballot conducted by Electoral Reform Services and take place from 26th September to 27th October 2011. Each business premises will have one vote and for the BID to proceed the Ballot must secure majority support (51%) of those who vote by a) number and b) rateable value.

It isn't a New Tax

A BID is an investment. Unlike your business rates, the BID money doesn't go to the Government. Every penny stays in Acocks Green to be spent on the things that matter most to you.

Put simply, you agree the projects, you make a fair contribution and you control how it is spent.

Our vision for the Village

“An appealing and vibrant centre that businesses and local people alike have great pride in. Where people enjoy our blend of famous high street names and independent retail, leisure and service businesses in one convenient location and new investment from quality businesses helps to draw in new customers.”

The Business Improvement District (BID) is proposed by Acocks Green Village Partnership with the ambition to create a realistic and proven way for the business community to enhance our performance and build on the last three years of investment and successes, which include:

- £160,000 investment by the city council into highway improvements, local marketing and our Regeneration Plan
- £43,000 investment by local businesses into marketing initiatives and specialist business training

- Over £100,000 value of free media coverage
- Vacancy rate of 2.7% against a national average of 11.2%*
- A clear plan setting out urban realm and highway improvements

The BID working group, supported by Birmingham City Council, has consulted widely with the business community and local people. Consultation revealed a strong appetite from businesses for a BID as an effective response to the challenges the centre faces, with overwhelming support for investment in image, promotion, kerb appeal and crime.

We have set a challenging but achievable Vision for the Village, which sets us on a clear path to securing the long term prosperity of the centre and our businesses. We look forward to working with you on what is set to be an invigorating and rewarding journey.

*Debby Coulles
Chair of Acocks Green Village
Partnership*



*Source: ATCM/Springboard Joint Survey June 2011, Acocks Green Survey June 2011

"I'd support my local businesses more if...."

...more quality businesses were drawn into empty premises, selling the things we have to go to Solihull for."

...businesses had better, brighter facades so people passing through can see what is on offer."

...businesses opened later in the evenings."

...the business community contributed more to community events such as Carnival."

...the Village had more places like Costa."

... pavements were clear and smaller stores made more space for mothers, carers and the disabled."

Why is a BID necessary?

Although an established local centre, over recent years the Village has failed to keep up with consumer expectations and our 'kerb appeal' has suffered.

With new commercial investment totalling over 500,000 sq ft on our doorstep, the need to invigorate our local high street has never been greater. A YES vote for the BID will secure half a million pounds investment into creating more reasons to visit, a stronger image and targeted marketing campaigns all designed to drive up footfall, length of visits and essentially, customer spend.

Swan Centre (South Yardley)

Tesco Extra Supermarket, 20 retail units, petrol station, 839 free parking spaces.

Parkgate Retail Park (Shirley)

Asda supermarket, 18 retail units, 500+ free parking spaces.

Seven Trent Redevelopment (Sheldon)

100,000 sq ft supermarket selling wide range of non-food goods plus associated car parking.

Morrisons (Acocks Green)

Proposed 35,000 sq ft supermarket plus associated car parking.

We also have the local challenge of Solihull and Kings Heath BIDs investing £2.5 million and £600,000 respectively into their high streets.

As a business that has chosen to be based on a local high street, you will no doubt have done so because you depend on the footfall and infrastructure it generates. So whether you are retail, leisure, professional service or another type of business, when Village footfall drops so does your bottom line.

We cannot stop new investment taking place around us but we can invest better in our own futures.



What businesses say about BIDs

BIDs are good news for town centres and for the businesses in them. They are business-led and give businesses the power to invest locally with the sole aim of improving local trading conditions.

"New West End (BID) Company ensures that there is a body that can put significant investment into the West End, targeted directly to the needs of the area and particularly the customers."

Sir Philip Green

Owner, Arcadia Group which includes Dorothy Perkins & Burton (NVEC Business Plan, 2008 – 2013)

"BIDs put businesses in the driving seat. We are able to prioritise what is needed here rather than being just another part of Birmingham. The BID is building a better, more commercially rewarding future for all of us and giving Kings Heath its own unique identity by controlling how monies are spent and what our future can look like."

Cathy Edwards BSc FRICS MEWI

Chivers Commercial, Kings Heath BID

"A BID will provide the solid foundations I need to give me confidence to invest in my business. Taking away the pressures of trying to market my business beyond the shop door, I can access expert support to help me focus on what I need to do inside my business."

Kate Wright

Owner, The Wright Way, Acocks Green

"As one of the longest established businesses in the Village, I firmly believe that our greatest challenge lies directly ahead of us and that a 'do nothing' approach will only drive footfall to the new, more appealing centres emerging around us. Our image and presentation do not portray the fantastic range of businesses we have in the centre and only a BID can create the resources needed to tackle this and put the Village firmly back on the map."

Debby Coulles

Marketing Manager, Dennetts Furniture, Acocks Green

BID benefits

Business led and business managed

A realistic and tested way for businesses to revive their performance.

Better value for money through collective investment.

Complete independence from public sector control and finance.

A long term and renewable plan.

No 'free-loading'.

BID outcomes

A thriving business community that:

has the confidence to grow in a supportive and flourishing environment.

puts the customer at the heart of everything we do.

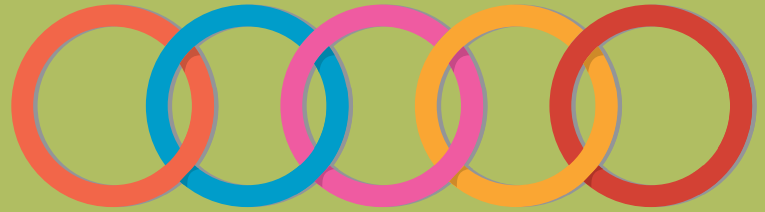
prosper through collective promotion and new local supply chains.

creates a better image for the Village to attract more local custom.

works better together and with the police to reduce crime.

What will the BID deliver?

We have developed five inter-linked themes for the BID to deliver on, each capturing specific issues and opportunities identified by businesses during the BID development phase.



Theme One:

Growing Business Capacity for Change

Issues

Despite many businesses trading alongside each other for a number of years local connections are generally weak, whilst the opportunities for business growth through local supply chains are exceptionally high.

From catering to branded uniforms to team days out; we can all grow

by using the businesses around us, if we know what we all have to offer.

Many of us have the desire to enhance our businesses by adapting to increasing customer expectations; be it better window displays, more point of sale opportunities or new ways to

promote ourselves. However, with 62% of our businesses unable to tap into the expertise and resources that national chains can, it is vital that smaller businesses are supported to create a more appealing and vibrant environment that delivers bottom line benefit to everyone.

Objectives

- Generate more trade between Village businesses by enabling closer working relationships.
- Deliver a higher quality kerb appeal and more appealing merchandising that better meets today's visitor expectations and those of all businesses.

Actions

- Create a business network that provides the opportunity for businesses to connect with each other, to access support and develop new business locally.
- Develop a specialist business training and evaluation programme that is available to all businesses.
- Create a business to business directory of products and services available locally.

Wouldn't it be
great
if...

... the Village was promoted more effectively.

... we had events that brought our streets to life and customers to our doorways.

... we made more of Christmas trading opportunities.

... visitors could enjoy exploring the Village more.

... we could promote lesser known but fantastic local businesses that can generate footfall for all of us.

... more local people were enticed to shop here.

Theme Two:

Stronger Image, Better Promoted

Issues

The overall presentation of the centre does not do justice to the terrific range of goods & services and leisure & social pursuits the Village has to offer.

Whilst the 'Growing Business Capacity for Change' theme will deliver support to businesses right where they need it, we also need to

enhance local perceptions and drive home new, fresh messages about what the Village really has to offer.

Many businesses, large and small, spend £ thousands every year trying to promote our businesses but according to the results of our survey, we don't find it all that effective. There are numerous

opportunities to create compelling collective marketing campaigns utilising direct mail, voucher books, local press and of course the internet which would provide appealing tasters of what the whole Village has to offer and create dynamic marketing tools for our businesses.

Objectives

- Enhance local perceptions of the centre and what it has to offer.
- Deliver collective marketing campaigns that promote what Village offers as a whole.
- Better engage with commercial property agents and equip them with purposeful and factual information about the Village.

Actions

- Create a Village website incorporating a business directory.
- Create marketing literature designed specifically for potential investors and agents.
- Create marketing materials with effective distribution channels to our target markets.
- Build on our previous success with local media coverage.

Theme Three:**Better Kerb Appeal & More Going On****Issues**

People want to visit and will spend more time in places that are clean, vibrant and appealing. New quality businesses are more likely to open in areas that deliver on this.

The Village has some open space, which even with its access limitations can be put to better use to entice more visitors to the

centre. Previous small scale seasonal events such as Easter and Christmas Trails have proved popular with businesses and local people alike and would benefit immensely from 'scaling up'. Many have also expressed strong interest in growing our floral enhancements and improving our Christmas Lights and local people have shown strong interest in markets and fairs.

One of the most frequent requests from our customers is to have better toilet facilities in the Village but at the same time, public conveniences are not generally well regarded unless they are staffed. Those businesses that do provide customer toilets find them frequently exploited by other businesses customers.

Objectives

- Create an environment that encourages more local people to visit the Village; to spend more time in it and visit more businesses.

Actions

- Enhance the floral planting scheme.
- Provide more Christmas Lights throughout the BID area.
- Develop a programme of street-based events and activities.
- Adopt a 'community loo' scheme as seen in many other smaller centres, that reimburses providers and enables us to deliver on a key customer priority.
- Dress vacant shops and tackle local 'grot spots'.

Theme Four:

Better Connected to Reduce Criminal Behaviour

Issues

Businesses want a safe, welcoming centre for their customers, staff and premises.

Feedback indicates that crimes such as shoplifting and anti-social behaviour need to be addressed with greater emphasis on

prevention and working better together and with the police.

Our Village Radio scheme is long established and has proven to be successful many times, delivering key information and responses that have assisted in apprehending

criminals. However, the low take up fails to provide solid coverage around the linear design of the Village. Also, as the recession has persisted some larger retailers have had to hand back their radios whilst many independent businesses do not feel they can justify the cost.

Objectives

- Create a more integrated business community that can help to reduce the potential for crime and is better enabled to respond.
- Further develop business relationships with our local policing team.

Actions

- Create a single 5 year contract for the Village Radio scheme that is paid for by the BID, delivers a 40% saving and can increase the number of businesses on the Radio from 25* to 50.
- Establish a Business Crime Forum that brings together the management of the Village Radio and shared data on criminal activity and enables businesses and the police to work better together.
- Make crime prevention training available to all businesses.

*as of August 2011

Theme Five:

Business Led, Performance Driven

Issues

Businesses want to be the decision makers on local investment opportunities and we want this decision making to be effective and free of 'red tape'.

Our plan is to bring together the skills and experience that exists within the centre for all our benefit.

The business community, via the Village Partnership has already established a clear, unified voice that has responded to consultation and successfully lobbied for investment. We want to grow this voice and benefit even more from the strength in our number.

Businesses want to be assured that existing local services provided by the public sector are delivered consistently, to an agreed specification so that our BID can demonstrate real added value through own investment.

Objectives

- Secure the necessary commitment, expertise and drive to ensure that the BID delivers tangible, business-focussed outcomes.
- Provide responsibility and accountability to all businesses in the BID area.
- Monitor, assess and evolve the BID's work to ensure maximum delivery on its priority areas.

Actions

- Adopt a clear business model involving a 'not for profit' company with transparent and equal decision making via a nominated Board of unpaid Directors.
- Appoint a professional BID Manager to ensure effective and efficient delivery of the BID proposal.
- Undertake regular monitoring, surveys and reviews of 'baseline' council and additional BID services.
- Provide interim and annual feedback reports on the BID's performance.

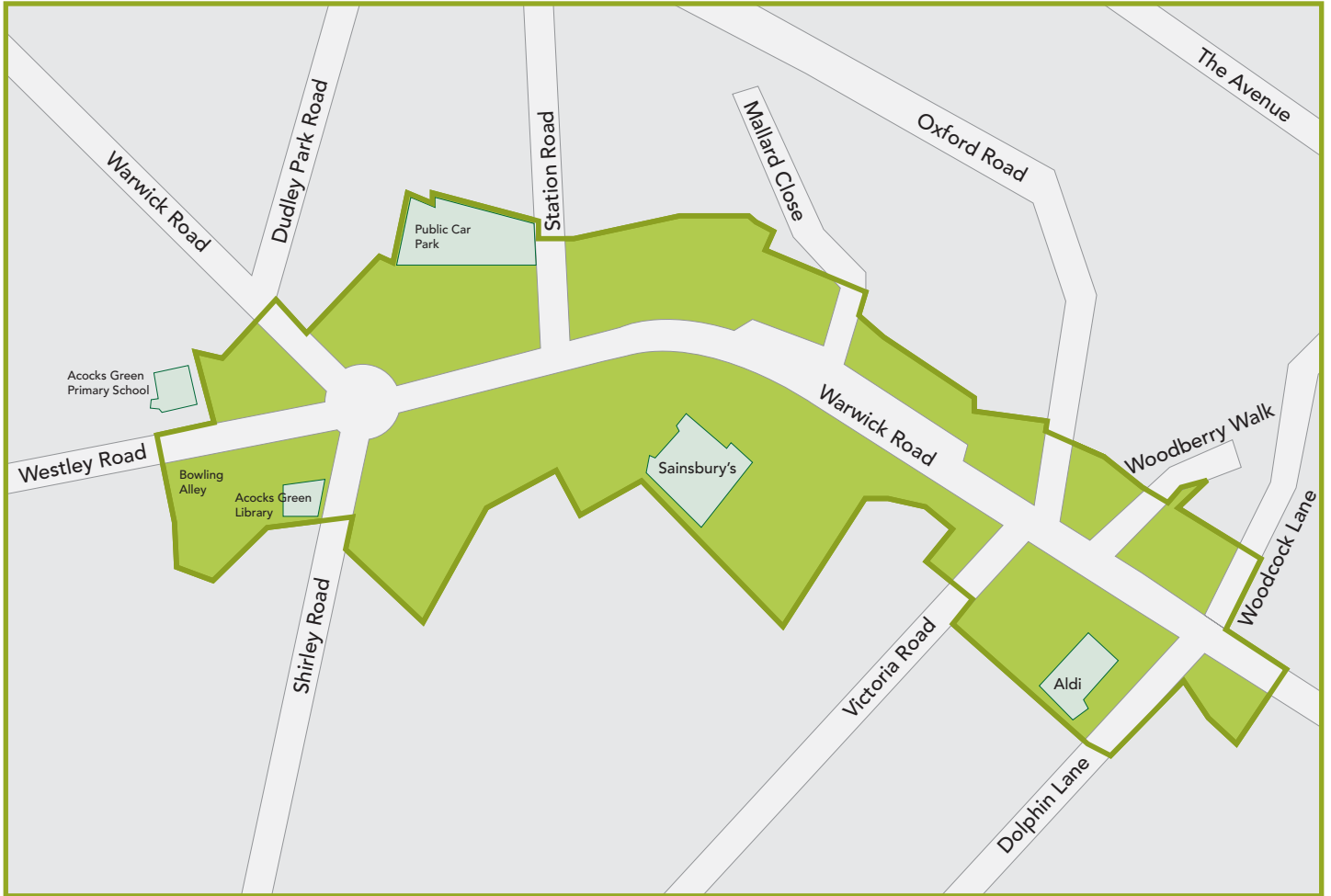
Year one budget

Theme	Action	Budget (£)	Measurement
Growing Business Capacity for Change	Business training & mentoring programme	18,000	Programme implemented Business feedback New business opportunities
	Business networking	3,000	
Stronger Image, Better Promoted	Consumer marketing campaigns	13,000	Website implemented Business events held Media coverage Customer & business surveys
	B2B communications	2500	
	Investor marketing	1000	
Better Kerb Appeal & More Going on	Public realm enhancements e.g. Christmas Lights, floral enhancements & street art	14,100	Projects implemented Customer & business surveys
Better Connected to Reduce Criminal Behaviour	Enhanced Village Radio Business Crime Forum	10,400	Business & customer & police surveys Business feedback Police crime figures
Business Led, Performance Driven	BID Manager (4 days a week) Lead contact & ambassador, project management, business engagement & performance management.	28,000	Annual appraisal Reports to Board
Overheads	Office, legal, finance, administration etc.	5,000	Monitored by BID Manager & Board
Contingency	At 5%	5,000	
TOTAL BUDGET FOR YEAR ONE		100,000*	
*not including any supplementary income that may also be secured.			

The BID area



Proposed Acocks Green Village BID area



How the BID will be financed

The BID will primarily be financed through a BID levy, which will raise circa £500,000 over five years.

The Levy

This is based on the commercial value of our property, including city council property and is calculated as a percentage of the rateable value ⁽¹⁾.

To achieve a realistic income that can deliver on business needs in Acocks Green, a percentage of 2.5% is proposed.

The following table illustrates the BID Levy at sample rateable value levels.

Rateable Value of Property	Annual BID Levy	Monthly Cost	Daily Cost
£10,000 or less	£240	£20	£0.66
£20,000	£500	£42.66	£1.37
£50,000	£1250	£104.17	£3.43
£100,000	£2500	£208.33	£6.85

Over 40% of businesses will pay £240.

Just under 70% of businesses will pay less than £500

We strongly believe, and many local businesses already agree, that put into simple financial terms, the BID Levy represents good value for money.

Who Is Included

The BID is designed to benefit all Village businesses, whichever sector you may be in, so all businesses will be included ⁽²⁾.

Caps and Minimum Levy

To ensure that the Levy is a fair reflection of the benefits that businesses will gain from the BID, we propose a minimum Levy of £240 per annum and a maximum Levy of £6000. It is also proposed that charity shops pay the minimum Levy of £240.

Empty Property

If at the time of Ballot there is no occupational lease, the liability of the Levy will fall to the property owner until a new lease is confirmed and the owner will be entitled to vote in the BID Ballot.

Other Income

Birmingham City Council will invest nearly £70,000 over 5 years into our >

⁽¹⁾ The BID Levy will be increased each year by the annual inflationary factor for local non domestic rate bills as calculated by the Government. There will be no adjustments during the year to reflect changes in individual rateable values due to appeals. Changes in values will be reflected in a corresponding change to the Levy collected from the appropriate properties in the following year. Where a property is taken out of the Rating List, the BID Levy will apply up to the day before the effective date of removal and the annual BID levy will be apportioned

accordingly. Where a new assessment is brought into the Rating List, the BID Levy will apply from the effective date as shown in the Rating List. The annual Levy will be apportioned on a daily basis.

⁽²⁾ 'The BID levy will be applied to hereditaments (premises) with the exception of private car parks, ATMs, telecommunication masts, advertising hoardings as assessed in the 2010 Local Non-domestic Rating List as at 1st August 2011

➤ BID by meeting the BID Levy set up costs (circa £30,000) and collection costs (circa £35,000) and as a Levy payer on its local property (£4825).

The BID will seek to raise additional income through, for example, advertising revenue on the website and making some BID services available to non-BID businesses at a commercial rate.

At a glance

2.5% of your rateable value.
Minimum Levy of £240 per annum.
Charity shops pay the minimum Levy of £240.
Maximum Levy of £6000.
No relief for vacant properties.

How the BID will be organised & managed

The BID company

The BID will be managed by a new, independent, not for profit and limited by guarantee company 'Acocks Green Village BID Limited'. It will be managed by a nominated Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors

The Board will have overall responsibility and accountability to all the BID Levy payers for the delivery of the BID and will direct the BID Manager.

It will comprise of 15 Directors in total:

13 will be **Business Directors** who will proportionately represent the different sectors in our business community i.e. retail, hair and beauty, professional services, leisure etc plus at least one property owner.

3 will be **Stakeholder Directors** comprising Birmingham City Council (also a Levy payer), West Midlands Police and Community (nominated from Acocks Green Village Partnership.)

The Board of Directors will be led by a private sector chairperson and the Board will elect a chair and vice-chair annually.

Membership of the BID Company

All BID Levy payers will be eligible to be members of the company and to vote at General Meetings as will any local organisations, as agreed by the Board, that make an annual contribution no less than the minimum annual Levy.

Role of the BID Manager

The BID Manager will be accountable to the BID Board and their role will

be to design and implement BID projects and services, monitor feedback, explore ways to raise additional income and as a first point of contact for the BID.

Interim Measures

It is proposed that the Board of Directors and BID Manager will be appointed within 3 months of the BID Ballot.

To ensure continuity and an efficient set up process immediately after the Ballot, an interim Board will be put in place comprising of Acocks Green Village Partnership and the BID working group members. At the same time, an interim BID Manager will be appointed to implement the day to day tasks of setting up the BID Company



How the BID will be implemented

The Ballot

All occupiers of premises within the proposed BID area will be entitled to vote if they were listed as a non-domestic (business) rate payer on the date the 'Notice of Ballot' was issued.

In the case of an empty, partly refurbished or demolished property where no occupational lease exists, the property owner will be entitled to vote.

Each business rate payer in the BID area will have one vote for each property (hereditament) for which they are liable for business rates. Some businesses, for example where the business has expanded into an adjacent property, will have more than one vote.

For the BID to proceed the Ballot must secure a majority (51%) of those who vote a) by number of votes in favour and b) by total rateable value in favour.

Ballot papers will be issued on 20 September 2011 and must be completed and returned by 5pm on Thursday 27th October.

Levy Collection

It is proposed that the BID Levy will be invoiced annually to all Levy payers commencing 1st January 2012 for five years. The levy will be collected free of charge by Birmingham City Council and passed to the BID Company.

Commencement Date & Term

It is proposed that the BID's first five year term will commence on 1st January 2012 and end on 31st December 2016. Before this date, the BID Company may elect to seek a renewal of the BID for a further five year term and will seek a new mandate via a BID Renewal Ballot.

Alteration of BID Arrangements

The BID area and BID Levy (other than inflationary increases proposed) may only be altered via an Alteration Ballot or when a Renewal Ballot is held. BID projects, costs and timescales can be altered subject to approval by the BID Company Board providing they fall within the resources available to the BID.

BID performance & measurement

Ensuring that our BID delivers purposeful outcomes and that these are positively reflected in customer perceptions, is critical to our vision for the BID and to our asking of you to share our vision.

Independent market research of both customer and business perspectives will underpin the performance measurement of the BID. It is proposed that previous research in 2008 will be refreshed this autumn to provide our 'baseline' position. This will be followed up in Years Two and

Four of the BID to provide an accurate reading of how the BID is progressing and to assist our evaluation of a second BID from 2017.

In addition we will seek feedback from businesses on a project basis and through the newly created Business Crime Forum and business networks.

Management accounts will be reviewed quarterly and annual accounts will be subject to independent audit.



✓ Final checklist ✓

Why vote **yes**

£500,000 investment into:

- ✓ *Creating more reasons to visit, a stronger image and targeted marketing campaigns.*
- ✓ *Supporting the business community to 'raise its game' and provide a customer experience that other centres around us already deliver.*
- ✓ *Challenging and refreshing local perceptions about what we have to offer.*
- ✓ *And it will put Acocks Green firmly back on the map as a place to shop, eat, drink, do business and socialise in.*

And if **I vote no, or just don't vote**

- ✗ *No investment plan to respond to the challenges presented by new commercial space on our doorstep.*
- ✗ *An end to collective local business working that has a track record in securing funding for improvements to the Village.*
- ✗ *No publicity or support with grants and local concerns.*
- ✗ *No voice on behalf of the business community.*
- ✗ *No work to attract new investors or tackle graffiti, litter and fly posting.*

Where Can I Find Out **more?**

More information about the proposed Acocks Green Village BID can be found at: www.acocksgreenbid.com

If you have any other questions please contact:

Debby Coulles
Dennetts Furniture

Karen Vaughan
Karen's Estate Agents

Ian Mcauley
Hughes Fruits

Kate Wright
The Wright Way

Chris Fitzgibbons
CJF Meats

If you have any questions about the BID Levy or Ballot please contact:

Melinda Brown
Town Centre Manager

tel: 07823 534935

e: melinda.brown@birmingham.gov.uk

If you would like a copy of this document in large print or an alternative format please contact 0121 4640106.



www.acocksgreenbid.com