

What is a Business Improvement District?

A Business Improvement District, or BID, is a clearly defined commercial area within which extra improvement and management is funded by contributions made by the businesses operating within it.

A BID is proposed in consultation with stakeholders within the district, and ultimately voted for by businesses within the defined area for a specific term (generally five years). At the end of the term, the BID may either disband, or propose a ballot for a new, subsequent BID.

All businesses, large and small, are represented fairly in the ballot. This is because a majority vote both in the number of businesses, and the proportion of their rateable value, is necessary for the ballot to be successful.

If the ballot is successful and the BID is established, all businesses operating within the district must pay the agreed levy to fund the improvements. This would be a small percentage of their existing rates, so smaller businesses would pay proportionately less than their larger neighbours. The levy is treated in the same way as their rates, becoming a statutory debt.

Examples of services which could be provided within the BID could include:

- Additional street sweeping and washing, and removal of chewing gum
- Additional refuse collection and recycling services
- Upgrading or repainting of street furniture
- Deep cleansing of pavements and bins
- Prompt removal of Graffiti and fly posters
- Hanging baskets or planting schemes
- Improved security (warden patrols, CCTV, radio links etc.)
- Improved lighting
- Visitor assistance including maps and guides
- Public transport subsidisation or extra provision
- Marketing and publicity
- Provision of holiday decorations and festive lighting
- Improved signage

These services would *complement* those already provided by the City Council and Wiltshire Council; existing services would not be reduced or removed.

The details of exactly which services would be provided would form part of a baseline agreement which sets out the relationship between the BID, City Council and Wiltshire Council.

Further Reading

[Strong Local Leadership – Quality Public Services](#) (2002 Government White Paper)
[Local Authority Guide to Business Improvement Districts](#), London Bids, 2005.