

Open Report on behalf of Andy Gutherson, Executive Director - Place

Report to:	Environment and Economic Scrutiny Committee
Date:	22 October 2019
Subject:	Lincoln BIG Business Improvement District (BID) Update

Summary:

This report provides an update on the Lincoln Business Improvement Group's (BIG) activity to date and further information about the upcoming vote and timelines. Should they gain majority support from businesses in the next Business Improvement District (BID) Ballot, it also outlines their priorities for Lincoln BIG going forward.

Lincoln BIG is a business-led, independent not-for-profit organisation, governed by a board of directors drawn from City Centre stakeholders that represent the business sectors within the Business Improvement District (BID) area. As a co-opted member Councillor Colin Davie, Executive Councillor for Economy and Place currently sits on the Board on behalf of Lincolnshire County Council.

All businesses with a rateable value of £6000 or more pay the BID levy which is collected by the City of Lincoln City Council and governed by a Service Level Agreement between Lincoln BIG and the City of Lincoln Council. Currently there are 852 business ratepayers who receive a BID levy which brings in a levy total of £403,890. Lincolnshire County Council across their 8 city centre sites pay a total levy charge of £19,197.50. These sites include The Judge's Lodgings, The Collection Museum, Crown House, 4 Lindum Road, Usher Art Gallery, County Offices, Lancaster House and The Archives.

Every five years, levy payers are invited to vote for the continuation of Lincoln BIG for the next five years (2020-2025). All business rate payers in the BID boundary with a rateable value of £6,000 or more are eligible to vote on the proposals. The BID is about additionality. It does not replace local authority or police services but has to provide additional resource and activities to benefit the area for example: additional to those statutory and discretionary services provided by payment of Business Rates. The next BID Ballot will take place during October-November 2019 to which Lincolnshire County Council is eligible to vote.

Actions Required:

The members of the Environment and Economic Scrutiny Committee are invited to consider and comment on the report and recommend their continued support for the continuation of the Business Improvement District (BID) for the next five years (2020-2025) through Lincoln BIG.

1. Background

In 2005, 2009 and 2014, Lincoln city centre businesses voted to support the creation and continuation of a Business Improvement District (BID) and implement the proposals set out in the Lincoln BIG Business Plan. On Wednesday, 9th October 2019 ballot papers will be sent out to eligible voters to once again support the continuation of the BID. The deadline for voting is 5 pm on Wednesday, 6th November 2019 with the ballot result revealed at the AGM on Wednesday, 6th November 2019 at Home, Park Street, Lincoln.

During 2018/19 Lincoln BIG have delivered, commissioned and supported over 300 events in the city including Lincoln by the Sea, The RAF100 Weekend and Lincoln Fashion Week 2019 to name but a few. Lincoln BIG manages the Visitor Information Centre for the City of Lincoln Council with 2018/19 seeing a record number of visitors through the door and also supports Visit Lincoln.

The levy funding also helps Lincoln BIG support a number of initiatives to make the city more accessible for workers including the Access Opportunities Fund which gives levy payers and their employees reduced car parking permits. Together with Lincolnshire County Council, City of Lincoln Council and Stagecoach; Lincoln BIG operates the City's only Park and Ride Scheme which is now in its third year with an increase of 20% in passenger numbers over the past year. The Access Lincoln project has also provided residents, commuters and visitors with more travel choices.

They have been active in supporting the retail sector delivering initiatives such as the Pumpkin Trail, Love Lincoln, the Ale Trail and the 'Shopwatch' scheme which levy payers are entitled to free membership. The street management programme works hard in removing graffiti, painting street furniture, weeding and removing fly posters to raise the standards of the appearance of the city centre. In addition, there is the Evening Economy Management Programme with schemes such as two professionally managed Pub Watch schemes and an Evening Economy Strategy Group which meets quarterly to help manage the multi-million pound evening economy. Lincoln BIG also supports Lincoln in Bloom by contributing towards the summer floral displays and Christmas decorations.

Lincoln BIG have outlined their key priorities in their Business Plan for 2020-2015. This has been drawn up through extensive consultation with businesses and stakeholders. The Business Plan outlines three priorities, each with five key focus areas which are:

1) **Welcome**

Focus activity around delivering a coordinated and effective approach to ensure Lincoln offers a well-managed, welcoming and safe city centre.

- a. Warden Service
- b. Street Management Service
- c. Night Time / Evening Economy
- d. Security & Safety
- e. Street Dressing

2) **Experience**

Focus on creating a world class experience for all who visit.

- a. Events
- b. Animating the City
- c. Vibrant High Street Experience
- d. Public Spaces Strategy
- e. Tourism Projects

3) **Value**

Represent value for money and use the collective voice of levy payers and partners within the city.

- a. BIG Bus and Car Park Deals
- b. Partnership Working
- c. Access
- d. Park & Ride
- e. Promotional Activity

Lincoln BIG will measure their success by an annual customer and business survey, undertaking PR, media coverage and social media reach, performance reports to the Board, Annual Report through the AGM, Quarterly review meeting with key investors, communicating with businesses through email bulletins, drop in sessions etc, increased footfall and visitors to the city centre, number of businesses actively engaged in Lincoln BIG activity and projects and increased levels of sales activity and productivity in the city centre.

2. Conclusion

Lincoln BIG aims to put Lincoln on the map as a retail and tourist destination and improve the experience of the city centre in Lincoln for those who live, work, invest and visit. Through their programme of events, initiatives and schemes they not only make the city centre more attractive to locals including businesses but attract new visitors to Lincolnshire. With the offer from the University growing at a fast pace bringing more students and their families to the area the offer through the BID is more important than ever in driving forward Lincoln's economy.

All the additional activities delivered through Lincoln BIG would not be possible and would not happen without the continued support of the businesses that pay the 1% levy. Their services offer value for money. Should the BID Ballot in November 2019 fail to gain majority support from businesses, Lincoln BIG will continue their

full range of services until December 2019 and then wind up activities based on contractual, staff and financial considerations. With Lincoln BIG ceasing to operate from June 2020.

3. Consultation

a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?

No

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Lincoln BIG Business Plan 2020-25
Appendix B	Lincoln BIG Annual Report 2018/19

5. Background Papers

This report was written by Samantha Harrison, who can be contacted on 01522 550576 or samanthal.harrison@gov.uk.