



Business Improvement Districts Update:

High Wycombe Town Centre (HWBIDCo)
and Cressex Business Park

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Table of Contents

Business Improvement Districts Update:	1
Overview	2
Background	Error! Bookmark not defined.
BIDs in Buckinghamshire.....	2
What is a BID and what is the process to get one set up?	3
HWBIDCo	3
Cressex Business Park BID.....	5

Overview

This paper is provided to raise awareness of Business Improvement District (BID) activities that will take place in the High Wycombe Town Committee area this summer, namely two formal ballots of businesses: the first in High Wycombe Town Centre - to continue HWBIDCo (for a third five-year term) and the second to create a new BID on Cressex Business Park. Both BIDs will commence from 1 October 2022.

Short presentations will be provided to by Margaret McCarthy, the Globe Business Park BID Manager who is helping with the creation of the new BID on Cressex Business Park and Melanie Williams, Chief Executive of HWBIDCo setting out the focus areas of their emerging five-year business plan proposal. These presentations form part of their respective wider engagement activity with local members and representatives on the BID proposals. Presentations will also be made to the Economic Sub Group of the High Wycombe Community Board later this month.

There will be an opportunity for members of this committee to ask questions and provide feedback on the emerging priority areas for each BID.

Members are asked to note this report.

Report

BIDs in Buckinghamshire

There are currently two Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) established in Buckinghamshire: a town centre BID in High Wycombe (started in October 2012 with a second five-year term running from October 2017) and a business park BID on Globe Business Park in Marlow (started in January 2015 with a second five-year term running from January 2020).

Prior to unitary transition, project work was well underway to create a third BID on Cressex Business Park. This was programmed to go to ballot in summer 2020 but due to Covid-19 had to be placed on pause.

What is a BID and what is the process to get one set up?

A Business Improvement District is a defined area in which a levy is charged on all business rate payers in addition to the business rates bill. This levy is used to develop projects which will benefit businesses in the local area. A levy rate is typically between 1% – 3% of the rateable value.

There is no limit on what projects or services can be provided through a BID. The only requirement is that it should be something that is in addition to services provided by local authorities. Improvements may include, but are not limited to, extra safety/security, cleansing and environmental measures. The Council is required to work with the proposer to develop a baseline service agreement that defines what statutory activities are carried out in the geography of the BID to ensure that new activity demonstrates additionality.

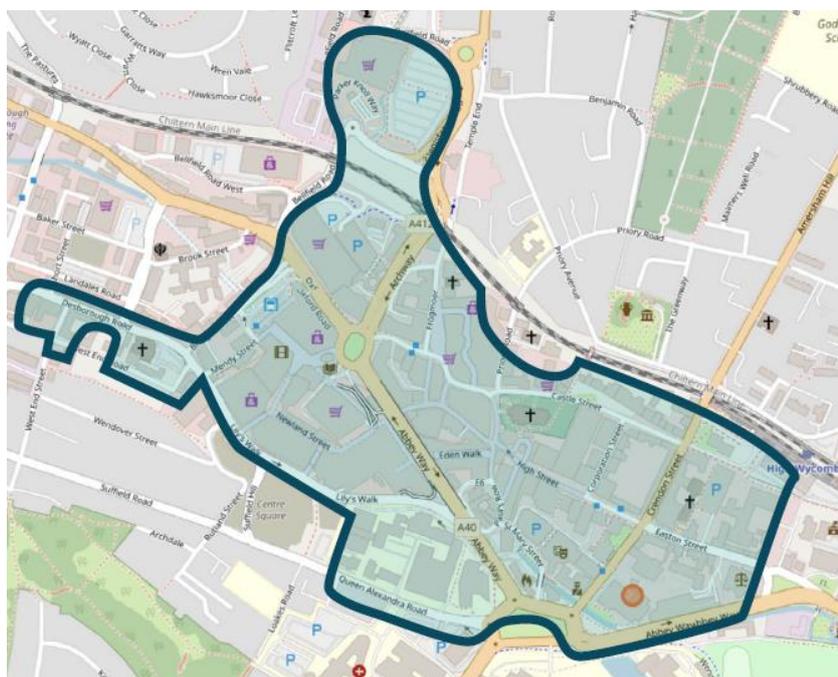
A successful vote is one that has a simple majority both in votes cast and in rateable value of votes cast. Each business entitled to vote in a BID ballot is allowed one vote in respect of each property occupied or (if unoccupied) owned by them in the geographical area of the BID.

Once the BID is in operation the levy is charged on all businesses within the BID area (regardless of whether or how that business voted in the ballot). The Council is required to set up arrangements to collect the BID levy on behalf of the BID from businesses within the designated BID area.

The establishment of a Business Improvement District (BID) is governed by Part 4 of the Local Government Act 2003 and the Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004. This legislation requires the Council to work with the proposer upon submission of a formal proposal (business plan) to the Authority and the Secretary of State. This process is triggered by an 84 Day Notice which calls on the Council to make preparations for ballot. The ballot is not conducted in house and the Council will appoint Civica to carry out a ballot of businesses within both BID areas.

HWBIDCo

BID Area:



Timeline:

84 Day Notice issues: 18 February 2022

Notice of ballot issued: 26 May 2022

Ballot papers issued: 09 June 2022

Day of Ballot: 07 July 2022 (result anticipated next day)

BID Start date: 01 October 2022

What is the focus of activity looking forward (2022 – 2027)?

HWBIDCo were established in October 2012 and started a successful second term in October 2017. In preparation for a third term, HWBIDCo have carried out a formal consultation process of all levy payers (closed 21 February 2022) to get feedback on proposed areas of activity and identify other opportunity areas. This will be used to inform specific project development as part of a new five-year business plan.

The key project areas proposed are:

Better for Business

- A voice for the business community
- Using our influence to lobby for the things that matter
- Zero tolerance to anti-social behaviour (ASB)
- Pedestrianisation of High St, Pauls Row & White Hart St
- Influence & improve the Charter Market
- Business training & peer support

Grow the MyWycombe brand & social media channels

- Promote businesses & raise the profile of the town centre
- Increase footfall & spend
- Deliver exciting seasonal marketing campaigns
- Animate public spaces
- Harness press opportunities

Events and Activities

- Expand the events programme
- Continue to bring in new & speciality pop up events
- Build on the success of big footfall driving events
- Speciality markets
- Monthly footfall data & intelligence sharing

Enhance & Recover

- Enhanced greenery for the town centre
- Raise awareness of employee parking provision
- Cardboard Recycling & Sustainability
- Street Cleaning follow up
- Keeping spend local with a MyWycombe Gift Card

Safe & Secure

- Employ Business Engagement Co-ordinator to run Safe & Secure activities
- Shopwatch, Pubwatch, DISC, Radio Scheme
- BCRP Accreditation & Purple Flag
- Support night time economy & Community Hub
- Zero tolerance policy for anti-social behaviour (ASB)

More information about HWBIDCo can be found here: [- HWBIDCo](#)

Cressex Business Park BID

BID Area:



Timeline:

84 Day Notice issues: 17 February 2022

Notice of ballot issued: 01 June 2022

Ballot papers issued: 15 June 2022

Day of Ballot: 13 July 2022 (result anticipated next day)

BID Start date: 01 October 2022

The catalyst to form this new BID was driven by a petition from businesses on the park for the 'council' to take action on traffic congestion. Legacy Councils (Wycombe District Council and Buckinghamshire County Council) met with businesses and shared the BID the experience of Globe Business Park in being an enabler to draw external funding. Businesses agreed that this model could work for Cressex Business Park too. In 2018 WDC Cabinet approved a funding allocation to support the creation of a BID on Cressex Business Park (CBP) and deliver some 'quick wins' ahead of ballot.

Groundwork South (who helped legacy WDC develop the BID on Globe Business Park in Marlow) are delivering this project alongside the Council's Economic Development Team.

What is the focus of activity looking forward (2022 – 2027)?

Formal business engagement on CBP started in late 2019 and consultation findings were used to develop a draft business plan. As mentioned at the start of this report, the formal ballot programmed for June 2020 was halted due to Covid-19. The Cressex BID Steering Group have carried out a further round of engagement on the draft proposal this spring and it still has support.

The five-year business plan is focussed on three themes:

Getting Cressex Moving: improving transport and reducing congestion

- Strong and effective engagement with the new Buckinghamshire Council and wider transport agencies to make the case for investment into Cressex BP and the surroundings (focus on access and egress enhancements as opportunities for improvements develop)
- Transport survey work to determine how people travel to work and using this intelligence to shape future transport improvement schemes
- Investments into private sector-led, independent transport studies
- Ensuring that Cressex BP companies have their voice heard when new plans come forward for developments in and around Cressex BP to mitigate and avoid future transport issues
- Review of existing traffic restriction orders/double yellow lines
- Review of paid for on street parking
- Assess the feasibility of smart parking bays and dropped curb schemes
- Engage with the council on potential new car park sites
- Deliver a business-led review of sustainable transport options for the business park to identify the feasibility of: bus services/park and ride; cycle and walking access; company and employee-focused sustainable transport plans; car sharing and on demand transport solutions
- Work with the council on a freight strategy to support overnight parking amenities for HGVs
- Introduce a 'Considerate Parking Scheme' to mitigate displacement impacts of employees parking in nearby residential streets

Supporting businesses and investing in employees

- Business Park management service – Cressex BID as the first port of call
- Improved facilities and amenities - The BID will engage and work with landowners and landlords to identify suitable sites for amenities for staff and visitors such as a café and cash point
- BID Board - will be established to lobby and work with stakeholders, investors and government to leverage new investment
- Improved communications and profile – regular e-bulletins, quarterly hard copy newsletter to share with employees, management teams, investors and visitors; a Cressex BP website and social media profiles targeting employees, investors and visitors
- Free and low-cost training services

- Cressex BP Employee Incentive Scheme – such as group discount for access to local leisure and health clubs; facilitated lunch time stress busting short health walks; access to special offers from the High Wycombe Town Centre BID businesses for example

Creating an attractive and secure environment for businesses

- A New Vision for Cressex BP - The BID will develop and implement a sustainable and manageable landscape master plan for Cressex BP incorporating:
 - New signage and lighting features
 - Creation of community space for employees to enjoy during lunch breaks or before/after work
 - Introduction of new landscaped features
 - Installation of a formal unit numbering system and branded features
 - On-going maintenance services to ensure improvements are sustained into the future
- Getting the Basics Right – to work with the Council to ensure that statutory cleaning and maintenance services are delivered and invest and implement a programme of ‘Grot Spot’ quick win enhancement projects across Cressex BP tackling litter issues and locations that create a poor impression for our visitors and employees
- The BID will implement responsive and flexible solutions to further improve security and safety across Cressex BP. Projects *might* include:
 - Investment into CCTV/ANPR at key entrances to the business park
 - Manned security patrol at key times of the year
 - On-call security response service to compliment the work of the Police
 - Development of a traveller response protocol to enable a swift and effective response to unauthorised encampments.
 - Implement a rapid text communication system between companies to quickly share intelligence on security threats
 - Establishment of a Cressex Business Watch scheme to share news and intelligence throughout the business community relating to crime and security.

A draft copy (currently being refined on the back of consultation work) can be found here:

<https://cressexbid.co.uk>