



ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS
TOGETHER
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

RTW Together Business Improvement District

Minutes – 13 May 2024 TWBC, Civic Way, Tunbridge Wells, TN1 1NU

In attendance: Alex Green (AJG), Alex Greig (AG), Clare Waller (CW), Hilary Smith (HS), Justine Rutland (RT), Peter Allinson (PA), Richard Simm (RS), Suzie Lewis (SL), Victoria Sampson (VS)

Apologies: Alexia Taylor, Jenny Kitchen, Nicola Paffard

Guests: Matthew Newman (MN), Nick Bryant (NB) & Oliver Butler (OB)

1. **Welcome** by Alex Green and introduction by all attending

2. **Minutes from last meeting:** Approved.

3. **Any conflicts of interest:** None

4. **BID Director Report**
Ballot

- There was no appeal to the BID ballot result. PA queried knowledge of those who voted no and those lacking in engagement. When the project officer is recruited, we will be in a much better position to track this. PA requested an analysis of which sectors did not engage in the ballot (in a pie chart) for the next board meeting to help BID planning going forward.

Promotion

- Colley Raine appointed, and BID have been working on plan for 24/25. This was approved at last promotion committee. Progress will be shown at next board meeting.

Event Grants & Support

- Event grants have all gone out, a few applicants were unhappy with results however there was only a limited amount of money. Most recipients very happy.

Engagement

- Engagement continues to rise. Subscription to newsletter increasing and AJG attending lots of meetings on the back of the ballot process.

Recommendation 1

- Amplifi: to provide a further £10k contribution to support Amplifi's efforts and maximise the deal they can obtain from Net Zero Now. They will assist business in making transition to carbon neutrality. Amplifi trying to get group discount deal on what they can do to help businesses. There is money put aside in the budget for this. PA would like a breakdown of the number of levy payers benefitting from this. AJG stated 75% would need to be BID members. Net Zero Now will do an analysis of what businesses do and how the businesses work, establish where emissions are coming from and then how businesses might change this to achieve net zero. AG: climate change is real and something needs to be done. A collaborative approach to achieve net zero goals hopefully means businesses will get there as a community and quicker. The funding is to subsidise the process and for businesses to learn where to focus their energies on to reduce carbon footprint. As Amplifi grows, there will be more support for businesses who don't want to go down the full process. The BID can achieve more working with Amplifi than it could on its own. Last year BID gave £20,000. The goal is to make Tunbridge Wells the most sustainable town in the country -
RECOMMENDATION APPROVED.

ACTION: SL to produce analyse disengagement by levy payers in ballot and produce results by sector & size in pie chart.

ACTION: SL to pay Amplifi £10k

Draft Budget

- PA – met new businesses during ballot process. For new businesses is there the opportunity to promote these new businesses? AJG not keen to just promote individual businesses however we do 'Spotlights On' in the guides for new openings. 'Support Local' area of budget looks after these types of new businesses. JR: footfall in RVP is increasing, we need to get this story out to detract from negativity on Facebook etc. AG: we should look to collaborate with Visit TW to get news stories, new openings etc out. When we get to a point when there is something big to shout about, we must do this. PA: update from RVP needed on new management who have been in place for nearly a year. OB: Rivington Hart working on final strategy and business plan.
- **Budget report attached in appendix 1 – OPTION 1 APPROVED.**

5. Finance Report

Taking forward £195k cash into next year.

Better Town spend came in at 11% of budget and not 20% due to BID school spend being less than budgeted, Springboard will be paid in 24/25 financial year, Business Savings Support did not happen.

Activities were 18% against proposed 24% - business support project did not happen last year and grants were under paid by £7,500 because evaluations were not completed by recipients to enable them to be awarded the final 25%. The evaluation report is a substantive piece of work, we are aware who did not complete it. It is often difficult to get feedback from levy years which may be the reason why the evaluation forms were not completed. VS queried if there is a right of appeal on the festivals, or whoever applied for the grant, over this money. AGJ – application form states must be done within 10 days of event. PA – softer approach could be photos, stories, assets and anything we can celebrate the event with, i.e. evidence of people having a good time in Tunbridge Wells. Marketing & Promotion only under by £10,000 which was funds put aside for the roadside digital campaign.

Environment was a 19% spend against 22% planned. High Street project not yet completed however we did go over on the lighting provision for the town, Xmas Lights, and over budget on Xmas wreaths in Joy to the Wells campaign. Wreaths went into the sale and so another 200 were purchased.

Collection of income:

Term 1, year 1: 100%

Term 1, year 2: 99.05%

Term 1, year 3: 99.05%

Term 1, year 4: 97.65%

Term 1, year 5: 94.92%

Term 2, year 1: 251k collected

Currently £184k in bank, TWBC collection fees and Safe Town Partnership support & grants have been paid. If all levy collected this year, we would receive £581k. Reminder invoices just sent out for term 2, year 1.

6. TWBC update attached.

7. AOB

- PA: what are the plans for Tunbridge Wells Summer from TWBC & BID? TWBC: Brickosaurs show and trail, TW in Bloom, new hanging baskets on RVP, Subuteo World Cup. BID: Fanzone, supporting Brickosaurs, supporting Puppetry Festival & Mela, finish High Street and street art & planters.
- AG: any progression on street cleaning? Any engagement from TWBC? AJG to chase Michelle at Maidstone One. Frustration at lack of progression. Maidstone and Canterbury have cleaning vehicles. Canterbury use their street cleaning vehicle for emergency support. PA: could BID put plaques on the planters to show supported by BID?
- AJG described levels of autonomy regarding budget.
- NB: space for more directors? There is a maximum of 14. Ideally looking for commercial real estate and ideally from RVP/Camden Road, ie North of BID area.

Appendix 1

Approval of RTWT Budget 2024-2025

Recommendation to the board to approve the budget as proposed.

Introduction

Each year RTW Together requires a budget to agree for the following financial year 1st Apr-31st Mar. This budget is to cover all project delivery as well as operational overheads including staffing.

Background

The budget would normally be in the region of £450k with approximately 20% spent on each of the 4 core priorities and a little less than 20% on overheads. The recent levy increase from 1.3% to 1.75% has increased our primary income and whilst a significant backlog of funds were spent last year, a significant balance will also be carried over from the prior year (which includes the 2023/24 unspent contingency and unspent re-ballot funds).

Proposal Summary

The full budget breakdown is attached as a spreadsheet with accompanying notes. If looking at excel version please click on '+' boxes on left hand side to open hidden rows and see breakdown of a particular budget area.

The income section is as follows:-

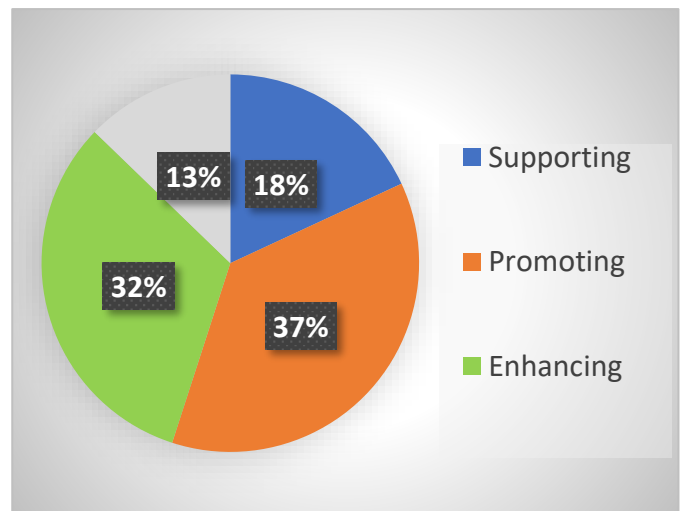
Budgeted Areas	Budget Amount	Notes
Levy Income	£552,435	Set at 95% of calculated rateable value (average is 97% + over last 5 years)
Grant Income	£4,000	Anticipated grants to be received
Voluntary Membership Income	£2,000	Set at £200 x 10 members but this could easily be much higher.
Carried Forwards	£195,594	Current forecasted income to carry forwards.
Total	£754,029	

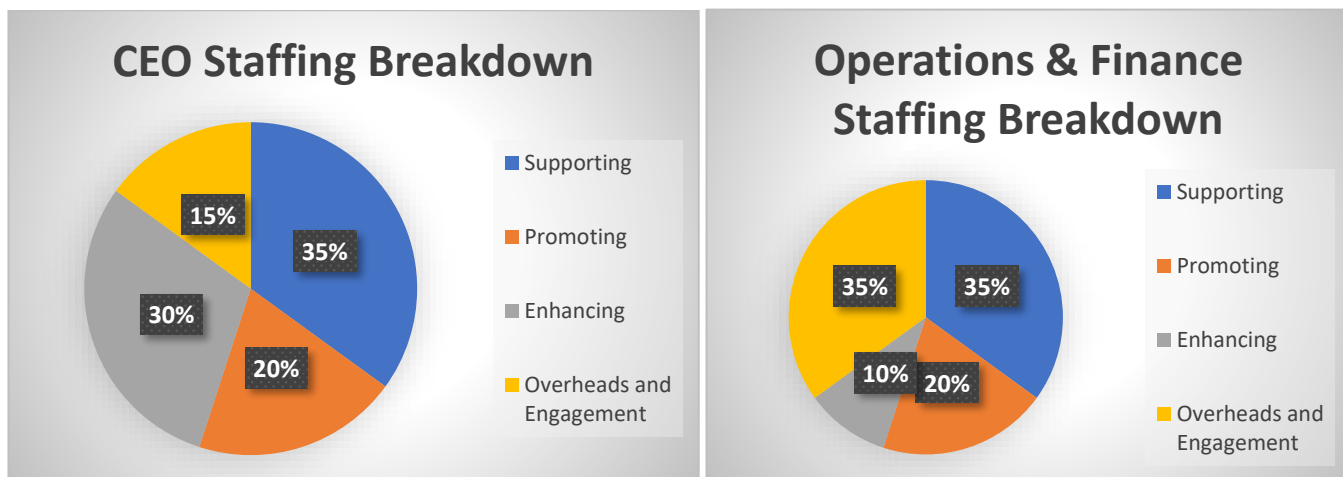
Note – additional project specific income e.g. sponsorship is expected and is netted off in the project areas.

The expenditure section is as follows:-

Budgeted Areas	Budget Amount	Budget Breakdown
Supporting	£131,354	18%
Promoting	£268,016	37%
Enhancing	£234,186	32%
Overheads	£92,736	13%
Total	£726,292	100%

There is a further £27,622 allocated to contingency (5% of anticipated levy income), resulting in a budgeted net surplus of £115. If this isn't needed, it will be carried forward to supplement the 2025/2026 budget.





Budget Principles

1. Balanced budget which does not show a loss at the end of the year.
2. Built in prudence with conservative income included and an additional contingency included.
3. All funds raised within the ballot period are utilised within the same period (i.e. draw down reserves).
4. Funds and resources are split similar to as outlined in the business plan.
5. Overheads are restricted to less than 20%.
6. The costs of staffing resources are shared as appropriate across the cost streams (shown above).

Risks / Mitigation

Risk	Mitigation
Income shortfall	Income largely set and levy includes conservative expectation of receipts.
Expenditure overspends	Detailed tracking of activity with regular reporting to ensure only agreed overspends take place.
Net loss generated	In addition to conservative income and careful control of costs, a contingency measure built in. Regular tracking of activity to take place with appropriate response measures to be implemented if financial do not proceed as planned.
Cash flow shortage	Detailed cashflow forecast created with extensive contingency measures. Income largely comes in early in the year whilst expenditure comes out gradually across the year.
Reputation damage	Overheads to remain carefully controlled, expenditure to be split roughly equally between priorities with activity deliberately focussed across the BID zone geographically and by sector. Transparent reporting to levy payers on finances to take place to ensure openness of activity.

Options

1. Agree budget as proposed.
2. Minor changes to the budget are agreed during the budget discussion.
3. Clear direction is provided for a new budget and the CEO creates and subsequently presents a new budget by email or the next board meeting.

Board Recommendation

Confirm either option 1 or 2 to confirm the budget for the financial year 2024-25.

Alex Green – BID CEO

Appendix 2

BID report from TWBC May 2024

Elections on 2 May have led to a Lib Dem majority and the Lib Dems will be governing alone without other parties. One of our pledges was to continue to revitalise the town centre so please rest assured we are 100% committed to the aims of the BID.

The literary festival has just finished and... Jen did Amplifi proud yesterday.

I look forward to hearing more from our team and seeing the evaluation.

Farmers market

We have had some delays due to licensing issues. We will need a new policy that will go out for a consultation so we are looking at later in the year for a launch.

Keir

You'll remember the Axa site over the road. The application has now been submitted and regrettably none of the consultation appears to have been taken into account. It is for 42 homes and no commercial use. We are looking at how to deal with this.

We received Fairtrade certificates last week and are looking at how to deepen our relationship with the Fairtrade organisation which is celebrating 30 years this year.

RVP

Remain in negotiations with several businesses

We are procuring consultants to develop plans for leisure and so on. Interviews are pencilled in for 4 June.

A new business should be moving into the Gateway in the summer and beginning works in August.