

To: POLICY & RESOURCES (REGENERATION & INFRASTRUCTURE) SUB COMMITTEE		Subject: North Lanarkshire BIDs update
From: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES		
Date: 16 May 2013	Ref: 1717/PK	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report seeks to:
- (i) update Committee on work undertaken to raise awareness of BIDs (Business Improvement Districts) in North Lanarkshire
 - (ii) seek approval from Committee to keep BIDs in North Lanarkshire under review but that no further action is currently taken.

2. Background

- 2.1 A BID is a defined area within which a levy is generated from all non domestic ratepayers and used to provide services additional to local authority baseline services. It is led and developed by the private sector but requires the support of the public sector. There are currently 19 BIDs operational and 19 under development in Scotland.
- 2.2 In November 2012, Committee agreed that an engagement exercise should be undertaken by Regeneration & Infrastructure Services, in conjunction with TCA Ltd, to assess the potential for a pilot BID in any of North Lanarkshire's Town Centres. Previous development work on BIDs undertaken by the Council has already established the timescales associated with BID formation and the scope of the financial and resource implications for the Council in the event that a BID emerges in North Lanarkshire

3. Engagement Exercise

- 3.1 The engagement exercise to assess the potential private sector interest in a pilot BID In North Lanarkshire was developed with the support of TCA Ltd. TCA Ltd has a track record of complementing North Lanarkshire Council's regeneration goals for town centres by working with retailers and businesses to drive forward initiatives in relation to promotional events, improving accessibility and community safety.
- 3.2 The following actions were undertaken to inform local businesses about BIDs:
- 1. An article about BIDs was included in the TCA January/ February 2013 Newsletter which goes to every Town Centre business in North Lanarkshire
 - 2. In the week beginning 4 March 2013 a leaflet giving detailed information on BIDs was circulated to all Town Centre businesses. In addition this invited businesses to attend any of the two public events which were organised to provide further discussion on BIDs.

3. On 20th March 2013 in Airdrie and on 27th March 2013 in Motherwell evening events were held which had speakers from BIDs Scotland, the national organisation funded by the Scottish Government to support the development of BIDs, and from other BID areas. In addition representatives from TCA Ltd and Regeneration & Infrastructure Services were on hand to answer queries and offer further detail on BIDs.

3.3 While both events generated debate and discussion the turnout at each was extremely low with eight businesses represented at the Airdrie event and three in Motherwell. From those businesses which took the time to attend there was a clear view expressed that BIDs was not an initiative that they felt would benefit their business. Those businesses represented had serious concerns about:

- the timescale for introducing BIDs (18 -24 months)
- the additional costs of the BID levy
- while there was acknowledgement that BIDs could help businesses work together this was heavily outweighed by a view that the return may not be worth the investment.

3.4 There were a series of additional issues raised, unconnected to BIDs, but all signalling a clear view that North Lanarkshire's Town Centre businesses have other priorities at this time. The initiative was also viewed as a Council or TCA project which, in the current economic climate, is considered negatively.

4. Next Steps

4.1 The lack of response or interest in BIDs by the private sector to the engagement process has led TCA Ltd and Regeneration & Infrastructure staff to examine further options. Factors for consideration are:

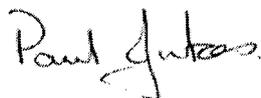
- (i) The clear message from businesses, other BID areas, and from BIDs Scotland that was communicated during this exercise was that local authorities are not the catalyst for BIDs.
- (ii) The Council has invested time in ensuring that it is familiar with its responsibilities and potential resource requirements of a BID.
- (iii) BIDs Scotland is a national resource available to support the development of BIDs and has made a commitment to come to North Lanarkshire to speak to interested parties at any point in the future.
- (iv) TCA Ltd has a strong ongoing relationship and dialogue with Town Centre businesses and a clear understanding of BIDs.

4.2 Given the lack private sector interest despite the willingness of the Council to engage appropriately with any emerging BID it is difficult to envisage any further useful action that could be taken at this point. One option used in other areas has been to engage a member of staff or external contractor for 12 months to work on BIDs development but, given the lack of response to date, this is not being suggested as an option.

5. Recommendations

5.1 It is recommended that Committee:

- i) note the contents of the report and the update provided on BIDs
- ii) approve that BIDs in North Lanarkshire are kept under review but that no further action is currently taken.



Paul Jukes
Executive Director of Environmental Services

Local Government Access to Information Act: for further information please contact Paul Kane on 01698 302842.