

# Setting up the BID partnership

## Working with key organisations

Establishing good working relationships with a number of key organisations can pay significant dividends for a BID partnership.

### Local Authority

Although BIDs provide additional private sector funding for services in their area, there is a danger, at least initially, that the Local Authority may feel threatened by the possible emergence of a BID. It is vital that the BID and the local authority understand each other's aims and objectives as quickly as possible.

In the pilot stage the BID partnership needs to develop a good working relationship with a number of local authority departments including:

- **Planning** - development (including S106 contributions which may fund demonstration projects), planning policy, local economic development and enforcement.
- **Environmental services** - street cleansing, wardens, greening. Depending on the projects a BID aims to deliver, either as demonstration projects or after the ballot, it is likely that the 'baseline' of the environmental services the council provides in the BID area will need to be defined ([step 18, role of the local authority](#)). A good working relationship, established through early discussion and consultation will ensure quick and accurate access to this information. Environmental Services can also be involved with regular visual audits conducted in the area to identify any problems with the delivery of existing services.
- **Legal** - with the need to formalise agreements between the local authority and the prospective BID an ongoing dialogue is required, and the BID may need its own legal representative to advise on the contents of these agreements.
- **Members** - many of the Circle pilots benefited from having council members on their Boards.

### Police

Working with the police is a priority for BID partnerships. The local police can provide support in many forms including PCSOs or training for ranger and warden staff. Similarly the BID partnership can deliver their objectives by funding PCSOs or additional police overtime, this can be of benefit to both parties. If the BID partnership pays for PCSOs they can have control over their patrol routes, shift patterns, monitor exactly what they do and set them business engagement targets. The BID can also provide the PCSOs with mobile phones so that businesses can contact them directly. None of which would be possible if they were wholly funded by the police.

Surveys conducted by the Circle Initiative BID partnerships have consistently shown that antisocial behaviour is the greatest concern to businesses because it directly affects how people feel about the area.

The police and local businesses can work in close collaboration via the BID partnership. The police can distribute detailed information on known shoplifters and those individuals in the area who have antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs), while businesses can provide information on theft, anti social behaviour and any other suspicious activities. The BID can feed back to businesses the outcome of this exchange of



information, so that businesses know they are being listened to.

### Charities

The decision to place a levy on charitable organisations can be a difficult one and can create some opposition. However examples from the Circle Initiative have shown that in setting up a BID improved links are formed between organisations in the area, which has led to companies being more likely to 'give where you live', which has brought a greater level of benefit to charities in the area.

### Private security

There is considerable benefit in bringing in any private security operations in the BID area into a closer working relationship with the police and the BID partnership.

## Evidence from The Circle Initiative

### Local Authority

**Better Bankside** benefited from Southwark's early commitment to BIDs and their decision to appoint an officer to work solely on BID development in the borough.

**The Holborn Partnership** - A local authority officer was seconded to the BID partnership three days a week during the early stages to assist the development of the potential BID. This proved invaluable in opening doors and ensuring the BID had support from council members and built up a relationship with officers. The officer was instrumental in communicating the BID's vision to the council.

**Paddington BID and Heart of London** are both located within Westminster which was the accountable body for The Circle Initiative and so had a very well developed understanding, at all levels, of BIDs. Westminster appointed inward and outward facing officers responsible for BID development in the borough. The inward facing officer focused on providing the BID interface with all the other council departments, holding regular meetings where the BID partnerships and the council officers attended and reviewed actions required. The outward facing officer handled liaison with the BIDs, attending BID partnership board meetings and holding regular monitoring meetings to track progress in the lead up to the ballot.

In the pilot stage **Paddington BID** worked particularly closely with the local authority on shop frontages. Being in a conservation area there are tight regulations about any changes being considered, creating some friction, but the BID was able to bring together the businesses and the council to educate and improve communication.

**Waterloo Quarter** also benefited from an officer from the Regeneration Department being dedicated to the BID in the latter stages of establishing the BID partnership. Before this, not having a dedicated point



of contact made it very difficult for the BID to work with the local authority.

## Police

**Heart of London** has worked closely with the local police and Westminster Crime Prevention Partnership through Civic Watch to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour, particularly street drinking and begging.

Westminster police were sufficiently interested in the BID concept to participate in the US BID study tour organised by Circle. As a result of this visit a pavilion, similar to one in Times Square New York, has been erected in Piccadilly Circus to make the police presence more apparent.



The BID area was covered by two police areas Charring Cross and Piccadilly but the boundaries have been adjusted to create the first Safer Business Area and the policing area now mirrors the BID boundary.

**The Holborn Partnership** is based in Holborn police station and consequently has a very close working relationship with the police from Borough Commander to PCSOs. The police have involved the BID partnership in all aspects of their work and they are treated as part of the police family.



**Paddington BID** worked closely with the police from the outset, they were represented on their management board up until the ballot. They assisted with the induction and training of the Paddington Rangers and then with provision of PCSOs and a PC for the final year before ballot.

**Waterloo Quarter** - the pilot BID area was covered by two police Safer Neighbourhood teams (Lambeth and Southwark), the partnership developed a close working relationship with both teams as the BID coordinator sat on both Safer Neighbourhoods Committees. Handbag theft in the bars and restaurants in the whole of this area was a particular problem (the highest in Lambeth), increased liaison with Police and the introduction of signage within establishments has tackled this issue. Close liaison has also helped to address antisocial behaviour in the area.



## Charities

**The Holborn Partnership** has quite a few charity headquarters in the BID area, and recognised that the sector would be significant for their ballot, so they set about ensuring they were fully engaged in the BID. They set up a Charities Group to bring the charities in the area together to share resources, and set up a brokerage service to link them to local businesses that were prepared to provide resources and help access services such as accountancy.

