

MINUTE 40

Stefan Krause (City Centre Manager) Patrick Knight (Economy and Employment Manager), David Draffan (Assistant Director for Economic Development) and Councillor Tudor Evans (Leader of the Council) provided Members with an update on the Plymouth City Centre Company Business Improvement District Ballot.

Members were advised that –

- (a) a report was submitted to the 9 December 2014 Cabinet meeting regarding the renewal of Plymouth City Centre’s Business Improvement District detailing the significant achievements of the city centre since the establishment of the BID in 2005;
- (b) the legislative framework for business improvement districts contained a provision enabling the local authority to veto the bid proposals;
- (c) Doug Fletcher, the Chair of the Board, and Officers had been working extremely hard to continue the ongoing success of the bid specifically during a time of difficult budgetary pressures;
- (d) in total 612 ballot papers were issued and 249 ballots received resulting in a 40.8% turnout – this was reflective of the national average. 175 votes were in favour of the BID with a percentage of 70.2%.

In response to questions raised it was reported that –

- (e) the City Centre BID was undertaken as a secret ballot therefore a breakdown of the number of votes from smaller retailers in comparison to larger retailers was not available;
- (f) the costs in developing the bid proposals and hosting a ballot was approximately £100,000 if taking the national average, however the Plymouth City Centre ballot had been managed within a much smaller budget of £40,000 including in-kind staffing costs and printing;
- (g) changes had taken place with regards to the governance structure of the Plymouth City Centre Company including both the strategic and operational boards as well as the financial structure and focus of the company’s projects. The promotion of the city centre and West End was a priority for the PCCC and this was strongly reflected in the business case to ensure the future resilience of Plymouth’s city centre;
- (h) the extension of the geographical City Centre BID area to include Bretonside had been formally agreed; consultation had taken place and this area of the city was fully inclusive in the city centre business improvement district.

The Chair congratulated the Leader and officers in attendance on behalf of the Working Plymouth scrutiny panel and highlighted the positive affect the result of the ballot would have upon the city centre.

The panel, having considered the report and advice of officers, unanimously supports the City Centre Business Improvement District proposals and recommends to the City Council that the power of veto, as per Regulation 12 of the Business Improvement District (England) Regulations 2004, is not exercised.