



Belfast City Council

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| Report to: | Development Committee |
| Subject: | Consultation: Assembly NI BIDS Bill |
| Date: | 18 September 2012 |
| Reporting Officer: | John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470 |
| Contact Officer: | David Purchase, Policy & Business Development Officer, ext 3792 |

| 1. | Relevant Background Information |
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| 1.1 | Council have been invited to make a written submission to the Committee for Social Development to inform their consideration of the proposed Business Improvement District (BID) Bill. |
| 1.2 | The Bill will allow Business Improvement Districts to be formed. A BID allows businesses in a geographic location to agree a plan to implement additional services (such as street cleaning or security) in their area and to agree an additional levy, on top of their rates, to pay for these services. The Council will have responsibility for organising a BID vote, managing the BID money and possibly providing the additional services. They will be able to charge for these services. |
| 1.3 | Committee made a response to the original consultation request on BIDs, which informed the development of this Bill. A copy together with a copy of the Bill and guidance notes is included in the appendices. |
| 1.4 | The consultation request was received by the Department on the 16 July and comments are required to be returned by the 21 September. |
| 1.5 | The consultations document was distributed to officers across Council and their responses have been included in the provisional draft response attached as appendix 1. |

| 2. | Key Issues |
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| 2.1 | Of the comments Council made in the original consultation response, the only issues that do not seem to have been addressed are: |

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| 2.2 | - Our main concern was that Land & Property Services (LPS), who already collect the rates, should collect the BID levy rather than Councils. The bill does not make specific reference to who will collect the levy though the accompanying notes document does say LPS will collect the levy (page 3 paragraph 10). |
| 2.3 | - We also expressed concern that the time length of BIDs may mean that any baseline level of service agreed by the Council or the cost for additional services may change over the length of the BID. Hence we would need reasonable flexibility. The BID Bill does not cover this level of detail. |
| 2.4 | - Our role in organising any ballots is not clear. The bottom of page 6 of the Bill and top of page 7 states “17. (1) The Department may by regulations make provision in relation to ballots. (2) The provision which may be made by regulations under subsection (1) includes provision— (e) as to the form that ballots may take, (f) as to the persons who are to hold ballots, (g) as to the conduct of ballots.” |
| 2.5 | - We had asked for clarity over our role such as guidance and oversight and guidance on the development of BIDs. These are not covered in the Bill. |
| 2.6 | - Our power to veto is mentioned but no guidance is given as to when we would reasonably be able to veto. |
| 2.7 | The documents suggest that these issues will be addressed through secondary legislation. |

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| 3. | Resource Implications |
| 3.1 | There are no resource implications attached to the report. |

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| 4. | Equality and Good Relations Considerations |
| 4.1 | There are no Equality and Good Relations considerations attached to this report. |

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| 5. | Recommendations |
| 5.1 | Members are asked to approve the draft BCC response to the consultation and raise any additional issues, relating to the consultation document, that they would like to be included. |

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| 6. | Decision Tracking |
| Timeline: | 21 st September 2012 Reporting Officer: John McGrillen |

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| 7. | Documents Attached |
| Appendix 1 “DSD BIDS Draft Consultation Response.” August 2012. Appendix 2 “Business Improvement District Bill.” July 2012. Appendix 3 “Business Improvement District Bill: Explanatory & Financial Memorandum.” July 2012. | |