



<b>Subject:</b>	Destination CQ BID ballot
<b>Date:</b>	8 September 2021
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Eimear Henry, Senior Manager, Culture and Tourism

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of the report is advise of the upcoming ballot for the Destination CQ BID (Business Improvement District) and to recommend that the council uses its available votes to support a “yes” vote to enable the BID to extend its mandate for a further five years.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Agree to use the council ballots to support a Yes vote for a new five year mandate for Destination CQ BID.</li></ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	Members will be aware that Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) were established for the first time in Northern Ireland in 2015. There are three BIDs in Belfast:

- Destination CQ covers the Cathedral Quarter, encompassing the area from High Street to Great George's Street, bounded by Donegall Quay and Millfield
- Belfast One covers the retail core from City Hall to Royal Avenue, bounded by Victoria Street and Millfield
- Linen Quarter BID covers the area from City Hall to Dublin Road, bounded by Joy Street and Durham Street.

3.2

Businesses located within the BID area agree a five-year business plan and pay a mandatory annual contribution (levy) to the delivery of the business plan, based on the NAV of their property. BID services must demonstrate that they are additional to core services that are delivered by other statutory partners (such as the Council, Department for Communities, Department for Infrastructure etc.). Belfast One was the first BID to be established in Belfast in April 2016 and was subject to a successful re-ballot at the end of March this year. Destination CQ's initial five-year mandate is now coming to an end and the re-ballot to determine whether or not the organisation will remain in existence for the next five years is currently open, with a closing date of 22 September 2021.

3.3

All property owners are eligible for one vote per levy-paying property in the BID area. Belfast City Council has sixteen properties in the Destination CQ area (largely car parks) and will therefore be entitled to a vote for each of the properties.

3.4

Members will be aware that all three BIDs have been playing an active role in the animation and management of the city centre since their establishment a number of years ago. Destination CQ's business plan for the next five year period includes a recap of its activities over the previous five years. These include:

- More than 1200 individuals from Cathedral Quarter businesses attended training events and took part in learning and development activities
- Helped businesses to reduce their rate overheads by 30% through collective purchasing arrangements
- Supported council in delivery of public realm improvements funded through DfC's Revitalisation Fund to a value of £170,000
- Worked with the other BIDs to successfully achieve Purple Flag – recognition of work to support a safe and vibrant night-time economy, as well as delivering events such as Belfast Restaurant Week and participating in collaborative promotion activities such as the Belfast Gift Card
- Supported delivery of a dedicated police team for the Cathedral Quarter – Street Beat

<p>3.5</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided additional and dedicated cleansing services through their appointed contractor, working alongside council teams to improve the cleanliness of the area.</li> </ul> <p>The BID expects to spend up to £2million over the next five years. Its business plan identifies how this spend will break down across three priority work areas. These are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Business Support: includes activities such as collective purchasing to reduce costs, training and networking activities and support for local businesses/cultural organisations</li> <li>2. Safer, Cleaner, Greener: includes putting in place additional street cleansing activities, progressing pedestrianisation efforts in collaboration with statutory partners, addressing anti-social behaviour issues and working on social issues such as homelessness</li> <li>3. Promoting and Animating: include activities to encourage visitors to stay in the area outside of work hours as well championing culture and arts activities.</li> </ol>
<p>3.6</p>	<p>All levy payers will now have received their ballots, which must be returned in advance of 22 September 2021. In order to secure a new mandate, the BID requires that at least 25% of those eligible to vote do so. Of those that vote, at least 50% need to cast a “yes” vote if the BID is to continue its work for a further five years. It is proposed that officers return the council ballots to confirm support for the BID with a “yes” vote. The BIDs are important engagement and delivery partners for the council and it will be increasingly important for us to have strong interfaces with city centre businesses as we focus on re-shaping the city centre in the post-COVID era and driving forward on key interventions such as city centre living and progressing the work on the Bolder Vision in conjunction with the other government departments. In addition, the complementary services that the BID delivers such as the Street Beat and the additional street cleansing regime are important in creating a welcome and safe city centre for all.</p>
<p>3.7</p>	<p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The current levy payable by the council to Destination CQ is in the region of £7,500 on an annual basis. This has been accounted for in existing estimates.</p>
<p>3.8</p>	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>No specific equality implications. BIDs have been established in a number of locations across Northern Ireland.</p>

<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents attached</b>
	None