MEETING OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENTERPRISE AND TOURISM SPC

Thursday, November 14, 2018

HEADED ITEM NO. 2

**Report to Economic, Enterprise & Tourism SPC on Business Improvement Districts**

**Introduction to Business Improvement Districts**

* The purpose of a Business Improvement District (BID) is to enable ratepayers within the boundaries of the proposed BID to draw up a scheme of projects, services and works which are additional to those provided by the Local Authority and are carried out for the benefit of the BID. These works may help improve the trading environment for the area within the BID boundary in which ratepayers operate their business.
* A BID can also be designed to improve the image of the County from a tourist perspective and improve the quality of life for residents and workers in the BID area.
* The most important factor in identifying and commencing a BID scheme is that it must be driven by the Businesses and ratepayers in the particular area.

**The Council's role in the BID process**

The Council's role in the process is set out in statutory legislation - The Local Government (Business Improvement Districts) Act 2006 - which provides the legal mechanism for the establishment of Business Improvement Districts within the functional areas of rating authorities in Ireland. Any decision on whether a BID Scheme proceeds is ultimately a matter for the Ratepayers within the Proposed BID Area. The Council's role is to facilitate the decision making process through the holding of a plebiscite. Should the majority of the Ratepayers within the BID area who participate in the plebiscite vote in favour of the BID Scheme, the Scheme will only come into effect after the Elected Members, by resolution, approve the Scheme. Businesses within the BID Area will then be asked to pay a levy which will be collected by the Council on behalf of the BID Company and all monies collected will be transferred by the Council to the BID Company. The monies collected are not Council Income, the income belongs to the BID Company.

Normal services continue to be provided by the local Authority to the BID area resources permitting and as per the annual Council budget allocations. These services do not impact upon the initiatives or activities to be undertaken by the BID Company which will comprise new and additional activities.

**Who pays the BID contribution?**

* The person liable for the payment of the BID contribution levy is the person who is in occupation of the property on the date that the annual BID multiplier is determined. If the property is unoccupied on that date, the owner is liable.
* When a commercial property has been sold or assigned, the Rates Office should be notified in writing so as to ensure that any further BID levy bills are forwarded to the correct person.
* The levy is also payable by the owner if the property is unoccupied on the date the BID multiplier is determined.
* The income collected by the BID Company is to fund activities/ services not provided by the Council. The legislation makes it quite clear that any activities/services cannot replace or substitute activities previously undertaken by the Council, they must be new and additional services/activities to those undertaken by the Council.

**Experiences of BID’s in Dublin City Council and Dún Laoghaire Rathdown**

**Observations from DCC in relation to their BID’s;**

The DCC BID was established in 2007 and is operated by the “Dublin Town” group.

“*Dublin Town is a key stakeholder in the city which provides an important representative voice for city businesses along with specific services such as economic data, branding and promotion which help to promote the city and its unique offering*”.

Greg Swift (Head of Economic Development & Enterprise – Dublin City Council)

Dublin Town Summary:

Stemming from the Local Government (Business Improvement Districts) Act 2006, various BIDs and BID Companies have been developed and enhanced around the country to support central trading areas and encourage economic development. The Business Improvement District in Dublin City is Dublin City BID Company Limited which trades as Dublin Town (It was formally known as Dublin City BID). Dublin Town was established in 2007 with operations commencing in 2008. The BID operates under a 5 year mandate ‘to develop and promote the economic advancement of Dublin City Centre’ which was recently renewed after the majority of the 3,000 eligible city centre ratepayers voted in the Plebiscite on the Renewal of the Dublin City BID .

As part of its’ new 2018-2022 term, Dublin Town prepared a business plan for the city and business districts within its area which features various key performance indicators and impact measurement of the BID. Dublin Town operates in 5 districts which are: Henry Street; Talbot Street; Dame Street; Creative Quarter and the Grafton Street Area.

Activities and operations which Dublin Town conduct to encourage economic development include:

* Cleaning: drug litter removal; graffiti removal; street cleaning
* Representative voice for businesses to An Garda Siochana, Local & National Government etc.
* Information: via websites, brands, information kiosks and street ambassadors.
* Marketing & Promotion: festivals, activities and brands such as Dublin at Christmas, Dine in Dublin, Dublin Fashion etc.
* Economic monitoring and data collating regarding footfall, spend etc.

In regard to Dublin City Council (DCC) and Dublin Town (DT), two elected representatives from DCC are DT board members along with an Executive Manager from DCC. DT also make presentations and submissions to DCC and relevant committees. DT represents the business community on a number of DCC committees such as the Transportation SPC, Central Area Joint Policing Committee and the City Wide Joint Policing Committee.

**Observations from DLRCC in relation to their BID’s;**

Dún Laoghaire Rathdown Co. Co. have 2 BID’s – One in Dún Laoghaire Rathdown town and one in Sandyford.

* They require strong management.
* Need to deliver value to the users.
* The BID needs to be well resourced.
* Need to have a clear mandate and give concrete vision backed by specific deliveries that will add value to the business community.

As they are funded by businesses, if the above is not in place then they can become difficult to manage and deliver broadly agreed impacts.