

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Economic and Community Regeneration Board

4 December 2015

Report of the Head of Property and Regeneration - S.Brennan

Matter for Monitoring

Wards Affected: Neath North

Neath Business Improvement District

Purpose of Report

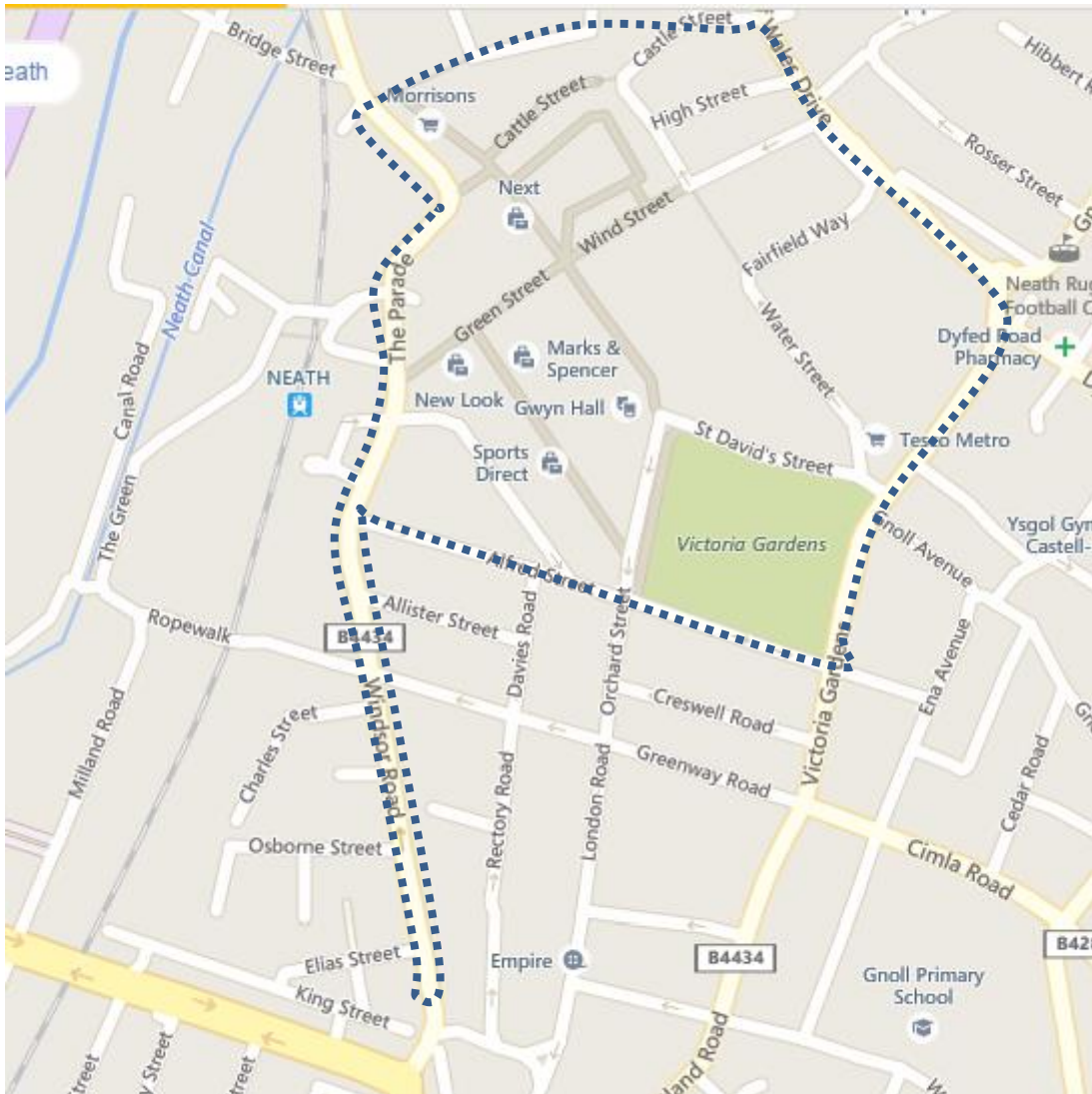
1. To inform members of the result of the Neath Business Improvement District (BID) ballot

Background

2. Businesses in Neath Town Centre have voted to establish a Business Improvement District (BID) which will generate £500,000 in additional funding for the town over the next five years.
3. A BID is a mechanism that has been recognised as being successful in bringing local businesses and other stakeholders together with the aim of improving their trading environment and enhancing their profitability. The Welsh Government is supporting the development of additional BIDs in Wales, as a key component of its commitment to encourage economic development and to deliver its new regeneration framework.
4. The vote, which closed on 19th November 2015, resulted in 64% of the businesses who voted, supporting the BID Proposal. The votes in favour represented 70% of the rateable value of all business properties in the town.

5. **Neath Inspired Ltd** will be funded by a 1.25% levy on the rateable value (RV) of all hereditaments, or business units, within the defined BID boundary with an RV of £6,000 or more. Businesses with an RV below this threshold will be exempt from paying the BID levy as the cost of collection is likely to outweigh the contribution of smaller businesses. The levy will be charged on all businesses within the Business Improvement District area (regardless of whether or how that business voted in the ballot).
6. The Business Rates Section of the Council will be commissioned to collect the BID Levy and administer the BID Revenue Account on behalf of **Neath Inspired Ltd**. Discussions are ongoing and an operating agreement will be in put in place which will confirm the arrangements by which the BID Levy shall be collected together with general arrangements as to the relationship to be established between the Council and the BID Company for the duration of the BID.
7. The maximum period that a BID levy can be charged is for 5 years. If the BID Company wants to continue its activities, at the end of the 5 year period, it must hold a new ballot.

8. BID Boundary Map



9. An independent, not-for-profit company known as Neath Inspired Ltd will go live on 1st April 2016. This organisation will be led by the private sector – comprising a board of directors who represent the businesses in Neath and by theme groups, also drawn from local businesses, who will meet to oversee specific projects in the programme.
10. There is still a considerable amount of work to be undertaken to ensure that the new organisation, **Neath Inspired Ltd** is set up correctly and able to meet the requirements of its members (see chart below). In this respect, it is proposed that the Council considers extending the contract of the Consultants ('The Means') who have assisted the Council in the ballot process. The next stage is likely to cost in the region of £9.5k and discussions are ongoing with Welsh Government in respect of funding this work.

TOPIC AREA	ACTIVITY	DECEMBER		JANUARY				FEBRUARY				MARCH			
Governance & Strategic Planning	Negotiate & sign Operating Agreement	■	■												
	Negotiate & sign Baseline Agreement		■	■											
	Agree date for first AGM			■											
	Write to all members inviting them to become members of the BID company			■											
	Steering Group/board meetings			■							■				
	Mems & Arts prepared			■	■										
Theme groups	Safe theme group meets							■							
	Welcome theme group meets								■						
Office base	Identify office base	■	■												
	Procure IT & other services					■	■								
BID levy collection	Meet with Council on rules for collection & monitoring		■												
	Prepare leaflet/letter for inclusion with first levy bill										■				
	Produce plan for responding to levy payers who query their bill										■				
	Levy bills to be despatched by Council														■
Staffing	Complete job descriptions for key roles					■	■								
	Advertise posts.						■	■							
	Interview and appoint positions										■	■			

Financial Implications

11. Funding of £25,000 has been awarded for the appointment of consultants to lead the team to ballot.

Sustainability Appraisal

12. A BID in Neath would support the Authority's sustainability agenda in the following ways:
 - Economic Prosperity – promoting the attractiveness of Neath as a retail centre.

Background Papers

13. Summary of BID arrangements (attached)
BID Proposal (attached)

Officer Contact

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