

Tamworth Business Improvement District Feasibility Report

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Contents

Executive Summary

1. Methodology

2. Background

3. Research

4. Key findings

5. Potential BID Boundary

6. Financial Review

7. Conclusions and recommendations

- a. A BID which covers the whole area or two BIDs?
- b. Financially viable
- c. Private sector led and real business engagement
- d. A coordinated approach and links to key strategies and plans
- e. Time scales

8. Potential benefits for Tamworth

9. The way forward

10. Scheme of work

Appendix A - BID Steering Group members

Appendix B - Key Stakeholder Interviews / meetings

Appendix C - Analysis of the rateable properties in the Ventura
and Old town

Appendix D – Survey Form

Tamworth Business Improvement District Feasibility Report September 2016

Executive Summary

This document outlines the work undertaken for the feasibility stage of the development of a Business Improvement District in Tamworth including the retail parks known collectively as 'Ventura'. It includes financial analysis based upon the Non Domestic Rating List supplied by Tamworth Borough Council, a summary of the key findings from the interviews with a cross section of businesses and other key stakeholders from across the area and recommendations for the BID boundary.

The document also contains information about Business Improvement Districts, their development / delivery in the UK and offers some thoughts on potential scenarios for a BID in the area drawn from the experience of pfbb UK in this field over the last ten years.

The conclusions and recommendations which have been reached as a result of this work identify that there is clear potential and in fact a need for the development of a Business Improvement District (BID) in Tamworth.

The report identifies that the key challenges for the town are: access in and around the town and the retail parks, the lack of promotion and awareness of the town at a regional and national level and the development of a business community.

The report concludes that a BID will be the ideal vehicle to bring people together to build upon the unique strengths of the town and its retail parks and slowly change perceptions of the local residents, the awareness of potential visitors and the interest of potential investors.

1. Methodology

Information has been gathered using the following methods:

Analysis of financial data

Collation of Non Domestic Rates data for the area, supplied by Tamworth Borough Council including analysis of:

- Key levy payers
- Assessment of payment structures and options
- Boundary area options

Research and Consultation

- Analysis of existing plans, strategies and reports
- In-depth interviews with businesses and other key stakeholders in the proposed BID area

Information Management

We use a comprehensive contact management system which we developed which provides the potential BID with the ongoing ability to:

- Maintain accurate mailing lists for postal and e mail addresses filtered by:
 - Property in the area
 - Rate payer's contact details (which may not be in the BID area itself)
 - Landlords contact details
- Business data by R.V, Business type and category
- Identify links between individual businesses and BID projects

Recommendations and next steps

Besides outlining the scheme of work needed in the development campaign phase of a BID we have identified some particular issues for consideration in the development of a BID for Tamworth .

2. Background

The feasibility and the development of a Business Improvement District (BID) is being considered for Tamworth led by the Tamworth BID Steering Group and supported by the Tamworth Borough Council. It has been discussed as a possibility for at least two years by the Borough Council recognising that a BID would potentially act as a key vehicle and play a vital role to support the economic development of the town.

The BID initiative is being led by a group established for the purposes of assessing the feasibility and potentially developing a Business Improvement District in Tamworth. It is made up of a wide range of businesses and business sectors from across the town and retail park, together with representatives from Tamworth Borough Council. See Appendix A.

The BID Steering Group, comprises of many of the business representatives which sat on the Town Team and has started to create a sense of its own identity calling itself, 'BID Tamworth'. It is gathering a momentum with a sense of purpose and it is now ready to consider the initial findings of the feasibility stage and potentially move forward into a development stage of work.

3. Research

At this Feasibility Stage the market research and consultation is limited. The main aim at this stage is to establish a general understanding of the business issues, aims and challenges in Tamworth to understand how a BID will provide a solution and a means of taking advantage of any opportunities identified by the businesses.

It is in the Development stage where a more in-depth understanding of business needs is gained and specific activities defined as part of the development of the BID plan and the process of developing the confidence in the businesses that the BID will deliver additional services and benefits which they could not gain from elsewhere.

It is also important to ensure that the context of a potential BID is understood as successful BIDs link into other strategies and plans which enable more efficient and cost effective delivery of benefits to business levy payers.

In depth one to one interviews with businesses and other stakeholders

There have been a total of 26 different businesses and organisations involved in these in-depth structured individual meetings from across the geography and business sectors of Tamworth. The list of the individual meetings can be seen in Appendix B.

When considering the number of non-domestic rated properties in the town and Ventura above £12,000 rateable value, there are a total of 83 in Ventura and 267 properties in the old town, giving a ratio of approximately 1:3. It is recognised that the number of total interviews held at this stage represent a very small number of the total businesses in the area but the ratio of interviews in Ventura to those undertaken in the town represent the ratio of total businesses between the two areas.

Strategic relationships and context

There is a considerable amount work being undertaken and progress being made to develop and regenerate Tamworth. A Business Improvement District should not and cannot operate and deliver in isolation. If it is to deliver optimum value for the levy payers then it must take account of the plans and activity undertaken by organisations, agencies, businesses and the public bodies which have a stake in the area.

Key plans, strategies and papers which the BID needs to be aware of as part of its development and which have been referred to in formulating conclusions for this report include the following:

- Tamworth Local Plan 2006-2031
- Tamworth Town Centre And Retail Study 2012 and supplementary updates 2012 and 2014
- Town Centre and out of Town Linkage Proposals 2011
- Tamworth CLES Assessment 2014 in association with the ATCM

4. Key findings

The following summary is based upon discussions at a total of 26 in-depth interviews with businesses and other key stakeholders across the potential BID area. Out of the 26 surveys, 6 were based in the Ventura retail park and 20 were based in the town which included the Snow Dome. The businesses covered a wider range of sizes and types from retail to leisure and professional services, independent and national multiple and were representative of the business mix in each of the main areas. The interviews each lasted an average of one hour and using a survey form followed the same structured format (see Appendix D Survey Form).

1. Introduction and brief outline of the concept of a Business Improvement District with an opportunity to discuss the operation, the role of the business and the potential benefits a BID can bring to the area.
2. Exploration about how they viewed Tamworth as an entity and the how they viewed the relationship between the town and the retail park of Ventura and associated areas.
3. General questions about their business and how it performed in Tamworth and their general views of the trading environment.
4. More detailed assessment of individual aspects of the town and the retail park such as access, marketing, environment and crime and safety. Their thoughts on what should be done to address the issues and take advantage of any opportunities.
5. Concluding questions including blue sky / 'if they had a magic wand what would they do?' scenario and their views and potential support for a BID.

There are three retail-and-business parks to the south of the town centre which include Ventura Retail Park, Jolly Sailor Retail Park and Cardinal Point, but as these are adjacent to each other and for ease of reference we will refer to them collectively as Ventura Park.

Is Tamworth good for business?

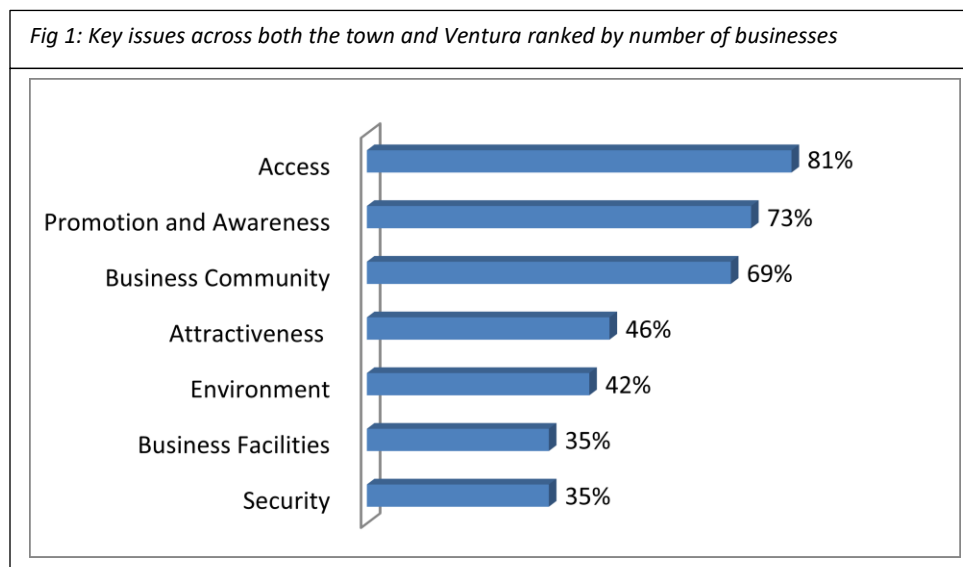
One of the first questions asked was: 'How do you think Tamworth is performing as a town as a whole (Ventura and the Old Town) do you consider that over the last two to three years Tamworth has: become better or a worse place to do business or stayed the same?'

When considering Tamworth as a whole (the town and Ventura), 65% of all businesses thought that the area had become a better place to do business and 35% thought it had become worse. When splitting the feedback down to where the business was based, the feeling of the Ventura businesses was much more positive than those in the old town. When exploring the responses to this question even further with the individuals, when considering the old town on its own, the feeling was completely reversed with 75% of businesses feeling that the town had become a worse place to do business.

The overall feeling was that Tamworth town centre has seen a general decline over the last few years and has lost out to Ventura with larger brands re-locating from the old town and the town centre shopping mall of Ankerside, to the retail parks, which has a bigger offer and free parking. During the daytime the town centre is now dominated by people who are less mobile, local and from socio economic groups with lower disposable incomes. Although Tamworth town centre has recorded declining footfall over the last ten years of around 29%, since the development of Ventura, this is in line with many towns and city centres across the country.

The night time economy in the town is seen as stagnant and outdated and the range and offer is too limited to attract people from outside the area.

There were three key issues identified by businesses which were consistent across both the town and Ventura. They were access, promotion and awareness and a sense of business community. Although these formed common themes across the two areas, there were distinct differences within these issues dependent upon the area where the businesses were based. Some issues were also identified as being interdependent between the two areas.



Access

Parking was identified as a key issue from both Ventura and the old town, although the particular reasons for this being an issue were different and to some extent interdependent. Those in Ventura identified that the majority of their customers arrive by car and that the area is not pedestrian friendly, so that even once people have arrived in the area they will still use their car to move from one part of the area to another.

There is no holistic approach to the management of car parking in Ventura and no signage or traffic information to support drivers in finding spaces or locating the most convenient car park to where they want to go. In certain parts of Ventura, capacity was considered inadequate to the extent of creating hazards with cars parked on verges and creating obstructions or blind spots to junctions. At peak times, such as the Christmas trading period, the car parks themselves are at capacity and access in and out becomes gridlocked.

Although parking availability in the town area is considered adequate, the fact that the town centre car parks make a charge and the Ventura car parks do not charge, this is considered as a barrier to encouraging people coming to the town by car.

There was also one aspect to the parking which linked the two areas together in that businesses in Ventura estimated that anything up to 15% of the parking spaces in Ventura car parks are taken up by people who work in Ventura and the town centre as it is free parking. This in turn limits the capacity available for visitors to Ventura to park.

Signage was also considered an issue both in Ventura and in the town centre. In Ventura it was considered that there is a lack of signage for finding different retail stores by car or even on foot, with certain parts of the retail area being completely hidden from the main access roads into the area. In the town centre signage to and from the railway station was considered poor as well as connecting different parts of the town centre together. Businesses from both Ventura and the town commented that there was a complete lack of signage for people on foot connecting the two areas together.

Promotion and Awareness

Although many of the large retail stores in Ventura recognised that they were destinations in their own right they still felt that there was a lot more which could be done to promote the area. The area does not really have any sense of identity in itself and although it is made up of three different elements, Ventura, Jolly Sailor and Cardinal Point, there is no real identity to the area. There is no single holistic marketing of the area or even a single web site which brings all the retailers and businesses together into one web portal. There is no indication on many of the main surrounding routes such as the A5 or M42 that there is a significant retail park at Tamworth.

As regards the town itself, many businesses felt that there was a lot more that could be done to promote the town and what it has to offer. There were also comments from businesses who said that although there are events which happen at the Castle, many of the businesses remain unaware of them and are therefore not able to take advantage of the events and the additional people which the events may attract.

Although a number commented on the fact that some of the older buildings of Tamworth have been demolished and replaced with some unattractive 1960's and 1970's buildings many commented on the castle and the church as being major assets which should be developed along with other heritage aspects of Tamworth. Many thought that more should be made of the history and heritage of the town and use it to re-develop its sense of identity.

Many felt that the town should not compete with Ventura but rather be developed in such a way as to compliment it. Many felt that the town could be the showcase for a greater range of unique quality independent retailers, an improved restaurant, café, pub and bar offer and development of the events so that they are not just focused on the castle grounds but encourage people to visit the whole of the area.

Attractiveness and Environment

In Ventura businesses commented that it is a relatively clean and tidy environment, but is dominated by the car and is not pedestrian friendly.

In the town, businesses considered that the town was relatively clean and many commented on the attractiveness of the floral displays in the castle grounds. Many thought that the town could be made more attractive with more and regular events being held together with a more interesting range of quality shops and cafes.

Security

The overall impression of crime and safety in Tamworth was that there were very few problems. The sample of businesses interviewed in both Ventura and the town, only mentioned shop theft as the only issue which was not considered to be on a serious scale.

Business Community

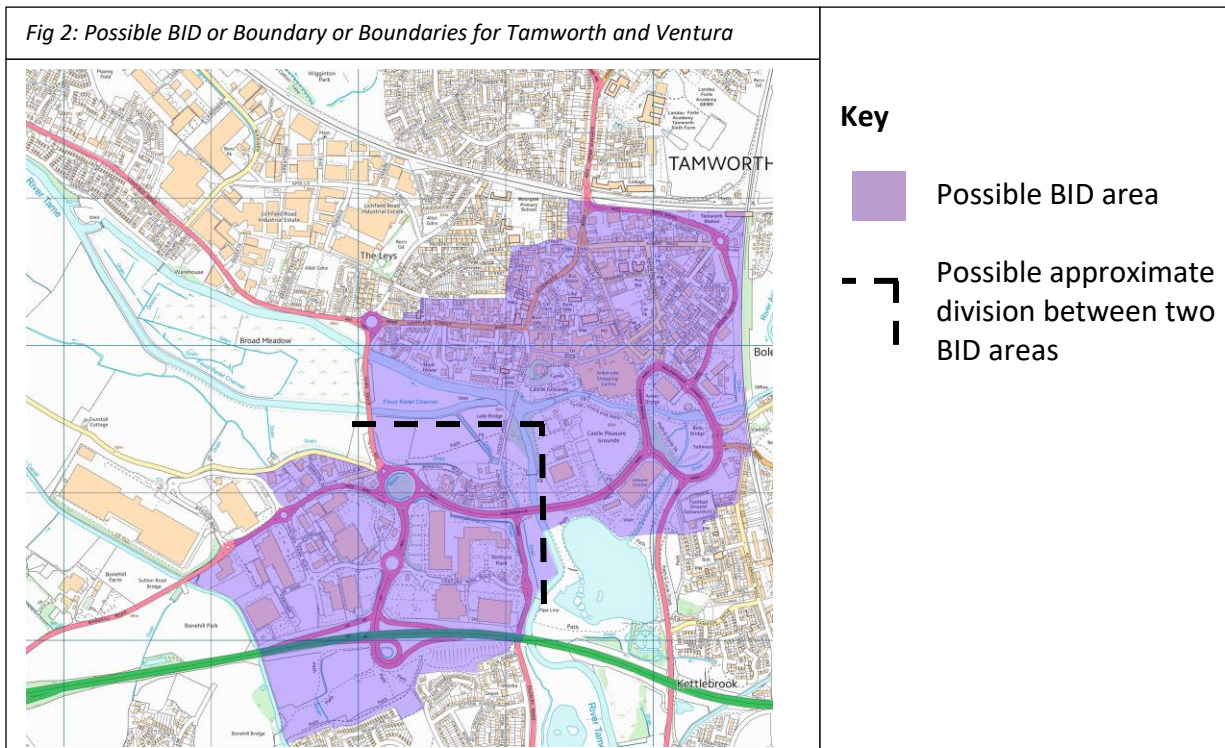
Most businesses in both areas felt that there was no sense of a business community and that this was important. However there was a distinct desire to have more of a community across the businesses in both the town and Ventura

5. Potential BID Boundary

There was a clear desire expressed by the BID Tamworth Steering Group that the area to be considered for the Business Improvement District should include both the old town of Tamworth and Ventura (including Jolly Sailor and Cardinal Point retail parks). At the start of the feasibility study the BID area also potentially covered an area to the north of Offa Drive and the railway line, covering the College and Landeau Forte Academy as well as taking into account the distribution centres to the south west of Ventura.

Over the course of the feasibility study the area has been reviewed and excludes the industrial areas and distribution centres to the south west and stops at Offas Drive in the north. It does now extend to the south of the A5 to include potential development land.

Ventura and the old town are divided by the River Tame and the River Anker surrounded by water meadows which are prone to flooding in extreme weather conditions. Although the walking distance between the town and the retail parks is only in the region of 10 minutes or so, there is very little pedestrian flow between the two areas and the nature of the two different areas results in each being a destination in its own right attracting two different types of person.



There is a considerable difference in the profile of the rateable values of the properties in the two areas. Ventura represents 24% of the total number of non-domestic properties of a rateable value of more than £12,000 but 67% of the total rateable value. Conversely, the town represents 76% of the number of non-domestic properties of a rateable value of more than £12,000 but only 33% of the value. This is an important issue to consider when formulating the BID Proposal as the result of the BID Ballot requires a majority of both number and value to succeed. It means that the BID Proposal would need to appeal to businesses in both areas enough for the businesses to feel they will get value for money from the initiative.

With such a polarised situation between the two areas with similar issues in some respects but requiring very different solutions, the prospect of dividing the area into two BIDs rather than having both areas under one BID needs to be considered as a way of ensuring that all businesses feel that the BID delivery is equitable and providing value for money. We will explore this further in the 'Financial Review' and in the 'Conclusion' of this report.

At this stage it is important to stress that the boundary is very much a draft consideration and that there is a considerable amount to work to do to confirm whether or not it is best to go for one BID or two adjacent BIDs operating in partnership but benefiting from operational economies of scale where possible.

Due to the complexities of the considering two very different retail and business areas, it is not considered appropriate to include any industrial zones or areas as part of this BID work.

When developing the BID Proposal and Business Plan, the relationship between the BID boundary and other spatial definitions of the town centre and Ventura in other strategies will be an important factor to consider. The precise delineation of the boundary will need further consideration as part of the development phase of the BID.

6. Financial review

Within the draft BID area as a whole identified as a shaded blue area in the plan in Section 5 above, the raw data from the National Non Domestic Rates Listing (NNDR) shows that there is a total number of 735 hereditaments which have a total rateable value of £36,531,576.

Smaller businesses

As identified in Figure 1, a large proportion of the hereditaments, 30%, fall below a rateable value of £6,000 representing on 1.7% of the rateable value. The very small ones will comprise of classifications such as advertising hoardings, individual car parking spaces and micro-office suites. Properties from an R.V level of approximately £6,000 start to include small shops, small office based professional service businesses and small take-away food outlets.

Fig 3: Analysis of all hereditaments across the town and Ventura (blue shaded area on plan above)

Tamworth								
RV band	RV band	Number of hereditaments	Total RV	% to total number of premises	% of RV band	% No of Hereditaments by band to total	% RV band to total RV	
>£150 k	> £500 k	10	£10,965,000	1.4%	30.0%			
	£250 k - £499,999	23	£7,765,000	3.1%	21.3%	7.5%	63%	
	£150 k - £249,999	22	£4,231,250	3.0%	11.6%			
£60 k - £149,999	£125 k - £149,999	3	£404,000	0.4%	1.1%			
	£100 k - £124,999	16	£1,846,000	2.2%	5.1%			
	£90 k - £99,999	7	£658,500	1.0%	1.8%	8.7%	16%	
	£80 k - £89,999	11	£936,750	1.5%	2.6%			
	£70 k - £79,999	9	£672,500	1.2%	1.8%			
	£60 k - £69,999	18	£1,162,000	2.4%	3.2%			
	£50 k - £59,999	10	£538,750	1.4%	1.5%			
£12 k - £59,999	£40 k - £49,999	30	£1,339,750	4.1%	3.7%			
	£30 k - £39,999	29	£968,000	3.9%	2.6%	31.4%	16%	
	£20 k - £29,999	59	£1,444,250	8.0%	4.0%			
	£15 k - £19,999	59	£1,006,500	8.0%	2.8%			
	£12 k - 14,999	44	£574,750	6.0%	1.6%			
Subtotal		350	£34,513,000					
£0 k - £11999	£10 k - 11,999	37	£395,250	5.0%	1.1%	22.7%	3.8%	
	£6 k - £9999	130	£1,008,800	17.7%	2.8%			
	Subtotal		167	£1,404,050				
	£5 k - £5999	42	£231,900	5.7%	0.6%			
	£3 k - £4999	56	£225,650	7.6%	0.6%	29.7%	1.7%	
£0 k - £2999	120	£156,976	16.3%	0.4%				
		735	£36,531,576					

It is the norm for the smallest hereditaments to be excluded from paying a levy as if the levy payment is based at 1% of R.V it could potentially cost more to collect and administer the bill than the bill is worth e.g a property with an R.V of £6,000 would only pay £60 if it was charged 1% of R.V. According to the British BIDs survey 2015, 83% of all BIDs in the UK have some sort of minimum threshold.

However it is important to consider businesses with small rateable values even those who may be eligible to small business rates relief to make some sort of contribution to the BID. It is possible that this is done through a voluntary mechanism once the BID is established. There is a tactical consideration here as much as there is a financial one, at least for voting purposes. However a Business Improvement District is supposed to be for the benefit of all businesses in the area and therefore even the smallest businesses have an interest in the activities undertaken by the BID.

The views and aims of smaller businesses need to be carefully considered as they can take a disproportionate amount of management time for a much smaller return on levy amounts but who potentially stand to gain considerably from a Business Improvement District and whose critical mass can make a large tangible difference to overall BID outcomes to the benefit of the larger businesses.

Further research needs to be done in the development stage to understand the level of interest in a BID across this range of diverse and small businesses, but if they were to be included, one way of collecting a worthwhile levy is to charge these small businesses a fixed levy rather than one based upon a percentage of rateable value. If, for example 1% was selected as the general levy rate, businesses between an R.V of £6,000 and £12,000 could be charged £120 per year.

Larger businesses

The breakdown of all properties and values in the potential BID area shows that 7.5% of the properties have 63% of the total rateable value. The majority of these are located in Ventura. In fact for properties of a rateable value of £12,000 or more, Ventura has 23% of the number and represents 67% of the value of the entire area including the old town and Ankerside shopping centre.

Fig 4: Comparison of value and number of hereditaments between town and Ventura

	No of hereditaments >£12k	% of total of Number	Value of hereditaments >£12k	% of total of Value
Ventura	83	23%	£23,195,500	67%
Town	267	76%	£11,317,500	33%
Total	350		£34,513,000	

Fig 5: top ten hereditaments by value across the town and Ventura

Top 10 RV (Old Town and Ventura)		
RV	Ratepayer	Location
2660000	ASDA STORES	VENTURA PARK, BONEHILL
2040000	SAINSBURY'S PLC	BONEHILL ROAD
1650000	MARKS & SPENCER	VENTURA PARK ROAD
1120000	JOHN LEWIS PARTNERSHIP	VENTURA PARK, Bitterscote Drive
660000	TRUSTEES OF J B AUCOTT	UNIT 1, VENTURA SHOPPING CENTRE, VENTURA PARK ROAD, BONEHILL
630000	MATALAN DISCOUNT CLUB LTD	UNIT 7, VENTURA SHOPPING CTRE, VENTURA PARK ROAD, BONEHILL
595000	TAMWORTH BMW	WINCHESTER ROAD
560000	B&Q PLC	UNIT 1 CARDINAL POINT RETAIL PARK, VENTURA PARK ROAD
545000	BOOTS UK LTD	UNIT A, VENTURA PARK, VENTURA PARK ROAD, BONEHILL
505000	NEXT GROUP PLC	UNIT F, VENTURA SHOPPING CENTRE

When considering the larger businesses in the town itself the top ten rateable values start at levels well below the top ten in Ventura. (See the table on the below)

Fig 6: top ten hereditaments by value across the town only

RV	Ratepayer	Location
270000	BOOTS UK LTD	18, ANKERSIDE SHOPPING CENTRE, TAMWORTH, STAFFS, B79 7LQ
255000	TAMWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL	TAMWORTH BC MARMION HOUSE, 121-123, LICHFIELD STREET
236000	DUNNES STORES (BANGOR) LTD	44, ANKERSIDE SHOPPING CENTRE, TAMWORTH, STAFFS, B79 7LQ
219000	T J MORRIS LTD	25, GEORGE STREET, TAMWORTH, STAFFS, B79 7LL
210000	ODEON CINEMAS LTD	50, BOLEBRIDGE STREET, TAMWORTH, STAFFS, B79 7PB
185000	LIDL LTD	GROUND FLOOR, BOLEBRIDGE STREET, TAMWORTH, STAFFS, B79 7AG
177000	PEACOCKS STORES LTD	4-10, ANKERSIDE SHOPPING CENTRE, TAMWORTH, STAFFS, B79 7LQ
174000	TAMWORTH CO-OP SOCIETY LTD	5, COLEHILL, TAMWORTH, STAFFS, B79 7HH
173000	ALDI LTD	ALDI, SAXON DRIVE, TAMWORTH, STAFFS, B79 7HY
159000	BLUE INC (UK) LTD	52-54, ANKERSIDE, TAMWORTH, STAFFS, B79 7LQ

The largest multiple occupier is the Tamworth Borough Council with 14 hereditaments above £12,000 rateable value with a total rateable value of £509,750.

It is important to understand the views and aspirations of top levy payers and ensure that they are fully engaged as part of the development process. Consideration can be given to whether the higher rateable value properties are capped and pay no more than a fixed sum.

If land or buildings are included in the BID area which are not on the current rates listing of the local authority, then provided the levy criteria takes account of this, these properties can be charged a BID levy as and when they are built or refurbished and appear on the Rating List with their re-assessed rateable value.

Boundary considerations

With such a polarised concentration of hereditaments between the town and Ventura and the possibility of two separate BIDs rather than one single one should be considered and explored during the development process. This has been discussed to some extent above in Section 5 'Potential BID Boundary' and will be discussed further in considering the levy options, below.

Levy options

According to the British BIDs survey of 2015, 34% of BIDs surveyed charge a levy of 1% with 39% charging between 1% and 1.5% levy and 13% of BIDs charge between 1.5% and 2%.

While 1% to 1.5% forms the "industry norm" favoured by many national institutions such as the banks, department stores and national retailers, there is no reason why a higher (or lower) rate cannot be set if the list of potential additional services that the businesses call for is greater (or smaller) than can be accommodated by a levy of 1% to 1.5%.

The table below provides some indication of levy values which could be generated by the whole area including the town and Ventura (within the blue shaded area of the map in Section 5 above). These do not take account of any potential exemptions, discounts or banding of the levies for smaller rateable values. The table simply applies a straight percentage across all hereditaments.

Within these scenarios one needs to consider the fact that at a straight line percentage applied to both the town and Ventura, 67% of the levy budget (see 'Fig 4 Comparison of value and number of hereditaments between town and Ventura' above) would be paid by businesses based in Ventura and 33% paid by businesses in the old town. With this in mind, one has to wonder whether in fact the actual needs, BID proposal and actual project delivery would reflect this proportion to ensure that the businesses in Ventura would see the BID delivering them 'value for money'.

Fig 7: Indications of levy amounts generated from town and Ventura at levy rates between 1% and 2%

Possible BID Levy Scenarios					
RV band	Nos of Hereditaments	Total Value	Fixed Charge per hereditament	Potential Levy at	Levy value
				1%	
£5k to £11,999	209		£100		£20,900
> £12k	350	£34,513,000		£345,130	£345,130
Total Levy Value					£366,030
				1.50%	
£5k to £11,999	209		£150		£31,350
> £12k	350	£34,513,000			£517,695
					£549,045
				1.75%	
£5k to £11,999	209		£175		£36,575
> £12k	350	£34,513,000			£603,978
					£640,553
				2.00%	
£5k to £11,999	209		£200		£41,800
> £12k	350	£34,513,000			£690,260
					£732,060

Fig 8: Illustrations of different levy scenarios in each area for hereditaments >£12k only

Potential Levy %	Ventura		Old Town	
	No of Properties > £12k	Levy Revenue	No of Properties > £12k	Levy Revenue
1%	83	£231,955	267	£113,175
1.50%	83	£347,933	267	£169,763
1.75%	83	£405,921	267	£198,056
2%	83	£463,910	267	£226,350

Other possible variations in combining both areas is that the percentage levy rate in Ventura is different to the one in the town, so for example, the town could be set at 1.5% and Ventura could be set at 1% within the same BID. However, the rationale behind the

levy structure in this scenario would need to be explained and fully accepted by the businesses in both areas to ensure a chance of success in the ballot.

Where a shopping centre is involved, it is the 'norm' (in 61% of BIDs) that the businesses within it are still charged the same rate despite the fact that they pay a service to the shopping centre operator which covers certain activities the BID may supply such as additional cleaning, security and marketing. However in 39% of BIDs, businesses in shopping centres are given some sort of discounted rate to allow for this. It may be deemed appropriate to apply a 0.75% rate to businesses in the Ankerside Shopping Centre, if the remainder of businesses outside this centre were being charged 1% for example.

It will be important to consider carefully how the potential BID projects benefit those in Ankerside, engage with them and ensure that a levy is set at the appropriate rate to satisfy their needs to see an appropriate return on investment.

Banding across the entire levy range is an alternative way of developing a charging structure but potentially becomes more complex and costly to administer the charging.

Key decisions effecting levy revenue are determined by where the boundary falls and therefore who pays and who does not and the over-arching charging structures. The criteria applied to levy charging will need to include other decisions including treatment of registered charities, which include arts organisations, vacant properties places of religious worship, educational establishments etc.

Decisions on the levy to be charged must take account of what businesses want to achieve, how much they are prepared to pay and what return on investment they would expect. When considering the levy revenue and criteria the over-riding principle needs to be that businesses believe they will receive as much value back from the BID as they pay in levy charges. In other words they see a return on their investment. The ability to generate the confidence in the Tamworth businesses that this will be the case, will be crucial to securing a 'YES' vote.

Rates Revaluation 2017 and Small Business Rate Relief

At the end of October 2016 the Valuation Office will be making public their draft rate valuations of property ready for implementation of them as the basis of calculating rates bills from the 1st April 2017.

We do not know what impact this review will have on the rateable values in Tamworth town and Ventura but as part of the BID development work these new values will need to be taken into account and the situation reviewed.

We do not anticipate that the review will alter the key issues to be considered as part of the development of the BID.

With effect from the 1st April 2017, besides the revaluation of the business rates, the threshold for small business rates relief will be increased from £6,000 to £12,000. Although the levy criteria does not have to follow that of the business rates, it does mean that any business with a rateable value below £12,000 will be eligible to 100% relief. This means that any business with a rateable value of between £6,000 and £12,000 who would have been paying rates of around 48p in the pound and therefore a property with a £12,000

rateable value would be paying a rates bill of around £5,750 will not need to pay anything with effect from 1st April 2017.

The implication for any potential BID is that these businesses could still be charged a levy. However it is unlikely that the BID would want to propose a similar charge to that of the rates as it would be highly unlikely to succeed in getting through a ballot.

7. Conclusions and recommendations

A BID which covers the whole area or two BIDs?

The old town centre of Tamworth is divided from Ventura, not only physically by the rivers, but in the way in which it is used and by those who visit. There has been a strong desire for a number of years to try and address this physical divide through improvements to the public realm, bus links and innovative travel initiatives and other ideas. Although there have been some improvements to the links between the two areas, there is currently no framework which brings businesses together with any sense of common purpose.

It has been encouraging in many respects that there has been a desire from all businesses we have spoken to, to build on the strengths of the town and Ventura and bring businesses together as a community. It was also clear that although some had seen Ventura as a reason for the town's demise, businesses now saw it as an opportunity to take advantage of the people it brings to the area as a whole.

In determining the actual boundary, and whether the BID should be one complete BID or two separate BIDs, there are a number of key factors to consider. It is important to consider this carefully as the success of the BID ballot rests on two criteria which are that there has to be a simple majority by both number and rateable value of the businesses which vote.

In most town and city centres there are shopping malls where there can be a mass of highly rated properties concentrated in one part of the potential BID area. However there are a number of factors which make this situation different from the 'norm'. They are:

- the polarisation between the town and Ventura is more significant than it would normally be between businesses in a town centre shopping mall and those outside
- the geographical separation
- the difference in environments and infra-structure in which the businesses operate
- the different business profile of each area

If the two areas are to be combined into one BID and gain a successful ballot result then it will be important to consider the relationship between the two areas and whether or not a viable BID Proposal and Business Plan can be created which addresses the needs of both areas and satisfies the businesses themselves, particularly those in Ventura, that they will receive value for money from their levy payments.

If the whole area was divided into two BIDs, they could both gain certain economies of scale from joint operations, although the governance arrangements would need to be set up independently.

It is proposed that the development phase starts with the intention of bringing the businesses from both Ventura and the town together through one BID. If the timeline for a ballot is fixed for a ballot in June/July a final decision as to whether to split the area into two BIDs or retain it as one really needs to be taken by January when a notice needs to be lodged with the Secretary of State as to the intention to hold a BID ballot.

Financially viable

Town BID only

If there were two BIDs the town BID levy percentage would need to be set at a minimum of 1.5% to make it viable. The illustration above in Fig:8 above shows that the 267 properties with a rateable value in excess of £12,000 and at levy percentage of 1.5% would equate to a value of £169,763. This does not take into account any potential concession given to properties in the Ankerside shopping centre and other possible exclusions such as charities. The town levy percentage would probably need to be set at 1.75% to generate sufficient income to have a BID which would make a significant difference.

If properties below £12,000 rateable value were included with a fixed band charge of £120 (rather than a % levy charge) for those between £6,000 and £12,000 rateable value, this would generate a further £24,720 but would effect a further 166 businesses. This is a relatively small amount of revenue for significant number of businesses (23% of the number of hereditaments with only 4% of the rateable value) and would require a significant amount of work with little return. A table illustrating the analysis of the rateable properties in the town only can be seen in Appendix C.

As discussed above, careful consideration also needs to be given to the way in which the levy rate is applied to businesses in the Ankerside shopping centre who already have services provided through their service charges.

Ventura only

If there were two BIDs, Ventura's rateable value is such that even at 1% across the 83 properties in excess of £12,000 rateable value the levy revenue generated would be in the order of £231,955. This revenue would be sufficient to significant difference to the businesses in this area.

A table illustrating the analysis of the rateable properties in the Ventura only, can be seen in Appendix C.

Both areas combined into one BID

At a 1% based levy the revenue is sufficient enough to potentially make a considerable difference to the way in which Tamworth is perceived and provide significant benefits to businesses. A 1.5% levy rate would enable the BID to deliver even more and may still be deemed acceptable if not desirable by businesses in Tamworth. However the fact that there is no sense of business community in the town centre, may mean that a 2% levy rate for businesses would be considered too much of a cost and a barrier to support of the project. However, we recommend that the BID development should encourage businesses to understand what could be achieved with a higher levy rate and aim for the highest possible.

The precise nature and levels of levy charges would need to be considered in more detail as part of the development phase. There is considerable scope and flexibility within the BID Regulations to adapt the criteria to what is charged and the way in which the levy is set so that it is appropriate and relevant for Tamworth. Voluntary contributions, match funding and other funding streams should also be built into the budget. At a conservative level there should be no reason why the direct additional revenue should not equal 10% to 15% of the levy revenue generated with an even greater proportion of value levered in by

in-kind or re-directed investment to match at least 25% to 30% of the levy revenue. Many BIDs exceed these figures.

Private sector led and real business engagement

The development of the BID has been a very positive initiative with support from the Tamworth Borough Council with a dedicated Steering Group formed to ensure that there is good cross sector business representation to take the key decisions during the development of the BID. A successful BID relies upon business leadership.

A BID will be successful if it is properly researched, communications are good and recognised, working techniques are deployed and the fundamental principles are adhered to. The fundamental principles include these two elements:

- A BID is a Business Improvement District. Exactly that. It is a mechanism which has to be driven by business to help them to improve their vitality and profitability. It cannot be instigated by a local authority that then imposes ideas, terms and conditions on the potential BID levy payers. With a free vote by all businesses, any such action would simply fail to gain the mandate to proceed
- A BID is all about incremental, additional services that are over and above those already provided by the statutory bodies locally. It cannot be set up to replace existing activities that are, by habit or custom, already in place, even if those services are under threat and may well disappear imminently.

There is a large number of small independent businesses who stand to gain considerably from the collective influence and voice of a Tamworth BID. There are also many national retail names that are known as enthusiasts or champions of the BID movement, some from its initial inception. Many others are familiar with BIDs because they operate a local store or office in an existing BID and see for themselves locally and centrally through their head offices the activities of these BIDs and the success they are enjoying. However general support for BIDs cannot be taken for granted and national businesses will review each BID Proposal and Business plan on a case by case basis to ensure that they will receive value from their levy investment.

As part of this work we have developed a database which is based upon the Non Domestic Rate Listing for Tamworth and against which we will be adding contact names, telephone numbers and e mail addresses which will be vital for developing and maintaining contact with the businesses as part of this development process. Whenever new business contact data becomes available it will be added as it will ultimately provide a vital tool in supporting the BID operation.

There is tremendous potential and the need has never been greater for business collaboration around the development of clearly defined goals with deliverable objectives to bring the different elements of Tamworth together. Building and improving public realm and transport infra-structures is an essential part of economic development of a town centre but in order to attract the right people and investment there needs to be a real sense of community and commercial vitality. The role of town and city centres as economic and social hubs is changing rapidly. A Tamworth BID can make a radical difference to the way in which Tamworth town and Ventura is perceived by; the local population, visitors, a skilled work force and potential investors.

A coordinated approach and links to key strategies and plans

Town and city centres are being challenged across the UK in trying to find their identity and sense of purpose as the way in which we use our towns and cities has changed. Town and city centres have no future on relying as being simply shopping destinations.

One of the key challenges is to identify the future role of the town itself. The latest version of the Local Plan adopted in February 2016, quite rightly identifies the need for the *'town centre offer, to focus particularly on specialist retail and restaurants, combined with its status as a tourism and cultural hub to counter-balance the attractions of the out of centre shopping parks.'*

The polarisation between the town and Ventura is highlighted in the Tamworth Town Centre and Retail Study, 2014, which identifies that Tamworth is one of the few towns where comparison expenditure in its out of centre retail areas is double that of the town centre - with the town centre only attracting 28% of comparison goods spending by Tamworth residents in contrast with the out of centre retail areas receiving 58%.

However even retail parks are seeing that they have to re-invent themselves as places to enjoy and have great 'experiences' if they are to retain visitor numbers.

The timing of the BID is such that it will be well placed to work closely with key partners in ensuring that the businesses can play a key role in not only identifying the future direction but playing a key role in developing and delivering meaningful steps which will contribute towards a new and vibrant economy and an exciting future for all.

Time scales

The timescale desired by the BID Tamworth Steering Group is for a BID ballot by June/July 2017. We consider this ambitious but possible, given the level of support from the BID Tamworth Steering Group and the Tamworth Borough Council who are providing personnel to support this development. However given the nature of this BID and the prospect of the potentially two BIDs we would recommend that more time is given and that the timeline for the ballot is put back to October 2017.

It will be important to focus on generating momentum and support from businesses in Tamworth town and Ventura and the amount of work involved should not be underestimated.

8. The potential benefits for Tamworth

The beauty of the Business Improvement District mechanism is that each one is tailored to the needs of businesses in the specific area otherwise they simply would not work and be valued.

However the ten years since the launch of BIDs in the UK has been ample time to demonstrate the tangible benefits that are derived from applying the mechanism. These benefits are geared up to raising business return on investment. The most common ones include the following:

- Increased footfall, dwell-time and spend by a wider audience, resulting in improved bottom-line profit
- Increased profile and recognition of the businesses in a particular area
- Improved communication between businesses in an area increasing awareness of local goods and services and stimulating a more interactive local economy.
- Reduction in crime and stock loss so there is less expense replacing damaged property or stolen goods
- Reduced operating costs through collective bargaining and the bulk purchase of business essentials such as heat, light, power, insurance or maintenance
- A physically safer and more appealing environment for workers, owners and all visitors
- Greater choice and appeal for everyone
- An elevated, more attractive profile for the town, bringing in new custom and possibly new investment
- Easier recruitment and retention of quality staff and wider employment opportunities for the local population, especially the young
- A strong, collective voice for business in the affairs of the town centre and its future development
- Increasing asset value over time brings a greater return on investment
- Shared investment in the public realm gives a better pay-back for tax/ rates paid
- Access to performance data and early insight into forthcoming events and attractions help to deliver better performing businesses

More specifically for Tamworth, the feasibility study has provided insight into some of the key issues which need addressing. Most notably at this stage, access and promotion are seen as fundamental issues to address together with bringing businesses together around one common vision and sense of direction for the future. The activities which are needed to tackle these issues will start as small incremental steps. The BID will need to interface with the larger strategic programmes for the town and build on these to tackle the issues which directly impact upon the ability of businesses to optimise their investment in the town and Ventura.

Ultimately Tamworth should be a place to be celebrated in which the local population takes pride and which is recognised regionally and nationally as a town with a great sense of heritage and a great retail and leisure offer.

9. The way forward

In our view there is more than sufficient reason to develop a BID or BIDs across the town and Ventura. The key to development of the concept is to translate this understanding and appreciation of the opportunities a BID can bring, to the wider business community. There is a need to start the development process which includes essential research and the challenge of spreading understanding and acceptance of BIDs and their enormous potential to create an influential business community, help reduce operating overheads, build sales and consequently deliver increased profits. We outline the scheme of work required, in the next section.

We believe that a BID forms the best vehicle for tackling and overcoming many of the long-standing challenges and well as providing the initial cash impetus and collective team spirit to rise to many of the opportunities that are waiting to be seized.

The initiative needs to be business led by the BID Tamworth Steering Group, and seen to be business led by the businesses in Tamworth. There needs to be support on the ground which has been kindly offered by Tamworth Borough Council to provide coordination and the ability to maintain momentum of communication and liaison with businesses across the town centre supported by pfbb UK. The BID Tamworth Steering Group members should not underestimate their role as individuals in providing practical support in communicating with businesses and engendering the support required to achieve a successful BID ballot.

With more than 370 ballots (83% of which have been “Yes” votes in favour) to create and retain BIDs recorded in the UK since the legislation received Royal Assent, it has become very apparent what works and what doesn’t within the BIDs movement. There have been sufficient successful ballots (and subsequently renewal ballots too, 90% of which have been successful), and a number of contrasting failures to allow those interested in the mechanism to conduct detailed analysis and investigation into the key determinants of a successful campaign and the best and most effective model to achieve it. There is a clearly defined process to shaping up and delivering a successful BID but the key component to success is the drive and commitment from the businesses in Tamworth.

10. Scheme of work

The scheme of work for the development and ballot stages has previously been submitted in some detail to the BID Tamworth Steering Group as part of the contractual arrangements for the BID. The key activities pfbb UK will undertake in these next stages are as follows:

STAGE 2: Consultation and Ballot	
Consultation with businesses within the proposed BID area	
1.1	Boundary Review
1.2	Action plan and delivery of consulting and canvassing businesses
1.2.1	Business survey, assimilation and analysis
1.2.2	Consultation events and workshops
Support the Shadow BID Board in all aspects of Developing a BID	
2.1	Development of the business plan, drafting, testing and printing
Coordinate all BID activity in conjunction with relevant partners	
3.1	Key Partner Assessment
Liaison and coordination with relevant Council Departments, staff and elected officials	
4.1	Identify key overarching strategies
4.2	Strategic Review
4.3	Ensuring effectiveness, additionality and monitoring
4.4	Legal process, operating agreement and memorandum of understanding
4.5	Ballot and billing authorities and head office engagement
Lead and coordinate all marketing and communication's activities relating to the BID	
5.1	The launch and marketing of the plan and ballot
Recording, reporting and analysis of all activity	
6.1	Business database creation and management
6.2	Engagement log
6.3	BID Steering Group Support and Progress Reports
General contract related administration	
	BID plan designed and printed
	BID Proposer issues Notice to Secretary of State intention to hold ballot
	Ballot Holder publishes notice of Ballot
	Ballot period
	Ballot result
STAGE 3: Post Ballot stage and set-up	
1*	Formation of the legal entity
2	Set-up of staffing and management structure post-ballot
	Start BID operation

End of report

Appendix A

BID Steering Group members

Business Sector Representation	Name	Company
Banking & Finance	Andrew Mair	Handelsbanken Tamworth
Independent Retailer	Sam Panton	Roasters Restaurant & Coffee Shop
Insurance Broker Services	Julie Pound	Prizm Solutions Ltd
Insurance Broker Services	Peter Robinson	Prizm Solutions Ltd
Leisure Industry	David Morrell	Tamworth Football Club Ltd
Leisure Industry	Faye Fitzpatrick	Namco
Leisure Industry	Martin Smith	The SnowDome
National Multiple Retail	Rob Holder	John Lewis Tamworth at Home
Night Time Leisure Industry	Stacey Penney	Kuda Nightclub
Parish of Tamworth	Revd Alan Gordon	St Editha Church and Parish of Tamworth
Professional Services	Ian Ritchie	Ritchie & Ritchie Architect
Publicity PR and Marketing Services	Linda Ram	Professional Copy Creation
Retail Shopping Centre	Jeff Wigley	Ankerside Shopping Centre
Local Authority	Cllr Steve Claymore	Tamworth Borough Council
Local Authority	Matt Bowers	Tamworth Borough Council
Local Authority	Matt Fletcher	Tamworth Borough Council
Local Authority	Stacy Birt	Tamworth Borough Council

Appendix B

Key Stakeholder Interviews / meetings were held with the following people:

Contact name	Position	Business Name
Jeff Wigley	Manager	Ankerside Shopping Centre
Elizabeth Robinson	Store Manager	Bon Marche
Pam Moseley	Store Manager	Boots
Sue Mitchell	Store Manager	Burton
Mike Roberts	General Manager	Castle Hotel
Christopher Duffy	Proprietor	Christopher's Jewellers
Lee Foster	Head Front of House	Francesco
Girish Jethwa	Manager	Goldsmiths
Andrew Mair	Branch Manager	Handelsbanken
Rob Holder	Head of Branch	John Lewis
Nick Watson	Manager	Marks and Spencer
Amy Linnett	Sales Manager	Outfit
Pixie Andrews	Owner	Pixie's Grotto
Ian Ritchie	Manager	Ritchie and Ritchie
Samantha	Owner	Roasters
Will Carpenter	Manager	Sainsbury's
Ben Cunningham	Branch Director	Santander
Martin Smith	Managing Director	Snow Dome
Stacey Penney	Manager	Spinning Lane
Brian Kenny	Proprietor	Sub Culture
Mark Brindley	Proprietor	Tamworth Info Biz
Sarah Gill	Joint Owner	The Peel Hotel / Christophers
Peter Finch	General Manager	The Penny Black Pub
Dereck Nichol	Manager	Toolbox
Sue Verity	Joint Owner	Verity Art
Amy Grimes	Manager	Wilko
Nicole Quinn	Assistant Manager	Wilko

Appendix C

Analysis of the rateable properties in the Ventura and Old town:-

Ventura (including all retail and business park areas)							
RV band	RV band	Number of hereditaments	Total RV	% to total number of premises	% of RV band	% No of Hereditaments by band to total	% RV band to total RV
>£150 k	> £500 k	10	£10,965,000	9.2%	47.2%		
	£250 k - £499,999	21	£7,240,000	19.3%	31.1%	40.4%	89%
	£150 k - £249,999	13	£2,542,250	11.9%	10.9%		
£60 k - £149,999	£125 k - £149,999	2	£258,000	1.8%	1.1%		
	£100 k - £124,999	8	£910,000	7.3%	3.9%		
	£90 k - £99,999	1	£96,000	0.9%	0.4%	15.6%	7%
	£80 k - £89,999	2	£169,000	1.8%	0.7%		
	£70 k - £79,999	0	£0	0.0%	0.0%		
	£60 k - £69,999	4	£265,500	3.7%	1.1%		
	£50 k - £59,999	2	£104,000	1.8%	0.4%		
£12 k - £59,999	£40 k - £49,999	6	£270,500	5.5%	1.2%		
	£30 k - £39,999	6	£195,250	5.5%	0.8%	20.2%	3%
	£20 k - £29,999	6	£147,250	5.5%	0.6%		
	£15 k - £19,999	2	£32,750	1.8%	0.1%		
	£12 k - £14,999	0	£0	0.0%	0.0%		
	Subtotal	83	£23,195,500				
£0 k - £11999	£10 k - 11,999	0	£0	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	0.0%
	£6 k - £9999	1	£7,700	0.9%	0.0%		
	Subtotal	1	£7,700				
	£5 k - £5999	2	£11,800	1.8%	0.1%		
	£3 k - £4999	4	£15,000	3.7%	0.1%	22.9%	0.2%
	£0 k - £2999	19	£22,085	17.4%	0.1%		
		109	£23,252,085				

Tamworth (Old Town)							
RV band	RV band	Number of hereditaments	Total RV	% to total number of premises	% of RV band	% No of Hereditaments by band to total	% RV band to total RV
>£150 k	> £500 k	0	£0	0.0%	0.0%		
	£250 k - £499,999	2	£525,000	0.3%	4.0%	1.8%	17%
	£150 k - £249,999	9	£1,689,000	1.4%	12.7%		
£60 k - £149,999	£125 k - £149,999	1	£146,000	0.2%	1.1%		
	£100 k - £124,999	8	£936,000	1.3%	7.0%		
	£90 k - £99,999	6	£562,500	1.0%	4.2%	7.5%	30%
	£80 k - £89,999	9	£767,750	1.4%	5.8%		
	£70 k - £79,999	9	£672,500	1.4%	5.1%		
	£60 k - £69,999	14	£896,500	2.2%	6.8%		
	£50 k - £59,999	8	£434,750	1.3%	3.3%		
£12 k - £59,999	£40 k - £49,999	24	£1,069,250	3.8%	8.1%		
	£30 k - £39,999	23	£772,750	3.7%	5.8%	33.4%	39%
	£20 k - £29,999	53	£1,297,000	8.5%	9.8%		
	£15 k - £19,999	57	£973,750	9.1%	7.3%		
	£12 k - £14,999	44	£574,750	7.0%	4.3%		
	Subtotal	267	£11,317,500				
£0 k - £11999	£10 k - 11,999	37	£395,250	5.9%	3.0%	26.5%	10.5%
	£6 k - £9999	129	£1,001,100	20.6%	7.5%		
	Subtotal	166	£1,396,350				
	£5 k - £5999	40	£220,100	6.4%	1.7%		
	£3 k - £4999	52	£210,650	8.3%	1.6%	30.8%	4.3%
	£0 k - £2999	101	£134,891	16.1%	1.0%		
		626	£13,279,491				

Appendix D

Scoping Survey



Interview format:

This form provides a framework for an interview which should last around 30 to 45 minutes with an organisation or business. It is important to allow the interview to flow as much as possible without having to stop too much to record what is being said. However it is important to capture the responses as they will be used to inform the next stage of the BID development and allow us to explore key issues in more detail. Allow on average about 5 minutes for each of the elements of Question 2 and 5 minutes for Question 3.

Begin the interview by briefly explaining that this is a BID Tamworth initiative and outlining what a BID is and how it works. Explain that this interview forms part of the feasibility stage to gain an understanding of the key issues and challenges facing businesses in Tamworth and identifying possible top line solutions with the business or organisation.

Interviewee's Contact Details

Contact name:	Position:
Business address (inc postcode):	
Tel no:	Email address:

1. General views

1.1 What are your views on Tamworth in general?

Do these views apply to just Ventura / Old Town or do you consider that Ventura is part of Tamworth?

1.2

A. How is your business doing in Tamworth?
B. Does this reflect issues / challenges you face locally? If so, what are they?

C. Are these getting worse or better?

1.3 If you were to summarise how Tamworth is performing as a town as a whole (Ventura and Old Town) do you consider that over the last two to three years Tamworth has:

<input type="checkbox"/> Stayed the same	<input type="checkbox"/> Become a better place to do business	<input type="checkbox"/> Become a worse place to do business	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know
------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------

1.4 Has your business or organisation changed over the last two to three years? If so how?

1.5 What are your key challenges as a business nationally? (only relevant if national or larger business)

1.6 What are your key challenges as a business in Tamworth?

2. Different aspects of Tamworth – what are the challenges and how might these be addressed?

2.1 Access (examples – parking (business and customer), traffic control, traffic flow, visitor signage, public transport, delivery access for business) -

Details:

2.2 Environment (examples - Street / Footpath lighting, greenery, street cleaning, buildings)

Details:

2.3 Attractiveness (examples -floral displays, street cleaning, events in the streets, festivals, Christmas lights)

Details:

2.4 Promotion and awareness (examples – digital media promotion of the town, coordinated promotion of what’s on and events,)

Details:

2.5 Security (examples – personal safety during the day, night, crime)

Details:

2.6 Business Community (examples – sense of identity, feeling part of a vibrant town, businesses working together, council and landlord interest)

Details:

2.7 Business facilities (examples – conference facilities, suitable premises for business)

Details:

3. Top opportunities for Tamworth – if you had a magic wand!

3.1 Two opportunities that you feel would make the strongest contribution to improving your business in the town:

1.

2.

Final thoughts about the BID

Any other general thoughts not covered by the interview to this point?

What do you think about the concept of the BID at this stage? In principal are you in support of it and if not what would need to happen for them to think differently?

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