

BIDS & BUSINESS CRIME: A MANIFESTO

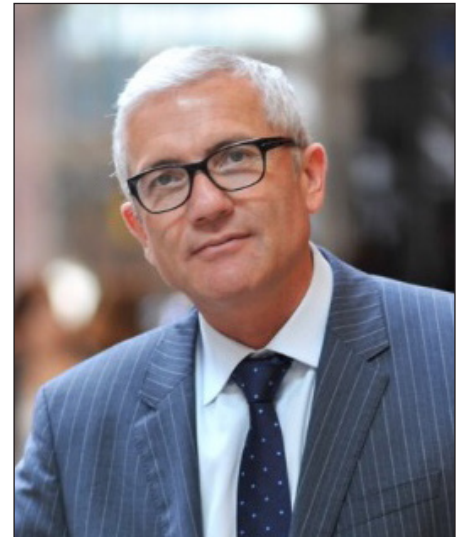
Written on behalf of retail industry
business leaders and local SME's



August 2018

INTRODUCTION

“BID’s represent an excellent vehicle in which retail business can collaborate to make respective Town Centres pleasant and safe places to both shop and work. However, there is a concern that previously some BID models didn’t focus enough resources on the ‘safety and security’ element. Therefore, a new manifesto is being launched today including the provision that a suitable proportion of the BID levy is spent on safety and Security. With the recent British Retail Consortium figures reporting a doubling of incidents of workplace violence, now is the time for us all to act together and ensure that that the BID levy is spent appropriately, whether that is for the introduction of Uniformed patrols, funding a Crime Reduction partnership, updating Town Centre CCTV or maybe in some situations all three! It’s our money, let’s use it to safeguard our staff and our businesses together.”



Tim Edwards
Group Profit Protection Director
JD Sports

Violence, intimidation, robbery and organised crime, are sadly just part of the issues our staff face daily when we open our doors to trade. With increasing pressure being put on costs, its imperative that any investment business’s make is used wisely, the BID business crime manifesto is integral to ensuring that this action is taken with energy and resource directed where we need it most!

Darren Conway, Sports Direct

The security of both premises and stock plus the wellbeing off all Staff in the Retail community is paramount to creating a prosperous and vibrant environment where all local businesses can confidently grow. A BID Business plan should be the catalyst to achieving this by taking positive steps to reduce all areas of Business Crime. Working together to reduce Business crime is not just an option but an absolute necessity.

Colin Peters, WHSmith



BIDS & BUSINESS CRIME: A MANIFESTO

This Manifesto has been written on behalf of retail industry business leaders and local SME's, by a not for profit business intelligence exchange with the desired intention of driving national consistency by Business Improvement Districts in crime management workings, supporting all retailers during these challenging trading and crime conditions.

As the number of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) continues to grow (over 300), and funding from the levy businesses pay is estimated to be in the region of £100m a year, there is a desire from the business community to ensure that a reasonable proportion of this is dedicated to tackling business crime. Many businesses support BIDs and agree the funding as they want to create an attractive, safe and secure environment for customers, staff and visitors.

There is a recognition that the scope, scale and quality of BIDs varies enormously; from those that have £multi-million budgets to those that rely on volunteers. In addition, the budget and resources needed to be dedicated to business crime will vary from place to place according to need and perception.

The overall aim is to make BID areas better trading locations, more attractive to customers and users, and therefore thriving places. There is also a desire from the NBCS to enhance the relationship and engagement between BIDs and many of their levy payers (NBCS members). The business community must be engaged at a local, regional and national level. The BIDs Foundation, the ATCM and British BIDs all have been consulted as part of the process in drawing up this Manifesto, alongside Revo, the ACS and others.

BIDs have pointed out how the reduction in funding available to local authorities and policing in their areas is causing their businesses to request greater efforts to address safety, security and crime reduction issues. But if BIDs fail to respond to this, it could adversely impact the trading environment and lead to business closures.

Crime comes in many forms and, as the recent BRC report¹ shows, the increases in violence towards staff is a major concern. Retailers want their staff to be able to work free from fear of threats and violence, which is an increasing priority. Therefore, protecting their staff as well as their stock and premises is a major concern for all business who want a centre that is safe and welcoming throughout the day and night. Not only that but finding ways to combat public safety issues such drugs, alcohol, begging and rough sleeping will all have an impact on the trading environment and indirectly affect businesses.

It is not just retail that is suffering. All businesses that operate in our towns and cities through day and night are impacted. At a time when Police numbers are at record lows, the business community recognises that they also have a role to play in putting into place effective measures. That is why they are supporting the NBCS, Business Crime Reduction Partnerships (BCRPs) and, increasingly, BIDs. This Manifesto is aimed at BIDs to ensure that the investment being made by businesses in the 300 BIDs operating in the UK is made in the most appropriate, proportionate and efficient way.

EMBEDDING SAFETY & SECURITY INTO BIDS

The propensity of BIDs to take active responsibility for safety and security, primarily in the retail environment is very mixed. There are some exemplars, but others assume the responsibility falls to a separate BCRP. Increasingly, these BCRPs are finding funding very difficult and BIDs offer a secure funding source.

Without being overly prescriptive, it is the right of any retailer, leisure business or other levy payer, to ask what arrangements are included in the BID business plan that promotes the protection to staff and security of goods. There is also recognition that to get the coverage and support required there may need to be a higher levy or top-up in some way. Or that a reduction could be made in other activities such as marketing, events etc. However, there is an expectation that any BID Business Plan will clearly state what it can do, perhaps in partnership or through others, to tackle business crime.

THE BID BUSINESS CRIME MANIFESTO: KEY PRINCIPLES

In order for businesses to support a BID, they call for the following to be in place:

- A statement about the way Business Crime is addressed must be included in the BID Business Plan, either at inception or renewal.
- This should include the development of a specific strategy to deal with business crime at all times of the day and night with clearly defined objectives, outcomes and measures of success.
- Prioritisation should be focused on the crimes that most impact businesses and their staff. It is expected that some research e.g. survey of businesses is undertaken to identify local priorities.
- A commitment to strengthening of partnerships with businesses, community, police, council and other key agencies
- This means sharing critical intelligence, operational and security support, as well as opportunities to up-skill businesses in order to be able help businesses help themselves
- Where there is a separate BCRP, the relationship (including funding), should be clear.

It goes without saying that any response should be proportionate and is best delivered in partnership. The business community recognise that, locally, they have a part to play in being a part of the solution and are committed to supporting and voting in favour of BIDs that bring forward Business Plans, either at the inception of a new BID or the renewal of an existing BID, that meets the ideals set out above.

CASE STUDIES

GREAT YARMOUTH: A BID FOUNDED ON CRIME REDUCTION



Now two years into its third five-year term the Great Yarmouth Business Improvement District (gyBID) has made crime reduction initiatives a priority amongst the projects that it delivers on behalf of the town centre BID levy payers.

The BID employs a team of street wardens, operates a town wide radio link, a civil exclusion scheme and a secure database of offenders to help promote community safety whilst reducing vulnerability of retailers to both shop crime and anti-social behaviour. This is in-keeping with the main priority for the Great Yarmouth Business Improvement District, which has been to promote a safe town centre for both businesses and shoppers since its inception.



The BID also operates the town's CCTV system on behalf of the local authority, which is staffed 24 hours a day; 7 days a week and provides a link between retailers, street wardens and police through use of the BID's dedicated radio link. The control room also has a direct radio to Police HQ and transmits live CCTV images directly to their control room. The unique arrangement in the way the town's CCTV system is managed by the BID has both promoted the involvement of businesses in community safety and contributed to the reduction of business crime.

BID Manager Jonathan Newman is convinced that the crime reduction initiatives delivered by the BID are highly valued by the businesses contributing to them via the BID levy "We have had two successful renewal ballots with over 85% of votes cast in favour of continuing the BID and it is clear that the CCTV, street warden and radio link schemes are what many of the BID payers are wishing to see continue when they cast their vote."



BRISTOL: TACKLING RETAIL CRIME & BUSINESS CRIME IN BROADMEAD



This is becoming increasingly important to businesses and a priority that is reflected in the 2018 Broadmead BID renewal prospectus.

Until recently, the Broadmead BID had very limited feedback from businesses in relation to the overall business crime position. That has now changed, and it is clear that action needs to be taken to address the concerns raised by businesses, in relation to organised and ad hoc business / retail crime. Retail crime, anti-social behaviour, rough sleeping and all the associated problems are also big issues, which will be an integral part of the Business Plan for the Broadmead BID, 2018 to 2023.



A new Broadmead BID sub-group will be established, which will focus on establishing a strategy to address the current issues. All the relevant partners will be invited, and a revised structure will be established. The plan arising from this will focus on the key areas identified and the increased funding allocated to this problem will be directed to addressing the cause of the problems. The Broadmead BID will actively work and co-ordinate with partners to create additional support and focus as required to tackle the new and important issues around crime and disorder.

To make this work effectively, the Broadmead BID will expand the size of the group and involve others who are not currently directly involved in retail and business crime. The issues / causes are complex, and many are driven by the underlying drug and rough sleeping issues, which are currently prominent and growing.

The new partnership will be strengthened to make sure that all key partners are involved, which will be relatively easy due to the scale of the problem. There will, however, be challenges in making the required changes and the best approach will be by working collaboratively to ensure that effective use is made of all existing resource and that new approaches are opened by the BID from across all sectors to effectively address the issues

The Broadmead BID will provide leadership to utilise all the systems, groups and information, which are available and then focus this through the delivery team to ensure that a strong, clear and effective plan is delivered. There are several groups operating currently with a focus on retail and business crime, these will be reviewed, and decisions made as to how these are consolidated and re-focused.

The Broadmead BID did have a similar problem in another area some years ago and now feel that they can utilise that experience to their advantage when preparing the new plan.

There is no doubt that this is a major issue in and around Bristol and additional resource, focus and time needs to be found and then allocated to address the current problems. The new focussed cross sector team and the priorities need to be established quickly along with a plan, and this will be critical to the effectiveness of the future team work.

The only way this can be resolved is by working in partnership, there will be a positive approach from all key players including police, retailers, Bristol City Council and other businesses. Coordinating the partners, developing a plan and resolving the issues will be the focus. The Broadmead BID team will take the lead role to ensure this is delivered effectively and quickly.

MAKING READING “MORE SECURE”

Reading Business Improvement District (Reading BID) are just completing their third term and preparing for voting for the fourth term in January 2018. This term has focused heavily on security, driving down crime and boosting the safety of visitors, shoppers and workers. Through recent PSPO surveys and BID renewal consultations security and crime reduction feature as most important to Reading's businesses.

Currently under “More Secure” the BID levy covers the part-funding of 5 PCSOs, a full time Business Warden and 1.5 CCTV Operatives. The BID has also funded the purchase of a cloud based banning system to ban offenders from the town centre with more than 40 individuals being barred in the past year. This system is also used by the Police to run presentations at the weekly Friday night Briefing Sessions for venue General Managers focusing on security issues relating to the night time economy.

Reading BID works very closely with both Reading Council and the Police and is a key partner working with the above and charities and other agencies formulating strategies to deal with behaviours such as shoplifting, drug taking, rough sleepers and begging.

Working closely with the Police, Reading BID has recently successfully lobbied for a town centre Police Constable focused on, bringing a higher level of arrest powers to assist retailers in their day to day operations, including advising on target hardening their own premises and venues. This additional support has been welcomed by businesses who are already benefiting from their presence.

The BID supported, Reading Business Against Crime runs the Town Safe radio scheme used by over fifty businesses. This radio scheme links the businesses with the PCSOs, the Business Warden, Police and CCTV and also operates the town centre's exclusion scheme that aims to remove consistent offenders through the Courts. Within the last year 15 people have been fully excluded from the town centre through the Court process, but exclusions from individual retailers is estimated to reach at least 150. Reading BID is part of the management of RBAC and contributes regularly to this scheme with Business Warden time as well as being Committee members.

Initiatives both completed and being worked on include:

- Installing security lighting to a notorious area for ASB
- Working with Council street cleaning, RBAC and the Police to remove detritus left by rough sleepers and beggars on an ongoing basis
- Identifying service yard land owners and, with the Police, lobbying them to secure these areas from ASB
- Lobbying businesses to secure accesses that affect neighbouring business areas

The consultation for next term is well underway (voting Feb 2019) and tackling crime and anti-social behaviour will continue to be a strong theme that the BID will invest heavily in.



NB:

This Manifesto has been written on behalf of the business community by the National Business Crime Solution (NBCS). The NBCS is a not for profit initiative that enables the effective sharing of appropriate data between the police, crime reduction agencies and the business community to reduce crime and risks to all, it represents around 50 of the largest major retail interests in the UK, discover more about the NBCS at www.nationalbusinesscrimesolution.com.

