

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S **REPORT TO CABINET**

14 OCTOBER 2025

Report Title: Business Improvement District, Newcastle Town Centre – Re-Ballot

Submitted by: Service Director – Neighbourhood Delivery

Portfolios: One Council, People & Partnerships; Finance, Town Centres and Growth

Ward(s) affected: Town

<u>Purpose of the Report</u>	<u>Key Decision</u>	Yes ☐	No ☒
To update Members on the Newcastle-under-Lyme Business Improvement District (BID) plans to hold a re-ballot for a further five year term until 2031 to continue the good work of the BID in its two preceding terms with the aim of assisting in the provision of a sustainable future for the town centre.			
<u>Recommendations:-</u> 1. That Cabinet notes the requirements of the Council to operate the ballot (and collection of levy if vote is successful) in line with the regulations covering BID ballots. 2. To note the BID Proposal and Business Plan and the aims and objectives for the new BID duration 2026 to 2031. 3. To support the BID in its efforts for a successful ballot outcome. 4. That the Portfolio Holder for One Council, People & Partnerships is authorised to vote Yes for each of the Council hereditaments to the BID proposal for a new term.			
<u>Reasons</u> The BID has delivered against its original aims and objectives and is widely seen to have been a success for Newcastle town centre and extending its term/duration is seen as a further positive contribution to the ongoing sustainable regeneration of the town centre economy.			

1. Background

- 1.1** A BID is a defined area within which rate-paying businesses decide on new improvements to help transform their area and fund them via a levy.

- 1.2** Improvements are made using the funding from the levy if the majority of ratepayers in a designated area approve them through a vote. This enables businesses to have a direct role in deciding what improvements should be made in their local area. The vote is open to business rate payers within the defined area – if a majority (over 50%) who of those who vote, both by number and by rateable value, to approve the proposal, the levy becomes mandatory on all defined ratepayers and is treated as a statutory debt. The BID Proposal and Business Plan indicates that the levy will be 2.1% of the rateable value in the town centre Zone 1 (inner ring road) and 1.65% for the surrounding area Zone 2 (outer ring road).
- 1.3** The BID area will cover the town centre from Newcastle College and the Sainsburys supermarket in the west, to the edge of the business areas on King Street and George Street up to the Borough boundary in the east. The boundary in the north includes the large professional services firms in the Brampton and in the south includes the Morrison and Aldi supermarkets.
- 1.4** The BID will continue to deliver the changes and improvements that businesses in the area identify, continuing the good work that the BID has delivered over the last 10 years. The BID Proposal and Business Plan 2026-31 highlights the achievements of the BID second term in relation to the objectives for the 2021-2026 term:
- Support business growth and investment with a great business offer
 - Create a welcoming and attractive town, ensuring a safe experience
 - Celebrate and promote Newcastle-under-Lyme as a town for all

2. Issues

- 2.1** The Council has a part to play in supporting the BID and these key responsibilities for the local authority to facilitate the processes within the regulations are listed below:
- The provision of the business rates data to calculate the BID levy

In line with the regulations the Council is obliged to give the BID information on the business rates within the proposed town centre area
 - The organisation of the formal BID ballot

There is a requirement to finalise which businesses are eligible to vote and to establish a ballot in line with the regulations. The BID propose to complete the ballot for billing on 13th November 2025, with the result announced on 14th November 2025.
 - The preparation and commitment to the baseline service agreements.

The Council is required to state the level of services provided within the proposed BID area in order that businesses can see what additional services may be provided for the additional levy. The baseline service agreements have been updated for the proposed new term by relevant Service Directors and Business Managers.

- The billing, collection and enforcement of the BID levy (which is then passed straight to the BID Company).

Subject to the ballot being successful a new operating agreement will be established with the BID for the new term/duration to set out how the BID levy will be billed and collected, enforcement procedures and payment processes. This will specify the Council charges for this service.

3. **BID Strategic Objectives and Activities for 2026-2031**

3.1 The BID Proposal and Business Plan 2026-31 contains three Strategic Objectives and Activities:-

- Objective 1: Promote and showcase Newcastle-under-Lyme

Showcase and develop the identity and positive awareness of the town.

A). Work with others and take a leading role in defining and promoting the identity of Newcastle under Lyme as a great place to visit, invest, work and study and showcase and raise the profile of its successful organisations and businesses.

B). Deliver campaigns that showcase and promote all business sectors and types of organisation in the town to encourage use and customer spend.

C). Develop and lead on the delivery of a plan to attract new businesses which will strengthen the identity of the town and increase its reputation as a great place to set-up and grow a business.

D). Work with businesses and other organisations to develop and organise events and develop an animated market town feel to the town and build its reputation as a great place to be.

E). Develop communications between businesses to promote awareness of BID activities and issues and opportunities which may affect trading conditions and the local environment.

- Objective 2: Create a welcoming, safe and attractive town

Work with businesses, organisations and the community to create a place which looks and feels good.

A). Work with the Businesses, Police, Local Authority, CCTV, voluntary organisations and agencies in tackling business crime, antisocial behaviour, street drinking and begging on the streets.

B). Improve the appearance and vibrancy of the streets and open spaces by adding colour and decoration and when appropriate using additional floral displays and festive and creative lighting.

- C). Support initiatives that encourage visitors to find their way safely and easily around the town.
- D). Work with landlords, occupiers, agents and others to encourage them to maintain properties and sites across the town in a smart and tidy appearance.

- Objective 3: Support businesses

Encourage everyone to work together to create a positive working environment and a good place to develop and grow a business

- A). Work with others to develop links between businesses across Newcastle under Lyme to encourage a strong business community.
- B). Promote and develop business excellence through award schemes which profile businesses, organisations and individuals and celebrates, recognises and promotes a great town.
- C). Act as a collective voice to represent business interests for any initiative in the BID area which may impact upon their commercial activity.
- D). Encourage and support relationships between businesses and organisations which seek to develop skills and have a positive impact upon business performance and development.
- E). Work with others to monitor footfall, commercial performance, perceptions and other key data sets for Newcastle under Lyme to monitor impact of delivery and inform decisions.
- F). Work closely with Local Authorities and other partners and play a key role in the development and delivery of a Place Management Delivery Plan which provides a frame of reference for all activities defined in this BID Proposal and Business Plan.
- G). Work closely with emergency services, the local authorities' statutory services and other key stakeholders during times of national or local incidents, emergency situations or economic or logistically challenging periods to maintain a safe and positive experience for visitors and workers and support businesses in Newcastle-under-Lyme.

4. **Recommendations**

1. That Cabinet notes the requirements of the Council to operate the ballot (and collection of levy if vote is successful) in line with the regulations covering BID ballots.
2. To note the BID Proposal and Business Plan and the aims and objectives for the new BID duration 2026 to 2031.
3. To support the BID in its efforts for a successful ballot outcome.
4. That the Portfolio Holder for One Council, People & Partnerships is authorised to vote Yes for each of the Council hereditaments to the BID proposal for a new term.

5. **Reasons**

- 5.1** The BID has delivered against its original aims and objectives and is widely seen to have been a success for Newcastle town centre and extending its term/duration is seen as a further positive contribution to the ongoing sustainable regeneration of the town centre economy.

6. Legal and Statutory Implications

- 6.1** The BID will continue to operate within the regulations; Part 4 of the Local Government Act 2003 and Statutory Instrument 2004 No 2443 – Business Improvement District Regulations.

7. Equality Impact Assessment

- 7.1** There are no direct implications for equality.

8. Financial and Resource Implications

- 8.1** In order for the BID to achieve the strategic objectives and activities stated above, the Council will continue to support in the form of payments based on the rateable value of the Council's premises in the town centre, in line with other public and private companies operating in the BID area. Officer and member support to the Board and where appropriate, theme groups, will continue in line with the Council's current approach.
- 8.2** Officers have calculated that the cost to the Council based on current business rates and property occupancy will be circa £21,152,70 (34 hereditaments of which 27 incur a levy). The key buildings in the town centre which the Council pay rates on are Jubilee 2, Guildhall, the Depot, Lancaster Buildings, properties on Merrial Street and Fogg Street, the bus station, town centre car parks and market stalls. Whilst the outcome of the BID re-ballot won't be known until 14th November 2025, the Council has considered this as part of the annual budget setting process.
- 8.3** In line with the BID regulations the Council can charge for the additional administration caused by the collation of funds on behalf of the BID. The current administration fee paid to the Council from the BID is £9,500. It is therefore recommended that this issue is addressed through the service agreement.
- 8.4** Customer Hub officer support will be required to complete the business rates information and the re-ballot will require Elections officer time and a small sum for stationary/postage. In addition, Neighbourhood Delivery officer time will be used to support the overall process. These officer resources will be prioritised within existing resources.
- 8.5** A levy of 2.1% of rateable value (RV) is proposed for businesses inside the ring road with a RV of £12,001 or more and a levy of 1.65% of rateable value (RV) is proposed for businesses outside the ring road with a RV of £12,001 or more which fall within the levy criteria laid down in Section 16 of the BID Proposal and Business Plan 2026-31.
- 8.6** This levy arrangement will generate an estimated annual amount of around £285,420 in Year 1 to £308,948 in Year 5 (billed amount) of ring-fenced

funding (estimated billed amount of £1,485,337 over the five-year life of the BID) and will also be used to lever in additional funds where possible adding a further estimated income of £260,202 over the life of the BID. The projected collection rate is 96%, and inflation of an estimated 2% pa will be applied. This will be used to fund the projects identified in the BID Proposal and Business Plan 2026-31.

- 8.7 In the event of the BID re-ballot being unsuccessful, there is likely to be an expectation for the Council to deliver similar activities directly without the additional BID Levy. This is a risk as there is no budget available to deliver these activities and the Council therefore cannot commit to doing so at present. Any change to circumstances brought about by Local Government Reorganisation, currently scheduled for April 2028, 2 years into the new BID term, will be considered at this time.

9. Major Risks and Mitigation

- 9.1 The major risk is the resource implications for the Council should the BID re-ballot not be successful as the activities undertaken by the BID will cease. There is likely to be a requirement for similar activities to continue to be delivered directly by the Council but without the additional BID Levy, which will not be possible within current projected budgets and resources. Any mitigation which may become possible as a result of Local Government Reorganisation will be considered at the appropriate time.

10. UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG)



11. One Council

Please confirm that consideration has been given to the following programmes of work:

One Commercial Council ☐

We will make investment to diversify our income and think entrepreneurially.

One Digital Council ☐

We will develop and implement a digital approach which makes it easy for all residents and businesses to engage with the Council, with our customers at the heart of every interaction.

One Sustainable Council ☐

We will deliver on our commitments to a net zero future and make all decisions with sustainability as a driving principle

11.1 Partnership working with the BID offers an opportunity to deliver greener, friendlier and safer spaces for Newcastle town centre, utilising the power and input of businesses in delivery, alongside digital promotion.

12. Key Decision Information

12.1 This is not a key decision.

13. Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions

13.1 None

14. Background Papers

13.1 Attached BID Proposal and Business Plan 2026-2031