

West End BID to open ballot for voting

Hot on the heels of the voting frenzy of last week, there will be more voting opportunities for businesses in the West End from today.

Edinburgh's West End BID Steering Group has launched their proposed manifesto to bring prosperity back to the city's West End through the creation of a Business Improvement District (BID) and business owners in the area are now being encouraged to have their say.

A Business Improvement District (BID) is a geographically defined or themed area, where businesses come together and commit to pay a levy to the BID Company to invest collectively in projects and services that the businesses think will improve their trading environment. Essential Edinburgh is the best known example of a BID in the city where businesses around George Street all pay for services from street cleaning to business boosting events.

The mission of the West End BID is to promote, revitalize and develop the area. 156 businesses across 20 streets are eligible to vote in the ballot between 13th May and 25th June, when the ballot closes at 5pm.

The West End BID is focused on retail, service and hospitality businesses in the historical West End district of Edinburgh where it adjoins the neighbouring BID area of Essential Edinburgh, which covers George Street and Princes Street. The West End BID Steering Group has agreed that these are the businesses that will be liable for the levy, and the proposed improvements in the BID have come from ideas, surveys, consultations and discussions with the local businesses.

The West End is strategically placed in the heart of the City

of Edinburgh. It has good transport links to the rest of the City and, through Haymarket Station and Edinburgh Airport, connectivity to the rest of the UK and beyond. Most visitors to the city will pass through the West End at some point during their stay and the West End BID Steering Group is keen for the West End to leave a good impression on these visitors.

It has, however, experienced significant changes over recent years. There has been a decline in footfall made worse by the tram works on Shandwick Place, the financial crash of 2008, the recession that followed and by the closure of several popular stores. Other issues have included road works, traffic management, parking restrictions, waste management and cleanliness, lack of investment and maintenance of properties and a perceived lack of variety, choice and customer service.

The West End BID aims to rectify all of these things by bringing together the businesses in the area to promote, revitalize and develop the West End. The levy money paid by West End businesses will go towards things such as improved signage, increased marketing, cleaner streets, more greenery and developing the West End's USP.

For West End businesses to find out more about the BID the West End BID Steering Group have set up a Twitter and Facebook page where any questions will be answered and all new developments will be shared.

Michael Apter, Chair of the West End BID Steering Group said "The idea behind this BID is to return the West End to its former glory and create a busy, vibrant and successful West End in 2015 and beyond."

To find out more visit: www.westendbid.com

on Twitter [here](#) and on Facebook [here](#)