

Businesses approve the West End BID!



The fourth Business Improvement District in the capital has now been given the green light by its members. The whole consultation and voting process has now been completed and the West End BID will proceed.

155 of Edinburgh's West End's businesses were invited to take part in the ballot, with 96 businesses responding; and over half positively backing the plans. It is expected through a levy on businesses based on rateable value, the BID scheme will raise £115,000 per annum to invest directly back into the area; undertaking projects which will contribute positively to improving the economic viability of businesses in the community and increase future investment.

A BID is a business-led and business funded body formed to improve a defined commercial area. This is the fourth Business Improvement District in the City Of Edinburgh.

In the UK, for a BID to go ahead the ballot must be won on two counts: straight majority and majority of rateable value. This ensures that the interests of large and small businesses are protected.

Edinburgh's West End chairman Michael Apter, who led the case for a BID, thanked his Steering Group and BID Manager Angus Smith, and welcomed the support shown in the ballot. He said: "We are really pleased with the result, and Edinburgh's West End BID now has the mandate from the business community to execute a business plan which will deliver significant benefits to all levy payers over the next five years. The result also means we can develop a stronger partnership with

City Of Edinburgh Council and other agencies to influence decisions and assist in the delivery of projects in the West End.

"Over the period of the BID, we will ensure all of our levy payers get value for money from their levy, and see improvements to the area, to footfall, and to their businesses. We appreciate a significant minority of businesses did not vote for the BID, and acknowledge we need to work harder to persuade them their money is being spent wisely. The BID is an opportunity for businesses to work with their neighbours and colleagues to improve the West End and I would urge all businesses, no matter how they voted, to get involved with the BID in the future to ensure they see a benefit for their business."

Cllr Frank Ross, Convener of City of Edinburgh Council's Economy Committee, said: "This is great news for the area and sends out a strong message to businesses in other parts of the city that BIDs help businesses to collectively improve trading conditions. The yes vote will now help to deliver over £650,000 of additional investment over the next five years to the West End BID area to be spent on projects led and managed by the business community."

Essential Edinburgh was the first BID to set out its business plan to city centre businesses. It was so successful in its first five years that it gained support to carry on for a further period of five years (as set out in the legislation). Essential Edinburgh was responsible for setting up St Andrew Square as a public space with a café and events there.

We interviewed their new Chief Executive recently and you can watch that interview [here](#).

(and yes for the eagle-eyed among you our photo is from 2011 when the tram was not yet in place!)