

**CRAWLEY TOWN CENTRE BID COMPANY LIMITED (THE "COMPANY" OR "BID")**  
**COMPANY NUMBER: 12058421**

Minutes of a meeting (the "**Meeting**") of the directors held at Cross Keys House, 50-52 The Broadway, Crawley, RH10 1HB on 31 January 2024 at 3.30pm

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DIRECTORS                      Paul Rolfe (**PR**) (Chair)  
PRESENT:                         Abigail Bowden (**AB**),  
   Neil Cooper (**NCo**)  
   Luke Longley (**LL**)  
   Peter Rainier (**PRa**)

OTHERS ATTENDING:    Wendy Bell (**WB**) - CTC Bid  
   Sam Murray (**SM**) – CTC Bid  
   Emma Bulleyment (**EB**) – EMW LLP  
   Alison Addy (**AA**) – representative Gatwick Airport  
   Suzanne Holloway (**SH**) -board advisor

APOLOGIES:            Nicola Cheek (**NCh**) Grigory Lazarev (**GL**) [absent] Duncan Crow (**DC**)  
   Clem Smith (**CS**) – representative Crawley Borough Council  
   Lynn Hainge (**LH**) – representative Crawley Borough Council  
   Atif Nawaz (**AN**) – board advisor Crawley Borough Council Matthew Tyson (**MT**)  
   Simon Cuckow (**SC**)

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**1            QUORUM AND INTERESTED DIRECTORS**

- 1.1            The Chair declared that due notice of the Meeting had been given to all board members (the "Board") and that a quorum was present.
- 1.2            Each of the Directors at the Meeting had declared all the interests that they held, directly or indirectly, in the matters to be discussed which they were required by statute, the Company's articles of association (the "Articles") or otherwise to disclose; and no Director was for any reason disqualified from voting at the Meeting or forming part of the quorum.
- 1.3            The Chair declared the Meeting open and presented apologies.

## **2 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

- 2.1 As this was an extraordinary meeting called for a specific purpose, it was agreed that the Minutes from the previous board meeting would be considered and approved at the next scheduled meeting.

## **3 PURPOSE OF THE MEETING**

- 3.1 The Board was reminded that a management working group had been established to work on the proposals for the BID's second term, such group chaired by LL ("Working Group"). It was reported that the purpose of the meeting was to consider the initial proposals put forward by the Working Group as set out in the papers circulated to attendees of the meeting.
- 3.2 It was further reported that those wishing to engage more proactively in the process had agreed to discuss this initial proposal in a meeting outside of the usual business agenda and timings of the main scheduled board meetings but noted that the Working Group would continue to provide update reports at all Board Meetings.

## **4 WORKING GROUP**

- 4.1 It was noted that the members of the working group included Alistair Watkinson from Carpenter Box and that any additional directors wishing to join would be welcome. It was reported that the current members were looking to broaden the membership of the Working Group to bring in more views on the proposals. It was noted that the Working Group currently met on a monthly basis.
- 4.2 It was reported that the Working Group had considered what the BID was currently doing and how. It was noted that information had been sent only to those that confirmed their attendance at the meeting as the drafts formed the basis for discussions, but a copy would be sent to anyone who was not present on request.
- 4.3 It was noted that the Working Group was looking at some of the information regarding where the BID is currently financially and where it will be if successful in term two, considering rating valuations and using the more current 2023 ratings list.
- 4.4 It was noted that the BID had run a survey during summer 2023 but had struggled to get responses from business in the BID area. Only around 30 responses had been received but it was noted that the BID team and the Working Group would continue to consult with businesses in the BID area seeking their view on what they would like to see covered by the BID in its second term.
- 4.5 It was noted that the draft timeline was subject to change. The initial intention to go to ballot in November had to be reconsidered due to the likelihood of a general election at this time and the Board would be asked to consider alternative suggestions.

## **5 FINAL CONSULTATION DOCUMENT**

- 5.1 It was reported that the document was at a stage where the Working Group was ready to go out to the businesses for their opinion. However, it was noted that ahead of doing so, it was important to get the board's view and opinion as to whether on they were on the right track. It was clarified that the documents were still in draft form, and this stage was just a consultation to get feedback from levy payers.
- 5.2 It was noted that the draft plan was to keep going as currently but build on existing successes, using the same 4 pillars and build on networking, ambassadors etc. An additional service was enhanced street cleaning but noted that costing needed to be considered and this would only be implemented if feasible.
- 5.3 It was noted the main item to be discussed was the budget. In line with best practice the 2023 business rate valuations would be used in the next term. It was noted that if using 2023 values, on the assumption that everything else stayed the same, the BIDs annual income would be £430k, £70k below current income.
- 5.4 The general consensus was that the BID had a surplus previously and had used the surplus to support the activities of the business plan; which was based on the priorities provided by the businesses in 2019. There will also be natural cost savings as efficiencies gained on regularly held events and no event management business to pay. However, it was also felt that the BID may not be able to offer what it has previously been offering based on the revised values.
- 5.5 The Working Group confirmed that it had looked at variations around the numbers including the levy cap and minimum threshold. It was noted that if the rate increased from 1.5% to 1.75% then this would increase the budget to a similar level.
- 5.6 Throughout term one of the BID the Board had decided not to increase the rates by inflation each year (despite this being an option). It was discussed that if the BID had done so, the current levy rate would have been closer to 2%. It was suggested that in this context an increase to 1.75% is reasonable and in real terms, not an increase as the average rateable value had reduced meaning that an average business will pay the same or less than previously. The BID would be asking for £150k less than over the first term.
- 5.7 Other options included increasing the cap from £10,000 to £15,000 and leaving the rate at 1.5% but this only generated £6k extra. An increase in both cap and levy would still only get to just over £500k so not a big enough difference to justify an increase for both.
- 5.8 It was noted that certain organisations, being the leisure park and mall, currently received a 25% discount on rates and consideration given to whether this should be lowered. It was noted that both have service charges and their own security teams so were getting a reduced service from the BID, they also collaborated on events which would need to be factored in.
- 5.9 A question was raised as to whether the team knew what value BID members had seen from events. Could the BID drop certain things and save money if not adding value?

- 5.10 It was reported that in the next month or two, the BID team would go to potential levy paying businesses with the consultation paper so can get views on priorities and BID services. The same questions would be asked of focus groups, head office of retailers etc. which would go towards the final business plan. It was noted that there had only been a 10% response to the survey previously carried out, but these responses mirrored what the team thought businesses thought – similar projects and priorities. Ambassadors and safety featuring high on the list. Enlivenment was also seen positively – members liked the events and how these were bringing people into the town centre, shown through footfall reports and positive feedback.
- 5.11 It was confirmed that the rate /cap etc. limits were not intended to be set now. All ideas remained as draft for the consultation process, but there was a need to agree on something for the draft paper as could not show the proposed / continuing services without knowing what budget was being suggested.
- 5.12 It was noted that the BID was keen to continue to deliver the requirements of levy payers but it would prove not to be feasible to deliver as much as it delivered now with a much lower budget. Discussion was had regarding ensuring that all the businesses felt that the levy requirements would be fair to all sizes of businesses and it was felt that as the levy is based on the size of business rates the most equitable option would be consider the levy rate.
- 5.13 PR noted that for larger businesses, there may be a need to provide a service that meets their priorities. For the college, for example, a top priority was safety in the memorial gardens and ambassadors – if this service continued and developed then they would be more likely to agree an increase. It was agreed that there was a need to look at what adds value and what doesn't. For example, Tesco loss prevention team and William Hill – if mention of BCRP in paperwork then will vote yes. Evidence of ambassadors helping this also. There was also a question of how much the BID did for professional services members. Non-retail members benefit less from the BID and so they should have opportunity to say what they want. However, it was noted that there would be a lot of differing answers based on the type of organisation and size and not everyone would be able to get what they asked for in the budget available.
- 5.14 It was agreed that the consultation document include narrative to explain the discussions and considerations around any increases, explaining that the BID needs to increase the levy rate to provide the current services and possibly also extra services and if there is no increase (or potential decrease) in the budget then services will have to be reduced. It was agreed that this narrative be included in the consultation document so it is clear how the current BID team have thought this through and have been fair to all businesses.
- 5.15 It was also agreed that the team would consider all the businesses' priorities and the requirements of any business plan agreed for Term 2 and continue to look for the very best value for the levy payers.

## **6 TIMELINES**

- 6.1 Consultation stage will happen now with the draft paperwork being considered at the Meeting turned into a more formal consultation document. Informal consultation was already happening, and the consultation process will continue until the business plan is launched. On the basis of the original November timeline, the draft proposal would go out at the end of March.
- 6.2 The business plan would be finalised by June and then go to the Council. The Secretary of State would need to be notified no later than 42 days before go to ballot, although it is possible to change the date (if push back due to general election). Options if there is a general election in November would be to use a third party to run the ballot or push to early February.

## **7 DECISIONS**

- 7.1 The Working Group requested a vote from board, endorsing what had been done so far and that on the right track. It was agreed that:
- a) The levy be increased to 1.75% but no change elsewhere (and suitable narrative explaining this to be included in the document).
  - b) The second term ballot would be held in February 2025.
  - c) The overall content of the draft consultation paper was agreed subject to the additional narrative referred to above and some styling comments; and
  - d) Any further comments would be provided to Wendy by the end of the week.
- 7.2 The Board passed on their thanks to Luke for driving forward and to the team working hard on this. Between now and February the priority was to continue to push the impact of the BID, really showcasing and articulating in a clear and transparent way why the BID should continue.

## **8 CLOSE**

There was no further business and the meeting closed.

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CHAIR

