

Brompton Road Occupier Business Improvement District: Ballot Statement of engagement undertaken

Background

The Brompton Road district has been identified as an area which would benefit from the services and representative voice that can be provided by a Business Improvement District. Following a meeting of landlords, occupiers, residents and representatives of the local authorities, Cadogan commissioned a feasibility study to explore the issues in more depth and to examine the case for establishing a Business Improvement District as a vehicle for change and improvement. Stakeholders have reinforced these views of the Brompton Road district and have been largely united in their desire for a strong strategic vision for the district together with an enhanced public realm to make for a more pleasant working and pedestrian experience.

Since the Autumn of 2018 a study group have been exploring the notion of establishing a Business Improvement District in the area and following extensive discussions with businesses and owners in the area, determined in the Spring of 2019, to seek the formal establishment of an occupier Business Improvement District to commence operations in 2021. The proposed ballot of businesses has been given the go ahead by the Brompton Road Partnership to take place in August / September 2021.

The Business Improvement District will be a voice for business interests in the district, recognizing of course that any vision for the district can only be achieved with the support of partners in the local community and local authorities.

Feasibility Study (2019/20):

A feasibility study to explore the case for establishing a Business Improvement District was set in motion in 2019. Having sought the thoughts and appetite of business and wider stakeholders and undertaken a technical review, the study suggested that the establishment of a Business Improvement District for Brompton Road was both viable and feasible, if approached in a considered and strategic manner.

A sample of 52 businesses were visited and interviewed as part of the study. The businesses surveyed stated they would value an organisation that could drive forward the following issues:

- Area identity;
- Raising the profile of the area and destination marketing;
- Quality of the public space;
- Enhanced traffic management;
- Crime and anti-social behavior;
- Destination of choice for business;
- Re-development and construction in the area;
- A greater sense of community.

Overall feedback to the proposition of a Business Improvement District for Brompton Road was neutral to positive with minimal opposition or belief that the initiative would be negative for the area. Most respondents were keen on creating greater support for business and a more cohesive business community, voice and force for change.

Stakeholder view

The feasibility study was also informed by 31 interviews with local stakeholders drawn from resident and amenity societies, local Councilors, major owners and major institutions in neighbouring areas. Views on establishing a Business Improvement were:

- Overwhelming support for a Business Improvement District from all sectors of the community;
- Concerns about the lack of residential involvement in Business Improvement Districts and additional costs for businesses;
- Focus on creating and delivering a strategic vision. Public realm improvements and enhanced services were welcome but secondary;
- Useful to help pull the two local authorities together.

An ambition of establishing a Business Improvement District was agreed, together with the formation of a Steering Group to lead the process forward. Engagement continued with key businesses and wider stakeholders to explore in more detail the role and activities of the BID

2020 – Strategic Vision

In 2020 the Brompton Road Partnership commissioned a study by Arup to develop the framework for a strategic vision for the area based on a wide range of robust evidence.

The strategic vision, together with feedback from business and the wider community will inform the work of the BID once established.

2020-21 - Brompton Road Partnership

In December 2020, responding to the postponement of the BID development programme due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a group of local businesses led by Cadogan formally established and funded the Brompton Road Partnership.



This ensured that engagement continued throughout the COVID-19 pause period. The Partnership.....

- issues a weekly business news update
- provides monthly footfall figures
- joins other London business groups in campaigning on issues to support COVID-19 recovery
- retains a part-time representative for business engagement on the ground
- is undertaking preparatory work on a number of priority projects for the BID to adopt

Business Engagement (2021)

2020/21 has clearly been dramatically influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, over the period the Brompton Road Partnership has sought to engage with the business community within Brompton Road and Knightsbridge. An occupier consultation programme during the period has helped understand the appetite for establishing a Business Improvement District mandate and identity priorities and themes moving forward which appear in the Business Improvement District business plan.

- All constituents were given the opportunity to meet during 2021, a total of c250 businesses;
- An engagement leaflet was distributed to all businesses;
- A postcard calling card was used as a 'leave behind' when visiting business during the period;
- A micro-site was launched to communicate the Brompton Road Partnership and the aspiration for creating a Business Improvement District;
- A total of ?? business visits have been undertaken;
- A majority of businesses met have demonstrated positivity towards a Business Improvement District;
- All businesses have had the opportunity to meet and input into the onward business plan;
- All businesses receive The Brompton Road Partnership e-communications;
- All businesses in the ballot asked to verify their decision maker in a Westminster City Council and Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea led voter verification process;
- Businesses have been invited to business-to-business Webinar events – 3 themes:
 - The Business Improvement District Business Plan and COVID-19 recovery support
 - The Strategic Vision: Place making and transport enhancements
 - A welcoming and safe district: Increasing security, tackling crime and managing anti-social behavior.
- Electronic version of business plan has been sent to all voters in the ballot;
- An invitation to meet and discuss the business plan has been provided to all voters.

Stakeholder Engagement (2021)

Right from the start, the Brompton Road Partnership, as the BID promoter, has been active in engaging local resident and amenity groups, local councillors, and major neighbouring institutions to complement and add to the input from businesses. The Partnership understands the importance of wider community support for delivering the BID's objectives.

- The initial meeting to examine the future of the Brompton Road included representatives from these organisations
- The Feasibility Study was largely based on a series of one-to-one interviews with a total of 31 local community representatives and leaders. Their views are reflected throughout the analysis and recommendations
- The Partnership held a series on community meetings and workshops to present the Feasibility Study findings and take comments to inform the direction of the BID

- The Strategic Vision Study was managed by a Commissioning Group, established by the Partnership, and including local authority and community group representatives.
- All of the community stakeholders receive the weekly Brompton Road Partnership newsletter
- Throughout the entire process the Partnership produces a separate community update which is emailed to key stakeholders
- The Partnership will repeat the three webinars for a community audience, on the themes of:
 - The Business Improvement District Business Plan and COVID-19 recovery support
 - The Strategic Vision: Place making and transport enhancements
 - A welcoming and safe district: Increasing security, tackling crime, and managing anti-social behavior

Ballot (July 2021 to September 2021)

Presentation of the final Business Plan

- Notice of Ballot sent to finalised voter list confirmed by Westminster City Council and Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.
- Invitation to discuss business plan given to 100% of businesses taking part in ballot;
- Ballot papers sent to 100% of voters;
- A further communication made to all voters with an invitation to discuss the business plan.

The Brompton Road Business Improvement District occupier ballot commences 26 August 2021