



## Introduction

The Northern Ireland Retail Consortium (NIRC) is the trade association of the Northern Ireland multiple retail sector and is their authoritative voice to policy makers and to the media. We bring together a range of retailers across Northern Ireland, selling a wide selection of products through high street, out of town, neighbourhood, rural and online stores.

## Key Facts about Retail

- Around 74,500 people work in the retail sector in Northern Ireland – approximately 10% of all employment.
- There are almost 10,000 retail outlets in Northern Ireland.
- More than a third of consumer spending goes through shops.

## Key Facts about Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)

- **BIDs legislation** was first passed in England in 2004, in Wales in 2005, and Scotland and Ireland in 2007. Legislation has yet to be enacted in Northern Ireland.
- There are around **140 BIDs** across Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England, around **half in town centres**.
- Most (55 out of 66) town centre BIDs attracted **additional income**, over and above the BID levy, totalling **£7.4m** in 2010/11.
- Town centre BIDs have helped to attract **£39m in investment** in 2010/11 across 35 BIDs.
- Most (79%) town centre BIDs have introduced **innovation projects**, with marketing and events (59%) and crime prevention (56%) remaining the most common. These measures help attract more customers and address personal safety fears.
- In total, 105 **service projects** were implemented with waste management (41%), followed by energy costs (33%) and marketing (30%) leading the way.

## Background

**BIDs are a proven concept.** They were first established in Canada and the US in the 1960s and now exist across the globe, including in South Africa, Germany, Japan, New Zealand and Australia. The BID model works on the principal that the majority of businesses choose to establish a BID in their area. Each business then contributes to the common good of the district in question.

In the UK and Ireland, the rates system is regarded as the fairest mechanism for establishing appropriate contributions for each business. The level of contribution is decided by the business community at the BID's AGM each year.

Most BIDs exist in town centres, however there are increasing numbers in industrial areas, as well as commercial and mixed-use locations. The **average size** of a BID is **300-400 hereditaments**, with some of the smallest having fewer than 50 hereditaments and the largest at 2,500. **Annual income** is typically **£200,000-£600,000** but can be less than £50,000 per annum or over £2 million.

The British Retail Consortium's *21<sup>st</sup> Century High Streets Report* provides constructive guidance on the new vision for town centres based on **priority policy areas** requiring action in town centres. In the report the BRC indicates that BIDs must take the lead in promoting and implementing key aspects of the strategy, in particular the raising of additional finance to **address local problems**, supported by a **robust business plan**.



BIDs are **not a one-size-fits-all** solution to the varied problems facing our town centres. Successful BIDs **address the specific needs** of the areas in which they operate. They deliver tailored solutions to local problems.

The **delay** in legislating to enable the introduction of BIDs has **withheld a vital tool** that should have been available to local businesses and councils to mitigate the effects of the economic downturn. Any continuing delay in introducing BIDs legislation risks further damage to Northern Ireland's already fragile town centres. We urge the Minister to expedite the secondary legislation and regulations needed to bring BIDs to a reality in Northern Ireland

## Case Studies

# Hull BID

## Working for Business

For just one per cent on rateable value from city centre businesses, Hull BID has helped to attract additional investment to deliver huge improvements to the local trading environment. Funding has been secured from a wide range of partners including Goodwin Development Trust, Hull City Council, Hull Forward, Visit Hull and East Yorkshire (VHEY) and the Hull Bondholders. Individual businesses have also contributed to spectacular effect, from the main shopping centres with their support for large events to smaller concerns working together and sharing the benefits.

### **Hull BID in numbers:**

- **£2,000,000** - Income generated from the levy over five years and spent according to business priorities.
- **£1,000,000** - Over a million pounds worth of funding and support.
- **£300,000** - Minimum value of additional security measures from PCSOs and BID Support Officers on the beat to a radio system exclusively for businesses.
- **£180,000** - Committed by sponsors to support the Yum! Festival of Food and Drink and its predecessor the Global Food Festival.
- **£115,000** - Value of additional funding to support the Hull Comedy Festival, now established on the national circuit.
- **£100,000** - Christmas "presents" from private businesses and public bodies to help co-fund a campaign of festive activities.
- **£55,000** - Investment secured to help build Hull's evening economy with such events as Dine Week and Half Past The Weekend.

In addition to its high-profile activities in crime-fighting, street-cleaning and event organisation, Hull BID is even busier behind the scenes, working hard to support city centre businesses:

**Security forum:** Hull BID organises monthly meetings where local business can share and receive crime intelligence and liaise directly with the Riverside Neighbourhood Policing team and Civic 1 CCTV.

**Eat Drink Enjoy:** The BID funded and manages the [www.eatdrinkenjoy.co.uk](http://www.eatdrinkenjoy.co.uk) website which is an online gateway to Hull city centre's dining, entertainment and leisure sectors for people planning an outing in the city.



<p><b>Rapid response hotline:</b> They introduced a dedicated hotline number to help city centre businesses get immediate action on safety, cleaning and graffiti issues.</p>	<p><b>Public transport:</b> Hull BID has funded additional bus services to support traders by helping people get into the city centre for special events.</p>
<p><b>Graduation:</b> They support the University of Hull graduation ceremonies by providing music and other activities in Queen Victoria Square.</p>	<p><b>Buskers:</b> They monitor busking to ensure it provides a pleasant city centre atmosphere for business, shoppers and visitors rather than a public nuisance.</p>
<p><b>Street maps:</b> Hull BID has produced maps – updated every year – that help local residents and visitors to the city find their way around the main attractions and the hidden gems.</p>	<p><b>Christmas lights:</b> Hull BID has implemented Christmas lighting schemes in parts of the city centre that were previously unlit.</p>



Dublin City Business Improvement District (BID) ensures that Dublin city centre remains Ireland's premier location for shopping and recreation. The BID continues to build on the city's loyal customer base through a programme of activities aimed at enhancing the customer experience and by making the city a more accessible, safe, welcoming and well-presented environment for all.

Since its inauguration, the Dublin BID has:

- Established an ambassador team which provides 26,000 business recommendations to 200,000 visitors annually, driving business directly to members.
- Developed integrated city marketing programmes bringing city businesses, Fáilte Ireland, Dublin City Council and the transport companies together to target the domestic and international market. Businesses in the city are showcased through Dine in Dublin, Dublin Fashion Festival, Dublin at Christmas and New Year, and Unique to Dublin while Christmas lights are provided to 30 streets each year.
- Successfully lobbied against inappropriately placed social services such as a 15,000 sq ft prisoner rehabilitation centre and homeless services planned for the city's commercial district.
- Worked on behalf of businesses with the Gardaí to curb anti-social behaviour and organised begging, and secured legislation to outlaw aggressive begging and the closure of head shops.
- Developed an immediate response cleaning service for members and created a graffiti-free environment in the city centre while ensuring that Dublin City Council delivered on its commitment to city traders through a baseline cleaning agreement.



Before the BID's establishment in 2005, Broad Street's reputation had suffered due to a general rise in crime and antisocial behaviour, and environmental deterioration. The BID has changed this city centre area dramatically. The initiatives have delivered real improvements to Broad Street, Brindleyplace and the surrounding area over the last four years, following the BID's 'Brighter, Safer, Cleaner' mantra.

Birmingham Broad Street BID's achievements to date include:

<p><b>Street Wardens:</b> An evening street warden service of four wardens greets visitors, liaises with police, security and concierge staff on crime prevention, and monitors environmental and maintenance issues. The city centre management team delivers a day time warden service.</p>	<p><b>Marketing Programme:</b> The BID has developed an events/campaigns programme, an interactive website and public information points. It has promoted the area's diverse offer to visitors, workers and residents and expanded the variety of activities and attractions, throughout the day and night and across the year.</p>
<p><b>Area Lighting Strategy:</b> Year round event and festive decorative lighting brightens the area. The BID, working with the City Council, is transforming the appearance of the street using lighting and signage.</p>	<p><b>Floral Dressing:</b> Enhancement of the day time environment with additional seasonal hanging baskets and planters.</p>
<p><b>Safer Business Area/Radio Link:</b> All licensed premises, hotels, shops and car parks are provided with a free or subsidised package via Birmingham's Business Crime Operation including real time radio service, intelligence bulletins, staff training and briefings.</p>	<p><b>Public Relations:</b> Develop Broad Street's brand and image to assist in the positioning and promotion of the area and its diverse characteristics.</p>

For more information on Business Improvement Districts, or any other issue affecting the retail sector, please contact

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