



Renewal of Dublin City Centre Business Improvement Districts (BID) Scheme under L. G. (Business Improvement Districts) Act 2006

On the 1st of March 2017, Dublin Dublin City Centre BID Company (T/A DublinTown), submitted a proposal to Dublin City Council to renew the current BID Scheme which is in force until 31st of December 2017. The proposal was entitled - **“Our Destiny in our Hands : The Renewal of the Dublin City Business Improvement District”**

The area of the Business Improvement District is delineated in the Maps on Appendices 3 and 4 (MAP 15930) and as listed in Appendix 5 as required in section 129B (a) of the above Act. Baseline services provided by Dublin City Council in the BID area were outlined in the proposal as services provided by a BID company must be in addition to, and not instead of, any project, service, or work carried out by the Local Authority (subsection 2)

As required by the above legislation and as advised to the March City Council meeting, (Report 92/2017), the DublinTown proposal was put on public display from the 8th of March to 7th April in the Civic Offices and in the Central Library, ILAC Centre and was also available online at www.wearedublincity.ie and www.dublincity.ie. A public notice placed in the Irish Independent of the 10th of March invited submissions on the proposal.

As advised to the June City Council Meeting (Report 175/2017), 44 submissions were received by the deadline. 26 of these were in favour of the renewal of the BID and 18 were opposed to the renewal. The report detailed issues raised in the submissions and outlined the Plebiscite timeline. The report was noted by the City Council.

DublinTown informed the Council in writing on the 8th of June that they had considered the submissions received and requested that a Plebiscite be arranged to determine the level of support among ratepayers in the BID area for the renewal proposal. I was appointed Returning Officer on the 12th of June by Order of the Chief Executive (OCE10/2017)

The Plebiscite was fixed for the 17th of July and ballot papers were issued to the eligible Ratepayers on the 22nd June. , The ballot papers were posted in the presence of the then Lord Mayor, Cllr. Brendan Carr. in accordance **with SI 166/2007 Local Government (Business Improvement Districts Ratepayer Plebiscite)**. Árdmhéara Micheál MacDonncha was present at the opening of the ballot boxes and the commencement of the count on the 17th July 2017 in City Hall.

At the count and subsequently, comments were made by observers that displayed a lack of understanding of the differences between a BIDS plebiscite and other elections and plebiscites. The key differences are that in a BIDs Plebiscite, the business name, address and signature of the ratepayer is displayed on the Ballot paper itself so maintaining secrecy at a count is more challenging. Also one ratepayer may have multiple ballots for different rateable properties which may be returned together. It is misleading to imply that practices used in other types of elections are applicable to a BIDs Plebiscite. The only regulations that apply are those outlined in SI 166/2017

The majority of votes cast were in favour of the renewal of the BID.

The result of the Plebiscite was as follows:

	Ballot Papers Issued	Ballots Cast	Invalid votes	Valid Poll	Votes in favour of BID Proposal	Votes Against the BID proposal
2017	3001	1583 - (53%)	25	1558	843 - (54.1%)	715 - (45.9%)
* 2012	3571	1607 - (45%)	33	1574	1063 - (67.5%)	511 - (32.5%)
*2007	3700	1001 (27%)	16	985	761 (77.3%)	224 - (22.7%)

* I include figures from the previous plebiscites for comparison purposes.

These results were advertised as required in **the Irish Independent** (Commercial section) of the 20th of July 2017 and on the Dublin City Council Website

In accordance with Section 129B of the Local Government (Business Improvement Districts) Act 2006, it is provided that a rating authority for an administrative area may by resolution:-

- a) Specify an area within the administrative area and establish that area as an Business Improvement District, and
- b) Approve implementation of a scheme ("BIDs Scheme") to carry out or provide one or more projects, services or works described in subsection (2) and which scheme is financed in whole or in part by BID contribution levies under this part.

Subsection 2 provides that the projects, services and works referred to, shall in the rating authority's opinion be:-

- a) for the benefit of the business improvements district and those who live, work or carry on an activity in it and
- b) in addition to and not instead of any project, service or work carried out or provided by the Rating Authority immediately before approval of the Scheme.

Section 129 C (7) provides for a renewal of an existing BID scheme for a further period, not exceeding 5 years. It is recommended that, if approved, the BIDs scheme will operate from 1st January 2018 for a further period of five years.

The adoption of a Business Improvement District Scheme is a reserved function. It is a matter for the City Council, having considered this and previous reports and the outcome of the Plebiscite, to approve/not approve the renewal of the Dublin City Centre BID Scheme. If the resolution is to be passed, by law at least one-third of the total Members of the Council are required to vote in favour of the proposed resolution.

If the Members wish to approve the renewal of the Dublin City Centre Bid Scheme, the resolution to be adopted is as follows:

"That Dublin City Council, having regard to the result of the Plebiscite, the submissions made during the consultation process and judging the scheme to be for the benefit of those who live, work and carry on activity in the BIDs area, hereby approves

- *the renewal of the Dublin City Centre Business Improvement Districts Scheme T/A Dublin Town*
- *the continued implementation of the BID Scheme*
- *the re-specification of the area of the Business Improvement District as that included in the DublinTown proposal and delineated as Maps Map No 15930, dated 15th February 2008,*
- *the operation of the renewed BID scheme for a period of five years from 1st January 2018*
- *the financing, in whole or in part, of the BID by the specified contribution levies".*

Deirdre Ní Raghallaigh
Senior Executive Officer

Date 21st August 2017