

Orpington 1st BID Frequently Asked Questions – June 2013

What is a BID?

A Business Improvement District (BID) is a business-led and business-funded scheme to improve a defined commercial area, such as a town centre or industrial estate through additional services or new initiatives. Government legislation * enabling the formation of BIDs, was introduced into England and Wales in 2003, empowering businesses to 'raise funds locally to be spent locally' on improving their trading environment. For more information on BIDs in the UK please visit www.ukbids.org and www.britishbids.info/.

How was Orpington 1st established?

Orpington 1st was established by a ballot of all eligible businesses in Orpington town centre. This took place in February 2013. As with all BID ballots the result was required to pass two tests: 1) an absolute majority (i.e. more than 50% of the vote) in terms of numbers and 2) a majority of the rateable value represented by all votes cast must be in favour. No minimum turnout is required. In Orpington the total number of votes cast in the ballot was 164, representing a turnout of 48%. 54% voted in favour representing 60% of the rateable value.

The Orpington 1st BID covers most of the High Street area of the town centre from Tesco and the Memorial Roundabout in the South and the entrance to Priory Gardens in the North. **A map of the BID area** is available on the homepage of the BID website (www.orpington1st.co.uk).

How is Orpington 1st funded?

Now that the BID is in place, all eligible businesses are required to pay a levy, based on 1.5% of the rateable value of their properties. Orpington 1st will use the levy money – which it expects to total approx £160,000 per annum – along with funds generated from other sources to deliver additional services to boost the town centre and its businesses. Bills for the 2013/14 BID levy were dispatched in mid-June 2013. Accompanying the bill was an explanatory **Billing leaflet** which can also be downloaded from www.orpington1st.co.uk.

Why is the bill coming from the Council when this is supposed to be a business initiative?

The bill is sent on behalf of the London Borough of Bromley and has the Bromley Council logo on it. This is because the BID Regulations state that the Local Authority must be the 'billing authority' for any Business Improvement District. All the monies collected through the BID Levy are passed straight to the BID Company, minus any agreed administrative expenses involved in collecting the Levy.

What if I have a query about my bill?

In the first instance please contact Liberata, who are managing the billing process on behalf of the Council and the BID. They can be contacted on 020 8603 3303 / 3437.

If your bill states that you are receiving 'Hardship relief' please note that this is actually a discount because you are a tenant of the Walnuts Shopping Centre and pay a Service Charge. The discount of 50% reflects the fact that you are already paying for some common services for the benefit of the Centre and town through this Charge.

What will Orpington 1st do with the BID Levy money?

Key issues to be handled by Orpington 1st over the next five years include improving the look and feel of the town, promoting it as a destination for shoppers and potential investors, improving accessibility and parking, tackling crime and anti-social behaviour and introducing initiatives to reduce costs to businesses. You can view more about the aims of the Orpington 1st BID in its **Proposal document** 'Let's make our town centre better for business' which is available on www.orpington1st.co.uk.

How can I get involved?

Orpington 1st is now a legally constituted Company limited by guarantee (not-for-profit) and is managed by the BID Board, which was established after the BID ballot. The Board comprises business people from the town, including representatives from both retail and non-retail sectors, nationals and independents. However, the Board is looking for more local business owners and managers to get involved, both on the Board (which currently meets monthly) and in the 4 theme groups – each of which will drive the planning and delivery of projects around the 4 areas within the BID proposal – Orpington First for Customers, First for Look and Feel, First for Access and First for Business. If you want to get involved please contact Martin Price, Chairman on 01689 832923 or email: info@orpington1st.co.uk

The first AGM of Orpington 1st will take place on 11 September 2013, at which all the current Board members will stand down and a new Board will be elected by the BID members.

How can I vote at the AGM?

In order to vote in the AGM – to elect Board members for the coming year – or stand for a Board position - you must be a member of the BID Company. However, due to Company Law BID Levy payers will not automatically become members. Businesses will have to opt in to becoming members of the Orpington 1st BID Company. An application form for membership will be provided to all business properties within the BID area in advance of the AGM. Please ensure you complete this important form in good time to ensure your voice can be heard.

How will Orpington 1st be run?

Although the BID Board will take oversight of the work and development of Orpington 1st, the day-to-day running of the BID, and the management of projects to improve the town, will be undertaken by a BID Manager, to be employed by the Board. Orpington 1st is currently recruiting to this position – and you can view the **Job Advert** and the **Job Description** on www.orpington1st.co.uk.

* The Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004