

THE VIRTUAL  
NATIONAL BIDS  
CONFERENCE

# 10 TIPS FOR BUSINESS PLANS OF THE FUTURE

WHAT WILL LEVY PAYING BUSINESSES EXPECT TO SEE?  
HOW DO YOU RESEARCH AND DELIVER THIS?  
LUCY STANFORD

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- Nottingham BID was formed in 2012 following the merger of the city's retail and leisure BIDs
- It currently has approximately 860 levy payers
- Annual income of approximately £1,250,000
- Nottingham BID's ballot finished on the 15th October



- Achieved a turnout of 46%
- 92% voted in favour by number
- 89% voted in favour by rateable value



# 1. EMPHASISE COVID-19 AND RECOVERY

- The key theme running through the business plan and communications was the context of COVID-19 and the BID's role in the city's recovery
- Position the BID as key to the long-term recovery of the town / city
- Include details of the BID's response to COVID-19
- Emphasise the message of the BID throughout COVID-19



## 2. ASSESS THE CLIMATE



- Many town and city centres will be irreversibly changed as a result of COVID-19. Accurate data and intelligence gathering is necessary to adapt
- Combined 3 pieces of research to assess the following:
- What is the current state of the town / city?
- What are the business needs both immediately and longer term?
- What is the public perception of the town / city and how are consumer trends changing?



### 3. CONSIDER THE TIMING OF THE BALLOT

- Despite a 3-month extension granted by the government, Nottingham BID continued with an October timeline.
- Consider the following:
  - The number of other ballots taking place
  - The timing of levy bills
  - The timing of holidays such as half term and Christmas
  - The expected climate for businesses

## 4. REVIEW THE LEVY RULES

- Review the levy rules in the context of COVID-19
- Area was increased to include the train station area and the area around Nottingham Castle
- Threshold was increased from £25 000 to £35 000
- Levy rate reverted back to original amount at the start of the previous term at 1.25%





## 5. ADAPT PROJECTS AND SERVICES TO THE NEW NORMAL

- Businesses still wanted existing projects, updated and improved to fit with the new normal
- Promoted City - emphasised experiential, outdoor events and marketing and promotion
- Managed City - a safe and welcoming environment became essential following lockdown to reassure people to return
- Working City - wellness in the workplace has become more important than ever throughout COVID-19
- Independent City - independents play a key role in Nottingham's economy and supporting them through these difficult times is vital





## 6. INCLUDE A LONGER-TERM VIEW

- The long-term recovery of the city following COVID-19 will take time, so a longer-term view beyond the BID term is required
- Emphasise the opportunities that may come out of COVID-19
- Nottingham BID chose to carry over reserves to put towards ‘Transformation Projects’, that aim to leave a legacy far beyond the 5 years
- These cover large scale projects to partner on with other organisations:
- Improvement of key arrival points into the city
- Better use of urban spaces
- Creating spaces and moments around the city
- Review of planning on key streets



# 7. CREATE A COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

- Phase 1 - initially focused on the BID's role in the city reopening and support offered throughout COVID-19
- Phase 2 - showcased key success stories and highlights from the BID term
- Phase 3 - showcased the business plan and tailored messaging to ensure relevant for individual sectors
- Phase 4 - announcement of the ballot opening and instructions on how to vote and why you should vote

The screenshot shows a news article on the LEFTLION website. The article is titled "The Inside World of Nottingham BID's Festivals..." and is dated 9 September 20. The article text discusses the Nottingham Business Improvement District (BID) and its role in facilitating events and festivals during the COVID-19 pandemic. The article is part of a series of news items from Nottingham News, Nottingham City Centre.

**LEFTLION**  
Where Nottingham

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**The Inside World of Nottingham BID's Festivals...** 9 September 20  
reading time: 8 min

Nottingham's blessed with more than its fair share of events, ceremonies and festivals, many of which have been facilitated by the Nottingham Business Improvement District (BID). Formed in 2012, Nottingham BID has offered support, information and funding to some of the city's biggest cultural offerings and, with the upcoming ballot to determine whether they'll continue next year scheduled for October, we caught up with some of the festivals that have benefitted from their support to see how they've coped during lockdown, and what Nottingham BID means to them...

News · Nottingham News · Nottingham City Centre

**This is how the BID plans to build a better Nottingham**

'A city of experiences and excitement'

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1 [Image of a building] Police find 40 people at party in Nottingham student halls of residence



## 8. PREPARE AS EARLY AS YOU CAN

- An up-to-date database with contact details is vital, especially with many working from home
- COVID-19 has led to a high turnover of staff so the database should be continually updated up to and throughout the ballot
- Build relationships with voters as early as you can and maintain up to and throughout the ballot
- Assess and record the expected voter intentions of all businesses - following lockdown assume all businesses are a no vote until you've had a conversation with them
- Keep in touch with businesses continually, as their situations can change quickly in the current climate



## 9. CONSIDERATIONS FOR DURING THE BALLOT

- Going through a ballot during COVID-19 creates some unique issues to consider:
- Consider splitting your team in 2 so if a COVID-19 outbreak occurs there is a backup team
- Factor in longer timings for everything
- Use a courier if you can - the postal service is slower and less reliable during COVID-19
- Agree the process for replacement ballot papers as early as you can - replacements were vital for those that switched to home working during the ballot
- Prepare for staff being unavailable due to self-isolation or COVID-19
- Remain flexible and quick to adapt to new situations

## 10. STRATEGY FOR THE BALLOT

- The office sector returning to home working and the increase in vacant units meant a lower prediction for turnout
- Focused only on the yes votes, rather than trying to convert any unknown or no votes to increase turnout
- Be relentless in chasing businesses until the vote arrives

**BUILDING A  
BETTER NOTTINGHAM,  
2021-2025** TOGETHER.

**VOTE  
YES** 



- Emphasise COVID-19 and recovery
- Assess the climate
- Consider the timing of the ballot
- Review the levy rules
- Adapt projects and services to the new normal
- Include a longer-term view
- Create a communications plan
- Prepare as early as you can
- Considerations for during the ballot
- Strategy for the ballot



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THANK YOU

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