



Business Improvement Districts

Client: **Birmingham City Centre Partnership**
Scope of services: **Qualitative and quantitative business and consumer study**
Location: **Birmingham, UK**

Challenge

In 2003, Birmingham was one of twenty-two towns and cities to be chosen to pilot BIDs; business sector led schemes that bring businesses and local authorities together to improve the economic environment of a clearly defined geographic area.



Business Improvement Districts

Two very vibrant areas of the City were selected to participate in the pilot scheme - Broad Street, the centre of Birmingham's nightlife, and the Central Shopping area, including the Bullring. These two areas were chosen because they are so very important to Birmingham's economy and because complacency in respect of helping businesses improve their potential to grow, increasing their profitability, attracting and retaining staff, and increasing customer and visitor footfall was not felt to be an option.

But businesses had to agree to the point where they were willing to pay an additional levy on their rates to secure investment in their Business Improvement District.

Research

Research by Design supported the consultation process in both BIDs areas by developing questionnaires to find out the priorities for businesses in terms of improvements, e.g. CCTV, street washing, street furniture, signage and information, promotional activities. These were posted out with the first Consultation Prospectus, though respondents had the choice of completing an on-line survey if they preferred.

To encourage responses still further, Research by Design also undertook telephone interviews, resulting in a 43% response rate amongst businesses in the Broad Street BID area.

Additionally, Research by Design undertook similar studies with local employees and visitors to gain their views on the proposed BID areas through street interviews.

Outcome

The Broad Street BID was the first of the two areas to go to ballot and the result was stunning. Indeed this BID proposal achieved the highest level of support seen in the UK. 92% voted in favour of establishing the formal BID area, equating to 97% of businesses by rateable value. Furthermore, 65% of businesses cast their vote in the ballot, the highest turnout achieved across the UK to date.



The consultation in Birmingham, the response levels achieved and the understanding gained from businesses about what needed to be achieved by a BIDs scheme led the way across the country, with Birmingham seen as one of the leading areas of best practice.

The ballot that followed on Birmingham's Retail BID secured Birmingham's position as the first in the country to achieve two successful BID outcomes. In the Central Shopping area 69% of businesses voted in favour of the BID and funding a range of projects and services focused around retail marketing, street operations and business support.



city centre partnership



For further information please check out the Broad Street Bid website: www.broadstreet.co.uk or download our latest report [here](#).