16th June 2017

**St Austell BID Press Release**

**Help us Shape the Future**

St Austell Business Improvement District (BID) which delivers projects and services in the town funded by non-domestic ratepayers is in the final year of its first term which ends on 31st March 2018. The BID can be renewed for a further five years subject to a new business plan being published and a ballot held.

St Austell BID is now consulting with all levy payers who contribute financially towards the BID to firstly, find out if there is an appetite to proceed to a second term and secondly, to help inform the new business plan to be published this autumn ahead of a November postal ballot.

The BID’s second term consultation document, ‘Help us Shape the Future’ has been launched this week and sent to over 200 businesses within the BID area.

John Kneller, St Austell BID Chairperson said, ‘We want to hear from businesses about their priorities for St Austell and where they think their levy could be best targeted to generate the greatest value. We want to hear what businesses think to ensure that we build on our success to date and continue the journey to create an attractive, accessible, safer, well-promoted and vibrant town.’

Since the BID began in 2015, the journey has started towards improving the town’s image, making it more attractive through initiatives including hanging baskets, tackling anti-social behaviour through security patrols and the Storenet radio scheme and promoting the town via digital media and traditional channels as well as supporting and funding events including Christmas.

Jenny Yelling Manager of Boot’s and a new Director of St Austell BID concedes that it is a journey and there is much more to do which can only be achieved by working together, ‘You won’t change anything over night but what the BID has done so far is to invest its modest resources in the things that will drive footfall into the town which every trader needs. It has also fostered productive relationships with other stakeholders in St Austell to deliver projects on the ground. The BID is a force for good in the town.’

Each year St Austell BID has matched £1 of levy payer’s money with a further 27 pence from additional sources, money that simply wouldn’t be levered in without the BID in place.

Rachael Hunt of Sew & Fabric said ‘The BID has been great for our business. The town promotion project alone has brought in new customers and I am really impressed with the way the town is looking I really like what the BID has done about additional security. Without the BID, we wouldn’t have a business led organisation that is forward thinking and specifically looking after our interests; I believe that would be detrimental both to the town and my business. In fact without the BID my business would have had to relocate 18 months ago.’

Initial consultations with a sample of levy payers across St Austell have indicated that the projects and services delivered so far have made a positive difference to trading in St Austell. For more information on what the BID has delivered to date, please click on http://[www.staustellbid.co.uk/bid-achievements/](http://www.staustellbid.co.uk/bid-achievements/)

Completed questionnaires need to be returned by Friday 30th June and can also be completed on line.

To find out more, go to  <http://www.staustellbid.co.uk/help-us-shape-future/>.... And download a copy of the 2nd term consultation questionnaire or complete the questionnaire via the survey monkey link at this address http://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/BBLG2KC

For further information, contact Annette Miller, BID Manager on 01726 63595 or 07794 910558 or email staustellbid@gmail.com

**BID Fact file**

A Business Improvement District (BID) scheme is a business led initiative supported by government legislation which gives local businesses the power to ‘raise funds locally to be spent locally’ on improving their trading environment or trading prospects. There are now over 270 BID schemes operating across the UK with 8 in Cornwall.

BID schemes are ‘business led for business benefit’ and operate in clearly defined geographical areas, often but not exclusively, town centres. They are not local authority led schemes although Cornwall Council would be responsible for running the ballot and collecting the levy on the BID Company’s behalf if the BID was approved. Unlike business rates, all the money collected remains in St Austell to be spent on the priorities identified by businesses.

The process of developing a BID involves extensive consultation with businesses to establish what improvements they want and may be prepared to pay for.

The BID programme is primarily funded by the private sector although any non-domestic rate payer will be eligible to pay including organisations in the public or voluntary sector that have premises over a rateable value of £5,000 within the defined St Austell BID boundary. Cornwall Council would pay almost £10,000 per year in levy towards the BID if it was voted in.

The BID is funded through a levy on rateable value. If St Austell were to commence a second term, the levy would be based on 2% of the rateable value of the premises against the new ratings 2017 list creating circa £97K per year each year for five years.

BIDs are viewed by many organisations as a fair and affordable way of creating a ring-fenced fund for 5 years that is managed by business for business through a private sector led, not-for-profit company.

BIDs are about new investment not about placing additional tax burdens on businesses. Where BIDs are successful, businesses will see a return on their investment. There is clear evidence of the success of BID schemes which have led to increased footfall, higher spending, cleaner, safer and more vibrant towns.

Following consultation with businesses, a Final Proposal or ‘BID Manifesto’ is published which outlines what benefits the businesses will receive if the BID proceeds. A ballot is then held where each business has the opportunity to vote ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to the BID. For the BID to be approved, of those who vote, two tests must be met:

* More than 50% of those who vote must vote ‘yes’
* Of those ‘yes’ votes, they need to represent more than 50% of the total rateable value of all votes cast

If these conditions are fulfilled payment of the levy becomes mandatory for all businesses regardless of how they voted.