

King's Road Occupier Business Improvement District: Ballot

Statement of engagement undertaken

Background

The King's Road district has been identified as an area which would benefit from the services and representative voice that can be provided by a Business Improvement District. Following a meeting of landlords, occupiers, residents and representatives of the local authorities, Cadogan commissioned a feasibility study to explore the issues in more depth and to examine the case for establishing a Business Improvement District as a representative group for the area. Stakeholders have reinforced these views of the King's Road and have been largely united in their desire for a strong identity for the area, enhanced marketing and promotion, together with an improved public realm to make for a more pleasant working and pedestrian experience.

Since the Spring of 2019 a study group have been exploring the notion of establishing a Business Improvement District in the area and following extensive discussions with businesses and owners in the area, determined in the Autumn of 2019, to seek the formal establishment of an occupier Business Improvement District to commence operations in 2021. The proposed ballot of businesses has been given the go ahead by the King's Road Partnership to take place in October / November 2021.

The Business Improvement District will be a voice for business interests in the district, recognizing of course that any vision for the district can only be achieved with the support of partners in the local community and local authorities.

Feasibility Study (2019/20):

A feasibility study to explore the case for establishing a Business Improvement District was set in motion in 2019. Having sought the thoughts and appetite of business and wider stakeholders and undertaken a technical review, the study suggested that the establishment of a Business Improvement District for King's Road was both viable and feasible, if approached in a considered and strategic manner.

A sample of 47 businesses were visited and interviewed as part of the study. The businesses surveyed stated they would value an organisation that could drive forward in particular the following issues:

- Area identity;
- Raising the profile of the area and destination marketing;
- Quality of the street environment;
- Crime and anti-social behavior;

Overall feedback to the proposition of a Business Improvement District King's Road was positive to neutral with minimal opposition or belief that the initiative would be negative for the area. Most respondents were keen on creating greater support for business and a more cohesive business community, voice and force for change.

An ambition of establishing a Business Improvement District was agreed, together with the formation of a Steering Group to lead the process forward. Engagement continued with key businesses and wider stakeholders to explore in more detail the role and activities of the BID.

2020-21 – King’s Road Partnership

In January 2021 a group of local businesses led by Cadogan formally established the King’s Road Partnership.



The Partnership key aim to establish a Business Improvement District which would :

- Bring £4m investment into the King’s Road
- Assist COVID-19 recovery
- Encourage footfall, encouraging dwell time and spend
- Establish a collective business voice on issues that matter

Business Engagement (2021)

2020/21 has clearly been dramatically influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, over the period the King’s Road Partnership has sought to engage with the business community within the King’s Road area. An occupier consultation programme during the period has helped understand the appetite for establishing a Business Improvement District mandate and identity priorities and themes moving forward which appear in the Business Improvement District business plan.

- All constituents were given the opportunity to meet during 2021, a total of c220 businesses;
- An engagement leaflet was distributed to all businesses;
- A postcard calling card was used as a ‘leave behind’ when visiting business during the period;
- A micro-site was launched to communicate the King’s Road Partnership and the aspiration for creating a Business Improvement District;
- A total of c200 business visits have been undertaken;
- A majority of businesses met have demonstrated positivity towards a Business Improvement District;
- Businesses have had the opportunity to meet and input into the onward business plan;
- Businesses receive The King’s Road Partnership e-communications;
- All businesses in the ballot have been asked to verify their decision maker in a Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea led voter verification process;
- Businesses have been invited to a business-to-business Webinar event – 2 themes:
 - The Business Improvement District Business Plan and COVID-19 recovery support
 - Increasing security, tackling crime and managing anti-social behavior
- Electronic version of business plan has been sent to all voters in the ballot;
- An invitation to meet and discuss the business plan has been provided to all voters.

Stakeholder Engagement (2021)

Right from the start, the King's Road Partnership, as the BID promoter, has been active in engaging local resident and amenity groups, local councillors, and major neighbouring institutions to complement and add to the input from businesses. The Partnership understands the importance of wider community support for delivering the BID's objectives.

- The initial meeting to examine the future of the King's Road included representatives from these organisations;
- The Feasibility Study was largely based on a series of one-to-one interviews with a total of 30 local community representatives and leaders. Their views were reflected throughout the analysis and recommendations;
- The Partnership held a series of community meetings and workshops to present the Feasibility Study findings and take comments to inform the direction of the BID;
- All of the community stakeholders receive the weekly King's Road Partnership newsletter
- The Partnership invited the wider stakeholders to the webinar event to discuss the onward business plan.

Ballot (October 2021 to November 2021)

Presentation of the final Business Plan

- Notice of Ballot sent to finalised voter list confirmed by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea;
- Invitation to discuss business plan given to 100% of businesses taking part in ballot;
- Ballot papers sent to 100% of voters;
- A further communication made to all voters with an invitation to discuss the business plan.

The King's Road Business Improvement District occupier ballot commences 28 October 2021