

Development of the West Fitzrovia BID:

Summary of Engagement

Background

The Fitzrovia Partnership has operated as a Business Improvement District since 2012 and is currently in its third term, which operates until 31st July 2027. Driven by The Fitzrovia Partnership, the development of the West Fitzrovia BID has been given the go-ahead by The Fitzrovia Partnership Board to take place during 2023. The Fitzrovia Partnership BID has an excellent track record of delivery since its establishment, is highly visible and has a good business mandate achieving a 96% yes vote in 2022.

The Fitzrovia Partnership has had a strong programme of business engagement throughout its work programme. Regular communication is undertaken with 100% of its members - keeping its membership updated as to the work of the organisation, events and activities in Fitzrovia, opportunities and threats. The organisation manages a successful and well-attended business networking programme.

Business Engagement (2017-21)

As part of The Fitzrovia Partnership's ongoing development, in 2017 a study explored the possibility of extending the geographical footprint of The Fitzrovia Partnership BID, with a view to embracing the full extent of Fitzrovia, a 'cross border BID' between Westminster City Council and LB Camden.

As a result of feedback and analysis it was determined that a separate BID working in collaboration with The Fitzrovia Partnership would be a more appropriate model. The objective of exploring a BID in West Fitzrovia was subsequently placed into The Fitzrovia Partnership Business Plan, which was confirmed in their renewal BID ballot in 2017 and subsequently in 2022.

Early engagement with businesses in West Fitzrovia has shown a broad appetite to further explore the establishment of a business collective for this part of Fitzrovia. Business interviews undertaken have suggested an agenda focused on enhancing the economic wellbeing of the business community, particular given the events of the past 2/3 years, responding to the ongoing issues of air quality, congestion and environmental improvement and maintaining the strong heritage of the area.

Business Engagement (2022-23)

2021/22 was dramatically influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, over the period, The Fitzrovia Partnership sought to, and succeeded in, maintaining an engagement programme with businesses in West Fitzrovia.

Steering Group

A Steering Group was established as part of the business engagement process to help steer the project and provide input into the BID Proposal and work programme in general. Embracing both occupiers and property owners in West Fitzrovia, the Steering Group also includes a member of The Fitzrovia Partnership Board to provide a link between the two areas.

A business engagement programme during 2022-23 has helped understand the appetite for establishing BID and identity priorities and themes moving forward which appear in the BID Proposal.

- All businesses in the proposed district were given the opportunity to meet during 2022, a total of nearly 200 occupiers;
- All businesses in the proposed district receive The Fitzrovia Partnership's e-communications;
- A West Fitzrovia newsletter has been developed;
- 100% of members have been asked to advise of their key contact;
- One-to-one meetings have been undertaken with 60% of the constituency;
- A majority of businesses met have demonstrated positivity towards the BID initiative;
- All members have had the opportunity to meet to discuss business priorities;
- Feedback from business engagement has been taken forward into the BID proposal.

Community Engagement

Since its inception The Fitzrovia Partnership has welcomed representatives of the residential community onto its Board, together with a local Ward Councillor. This arrangement will be extended to the West Fitzrovia area.

The development of the **Fitzrovia West Neighbourhood Forum** has been a significant initiative during the past 5 years and one which has been embraced as part of the BID development work. Dialogue with the Forum has shown ambitions are very much aligned to the thinking around a West Fitzrovia BID and a real opportunity to add value and bring to the table a collaborative approach from business and a 5-year income stream, which can assist with projects identified.

The West End Ward Councillors have been engaged with respect to the BID Development initiative.

Ballot Campaign (2023)

Presentation of the final Business Plan:

- All businesses taking part in the ballot will be sent an electronic version of the BID Proposal;
- A summary printed version of the Business Plan will be distributed to all businesses in the ballot;
- An invitation to discuss the Business Plan will be extended to 100% of businesses taking part in the ballot;
- All businesses in the ballot have been asked to verify their decision maker in a Westminster City Council led voter verification (canvass) process;
- Businesses taking part in the ballot have been invited to one of three surgery events (hosted by West Fitzrovia businesses) organised ahead of the first day of ballot;
- The Notice of Ballot will be sent to the finalised voter list confirmed by Westminster City Council;
- All businesses will be provided a final opportunity to meet to discuss the initiative in the week prior to ballot papers being distributed.