

**Shadow BID Board**  
**09 February 2017**  
**Arndale House**

Events were one of the major focuses of the first BID (running until March 2018). When we consulted with current BID levy payers in 2016, events again were by far the most important aspect of the BID for the majority of current levy payers.

The first shadow board meeting considered the events the BID currently hosts, their purpose and how the event schedule could be developed in the next business plan.

There was broad agreement that the current plan works in that it hosts events in different areas, attracting different demographics and at different times of the year.

There was also agreement that the purpose of the events was not always to directly provide extra revenue but to:

- 1) Market and promote the city centre – encouraging repeat visits
- 2) To make the city centre more lively and vibrant
- 3) To achieve at other points of the year what the Christmas markets achieve in December

There was broad support for the two big events—Chinese New Year and Halloween. On the former it was thought that more could happen before the weekend of the parade, to attract Chinese shoppers in to the retail area. However, it was recognized that, thanks to the marketing campaign, this was now a major feature of the city's event landscape. Halloween was seen as all-inclusive, and an event that can continue to grow and involve more and more retailers.

Both the King Street festival and the Student events were similarly supported, though both were seen as geographically (and sector) specific.

It was agreed that the Summer event was still not right. A suggestion was made to investigate the MIF Fringe Festival which runs every year. There was agreement that this could be an excellent event for retailers (and banks) and F&B businesses throughout July and had the potential to become a national or international event. This received broad unanimity.

Alongside, there was support for a restaurant/bar festival which supported and promoted venues across the central district.

There was also a suggestion to re-investigate Eid, which is successful for a number of shops.

**The sense of the meeting was that events should form a central pillar of the new BID business plan, with a potential increase in funding, and more explanation of events that work with partners.**

**The next Shadow Board will be on Tuesday 28th March 2.30-4pm and will cover Marketing and PR.**

Please contact Phil Schulze, BID Manager for further information if required.  
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## **BID Shadow Board: 9<sup>th</sup> February 2017. More detailed minutes:**

This shadow board meeting was hosted by Vaughan Allen, CEO CityCo (VA) & Phil Schulze, BID Manager (PS). They were joined by management representatives from:

Bags ETC  
Boots  
The Victorian Chop House  
Clarks  
Costa  
Debenhams  
Harvey Nichols  
Jigsaw  
HMV  
Lloyds  
Marks and Spencer  
McDonalds  
The White Stuff

### **1. Run Through of the Shadow Board process**

VA opened the meeting with a brief outline of the BID and how it has evolved. There was a BID member consultation during the autumn in 2016 and five topics of discussion were identified to help shape the next business plan. There will be five shadow boards, each covering one of the topics

### **2. Discussion of potential BID Event programme for new BID business plan. (Based around the briefing document provided to attendees)**

#### **Are the events working?**

The current BID programme has 6 public events and thoughts were:

#### **A: Chinese New Year**

Really well established city wide event that receives a lot of press coverage and attracts regional and international visitors.

Could more activity start a week before and not just on the four days? Tap into the pre- New Year excitement

#### **B: Student night: Spring**

Works for bringing students and directly increasing retail turnover. Large participation with over 150 stores taking part.

Bucks the trend of other events by offering retail discounts rather than full price - but right for this demographic and increases footfall and awareness for longer term also

#### **C: King Street Festival**

Positive impact bringing the stores together, reminding consumers of 'high end' historic shopping area & heritage. Good atmosphere and significant extra footfall and sales for many retailers. Encourages repeat visits and brings together stores, restaurants and hotels for consumer and business community.

2017 change of timing to weekend in June could be more manageable than over the bank holiday last year.

### **D: Summer Festival**

This is not right yet we need to keep working on how to improve (see Fringe at the end of notes).

### **E: Student night autumn**

Works well with new students arriving. Again gives stores increasing opportunity to participate directly with discounts and on social media. Acts as a good welcome to Manchester event with high BID store participation of over 200 retailers

Opportunity to increase relationship with Universities themselves – raising pre event awareness, especially for high spending international students

### **F: Halloween**

Fast growing event across many retail sectors from family to food to beauty. 2016 inaugural event went well and capitalised on BID & CityCo relationships with partners across the city (hotels, restaurants, Printworks etc.), as well as retailer's own products and promotions. Overall event helping grow October half term as a week-long opportunity to come into the city centre. Need to consider how this will progress as Halloween moves away from a weekend. Overall great for bringing families into the City Centre and not just an adult event.

### **General thoughts**

- Not everyone benefits directly from every BID event but it was welcomed that they are now more numerous and are carefully planned alongside other city events (e.g. Pride)
- These events extend the experience and increase the chance of return visits as they all help raise the profile of the city
- Student night can be a loss leader but very important for many shops. The bigger picture is engaging with what is happening in the city and the other benefits
- Christmas is Christmas and with the markets probably does not need more – BID is right to focus on other periods during the year

### **Extension of events could be:**

#### **1. Greater Manchester Fringe**

We do not employ this opportunity as well as we could. Could BID help grow the annual Greater Manchester Fringe in the same way as is achieved in Edinburgh with their Fringe alongside the International Festival. Point of interest - The Camden Fringe is a larger event than Manchester! Manchester Fringe driven by acts who want to take part and are looking for quirky venues. In long term, could also link to other summer events, like Comic Con. So is there a day to night opportunity and to grow the duration of this during July, to encourage repeat visits into the city?

#### **2. Eid**

BID tried this 3 years ago with mixed results but with the new transport network across Greater Manchester may be worth another try. Covers several sectors e.g. fashion, jewellery, cosmetics

#### **3. Build on the historic areas and heritage of the city**

Medieval quarter around Cathedral already has street theatre and other activities. Could be opportunities to link this aspect of the city with the BID

### **3. Summary**

Overall, VA asked whether we have it right and the consensus was YES. Events are working in broadly the right direction