

Appendix B

Questions and Answers Holt BID

Public Question Time

The below questions were asked by members of the public attending the Holt Town Council meeting on Monday 10th June. The answers have been written up by the Town Clerk after liaising with Love Holt.

Holt Town Council is currently neutral on Holt BID, it cannot form a stance until the Business Plan has been written and Cllrs can understand clearly what projects are being proposed for Holt. The Town Council will continue to watch the process with interest.

As ever, the Town Council strives to help and support residents and businesses and so will endeavour to help anyone, with any questions about the process, to the best of our knowledge.

A brief outline of what a BID is can be found on the HTC website –

[Holt BID - Holt Town Council](#)

1. Why is workshop 4 restricted and why do you have to register your interest to attend?

When booking a venue for an event you need to be able to state the number of people you expect to attend for insurance purposes. Workshop 3 exceeded its capacity, meaning there were more people present than allowed to be, to comply with the rental terms and conditions. For everyone's safety it is important to ensure capacity is not exceeded. A larger venue has been found to accommodate up to 100 people and booked for the next meeting on 4th July 2024. Currently whilst writing, only 12 registrations have been received by Love Holt, therefore it is hoped that everyone wishing to attend the next meeting will be able to do so. Registrations are still compulsory for the event to ensure the capacity is not exceeded.

2. What are the admin costs of running a BID and what are the associated software costs?

Traders will get to decide what projects they would like to be delivered by the BID, it is likely that traders will want to employ someone experienced to

deliver the projects. What skill set that person will need will depend on what they are being asked to deliver, so costs are difficult to establish at this stage. Once the Business Plan has been drafted it will be easier to write a job description and know how many hours and what qualifications will be needed for the new role. As was discussed in the HTC meeting it is also possible that traders choose to undertake the work themselves. The costs involved will be published as part of the Business Plan, which will be voted on.

INNDC would need to purchase new IT software in order to collect the additional levy. Kings Lynn West Norfolk already have this software. Love Holt are confident there is a way round the software costs which are estimated at around £30,000. There are now precedents for internal billing under an “agency” agreement for NNDC, which would mean this would not be needed. Discussions are taking place.

3. How is the process democratic?

Traders have been approached to see if they would like to contribute to the Business Plan which will be written over the coming months. The Business Plan will be made up of the projects that traders would like to see delivered in the town in the next 5 years. The plan once written will be voted on by traders, if the majority of traders vote for the plan, then a BID is formed.

If you don't vote to support the plan but the majority do, and your business is eligible for the increase in rates, then you will have to pay the additional levy. In just the same way if the political party you vote for next month doesn't get elected you will still have to adhere to their legislation.

4. Can you vote if you do not pay into the BID? If you choose to donate to the BID does this give you the right to vote?

Not all businesses are affected by the levy, small businesses typically fall under the proposed rates threshold so will not have to pay anything. Only those businesses that will have to pay into the BID will have the right to vote for it or not. Those businesses that don't automatically contribute can choose to pay a voluntary donation, but this does not give them the right to vote. Each business which falls above the threshold will only have one vote.

5. How was the Steering Group formed? Is it a Love Holt Steering Group or the Steering Group for the BID?

The steering group which has been referred to in workshop sessions is the steering group for the BID. It was initially set up after a request for volunteers went out via the weekly email newsletter which is distributed by Love Holt. There were still some spaces available, which have been subsequently filled, by some of the attendees of the recent workshops. Crucially the Business Plan needs everyone's input, it needs to reflect the needs of the businesses and achieve their goals, otherwise it will not be supported. This is probably the biggest challenge that the BID Group have to face.

6. Is the Holt Vision separate to the Holt BID?

Yes. The Holt Vision is a document which was adopted in 2012 and can be seen in full here; [Policies - Holt Town Council](#) . This document is being updated by HTC, it is a HTC project and separate from Love Holt. The Vision is not progressing quickly, mainly due to lack of manpower to take the project forward. Some of the ideas in the Vision have now been completed (Fish Hill) and others which have recently been explored are deemed too aspirational. Therefore, a review is under way to create an up-to-date document that will then be shared with everyone via a public consultation.

7. Who pays for the Project Manager for the BID?

If a project manager is employed it would be paid for from out of the BID money collected.

8. Who set the £7500 threshold and suggested the 2.5% rise in Council Tax?

A consultant has undertaken a study of Holt for the purpose of creating a BID and has recommended the figures of 2.5 % increase in rates, this is to create a big enough fund to achieve projects in the Business Plan. The rate of £7500 was chosen as the threshold rate, because the cost of collecting the levy for businesses below this was not worth doing so, as the costs of collection were either the same or more than the fee collected.

The fee collected is also capped at £7500, this is because some large businesses would end up contributing much larger amounts to the scheme compared to everyone else.

However there has been some feedback to Love Holt that it would be fairer if all businesses contributed the same. This is being fed back to the consultant and forms part of the consultation process with traders.

9. What would happen if a business decided not to pay the rise?

As with all missed council tax payments, by not paying could result in being taken to court.

10. Why was HTC invited to go along to the workshops?

The Holt BID is a new idea in the town and the Town Council have an interest in what is being proposed. HTC's precept comes from residents' council tax, whereas business rates go straight to central government with no investment in the town. This is a way traders can (if supported by a majority vote) choose to invest in the town, providing they agree on a project that would be beneficial to everyone. The Town Council has an interest in how the town may evolve, in what might be proposed and how it might be achieved.

11. Can the proposed levy be voluntary?

No. Under the BID model you can only offer a voluntary donation if your tax is below the £7500 threshold.

12. Is there a financial incentive for HTC if the BID were to go ahead?

No. The BID is not allowed to carry out work which should be carried out by NCC, NNDC or HTC. There is no financial benefit to HTC. HTC do not get a vote as the rates paid all sit below the threshold.

13. Will all businesses, even those below the tax threshold who will not pay anything, be able to attend the next workshop?

Yes, they must still register beforehand.

14. Will the BID include the Industrial Estate?

Yes. A separate workshop is planned for the businesses on the Industrial Estate. Their needs may be different to those businesses in the centre of town and therefore the Business Plan will have to reflect these as well as common problems experienced by traders in town.

15. Will Love Holt include a Question-and-Answer section on their website?

Yes. This has now been added to the new BID website and is the best way to communicate with them and get any questions you have answered.

16. Why do HTC not benefit directly from the Holt Market?

The Holt Market is a voluntary group that run's the Market on 9 Sundays in the town, anyone can apply to Norfolk County Council to close the roads and host an event in the town it doesn't need permission from Holt Town Council. The Town Council is not involved in the Markets so doesn't get any financial reward. We understand that the market has donated £17,000 to Love Holt so far and aside from running costs is committed to contributing all proceeds to the town. Last year the money was used to put on the Holt Lights event and pay for some of the additional Christmas lights used in town.

17. Do Love Holt admit that they have got the consultation wrong?

Yes, they accept that they need to work on their communication. When contacted, Love Holt have advised HTC of all the ways they attempted to get the message of the workshops across but accept that some businesses have not got the message and have taken that on board.

18. Why did they not attend the HTC meeting?

It was not appropriate for them to attend, whilst HTC recognise that traders would have welcomed another opportunity to speak to Love Holt it would have not been the appropriate forum to do so. HTC meet for transparency reasons in public with a 15-minute slot for public questions. Whilst Cllrs allowed the public question time to overrun it was only one small part of the HTC meeting, whereby HTC had its own business to conduct. It is important for traders and Love Holt to discuss the BID in a meeting set up specifically for this purpose and in a scenario where there is no time constraint.