Survey results:

Bognor Regis Business Improvement District (BID) Feasibility Survey Report

July 2016
1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) are designed to improve the economic performance of an area. There are currently more than 200 BIDs in the UK with others on the way. BIDs create significant sums of investment in an area and participating businesses use the money they gather through a small levy on top of Businesses Rates to pay for improvements that benefit those businesses. These include such items as improved public realm, Christmas lighting, events, security, town marketing and loyalty schemes which all provide a better environment and attraction for shoppers, employees and business visitors.

1.2 BIDs are owned and driven by town centre businesses, and what they deliver is up to businesses to decide. BIDs can help to increase footfall and improve the overall perception of the town centre. The goal is to improve an area so that all business sectors benefit, whether shops, restaurants, offices or hotels and others.

1.3 The Bognor Regis Town Centre Management Partnership is investigating the feasibility of establishing a Business Improvement District to provide new management arrangements for the long term benefit of the town centre. The current funding for the Town Centre Manager will finish in 2018 and without a BID to continue this work, there will be no-one dedicated to working to improve the town centre.

1.4 This survey has been carried out to see if Bognor Regis town centre businesses are keen on this model and is something they would support, and if so whether they would be interested in getting involved in a BID Working Group/Shadow Board.

1.5 The survey was sent to 538 hereditaments, representing 444 organisations in the wider town centre area. The survey ran from 7th June to 15th July 2016. It was available as both an online and printed survey; following extensive promotion by the Town Centre Manager, 101 responses were received, representing a response rate of 18.8%.
2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 More than half of survey respondents (55%) feel that a BID is a good idea, with a further quarter (24%) undecided. Just one in eight (13%) do not think it a good idea.

2.2 However, less than one in four (23%) say that they would be interested in getting involved in the Business Improvement District Working Group/Shadow Board, with a further third (35%) saying maybe. Two in five (40%) say they wouldn’t be interested. The survey asked how they would like to be contacted regarding developments on a BID. Email is the preference of four in five (81%).

2.3 Respondents feel the main problems facing Bognor Regis town centre that a successful BID could look to address are (ranked in order of concern): ‘the perception of the town’; ‘the overall image of the town centre’; ‘a perception of crime and anti-social behaviour’; ‘availability of car parking’; ‘quality and availability of public toilets’; and ‘cleanliness of pavements.’

2.4 The main problems for local businesses to address appear to be: ‘a lack of evening and night-time attractions’; and ‘the quality of retail outlets’. Respondents’ comments included views on the quality of the current retail offering; and the recent/current work to the public realm.

2.5 ‘Cheaper parking’; and a ‘co-ordinated marketing strategy positively promoting the town centre’; are each seen by more than half of town centre businesses who responded as changes that would help “a lot”. The next five most helpful factors are: ‘special events to attract higher spending customers’; ‘more parking’; ‘uniformed patrolling service to reduce shoplifting and anti-social behaviour’; ‘improvements to public spaces’; and ‘improved street cleanliness’.

2.6 Asked if there is one specific initiative that would really benefit their business, ‘parking’ drew the most comment. Other initiatives mentioned include: tackling crime and anti-social behaviour; staging events around the town to attract customers (especially higher spending ones); ending the current public realm works; and (longer term) to improve the quality of the retail offering.

2.7 More than two thirds (69%) of respondents describe themselves as independent businesses. Around one in five are multiple businesses – 15% national multiples and 4% regional multiples.

2.8 Over the past 12 months around a third of respondents (34%) have seen their turnover in Bognor Regis grow, compared with less than one in five (18%) who have seen their turnover drop. Three in eight (37%) say that their turnover has remained stable.

2.9 Encouragingly, three times as many respondents are optimistic about the future (45%) than pessimistic (15%). One in three (34%) say they are unsure.

2.10 Final comments included concerns about an increase in business rates to finance a BID; plus concerns mentioned elsewhere in the survey: the need for adequate customer parking; concerns over disruption caused by public realm works; and the poor quality of the current retail offering.
3. KEY FINDINGS

3.1.1 Survey respondents were asked how much of a problem they considered each of a list of 17 factors to be. Figure 1 below summarises their responses, ranked by percentage saying a “significant problem”. The ‘perception of the town’ is seen by more than half as a “significant problem”. 12 of the 17 factors are considered to be a problem (either “significant” or “minor”) by 50% or more of respondents.

Figure 1 – Q1. How much of a problem do you consider the following to be? (ranked by percentage saying “a significant problem”) [Base: 101]

3.1.2 Apart from the perception of the town and the overall image and of the town centre, factors such as evening and night-time attractions, perception of crime and anti-social behaviour\(^1\), availability of car parking, the quality and availability of public toilets, and cleanliness of pavements are issues that a successful BID could look to address. The quality of retail outlets is for local businesses to address, helped by improvements to the other factors mentioned above.

\(^1\) 83% see ‘crime and anti-social behaviour’ as a problem (significant or minor), the same percentage who see the ‘perception of the town’ as a problem (see figure 1).
3.1.3 Factors of lesser concern are directional signage, management of street traders, traffic congestion, loading and unloading facilities, and finding and retaining staff, each with less than half of respondents viewing it as a problem.

3.2.1 Respondents were invited to list other issues or include more details on their responses. Their comments are shown in full in the appendix on page 17 and selected representative comments are shown below, sorted by emerging theme:

3.2.2 The (poor) quality of the current retail offering:

“The control of rubbish bins on the pavement i.e. bins being out all week on outskirts of town make the end of the High Street look like a back alley.”

3.2.3 The recent/current work to the public realm:

“The control of rubbish bins on the pavement i.e. bins being out all week on outskirts of town make the end of the High Street look like a back alley.”

“Would you be covering a bin collection service with this BID levy?”

3.2.4 Rubbish collection:

“Market stalls/music events/steel bands/etc in London Road deter shoppers and reduce our turnover by at least 25%.” [But note that “special events to attract higher spending customers” are supported – see sections 3.3.2 and 3.4.3].

“Parking for customers should be 2 hours not 1 hour on roads.”

“Seafront is not being included in the town centre.”

“Too many charity shops, too many similar shops, too many cheap shops.”

3.2.5 Other issues:

“The town centre as a whole is full of charity shops; understandably no high end retailers would touch Bognor at the moment.”

“We believe the current road works...have also massively reduced business in our coffee shop. (We have) been disturbed for a long period of time - also longer than originally stated. Access into the coffee shop has proven more difficult along with the continued noise pollution.”

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“Too many charity shops, too many similar shops, too many cheap shops.”
3.3.1 Respondents were asked to say how they think each of a list of 18 factors could improve trading conditions in Bognor Regis town centre. Figure 2 summarises their responses, ranked by percentage saying it could improve trading conditions “a lot”. ‘Cheaper parking’ and ‘a co-ordinated marketing strategy positively promoting the town centre’ are each seen by more than half of town centre businesses who responded as helping “a lot”.

Figure 2 – Q2. How much do you think the following could improve your trading conditions in Bognor Regis town centre? ( Ranked by percentage saying “a lot”) [Base: 101]

3.3.2 Apart from cheaper parking and a co-ordinated marketing strategy, factors such as special events to attract higher spending customers, improvements to public spaces, and improved street cleanliness, all seen as being of help (either “a lot” or “a little”) by more than three quarters of survey respondents.

3.3.3 16 of the 18 suggestions are considered likely to help either “a lot” or “a little” by more than 50% of respondents. The two factors that are seen as having the least effect are ‘training for businesses’ and ‘a town centre loyalty card’.

3.4.1 Respondents were asked to say how much they think these factors could improve their trading conditions in Bognor Regis town centre. Their comments are shown in
full in the appendix and selected representative comments are shown below, sorted by theme:

3.4.2 Parking:

“Cheaper or free parking to attract shoppers and visitors.”

“I think ensuring the availability of car spaces at a rate that doesn't deter drivers is key to getting dwell time up, spend up and the town flowing. (People will carry more if their cars are near!). Pedestrianisation improves footfall but reduces spend.”

“Parking isn't an issue; don't listen to those moaning people on the forum. I've never had a problem parking, so I don't get how everyone else does.”

3.4.3 Special events:

“Monthly food market - Southsea has a farmers’ market that visits once a month and takings for stores increase by 50% due to increased footfall.”

“More special events would work perfectly, not just a once a month thing - try arranging things mid-week.”

“Street entertainment / fairs of better quality would also help image of the town.”

3.4.4 Crime and anti-social behaviour:

“The perceptions about the town are generally true and these need to be tackled rather than promoting a marketing campaign. This means creating a better environment and reducing crime in the area.”

“We believe that crime is not a major issue in Bognor town. Additionally, we think the streets are generally quite clean and well looked after.”

3.4.5 Other ideas:

“A more pedestrian friendly town centre.”

“Bognor has an amazing seafront which should be used more to generate better foot flow into the town.”

“I also think there is a degree of adding the bells and whistles (planters etc) which will improve the ambiance and I think is a necessity in the future, but it’s getting the basics right first before it moves into the next phase.”

“Improvement of Queensway / Canada Grove area - planters, cleaner streets.”

“Lower rents and rates to promote and attract new businesses to the town centre and fill empty shops/premises!”

“More shops in the town, less 'out of town'. Less homes in the town centre, more up market shops/businesses.”
3.5.1 Asked if there is one specific initiative that would really benefit their business, ‘parking’ drew the most comment. Full verbatim comments are provided in the appendix and selected representative comments are shown below, sorted by theme:

3.5.2 Parking:
“2 hours parking on roads around Waterloo Square.”
“Cheap/free car parking at all car parks.”
“Keep parking charges down and more street parking to pop into shops. The town centre is too inaccessible at the moment.”
“More car parking with easy access to the stores.”
“More FREE parking.”
“Parking for customers.”

3.5.3 Crime and anti-social behaviour:
“A uniformed presence around the town and moving on any anti-social behaviour.”
“Improve town centre image, deal with anti-social behaviour, street drinking and begging. I would also like to see the curbing of authorised touting in London Road; sometimes it’s like running the gauntlet.”
“Law enforcement on rubbish being left out.”
“Removal of illegal tobacco / alcohol sales. Patrolling of Canada Grove to prevent groups forming outside Canada Grove shops and in Hothamton car park. Street cleaning - Canada Grove / Queensway.”
“Shoplifting is a real problem and the lack of response when reported.”

3.5.4 Events:
“Ban bands from playing at the south end of precinct as sound echoes LOUDLY through The Arcade annoying and dissuading customers.”
“For events taking place in town to stretch further down the High Street as it’s usually very central and doesn’t benefit us at all.”
“From the list we would say more special events to attract a higher spending audience.”
“Markets around the old town, maybe offering the businesses there the stalls for free; not getting outside people there only.”
“Special events that will bring people into the town or that the town can be famous for.”
“Use the Place St Maur space for more events. There should be something going on every Sunday (weather permitting) through the summer season.”

3.5.5 The quality of the current retail offering:
“Better quality of shops in town - High Street 'names' to draw clients to town.”
“More choice and better shops in the town centre will increase footfall. We do not have the right mix of shops etc.”

“Previously we have explained that actually a wider variety of shops filling the empty businesses would actually be most beneficial.”

“When the 38 premises taken up by charities pay their FULL rates I would consider a 1-2% levy for BID, but why are we expected to pay for improvements for them?!”

3.5.6 Public realm:

“End the roadworks.”

“Extending the town precinct area to the little High Street

“Improvements to the signage in the town would be welcomed.”

“Less disruption caused by extensive overrunning.”

“Public realm improvements to include Upper London Road in the 'Town Centre Precinct' - road surface, pavements and signage.”

“Sign posts showing lots more shops towards Lyon Street mini roundabout, improvement to bus travel/stops.”

3.5.7 Seafront:

“Bognor is a SEASIDE town, we need to attract people to the beach and then they will go and spend in the town.”

“Regeneration of the seafront and Regis Centre.”

“Seafront activities - food outlets/cafes etc.

3.5.8 Other:

“Cheaper business rates.”

“Marketing strategy to promote/raise the profile of the town.”

“Pub watch? I have been trying for months to get in touch with anyone with regards to this and had no luck.”
3.6 The questionnaire then asked local businesses to provide their views on a Business Improvement District (BID). More than half of the respondents (55%) feel that a BID is a good idea, with a further quarter (24%) undecided. Just one in eight (13%) do not think it a good idea (see figure 3).

**Figure 3 – Q4. In principle, do you think BIDs are a good idea? [Base: 101]**

![Figure 3](image1.png)

3.7 However, less than one in four (23%) say that they would be interested in getting involved in the Business Improvement District Working Group/Shadow Board, with a further third (35%) saying maybe. Two in five (40%) say they wouldn’t be interested (see figure 4).

**Figure 4 – Q5. BIDs are business led. Would you be interested in getting involved in the Business Improvement District Working Group/Shadow Board? [Base: 101]**

![Figure 4](image2.png)
3.8 The survey asked for contact details and how they would like to be contacted. Email is the preference of four in five (81%) (see figure 5). The second most popular method is by letter, mention by one in five (20%)\(^2\).

**Figure 5 – Q7. How would you prefer to be contacted? [Base: 101]**

![Contact Method Graph]

3.9 Figure 6 shows the wide range of business types responding. 26 industry sectors were listed of which 21 were mentioned. The key lists the top 5 sectors mentioned.

**Figure 6 – Q9. Which of the following categories best describes your business? (key shows businesses with 5%+ of respondents only) [Base: 101]**

![Industry Sector Pie Chart]

\(^2\) As respondents could select multiple methods, the totals add up to more than 100%.
3.10 More than two thirds (69%) of respondents describe themselves as independent businesses. Around one in five are multiple businesses – 15% national multiples and 4% regional multiples (see figure 7). Independent businesses represent 67% of the town centres hereditaments and 55% of town centre rateable value.3

Figure 7 – Q10. Which of the following best describes your business? [Base: 101]

3.11 Over the past 12 months around a third of respondents (34%) have seen their turnover in Bognor Regis grow, compared with less than one in five (18%) who have seen their turnover drop. Three in eight (37%) say that their turnover has remained stable.

Figure 8 – Q12. Over the last 12 months has your business turnover in Bognor Regis....? [Base: 101]

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3 362 Independent Hereditaments (307 Independent Organisations) representing £6,702,498 rateable value. 176 Multiple (national and regional) Hereditaments (137 Multiple (national and regional) Organisations) representing £5,515,980 rateable value.
3.12.1 Those responding commented on the reasons for this. Full comments are provided in the appendix and selected representative comments are shown below:

3.12.2 A number stated that the work to the public realm had adversely affected their turnover:

“Declined due to ROAD WORKS and area being blocked of preventing customer footfall, the moving of the bus stops has also affected all the businesses down this end of the town.”

“Due to the High St road works!”

“Work on precinct and road paving has halved business turnover. Limited access and excessive noise during the working day has driven customers away.”

3.13 Figure 9 shows that three times as many respondents are optimistic about the future (45%) than pessimistic (15%). One in three (34%) say they are unsure.

Figure 9 – Q13. Looking to the future of Bognor Regis town centre, are you? [Base: 101]

3.14.1 Respondents were invited to comment on the reasons for their view. Full comments are provided in the appendix and selected representative comments are shown below, split by view:

3.14.2 Optimistic:

“Bognor is an amazing town which is taken for granted. Don’t ask people from Bognor for an opinion; ask people who are potential visitors. Utilise small independent businesses and Butlins better and forget the seafront for a few years.”

“Clearly some great changes have been put in place (most notably the fantastic pedestrian walkways) - with more time and resources, Bognor Regis could potentially be dragged in to the modern era and be an attractive place for all generations to visit and get something from.”

“Different class of people being attracted to Bognor.”

“Having met with the town centre manager I have been impressed with the initiatives shown and the enthusiasm and passion he has for the town centre. I am
hopeful that people will provide the scope so that these plans can be realised to the benefit of the town.”

“I see lots of public realm improvements, public opinions of Bognor Regis becoming more positive, lots of effort on the part of TCM and the Councils, and great opportunities to be had from the BID etc. etc.”

“Lots of improvement work is clearly under way.”

3.14.3 Pessimistic:

“History: previous decisions have torn the heart out of Bognor.”

“It’s getting worse; nothing gets finished, everything done on the cheap.”

“Quality of retail offering continues to decline.”

“Rents, rates, staff costs, parking.”

“The materials used for pavements/town centre refurbishment look appalling!”

“‘White’ precinct is unpopular; seating is dangerous. Too many homeless begging. Too many drunks/anti-socials left in town centre.”

3.14.4 Unsure:

“Everything is favoured towards town centre - I feel forgotten.”

“Main retail outlets moved out of the town and continue to do so. Also to we need to have a no drinking alcohol policy in the town centre and surrounding areas, which needs policing. This makes people feel uncomfortable.”

“More out of town outlets are opening up offering free parking ease of shopping. In the town parking prices have gone up and the road works have prevented customers/visitors coming into the town etc.”

3.15 Nearly three in five (59%) say that they are not currently recruiting staff in Bognor Regis. Given that the majority on those responding are very small independent businesses with generally few staff, this is perhaps not surprising.

Figure 10 – Q14. Are you currently recruiting staff in Bognor Regis? [Base: 101]
3.16.1 The final question invited respondents to provide any further comments that they might have. Full verbatim comments are provided in the appendix and selected representative comments are shown below, sorted by theme:

3.16.2 About a BID / business rates:

“A BID may indeed work/be a good idea for the shops in London Road, i.e. in a much smaller area.”

“Any increase in rates whatsoever would result in business closures, including mine.”

“Business rates are already too high. The VOA is in the process of updating rateable values for 2017. I’m sure these will be adjusted upwards making business rates worse, so a 1% or 2% levy on that would be difficult. The BID is a good idea but business rates need to be reduced to make it affordable.”

“I feel we pay enough in our business rates and this should be included in them not set out as another charge. What do we really get for our business rates? Our bins are not emptied; we pay for other companies to do them. As the years go on there seems more and more additional charges for small businesses!”

“The Bognor Regis area has severely deteriorated in the past 20 years. I am not sure it’s the businesses that are still here that should be asked to pay more towards the business rates, but that the Council should be looking at what investments they can make towards improving the area.”

“We have a BID levy in Chichester. I don't think it has made a bit of difference to trade.”

3.16.3 Bognor Regis’s image (marketing and events):

“Bognor Regis is world famous as a seaside town - it is this that should be boosted and promoted. Events that encourage people to visit in the first place would impact on shops use.”

“Need to improve the image, remove stigma of Bognor Regis. This will be a long term goal, but now is a good time to start.”

3.16.4 Parking:

“If we want to encourage more people to visit Bognor we have to provide adequate parking and more entertainment.”

3.16.5 Public realm:

“Stop wasting money on new pavements and invest in the town’s future!!”

“The disruption caused by the current works, which seems to have stagnated, has had a significant detrimental effect on my turnover.”

“The roadworks continue to be devastating.”
3.16.6 Quality of retail offering:

“No-one really comes here just for the shops as there are far more and better choices available in Worthing, Chichester, Portsmouth, and Brighton - all within a short travelling distance.”

“Towns live or die by their retail offer. Visitors want M&S but that is clearly not going to happen. We need quality shops and rid of charity shops and £1 shops.”

3.16.7 Other:

“Provide a crèche facility in town so parents can shop without interruption.”

“The arcade is the gateway into town for many visitors and it is a disgrace. The landlord (arguably the biggest in town) is asking unrealistic rents and is happy to leave the units empty and decaying. This needs to be addressed.”

“With all the new houses on the outskirts of Bognor and the improvements to the town centre there has definitely been a better atmosphere in the High Street and it seems busier with better choice of shops that before. But the town doesn’t encourage people to the outskirts of town where there are still businesses i.e. Queensway, Waterloo Square, Station Road etc. The town stops at the precinct as do the people.”
Q1a. How much of a problem do you consider the following to be? Please use this space to list other issues, or to include more details on your responses:

“A lot of work needed.”

“All these are the responsibility of the local authorities for which we already pay business rates, except (2 crime related issues) which are Police responsibility, and the last four which are down to the businesses themselves.”

“Bedford Street parking is out of control. Blue badge holders double parking and blocking the road. Pavement is poor for delivery and unloading.”

“I feel businesses around my end (Old Town) aren’t taken advantage of and that the seafront is a write off, so you should focus more on what you do have in town in order to attract potential higher end establishments moving businesses into Bognor rather than focusing on a seafront which, let’s be honest, is a dump. The town centre as a whole is full of charity shops; understandably no high end retailers would touch Bognor at the moment. So focus on the top restaurants/barbers/tattooists we do have in Bognor over what we don’t have.”

“(The charity) houses 6 independent churches, feeds poor and homeless, has sponsored the clowns’ festival, but has no assistance from any council.”

“Look at Chichester. They do everything so much better and attract better people, customers.”

“Market stalls/music events/steel bands/etc in London Road deter shoppers and reduce our turnover by at least 25%. Rox on the Prom and events in Hotham Park may be good for the town overall but have neither a positive nor negative effect on our trade.”

“New pavements, especially yellow, are a total waste of money and cannot be kept clean. White and grey tiles (pavement) are a ridiculously impractical colour.”

“One area of the town centre which needs improving is The Arcade. I know it is privately owned, and out of the direct control of the town centre manager, but there are too many vacant outlets there. It is dragging down that part of the town centre.”

“Out of town retail park. Toiletry trade being hit by B+M, Home Savers.”

“Poor quality seating, poor quality paving in precinct. Colour of paving - ‘white’ will always look dirty.”

“Restaurant: high rates, energy costs, name it. Impossible to rent this property, 160 London Road. Has been empty for 14 months. Council building cafe in Hotham Park and now spending on lighting. Destroyed cafe.”

“Seafort is not being included in the town centre.”

“Some quality retail outlets/chains have closed down and we are left with only ‘value’ stores, charity shops, and mobile phone shops. This doesn’t create a good image to visitors.”

“The control of rubbish bins on the pavement i.e. bins being out all week on outskirts of town make the end of the High Street look like a back alley. Parking for customers should be 2 hours not 1 hour on roads.”

“The current Post Office is soon to close, to be replaced by a franchise in a shop. Which one? Where? How close to the town centre? With what facilities? How big?”

“The image of the town is being improved in some areas, but the way the work has been carried out has affected a lot of local business. Now looking at the High Street to new visitors and locals it basically says that where the new paving has been done is where the shops end when in fact the High Street carries on to the mini roundabout by Lyon Street & the shops carry on to this point. How will visitors and locals be encouraged to venture that way?”

“There are very few quality shops in Bognor. Reynolds, Clarks, New Look, Sussex Shoes, The Appliance Centre, That’s it!”

“There is a distinct lack of quality retail offering in the town. The town is dominated by charity shops and betting shops which add no value.”

“Too many charity shops, too many similar shops, too many cheap shops (Poundland, Brighthouse etc). Too many cheap flats/houses in town centre (should be for shops/businesses).”
“With regards to how the town looks at the moment - we believe the current road works are having a massive impact. They have also massively reduced business in our coffee shop. (We have) been disturbed for a long period of time - also longer than originally stated. Access into the coffee shop has proven more difficult along with the continued noise pollution. We understand that the improvements will be for the better of the town however this is usually our busy period as it is summer time yet we have failed to make our usual profits which we rely on every year. Our usual customers have even said to us that they cannot understand why the works are being done during the summer especially when we have lots of visitors to Butlins. They make navigation around the town more difficult for them as well as navigating potential customers away from our coffee shop.”

“Would you be covering a bin collection service with this bid levy? We work with most bid teams and would be grateful for local events and marketing.”

Q2a. How much do you think the following could improve your trading conditions in Bognor Regis town centre? Please use the space below to share your own ideas, or include more details on your response:

“I think ensuring the availability of car spaces at a rate that doesn’t deter drivers is key to getting dwell time up, spend up and the town flowing. (People will carry more if their cars are near!). Pedestrianisation improves footfall but reduces spend. I also think there is a degree of adding the bells and whistles (planters etc) which will improve the ambiance and I think is a necessity in the future, but it’s getting the basics right first before it moves into the next phase. Further consideration needs to be given to the “Walkway” to Bognor as well. It seems to be a town that is more recognised nationally than it is locally (I am from Birmingham). I was shocked on arrival that I was essentially being welcomed to Hove and Bognor appeared to be an embarrassment. The drive into the town is not welcoming. (I believe the first shop I saw was a funeral parlour!) and multiple speed cameras.”

“Improvement of Queensway / Canada Grove area - planters, cleaner streets.”

“Lower rents and rates to promote and attract new businesses to the town centre and fill empty shops/premises!”

“Monthly food market - Southsea has a farmers’ market that visits once a month and takings for stores increase by 50% due to increased footfall.”

“More parking, cheaper or free parking. More shops in the town, less 'out of town'. Less homes in the town centre, more up market shops/businesses.”

“New approach needed.”

“Our trade is not affected by the town centre due to the nature of it (non-retail).”

“Some not relevant.”
“The perceptions about the town are generally true and these need to be tackled rather than promoting a marketing campaign. This means creating a better environment and reducing crime in the area.”

“We are not a retail outlet. We are an office only. We found parking a problem but have resolved the issue.”

“We believe that crime is not a major issue in Bognor town. This is why we have answered no response for the questions related to it. Additionally, we think the streets are generally quite clean and well looked after. A main improvement we think would be beneficial would be the quality of shops for one thing. Bognor has become saturated with charity shops. These only attract a small market and not a wide variety of people. More events in the town could palpably help bringing more people out or in from elsewhere; however new, more upmarket shops filling the empty shops would certainly increase business for us all. This is a general consensus between not only us but also our customers.”

“We do not retail anything.”

“We do not trade. All users have been recommended. We have parking for 5 cars. This we are sure is an attraction.”

Q3. Is there one specific initiative that would really benefit your business?

“Cut business rates. Local authorities to properly do what they are supposed to do. Also Police. The Chamber of Commerce etc can do the rest, we don’t need another layer of expensive bureaucracy.”

“End the roadworks.”

“Events.”

“Extending the town precinct area to the little High Street with law enforcement on rubbish being left out, and 2 hours parking on roads around Waterloo Square.”

“For events taking place in town to stretch further down the High Street as it’s usually very central and doesn’t benefit us at all.”

“From the list we would say more special events to attract a higher spending audience. Previously we have explained that actually a wider variety of shops filling the empty businesses would actually be most beneficial.”

“Improve town centre image, deal with anti-social behaviour street drinking and begging. I would also like to see the curbing of authorised touting in London Road; sometimes it’s like running the gauntlet.”

“Improvements to the signage in the town would be welcomed.”

“Introduction of some quality branded retail food.”

“Keep parking charges down and more street parking to pop into shops. The town centre is too inaccessible at the moment.”

“Less disruption caused by extensive overrunning.”
“Marketing strategy to promote/raise the profile of the town.”

“Markets around the old town maybe offering the businesses there the stalls for free; not getting outside people there only. As there is a lot for me to offer which isn’t taken advantage of. Which you know yourself!”

“Maybe an event in the West Street area?”

“More car parking with easy access to the stores.”

“More choice and better shops in the town centre will increase footfall. Think of the Tesco model (free parking and all products in one place). We do not have the right mix of shops etc.”

“More FREE parking, sign posts showing lots more shops towards Lyon Street mini roundabout, improvement to bus travel/stops.”

“More volunteers. Reliable and skilled.”

“Much more demand for commercial stock i.e. from small and medium sized businesses. This would encourage the supply of more employment space. So, the BID team need to extend their expertise to the ‘commercial sector’ as that in itself will help the retail sector as more non retail jobs.”

“n/a”

“No”

“Parking for customers.”

“Parking!!”

“Pub watch? I have been trying for months to get in touch with anyone with regards to this and had no luck.”

“Public realm improvements to include Upper London Road in the ‘Town Centre Precinct’ - road surface, pavements and signage.”

“Regeneration of the seafront and Regis Centre.”

“Removal of illegal tobacco / alcohol sales. Patrolling of Canada Grove to prevent groups forming outside Canada Grove shops and in Hothamton car park. Street cleaning - Canada Grove / Queensway.”

“Shoplifting is a real problem and the lack of response when reported.”

“Special events that will bring people into the town or that the town can be famous for.”

“Town centre initiatives/directives for town events.”

“Turn clock back to the time before Hotham Way was built and all traffic came through the level crossing to go down London Road to the town. Cafe then thriving!”

“Use the Place St Maur space for more events. There should be something going on every Sunday (weather permitting) through the summer season.”

“When the 38 premises taken up by charities pay their FULL rates I would consider a 1-2% levy for BID, but why are we expected to pay for improvements for them?!”

Q12a. Over the last 12 months has your business turnover in Bognor Regis, grown, remained stable, or declined? Please provide any comments:

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Remained stable:

“Daytime only restaurant.”

“This ‘turnover’ relates to the church, not to trading.”

Declined:

“Business is weather driven and more shops selling the same as me.”

“Declined due to ROAD WORKS and area being blocked of preventing customer footfall, the moving of the bus stops has also affected all the businesses down this end of the town.”

“Due to the High St roadworks!”

“Issues related to the property market rather than the town.”

“Out of town.”

“Work on precinct and road paving has halved business turnover. Limited access and excessive noise during the working day has driven customers away.”

Q13a. Looking to the future of Bognor Regis town centre, are you optimistic, pessimistic, or unsure? Please explain why:

Optimistic:

“Bognor is an amazing town which is taken for granted. Don’t ask people from Bognor for an opinion, ask people who are potential visitors. Utilise small independent businesses and Butlins better and forget the seafront for a few years.”

“Clearly some great changes have been put in place (most notably the fantastic pedestrian walkways) - with more time and resources, Bognor Regis could potentially be dragged in to the modern era and be an attractive place for all generations to visit and get something from.”

“Different class of people being attracted to Bognor.”

“Extensive work is taking place to improve the public realm but it is important it is maintained to bring shoppers - and traders - into the town centre.”

“Having met with the town centre manager I have been impressed with the initiatives shown and the enthusiasm and passion he has for the town centre. I am hopeful that people will provide the scope so that these plans can be realised to the benefit of the town.”

“Hope to gain staff and grow.”

“I hope the town learns and grows.”

“I see lots of public realm improvements, public opinions of Bognor Regis becoming more positive, lots of effort on the part of TCM and the Councils, and great opportunities to be had from the BID etc. etc.”

“It’s my nature, don’t let the buggers grind you down.”

“Lots of improvement work is clearly under way.”

“Opening a large new venue, while continued investment within the town centre continues.”

“The need to restore a once popular seaside resort.”

“The town is looking better; house prices are picking up; we need to be positive.”

“We are a new business in Bognor Regis.”

“We have just relocated and committed to a 10 year lease. The town is moving forward.”
“We would be very interested in working with the local community to organise events and support this opportunity.”

**Pessimistic:**

“The quality of retail offering continues to decline.”

“Quality of retail offering continues to decline.”

“Quality of retail offering continues to decline.”

“Quality businesses (retail) continue to close down.”

“Rents, rates, staff costs, parking.”

“The materials used for pavements/town centre refurbishment look appalling!”

“White’ precinct is unpopular; seating is dangerous. Too many homeless begging. Too many drunks/anti-socials left in town centre.”

**Unsure:**

“History: previous decisions have torn the heart out of Bognor.”

“It’s getting worse; nothing gets finished, everything done on the cheap.”

“Lack of small independent shops.”

“Quality of retail offering continues to decline.”

“Rents, rates, staff costs, parking.”

“The materials used for pavements/town centre refurbishment look appalling!”

“White’ precinct is unpopular; seating is dangerous. Too many homeless begging. Too many drunks/anti-socials left in town centre.”

**Q15. Do you have any further comments?**

“1. The roadworks continue to be devastating. 2. Towns live or die by their retail offer. Visitors want M&S but that is clearly not going to happen. We need quality shops and rid of charity shops and £1 shops. 3. The arcade is the gateway into town for many visitors and it is a disgrace. The landlord (arguably the biggest in town) is asking unrealistic rents and is happy to leave the units empty and decaying. This needs to be addressed.

4. Bognor needs to exploit its only asset - its seaside location. Any bid should encompass all Bognor’s retail and catering businesses i.e. include all those on the seafront from Butlins to Aldwick. 5. Provide a crèche facility in town so parents can shop without interruption.”

“A BID may indeed work/be a good idea for the shops in London Road, i.e. in a much smaller area.”

“A nice town centre fountain like they have in Clacton would be nice (please look up). It would be a real feature, maybe on Place St Maur, or on the High Street where the sun sculpture was.”

“As a bank any agreement would need to be made centrally to take this further.”

“BID is unnecessary, and much of the funds will be swallowed by wages, on-costs, and expenses. The Chamber of Commerce can work with Town
Centre Traders Group to get councils to do their job properly. PLUS town centre improvements are for the benefit of, and should be paid for by, ALL the residents of the area, not just the traders. That’s what Council Tax is for.”

“Bognor is very much like a ghost town. The M&S store and Next choosing to settle in a retail park instead of the town centre. We are left with charity shops, estate agents in the main. In addition parking discourages people coming into town. May as well go to Chichester - more choice, more parking. Or as in my own case, Portsmouth.”

“Bognor Regis is world famous as a seaside town - it is this that should be boosted and promoted. Events that encourage people to visit in the first place would impact on shops use. No-one really comes here just for the shops as there is a far more and better choice available in Worthing, Chichester, Portsmouth, and Brighton - all within a short travelling distance.”

“Business rates are already too high. The VOA is in the process of updating rateable values for 2017. I’m sure these will be adjusted upwards making business rates worse, so a 1% or 2% levy on that would be difficult. The bid is a good idea but business rates need to be reduced to make it affordable.”

“Change of approach needed.”

“Council cafe built in Hotham Park has siphoned off any chance that Rosie Lee Cafe can survive. To be made worse soon by Council installing lights in the park to entice people to the new cafe. Nobody seems to understand in the council. I am considering turning the premises back to a terraced house as it was 100 years ago when it was turned into a shop.”

“Far too many charity shops.”

“I don’t think a new bid would benefit our businesses at all.”

“I felt that the cost of renting office space in Bognor was high. The rates are also high. I do not believe an additional tax will encourage more business to the area.”

“I have traded in Bognor for 30 years. I have seen it decline for 30 years; many of my customers only come to Bognor to visit me. EVERYTHING is all about how ‘cheap’ things can be. No forward thinking, no quality (markets, new paving, lights), no vision, everyone putting a different view forward so that nothing gets done. Need to put things on to appeal to people outside of Bognor (a wide audience) or nothing will happen. Very sad state of affairs.”

“If we want to encourage more people to visit Bognor we have to provide adequate parking and more entertainment. Seating in the Place St Maur with maybe a jazz band or street artists would lure people off the prom towards the town.”

“Keep up the good work, anything we can do to support.”

“My main point here is I feel we pay enough in our business rates and this should be included in them not set out as another charge. What do we really get for our business rates? Our bins are not emptied; we pay for other companies to do them. As the years go on there seems more and more additional charges for small businesses!”

“Need to improve the image, remove stigma of Bognor Regis. This will be a long term goal, but now is a good time to start.”

“Over the last 30 years there have been MANY grand plans that have never materialised. Bognor Regis is a small seaside town, its regeneration plans should be to scale and then they might go through. I have always felt that a modest marina would help Bognor Regis.”

“Rent therapy rooms to 6 therapists. Have space to grow by another 2. Perception of Bognor generally is a limiting factor.”

“Rents and rates are too high. Also staff wages make it difficult to run a profitable business. Parking is a major problem. People prefer to go to out of town suppliers as parking is easy. More out of town suppliers will eventually destroy inner cities.”

“Seeking a part-time person.”

“Staff recruitment is difficult to find for care workers in Bognor Regis. A lot of foreign workers that can’t speak English apply but are not always suitable. Staff turnover is high. Elderly environment is high and care requirements are needed to be supported within the community.”

“The Bognor Regis area has severely deteriorated in the past 20 years. I am not sure it’s the businesses that are still here that should be asked to pay more towards the business rates, but that the Council should be looking at what investments they can make towards improving the area. Stop wasting money on new pavements and invest in the town's future!!”

“The disruption caused by the current works, which seems to have stagnated, has had a significant detrimental effect on my turnover. Any increase in rates whatsoever would result in business closures, including mine.”

“The new pavements - who in their right mind authorised yellow tarmac for the pavements?!! It
looks disgusting and dirty already. Everyone I have spoken to all think what a complete waste of public money. The buildings in Station Road look tired and dirty. Maybe offer some kind of grant to help modernise? Nice cafe, outdoor dining for the cafe in Station Road would look good and more greenery around the town. At night there is a lot of homeless people sleeping and sitting in doorways in London Road. Bognor feels unsafe to come to after dark.”

“The poverty mentality of the population of the town will determine what happens. From where I’m standing it does not lead one to be positive, unfortunately. The quality customers one wants simply choose to shop elsewhere, Chichester for example. The consensus amongst my clients is: the local population is not attractive to be around. Quite a stinging judgment really! This seems to be an issue which traders can’t influence.”

“The regeneration of Bognor needs to happen now! The indecision and uncertainty is not helping the town. We have been talking about the future of the town for as long as I can remember and still we seem not to be any closer to making a decision. Somebody should be answerable to why we are in this embarrassing situation.”

“This is a charity (church based) business with an office in Bognor Regis. Most of our ‘trade’ is by mail order/online. The most essential item - not mentioned in the survey - is a reliable Post Office facility in the town centre that is certain to stay there, unlike the present situation where the current Post Office is likely to close soon, being replaced by a franchise in another shop!!!”

“We have a bid levy in Chichester. I don’t think it has made a bit of difference to trade.”

“We have been trading as ‘The Tank’ since March 2016. We are looking forward to opening our exciting new large bar, restaurant, entertainments venue in the centre of the town and are happy to be involved in any scheme for the good of traders and Bognor Regis as a whole.”

“When the 38 premises taken up by charity shops pay their FULL rates then it would be fair to charge 1-2% rateable value on everyone. Why should we bear more burden than these competitive to local traders charity shops?”

“Whilst we have said we are in favour of BIDS in principle, being significantly beyond the edge of town centre i.e. not even a secondary retailing area, it is unlikely we would vote for it in a ballot, as we are unlikely to see any of the activities that might be undertaken by a BID in our immediate area.”

“With all the new houses on the outskirts of Bognor and the improvements to the town centre there has definitely been a better atmosphere in the High Street and it seems busier with better choice of shops that before. But the town doesn’t encourage people to the outskirts of town where there are still businesses i.e. Queensway, Waterloo Square, Station Road etc. The town stops at the precinct as do the people.”