

Business, Infrastructure & Growth Committee



13 March 2025

Title	<i>Appointment of a director to the Board of Visit Staines (the Business Improvement District in Staines upon Thames).</i>
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report Author	<i>Heather Morgan, Group Head of Place, Protection & Prosperity</i>
Ward(s) Affected	Staines Ward
Exempt	No
Exemption Reason	N/A
Corporate Priority	Resilience
Recommendations	Committee is asked to: Agree to appoint the Economic Development Manager as a director to the board of Visit Staines Ltd, the Business Improvement District in Staines upon Thames subject to a resolution to appoint by the Visit Staines Board.
Reason for Recommendation	To ensure openness and transparency in appointments through the committee structure providing robust governance and accountability.

1. Summary of the report

What is the situation	Why we want to do something
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Deputy Chief Executive is currently a director, representing the Council on the Visit Staines Board. The Deputy Chief Executive intends to resign from the board. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For transparency it is for the Committee to approve officer/ councillor appointments as directors. As the current director is also the S151 Officer for the Council it is advised that to avoid any potential conflicts of interests the Deputy Chief Executive steps down as a director of Visit Staines.
This is what we want to do about it	These are the next steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appoint the Economic Development Manager or a nominated Councillor as a director of Visit Staines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This Committee to agree the appointment of a director. Visit Staines Board to approve the appointment.

- 1.1 This report seeks to present details of the nominations for appointment of a director to Visit Staines Ltd, the Business Improvement District management company.
- 2. Key issues**
- 2.1 The Deputy Chief Executive/ S151 officer represents the Council as a director of Visit Staines Ltd. There is not a time limit imposed by Visit Staines Ltd for this appointment.
- 2.2 As the Council's S151 officer, the Deputy Chief Executive has determined that he intends to step down as a director of Visit Staines Ltd.
- 2.3 As well as statutory duties of a director (as per The Companies Act 2006), the director will be responsible for ensuring oversight over public funds and provide good value for money. ([See Appendix A](#)).
- 2.4 **Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)** play a vital role in fostering economic growth, enhancing the local environment, and creating thriving communities. While businesses are central to the success of a BID, local authorities as key stakeholders in urban planning, infrastructure, and community well-being should also be integral members of BID boards. Here are several reasons why local authorities' participation is essential:
- 2.5 **Alignment of goals and Strategies.** Local authorities are responsible for the long-term development and planning of cities and towns. Their involvement in a BID board ensures alignment between the BID's initiatives and broader public policies, such as urban regeneration, sustainability goals, and infrastructure development. This alignment reduces duplication of efforts and ensures that both parties work toward complementary objectives, maximizing the impact of investments. They provide a forum to combine businesses' interests to collectively improve the local area.
- 2.6 **Access to Expertise and Resources.** Local authorities bring valuable expertise in urban planning, transport, licensing, and environmental management. Their presence on the BID board allows businesses to tap into this knowledge, leading to well-informed decisions and more effective projects. Additionally, local authorities often control funding streams or can facilitate access to grants that could amplify the BID's initiatives.
- 2.7 **Enhanced Communication and Collaboration.** Including local authorities on the BID board fosters open communication and collaboration between the public and private sectors. This partnership can expedite decision-making processes, resolve conflicts more efficiently, and streamline the implementation of projects, such as public realm improvements or event planning.
- 2.8 **Strengthened Advocacy and Influence.** A BID with local authority representation gains a stronger voice when advocating for issues such as policy changes, infrastructure investments, or regulatory support. Local authorities can act as a bridge to other public agencies, ensuring that the BID's priorities are represented and addressed at higher levels of government.
- 2.9 **Increased Accountability and Transparency.** As a levy payer, the presence of a director on the Visit Staines Ltd.'s board provides the Council with oversight and scrutiny of the public money spent by Visit Staines. Having local authorities on the BID board promotes greater accountability and transparency. Their involvement ensures that public funds are spent responsibly and that BID activities align with legal and ethical standards. This accountability fosters trust among stakeholders and demonstrates the BID's commitment to acting in the community's best interest. Spelthorne Borough Council is responsible for collecting the BID levy. Due to this and for transparency purposes, the representant of the Council does not have access to the BID's bank accounts to approve payments. Payments are approved by another BID director.

- 2.10 **Support for Community Well-being.** Local authorities are deeply invested in the well-being of their communities. Their participation ensures that BID initiatives address not only the needs of businesses but also the wider community, including residents and visitors. This holistic approach can enhance the area's appeal, attract more visitors, and boost economic growth.
- 2.11 **Facilitation of Infrastructure and Maintenance.** Many BID projects rely on public infrastructure, such as roads, sidewalks, lighting, and waste management. Local authorities' presence on the board ensures seamless coordination for these services, reducing delays and ensuring that projects meet necessary standards and regulations.
- 2.12 Local authorities are indispensable partners in the success of Business Improvement Districts. Their participation on BID boards brings strategic alignment, expertise, resources, and accountability, creating a more effective and impactful BID. By fostering collaboration between businesses and the public sector, BIDs can drive sustainable growth, improve public spaces, and enhance the overall quality of life for everyone in the community. The Visit Staines 5-year plan can be viewed [here](#).

3. Options analysis and proposal

3.1 Preferred Option 1:

To recommend the appointment the Economic Development Manager as a director to the board of Visit Staines Ltd.

The appointment will comply with the principles of good governance and will provide overview and scrutiny of public funds ensuring good value for money.

3.2 Option 2:

To recommend the appointment of a nominated Councillor as a director to the board of Visit Staines Ltd. An officer can attend the board meeting as an invitee and able to advise the nominated Councillor or board as required.

The appointment will comply with the principles of good governance and will provide overview and scrutiny of public funds ensuring good value for money.

3.3. Option 3:

To not appoint directors to the board.

This option is not recommended as the Council will have no scrutiny and oversight over public funds spent by Visit Staines Ltd.

4. Financial management comments

Officers/ councillors will be required to attend monthly board meetings. Any officer time outside of core hours will be subject to overtime claims. All BID board meetings take place during office hours so unlikely to incur any overtime claims nor has there been any overtime claims to date. The director does not have access to the BID's bank accounts nor can they make any independent financial decisions. There are no other identified financial considerations.

5. Risk management comments

- 5.1 To not appoint a director to the board of Visit Staines Ltd. will likely result in minimal governance and scrutiny. The Council has a responsibility to ensure that public funds are not misappropriated so to mitigate this, a director will provide governance, to ensure responsible allocations of public funds, providing good value for money.
- 5.2 The Council currently pays £5000 in levies out of a total of £285,000 raised by the BID.

6. Procurement comments

- 6.1 None identified

7. Legal comments

7.1 These are contained in the body of the report.

8. Other considerations

8.1 None identified

9. Equality and Diversity

9.1 No impact identified

10. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications

10.1 There is no direct impact of officers or councillors being appointed directors.

11. Timetable for implementation

11.1 This should be in place for the beginning of the 25/26 municipal year.

12. Contact

12.1 Heather Morgan, h.morgan@spelthorne.gov.uk

Please submit any material questions to the Committee Chair and Officer Contact by two days in advance of the meeting.

Background papers: There are none

Appendices:

Appendix A Responsibilities of a BID Board Member

Appendix A:

Responsibilities of the BID Board Members

1. To ensure that BID levies are collected as set out in the Business Plan.
2. To ensure that the projects in Visit Staines BID Business Plan are delivered effectively.
3. To monitor progress and report regularly to levy payers, voluntary contributors and other stakeholder.
4. To elect a Chairperson.
5. Board Members must serve collaboratively, positively represent the BID, and act in the best interest of all levy payers.
6. To receive updates from the BID Directors and/or BID Manager in order to be able to report back to the sector represented.
7. To contribute to developing the BID's strategy to enhance the town center and influence decision-makers positively.
8. To ensure that BID activities provide "best value" for levy payers, with results aligned with the Business Plan.
9. To ensure that the BID activities are aligned with the agreed Business Plan.
10. To provide strategic oversight of the BID Executive Team.
11. To approve the draft BID Business Plan developed by the BID staff for each five- year term, engaging businesses throughout the consultation and ballot processes.
12. To act as a positive ambassador for the BID.

Responsibilities of the BID Directors

1. To ensure good governance by adopting BID best practices.
2. To ensure the BID company meets all its financial, legal and employment responsibilities.
3. To support the BID team in managing the renewal ballot at each five-year term's conclusion.

Remuneration

1. Board Members and Directors do not receive any remuneration.