



The Runnymede Business Partnership Travel Initiative Business Improvement District (BID) Proposal

The Aim – To reduce local peak time traffic congestion

The BID levy will help fund the Runnymede Travel Initiative to further ease traffic congestion in the Borough. This will reduce the number of dedicated car journeys to local schools and colleges by providing 12 American style Yellow Buses for students' daily journeys.

The BID Proposal

The proposed Runnymede BID scheme will use the funds, raised by a business rates levy, to assist with the operation of a total of 12 American Style Yellow School Buses, which will serve up to 10 schools and colleges in the Borough of Runnymede. Additional services would be provided to schools in the existing scheme (Fullbrook, Jubilee High, Magna Carta & Salesians) whilst an additional Secondary school (Sir William Perkins) has applied to be included in the Yellow Bus scheme. The school bus service will operate for the 5 year period of the levy. Details of the schools involved, the operation of the service and current routes are available upon request. The new routes would have to be developed according to the residential location of the student passengers.

The BID Promoter is the Runnymede Business Partnership

The BID's Regulations were issued in September 2004. The Runnymede BID promoter is the Runnymede Business Partnership, comprising representatives of local businesses, Chambers of Commerce, schools, colleges, university, Surrey Police and Runnymede Borough Council. The BID will operate as the Runnymede Travel Initiative and be guided by a Runnymede Travel Initiative board.

The Runnymede Travel Initiative BID Board

A board will oversee the operation of the BID; it will be an informally constituted body. The day to day operation of the service will be undertaken by the Borough Council, but the BID Board will be responsible for ensuring that the BID funds are used solely for the provision of the proposed Yellow School Bus scheme and for developing and monitoring the service.

The membership of the BID board will comprise the minimum of one representative from; those businesses who directly fund and/or benefit from the scheme, the schools/colleges, parents/guardians of the students who use the service, and the Runnymede Business Partnership and Runnymede Borough Council. Other members will be co-opted as required.

The Chairman will have the casting vote, and would be chosen from the members of the Board. Leadership of the BID will come from the Chairman of the BID Board. The BID Board will meet twice per year and will be serviced by Runnymede Borough Council. The annual meeting of the Board will receive fully audited accounts, a report on the operation and promotion of the service and details of the roll out of



the service to the schools. The Board will also meet at least one other time during the year to receive an update report. Additional meetings will be called as required.

BID to provide *extra* services to Reduce Traffic Congestion

The Council is *neither an education or transport authority* and does not normally provide school transport services. The original development of the service stems from a desire by the local business community to reduce traffic congestion on the local roads at peak times. The focus on the school run was part of an overall approach to identify mechanisms for reducing the need to travel by car for certain peak hour journeys. Whilst the journey to school is part of the initiative, further work is taking place, outside the scope of the BID, to encourage both school and company travel plans.

The Growth of the Existing Baseline Service

The service is promoted by the Runnymede Business Partnership but administered by the Borough Council. Launched in February 2002 it then served Magna Carta and Fullbrook secondary schools. Four buses provided 8 routes and carried 130 students. Over the intervening period the service has been progressively expanded to include Jubilee High School and Salesians School with six yellow buses now in operation. The six buses now provide 15 routes and they serve all the main settlements in the Borough. They provide a journey to school for almost 500 secondary school students, with waiting lists for most of the buses.

The American Style Yellow School Bus Service

The buses and drivers are provided by First Group, the company which has promoted the American style yellow bus service. The service includes a package of measures that encompasses a specially designed bus for school students, a dedicated driver and a commitment to work with the schools and the provider (The Business Partnership). A key part of the yellow bus service is that it has been developed as a partnership with the schools, Business Partnership and the Bus Company. The routes are designed by the Company in liaison with the school and the Business Partnership, and the Partnership and schools work together to promote the service to parents and students.

Current Funding

The service is funded by fares collected (30%); development related funding (Section 106 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1991) (65%) and the remainder from business sponsorship. The funds from Section 106 agreements enable the service to be maintained on a year on year basis. Future income from Section 106 money may be affected by a government review of such contributions and it is difficult on this basis to provide the certainty for a long-term commitment and expansion of the service.

The BID proposal would enable the service to be expanded from 6 to 12 buses, which would serve approximately 10 schools, and ensure long term provision to be made.

The Impact of the BID Proposal

At present in the order of 20 million car journeys per annum are made by those travelling to work or school in Runnymede. Almost 50% of students currently travel to school or college by car. The target is to move 20% of the predominantly car based journeys to school to the Yellow School Bus or cycling by 2010 (i.e. 20% of 2.5 million trips made to school by car as the primary reason for the journey). This equates to 15% of the school age resident population (1600 of 10,300) being carried by the Yellow School Bus or being encouraged to cycle.

The yellow bus service is currently provided to Magna Carta, Fullbrook, Jubilee High and Salesians secondary schools that are located in Runnymede. The service will be extended to the other Secondary and upper schools in the area and, where practicable, to primary schools. There may also be opportunities to use the service for Strodes College and Royal Holloway UOL.



The Geographical Area of the BID Proposal

The BID will apply to those who pay the business rates on the non-domestic rateable hereditaments, in the Borough of Runnymede, with a rateable value in excess of £350,000 included on the proposed local 2005 Non-Domestic Rating list supplied by the Valuation Officer. The extent of the Borough is shown on the attached map.

Timetable for the Ballot and Commencement of the BID

14 January	2005	Notice of Ballot
28 January	2005	Ballot papers posted
28 February	2005	Closing date for receipt of completed Ballot papers
1 March	2005	Count and Declaration (Result will be published on the website and in local paper)
1 April	2005	Commencement of BID arrangements

The Application of the BID Levy

The BID levy will be a fixed rate of £7,500 per annum for the 5 year period of the BID. This will be charged to those who pay the business rates on non-domestic rateable hereditaments, with a rateable value in excess of £350,000 included in the proposed local 2005 Non-Domestic Rating list, updated for any changes in ratepayer, appeals, additions and removals from the list. Each individual non-domestic hereditament will be subject to the levy. This means that some companies may be subject to two levies, but they will also receive two votes. No individual hereditament that comes within the above mentioned criterion will be exempted from the BID levy. New build hereditaments will be subject to the levy, pro-rata for part year. The chargeable period is the financial year starting 1st April, ending 31st March. The BID levy will be collected by Runnymede Borough Council on the 1st April 2005 and on the same date in the subsequent four years, 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009. The funds collected will be ring-fenced for the operation of the American Style Yellow School Bus Scheme.

The amount to be charged is derived from the requirement to raise £375,000 from about 50 local businesses. The levy, which will be collected from about 50 major business ratepayers, would provide a total annual contribution of in the region of £375,000. This equates to approximately two-thirds of the funding per annum required to support a 12 bus service. The remaining funding, approximately £125,000 per annum in total, will be derived from fares and section 106 contributions.

The cost of developing the proposal has been met by the Borough Council. If the BID ballot is successful, the implementation costs will be recovered from the BID levy. Full details of the financial arrangements are set out in the BID business plan.

Alteration of BID Arrangements

The BID area and the BID levy cannot be altered without an Alteration Ballot. This would be determined by the BID Board.

The Ballot – 28 January 2005

A business ratepayer will be entitled to vote in the BID ballot if they are listed on the local proposed 2005 Non-Domestic Rating list with a rateable value in excess of £350,000. Some business ratepayers, with more than one Non-domestic rateable hereditament will receive more than one vote. In the case of an empty property that meets the above criterion, the property owner will be entitled to vote and be subject to the levy.



The outcome of the ballot will be decided on a simple majority of those who vote. However, the majority will also need to represent a majority in aggregate rateable value terms of those who voted. If the ballot reveals a majority in favour of the BID then the levy will be applied to all those eligible to vote.

The full ballot procedure will be sent, with the ballot papers, to those entitled to vote.

Further detailed information is available upon request from: Joanna Swatridge, 01932 425272 or by email: joanna.swatridge@runnymede.gov.uk