



## **The Runnymede Business Partnership Travel Initiative Business Improvement District (BID) Business Plan**

*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 Objectives**

#### **The Runnymede Travel Initiative and the Yellow Bus Service**

The Yellow Bus concept forms the core of the Runnymede Travel Initiative, with cycling and walking providing a complementary focus.

#### **1 Project Objective**

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 2.5million 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 10300) being carried by the Yellow School Bus or being encouraged to cycle.



## **2 Business Objectives**

Local businesses are valued and play an important part in daily activity within the Borough. They not only create local economic prosperity but they make a significant contribution to wider economy of the region and the importance this plays in the economy of the UK.

The initiative to reduce traffic congestion will have direct benefits to local businesses. Those depending upon deliveries would benefit from a reduction in the delays that congestion brings. In addition, employees will directly benefit by having a less congested journey to work, and for parents it may change the nature of their journey if they are currently involved in the school run.

## **3 Travel Objectives**

The operation of the yellow bus provides a safe, secure and reliable journey to school for students who would have either travelled to school by car (a majority) or by bus services whose reliability was affected by peak hour delays (a minority). The students benefit directly and their parents/guardians are saved the time and stress of taking their children to school. Providing a safe, reliable and convenient journey to school has had positive impact on students from those parts of the Borough where public transport has historically not been reliable and where there is no alternative transport for the school run.

Adults who use the local bus service would be able to access less crowded buses at the school run times avoiding some of the conflicts that can occur.

## **4 Environmental Objectives**

A reduction in the number of cars on the local roads at peak times gives rise to not only help reduce congestion but also to reduce air and noise pollution, and reduce road accidents.

## **5 Social Inclusion Objectives**

To provide an adequate, reliable and safe form of transport for students who live more than 1 mile from their school or college but who are unable to access such facilities for their journey.

# The Organisation Plan

## **The BID Board**

A board will oversee the operation of the BID; it will be an informally constituted body.

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 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 for the provision of the proposed Yellow Bus Service and for developing and monitoring the service. 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.



## **The BID Manager**

A BID manager will undertake the day-to-day operation of the BID project. This will involve serving the needs of both the BID Board and the operation of the BID project. The main area of work will focus on the organisation of the Yellow Bus Service. This will include liaison with the schools, colleges and Bus Company, developing the routes, and administering the scheme.

First Group currently provides the buses and drivers. The Bus Company have adapted the American style yellow bus concept, which they operate in the United States, for use in the UK. The service includes a package of measures that comprise 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 current yellow bus service is that it has been developed as a partnership with the schools, Business Partnership and the Bus Company. The Company in liaison with the school and the Business Partnership design the routes, and the Partnership and schools work together to promote the service to parents and students.

## **Monitoring**

The project will be subject to an annual review and monitor of progress. This will be set within the context of the arrangements being established for undertaking sustainability audits.

## **Risk Assessment**

The main issue that needs to be anticipated is the potential for the full levy not to be collected each year. This will result in a shortfall in funding for the year. Whilst there will be procedures in place for collection of the levy, a contingency is required if the monies are not immediately forthcoming. The arrangement will be to create a surplus contingency fund from the levy and to employ money secured through associated 'development projects'. This arrangement will also recognise the potential shortfall arising from a number of premises falling outside the defined categories during the levy period.

In view of the potential for a reduced levy to be collected in any one year, the number of new buses will be introduced on a phased basis. In the first year of operation the number of buses operating will be increased to nine. The full 12-bus service will be phased in over the subsequent year.

Consideration will also need to be given to the provision of the bus service and appropriate arrangements will be incorporated into the contract with the bus company to consider short and long-term issues.

## **The RTI Finance Plan**

See attached sheet for the implications of collecting from 45 or 50 non-domestic rateable hereditaments. The total number of non-domestic rateable hereditaments may vary from year to year for the reasons identified in the BID proposal.