

Case Study: Northumberland County Council: Hexham BID

Sector: Local Authorities



/// I would like to personally pass on my thanks to Nicola Greaves at Print Image Network, Matt Powell at Revive and Thrive and to all NCC staff that contributed to the smooth planning and implementation of the Hexham BID ballot. ///

**Annie Howliston (AEA Cert)
Elections Officer
Northumberland County Council**



PRINT IMAGE NETWORK PROVIDES BALLOT SERVICES FOR 'FIRST OF ITS KIND' SCHEME IN NORTHUMBERLAND

 **Council:** Northumberland County Council

 **Delivery Partner:** Revive & Thrive

 **Ballot Services:** Print Image Network

OVERVIEW:

In April 2015 businesses in Hexham announced plans to create a new £1.2 million business improvement district (BID) in the town. The BID covers the historic market town's retail centre and the outlying industrial estates, meaning over 600 local companies had the opportunity to vote to create the Hexham BID, the first scheme of its kind in Northumberland.

In recent years Business Improvement Districts have proved hugely successful in enabling businesses to take the lead in regenerating commercial environments, acting as a democratically elected voice for the whole business community within a defined area. Currently, there are over 200 BIDs in operation throughout the UK.

The Local Authority for the area, Northumberland County Council confirmed in December 2015 that Independent Scrutineer, Print Image Network would run the postal ballot during January and February 2016 for the BID on its behalf in liaison with its BID delivery partner, Revive & Thrive Ltd.

PRINT & MAIL BALLOT SOLUTION:

By law BID ballots have to be conducted by post and so Print Image Network produced a ballot mechanism that included three separate communications; the print and mail of the pre-ballot notification letter, a black and white ballot pack, which included a copy of the business plan and a reply-paid envelope, and a BID result announcement letter. The mailings were sent to over 600 hereditaments.

The count and standard verification procedures were undertaken by Print Image Network, in addition to weekly updates regarding voter turnout, which was communicated to both the BID delivery partner and Northumberland County Council.

THE RESULT:



The ballot closed on Thursday 18th February 2016. 232 businesses voted in the ballot, representing a 36% turnout. The overall result was a yes vote in favour of creating a new Business Improvement District (BID). 66% voted by number and 82% by rateable value.



Print Image Network and BID delivery partner, Revive & Thrive were impressed by the result as this was the first BID to happen in Northumberland.

The yes vote means that the town will benefit from more than £1.2 million investment over the next five years.

Thanks again for all your work on this, very impressed by your company!

Rob Strettle
Senior Economic Policy Officer
Northumberland County Council



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