

Supporting Westminster City Council to deliver four simultaneous BID ballots



City of Westminster

Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) help the business community and local authorities work together to improve the local trading environment. Created through a ballot process, BIDs are business led partnerships intended to involve local businesses directly in local activities and deliver additional services to support those businesses.

With a long and established relationship with Civica Election Services, Westminster City Council was familiar with our service for Local and Parliamentary elections. The Council's requirement to administer four BID ballots simultaneously on very close running timetables presented a different challenge. This was the largest project of its kind, with a total electorate size of 500 voters and nuanced, specific requirements for each BID in each business area.

The Council needed an experienced BID election provider to take responsibility for delivering this highly sensitive ballot.

Westminster City Council is the local authority serving the heart of London, from Pimlico and Victoria in the south, the West End, Marylebone and Bayswater to Paddington and Queen's Park in the north.

Although a standard statutory timetable was engaged, all four ballots ran over the Christmas period, and into a crucial period where local elections were due to take place in the UK. Both of these times had the potential to impact available resources and voter turnout. Drawing on our knowledge and experience of BID ballots, and many other community ballots, CES' advice was invaluable during this time.

Our response to the brief

CES appoints a dedicated project manager to BID ballot delivery (and any project), offering a single point of contact. The project manager holds a project initiation meeting with the client to capture all the election requirements and establish all points of contact and responsibility, ensuring the delivery of the ballot is seamless. This establishes the points of contact within the Council and the BID company and sets out a detailed timetable, defining which milestones CES will be responsible for and which lie with the Council.

A similar project initiation meeting is also held between internal CES departments, as different parts of the election project require input across the business. The project manager co-ordinates this communication internally to ensure a successful delivery of the BID ballots.

Up to **81%**
turnout of eligible
residents & property owners



55+
BID projects managed
every year on average



Civica Election Services offers unrivalled experience and expertise

Project requirements

- ▶ Four ballots to be managed as four separate projects
- ▶ Different timetables for each BID ballot
- ▶ Variation of eligible voters (owners and occupiers)
- ▶ Variation in artwork for ballot packs and notice mailing
- ▶ Four different online platforms for canvass
- ▶ Separate data sets collated, sorted and cleansed for each BID ballot
- ▶ Variation with replacement ballot papers
- ▶ Four separate Notice of Ballot

The project manager devised four timetables, all one day apart, using the standard timetable to ensure adherence to the statutory guidelines. Each ballot was managed as a distinct project, while the contact at the Council remained the same across all four projects.

“Westminster City Council has worked together with Civica on all its BID ballots.

We have had a number of high profile BID areas come up for ballot in the last year and the dedicated project manager and colleagues at Civica have worked alongside us to deliver those ballots.

Civica provide a dedicated value for money BID ballot service which has relieved the pressure on the local authority and met the needs of the proposers and the business voters at all times.

Civica Election Services offer a special expertise and knowledge of these ballots which has been of enormous help to us.”

Martin Pyrogiannos
Westminster City Council

Outcomes

- ▶ Four successfully delivered ballots with a positive outcome.
- ▶ Ballot managed independently, under strict statutory guidance and with the results in time for the BID renewal date
- ▶ Whole process managed at arm's length to maximise independence
- ▶ Ballot open throughout Christmas and the period when UK local elections were due to take place
- ▶ Ballots successfully managed during the onset of COVID-19 restrictions, with results presented just as lockdown commenced

Why choose Civica Election Services?

Our project team are fully versed in the relevant legislation and can advise you on best practice around all aspects of the ballot.

We maintain a strong relationship with various BID bodies, including British BIDs, and we strive to tailor our service to meet each and every customer's unique requirements.

Civica Election Services tailor solutions and provide ballot services that are based on regional variations for example Welsh translation requirement in Wales, or Owner and Occupier voters in Scotland.

Speak to our experienced team about our full range of election services – call 020 8365 8909, email electionservices@civica.co.uk or make an online enquiry.