

BUSINESSES BID FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE

FUNDED BY: Local businesses in the Albion Road area of Greet's Green agreed to pay a levy to fund the BID and Greet's Green Partnership provided support in getting the BID off the ground.

PROJECT BACKGROUND: Business Improvement Districts can be set up under a new Government scheme which enables local firms to pay extra rates to fund additional improvements in their area.



The BID brings together a diverse range of businesses in the area. Here Councillor Bob Badham (far left) and members of the BID team meet staff from timber merchants Donaldson and McConnell.

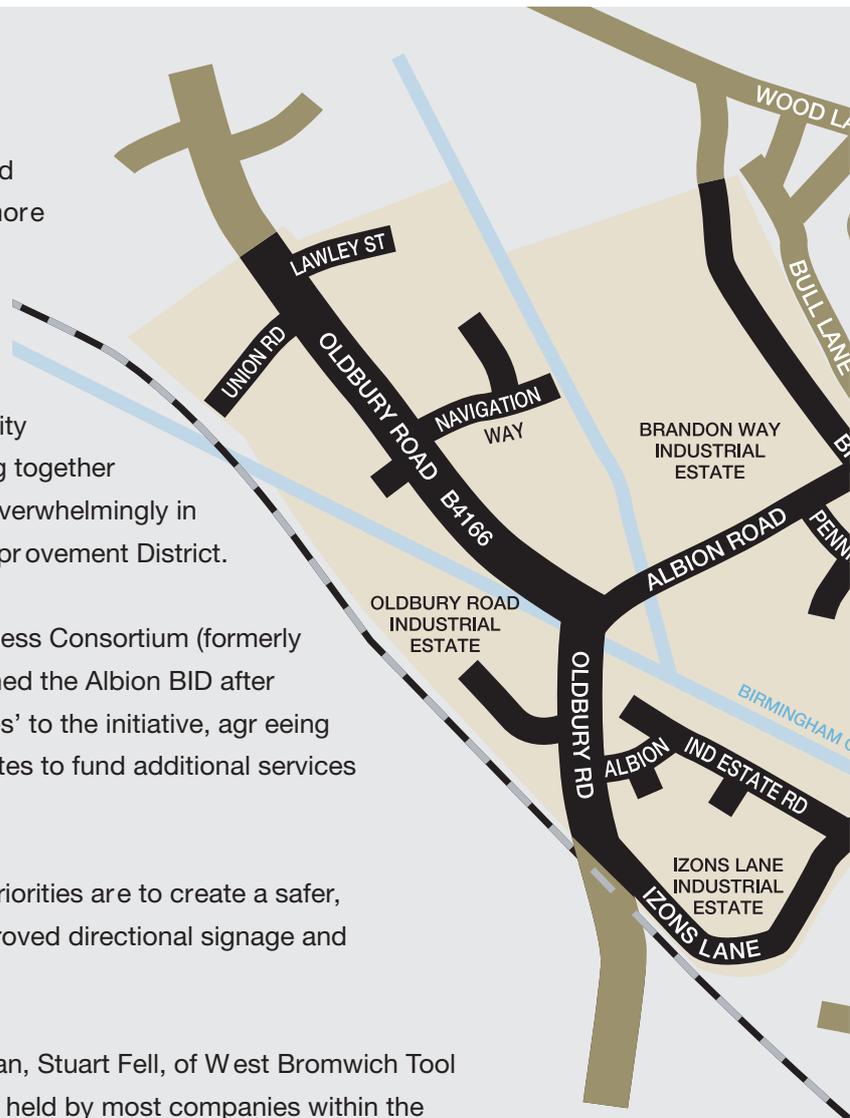
These could include tackling litter and graffiti, creating extra security with more lighting and CCTV, and improving parking, transport and open spaces.

Businesses in the Albion Road area of Greets Green seized the opportunity to create a brighter future by working together to improve their locality, and voted overwhelmingly in early 2006 to become a Business Improvement District.

PROJECT IN ACTION: Albion Business Consortium (formerly Albion Road Business Forum) launched the Albion BID after 79 per cent of its members voted 'yes' to the initiative, agreeing to pay an extra 4 per cent on their rates to fund additional services and improvements.

Local businesses agreed that their priorities are to create a safer, more secure work environment, improved directional signage and environmental improvements.

Albion Business Consortium Chairman, Stuart Fell, of West Bromwich Tool and Engineering Ltd, said: "The view held by most companies within the BID area was that we faced a simple choice. We could either drive forward an initiative to fund additional services and improvements to help make this a better business location for our workforce and our customers, or we could stand still and watch the decline."



Independent Scaffolding Services Ltd is also in the BID area.





The Greets Green BID is a trail-blazer because such initiatives usually involve retail and commercial areas. About 80 local firms are covered by the BID and it has already received national interest by becoming one of the first industrial BIDs.

ACHIEVEMENTS: Both Stuart Fell and Jon Ladd, Chief Executive of the British Urban Regeneration Association, who provided support to the Consortium, have praised the organisations which helped to deliver the BID in a record eight months.

Greets Green Partnership was among those instrumental in getting the BID off the ground, but Sandwell Council, M&T Solutions, Groundwork Black Country and the local business community, all helped to make it happen so quickly. The Albion BID provides a way forward for countless similar areas not only in the Black Country and West Midlands, but across the whole of the UK. Jon believes the significance of the result cannot be understated.

“This re-writes the rule books as far as BIDs are concerned,” he said. “So many people think that BIDs are all about retail and commercial areas which have got a solid foundation to build upon, but this took place on a small industrial estate.

“What I find truly awe inspiring is that following the feasibility study, it only took eight months to deliver, not the 18 to 24 months which were previously thought of as being the minimum requirement.

“The BID had a very small budget compared with some others I have worked on and so we deliberately avoided glossy business plans and marketing materials. Instead we focused all efforts on meeting businesses, identifying their needs and explaining how these could be addressed.

“The results speak for themselves and show what can be achieved when there’s a shared vision and a determination to deliver.”

Jon Ladd, Chief Executive of the British Urban Regeneration Association



PROJECT IN ACTION: New directional signs are currently being designed and work is underway to install a new CCTV system around the main roads in the area to improve security.

Albion Business Consortium Chairman Stuart Fell said: “We aim to have real tangible benefits for everybody whether they are working here as an employee or as an employer.”



Chase Castings Ltd is another business in the BID area.

For more information about the Albion BID, call Brian McKinstrie, Communications Officer, at Greets Green Partnership, on freephone 0800 953 0215.

Greets Green Partnership was awarded £56 million in 2000 to deliver a 10 year regeneration programme under the Government’s New Deal for Communities (NDC) initiative. It has funded more than 100 projects throughout the area, covering community empowerment, crime & community safety, education & lifelong learning, health, housing & urban form, jobs & enterprise and neighbourhood management. The Partnership area, which is adjacent to West Bromwich Town Centre, is home to just over 12,400 residents living in 4,900 households.

To find out more, call Greets Green Partnership on freephone 0800 953 0215.



Greets Green Partnership,
Ground Floor, Court House, 335-337 High Street, West Bromwich B70 8LU
Tel: 0121 533 3188
Fax: 0121 533 3168