



Responses requested by 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021

## **\*\*CALL FOR EVIDENCE\*\***

### **THE FUTURE BUSINESS DISTRICT**

#### **Background**

**Colmore BID** is leading a study on [The Future Business District](#) to inform its response to long-term recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and to offer policy directions on best practice for other central business districts in the UK. **City-REDI** at the **University of Birmingham** and the **Office of Data Analytics** at the **West Midlands Combined Authority** are undertaking the research underpinning this Study.

The research is seeking to answer two key questions:

- **What is the likely long-term impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on city centre business districts?**
- **How can we ensure they remain successful as places to attract businesses and people and contribute to vibrant city centres?**

Working from home, social distancing, lockdown and enforced closure of businesses, perceptions of risk, changes to international markets, the increase in online retailing, video communications and reduced footfall in city centres have all impacted on businesses in professional and business services, finance, hospitality, retailing and other sectors that have traditionally contributed to vibrant central business districts. Some were already experiencing change in their business environments due to other societal trends as well as the consequences of policy decisions.

#### **Call for Evidence**

*Who are we asking?*

We request input from anyone with relevant knowledge, expertise or experience – including business owners, leaders and managers of all sizes, professionals, investors, property developers, business support and economic development organisations, trade and professional bodies, policy analysts, academics, residents, civil society organisations and others to provide information and analysis. This is your opportunity to express your views.

*What are we asking for?*

We are seeking evidence, information, analysis and fact-based judgements to contribute to the study. Please base your answers on the questions below (but do also provide supporting evidence on related topics). Feel free to answer some or all the questions with a focus on solutions or recommendations for the future. We would welcome copies of, or reference to, existing work where it is relevant to this study.

#### **Questions**

1. How have developments over the last twelve months (especially in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic) changed city centre business districts for the long term? How have businesses, professionals and other users responded in ways which will last beyond the restrictions of the pandemic?



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2. What other developments will change city centre business districts and the way you, your organisation or sector accesses and utilises them over the next 5-10 years?
3. *How* do you expect things to change and *why*:
  - a) in the next 3 years?
  - b) in the next 5-10 years?
4. In what ways *should* city centre business districts be different in 2031 compared with 2021, and how should they relate to and interact with the rest of the city centre?
5. How should those responsible for planning, investing in and developing, managing and using city centre business districts *prepare* for the future?

### **Response and Further Information**

Please submit your evidence (as a Word or PDF document) to: [info@futurebusinessdistrict.co.uk](mailto:info@futurebusinessdistrict.co.uk) by **Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021**. In responding, it would be helpful if you could indicate in what capacity you are submitting, eg. as an individual/employee, regular visitor/user, a business leader, an academic, a consultant, etc.

This Call is being announced on the same day that Birmingham City Council launches consultation on its '[Our Future City Plan: Central Birmingham 2040, Shaping our City Together.](#)' We will feed the results of our Study into the local authority plan which is set to replace the Big City Plan, the current blueprint for Central Birmingham to 2031.

A dedicated website for the Study will soon be launched at [www.futurebusinessdistrict.co.uk](http://www.futurebusinessdistrict.co.uk). This will include a series of 'think pieces' reflecting on the emerging themes from our work.

If you would like to know more about the Study or contribute in other ways, please contact the Project Director, Kevin Johnson, via [info@futurebusinessdistrict.co.uk](mailto:info@futurebusinessdistrict.co.uk).

### **The Study**

Colmore BID is curating the study in partnership with **Birmingham City Council, West Midlands Combined Authority, the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership** and our neighbouring city centre BIDs – Westside, Retail, JQ and Southside. An independently-chaired Advisory Panel will be assisting the project team. Support also comes from UK Research and Innovation, Centre for Cities and the Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce.

The research team is currently reviewing existing data and literature. In addition to drawing upon responses to this Call, we will be running a series of interviews and workshops involving key stakeholders during the Spring. We expect to report in early Summer 2021.

Thank you in anticipation of your contribution to ***The Future Business District Study.***

**Colmore Business District and City-REDI**

**26 January 2021**