

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Response to Chronicle & Echo article 22/06/17:  
Northampton needs to overcome its identity**

**Background to relevant Northampton town centre BID projects**

All the issues which have recently been raised by businesses have already been identified by Northampton town centre BID during the preparation of its 2016-2020 BID Proposal and Business Plan. This plan includes a number of projects and a vision 'to develop the town centre into a quality destination with a clear sense of identity'.

Significant exploration and research has gone into it to determine how these issues are to be addressed – not by just one organisation but as part of our collaborative working with third parties such as Northampton Borough Council, the County Council and others.

The BID is either leading on or influencing a number of short and longer-term projects alongside key stakeholders in the town centre, which will have a positive impact on some of the issues recently raised:

- A re-think of the town – the creation of a town plan which is a working document with ways to improve the town centre, such as highlighting the strengths of the different retail areas so that shoppers know where to shop, better navigation through the town centre for pedestrians and traffic and improved signage and way-finding.
- Cleanliness – the BID funds additional deep cleaning which targets town centre areas most in need. It has also funded a glutton vacuuming machine for pavement and kerb cleaning. These initiatives are in addition to and complement the Borough Council's statutory services.
- Celebrating history – the BID is working with NBC as part of its new heritage group to drive projects based around promoting the town's rich history.
- Capitalising on the town's evening and night-time leisure offer – the BID is proud to be supporting and funding the town's application for Purple Flag accreditation alongside NBC. This will hopefully see Northampton town centre recognised as surpassing standards of excellence in its evening and night-time economy.

- Enhance the Market Square – our historic market square is both a trading venue and entertainment and activity space. There are lots of plans in the pipeline to utilise this area more effectively and take advantage of this unique space and offer.

Jessica D'Aulerio, Chair of Northampton town centre Business Improvement District (BID) said: “Celebrating and improving our great town to attract more shoppers and new businesses remain key objectives for the BID.

“We understand that some may see the opening of Rushden Lakes as a challenge, but we see it as an opportunity to really showcase everything that is unique about Northampton town centre.

“Northampton should not be trying to be like other shopping venues such as Rushden Lakes or Milton Keynes, Northampton provides something different – an historic marketplace, a strong leisure and entertainment offer, a mix of niche independent shops and high- street names, and some fantastic places to eat and drink.

“With lots of town centre stores, big names and independent traders, either opening or expanding, there is a real buzz about Northampton at the moment too – particularly now all the exciting university developments are underway.

“As a BID we feel incredibly passionate about really driving home the positive messages as to what Northampton town centre has to offer in terms of its individuality. Everyone has a part to play in making sure Northampton is celebrated for its great town centre - key stakeholders and influencers, businesses, employees, shoppers and visitors.”