



> The Street Ambassadors are an initiative by FOR Cardiff

Capital ideas pioneered by the FOR Cardiff business scheme

The business development service FOR Cardiff has been operating in the city for just over a year, and here we take a look at 10 initiatives the Business Improvement District has introduced as part of the first stage of their five-year plan to make Cardiff more welcoming, vibrant and influential.

■ What is FOR Cardiff?

FOR Cardiff is a Business Improvement District (BID) initiative whereby businesses based in Cardiff city centre get together, decide which improvements they want to make in their city centre, how they will manage these and what they will spend on them.

FOR Cardiff delivers services and projects that are entirely new or are in addition to those statutorily provided by the public agencies including Cardiff Council and the police.

■ How is it funded?

Businesses in the city centre with a rateable value of £25,000 and above contribute a 1% levy. There are 1,067 such businesses in Cardiff, covering 131 streets.

The total contribution for the first year was £1,180,000. Some of the biggest contributors include John Lewis, Admiral Insurance, Marks &

CHRIS PYKE

Business reporter
chris.pyke@walesonline.co.uk

Spencer and the Principality Stadium.

■ What schemes have they introduced?

■ Street Ambassadors

You may have spotted FOR Cardiff's team of nine Street Ambassadors. Dressed in red shirts, they work closely with businesses and act as human signposts to welcome visitors. In the first 12 months the team have made 12,000 business visits and provided 2,000 visitors with advice and directions.

■ Give DIFFerently

The first-ever contactless giving scheme to tackle homelessness, which saw a group of key organisations give the generous people of Cardiff an alternative method to give money and help people move away from homelessness.

Partnering with one of their members, Cardiff Blues, Sam Warburton appeared in bespoke footage encouraging passers-by on the Hayes to donate using contactless technology. The campaign had a reach of 40 million and inspired more than 500 donations.

■ Dedicated Cleansing Team

Following a six-month trial, the FOR Cardiff Street Cleansing Team was made permanent. They operate seven days a week carrying out an enhanced cleansing service on a proactive and reactive basis. So far they have dealt with 300 clean-up requests, removed 2000 pieces of gum and completed 3,000 additional cleansing jobs.

■ Night Marshals

Following Cardiff Council's decision to axe its Taxi Marshal service, FOR Cardiff funded a team of 10 Night Marshals to act as night-time ambassadors, offering advice and guidance to visitors and residents as well as managing three taxi ranks.

■ Street Pastors

Some £20,000 was invested to ensure the continuation of the Street Pastor scheme. There are 60 street pastors who work to ensure partygoers are safe during their night out. Each year they give out more than 1,300 bottles of water and 1,000 pairs of flip-flops, and remove 4,000 pieces of glass and bottles from the streets.

■ Event sponsorship

FOR Cardiff has sponsored key cultural events like Bafta Cymru, Swn Festival and the Iris Prize to make Cardiff a vibrant destination.

This year they are supporting those events again, as well as Tafwyl and the Cardiff Mini Film Festival.

■ Minty's Gig Guide

Following on from the success of the Save Womanby Street campaign, FOR Cardiff funded the creation and printing of 15,000 bilingual hand-illustrated Minty's Gig Guide maps. The maps were so popular, a reprint was needed almost immediately.

■ Planters

FOR Cardiff introduced 30 three-tier planters and 380 hanging baskets in locations across the city centre to make it more attractive.

■ Cardiff Against Business Crime

A new crime reduction programme offering business crime advice and training, as well as creating partnerships to reduce anti-social behaviour. It coincided with CityNet, a new radio network linking businesses with CCTV, police, Street Ambassadors and each other to ensure issues are dealt with quickly. Some 145 businesses are already signed up.

■ Gift Card

A gift card exclusively for independents to encourage more people to spend money in the city centre and help showcase independents. The card can be spent in over 60 businesses in the city.

■ What's next?

FOR Cardiff has just launched a major campaign to establish Cardiff as the City of Arcades, to champion independent businesses and help the capital stand apart from other city destinations.

There are also significant plans for improving Mill Lane's streetscape, the city's signage for visitors and reopening closed city gardens. There will also be a major Christmas advertising campaign to encourage more day and overnight visitors.

FOR Cardiff executive director Adrian Field said: "Our overall objective is to create a city centre that is welcoming, vibrant and influential, an attractive place for people to visit, work and live, and that is easily accessible from anywhere in Wales."

"Our first year has gone a long way in helping us achieve this - we've reached millions of people, had some brilliant feedback and laid the foundations of some fantastic relationships that we hope will continue over the next few years."

"We're very much looking forward to embarking on our second year and progressing with the delivery of our business plan. We have some really exciting projects in the pipeline and we can't wait to see them come to fruition."