

ERBID3 CONSULTATION SESSIONS

Themes and Key Notes

Sessions: October/November 2025

These notes summarise the discussions held during consultation sessions with businesses as part of the development of an ERBID3 Business Plan. They are intended to highlight key questions, themes, and priorities raised by businesses across all the sessions.

Levy and Payment

- There is interest in a BID payment plan, particularly if the levy increases. Suggestions ranged from five instalments of £50 (if the minimum levy is raised to £250) to quarterly payments. Carolyn confirmed at the Stage Left session that an interest-free payment plan will be considered, with details yet to be finalised.
- The proposed levy increase: concerns raised were particularly around the proposed minimum levy increase from £150 to £250, viewed as a 66% rise. Some felt the ERBID does not fully understand the pressures on businesses, including cost of living, taxes, and licensing. However, many attendees acknowledged the reasoning behind the increase and supported it.
- Several businesses suggested that the levy should have increased incrementally over the past 10 years, rather than remaining static and resulting in a large jump now. Some suggested that incremental increases could be part of the future plan.
- Supporters noted the importance of promoting the destination, rather than cutting back, highlighting that five years of stable income allows continued investment. Other South West destinations face difficulties (e.g., Visit Cornwall in liquidation), and the BID provides stability. Building on existing efforts was seen as important, with “8–10 touches” for a visitor to remember the destination.

Value for Businesses

- Small businesses want clarity on what the levy means for them specifically. Some are unsure of the tangible benefits their business receives, particularly if the levy rises.
- Examples of ERBID benefits mentioned include a business page on the English Riviera website, access to the free image library, and the contribution to events support and national advertising campaigns.

Tourism Tax

- Concerns were raised about recent mentions nationally of a tourism tax. Carolyn clarified that ERBID is firmly against such a tax, as the area could not support it and the local tourism sector is unlikely to benefit from any funds raised.

Retail Inclusion

- The idea of including retail businesses in the BID was raised at several sessions, with all comments in favour, seeing it as 'fair'. Carolyn explained that while further consideration is needed, there is potential to hold an alteration ballot in the future to include 'tourism retail' businesses within core investment tourism areas (CITAs), if ERBID3 is approved.

Year-Round Tourism

- Many attendees want more activity to make the resort attractive year-round, particularly with off-season events.
- The trend for shorter breaks was noted, with associated challenges for businesses, including extra costs with more turnarounds. One holiday park reported success in encouraging existing customers to take multiple shorter breaks with them, reflecting the decline in two-week holidays.
- Dynamic pricing by chain hotels presents challenges for smaller businesses.

BID Influence and Digital Opportunities

- Most attendees value the ERBID as a respected 'voice' for lobbying and representing the English Riviera.
- A proposal was raised to develop a visitor app with a B2B section, incorporating AI and live booking links.

TV Advertising

- Supporters noted that no individual business could afford national advertising, and the campaigns have increased bookings and website visits. There is optimism that advertising will continue to generate benefits now it has started to stimulate interest.
- Some questioned the targeting, demographics, value for money, and how success is measured. Attendees asked what alternative uses there could be for the funds.

Events

- There is broad support for continuing ERBID investment in events, particularly in the shoulder season.
- Views on the Airshow were mixed, depending on the location of the business. Early spring events and the return of bike nights were suggested. There was a suggestion that building on existing events could be preferable to starting new events from scratch.

Advertising Strategy

- Comments included suggestions for advertising at Paddington Station, the Underground, and from Reading outwards.
- Some questioned why the Midlands is a focus when some businesses see visitors from the South East. Carolyn noted the South East is on the agenda for 2026, with a primary aim to attract new audiences.
- Attendees asked whether more contemporary platforms are being considered.

Board representation and Engagement

- Some felt too few board members are levy payers. There was a suggestion that board members could undertake more visits to businesses. Board elections occur every five years and any company member may stand. If ERBID3 is approved, the next elections will be in early 2027.

Questions and Answers

- **Carryover of funds into ERBID3:** Funds cannot be carried over.
- **Separate vote for levy increase:** No, the consultation process informs the final Business Plan, which is what is voted on.
- **Are funds allocated across the three towns?** We promote as a Bay-wide resort, as there is strength in the 'English Riviera' brand. However, funds are allocated where needed, for example, focus on Brixham following cryptosporidium negative impact.
- **Extra donations from large organisations:** Larger tourism businesses already pay substantial levies, however additional income is raised through other means including the Visitor Information Centre retail sales and advertising opportunities.
- **Is the proposed levy increase due to cost of living or for TV advertising?** Primarily, it's to continue the momentum of TV advertising as this seems to be having a positive effect, but also the levy hasn't increased in its 10-year history, and so the same amount of money does



not buy what it did 10 years ago. ERBID administrative costs are kept low (20%), with 80% directed to destination marketing.

- **Use of influencers:** Already in progress, with further social media work planned.

General Feedback

- Concerns about the future of Paignton Zoo.
- Desire for ERBID to better understand small business challenges, with improved communication, with an interest in more focus groups, or forums.
- Need for clarity on ERBID activities and benefits.
- Air B&Bs perceived as not contributing fairly.
- Ensure smaller businesses are given a voice.