



# Working Together

## BedfordBID

Business Improvement District  
Funded by Town Centre Businesses

[www.lovebedford.co.uk](http://www.lovebedford.co.uk)



**The BedfordBID Company Limited Company by Guarantee  
Review period from 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018**

*Love Bedford is the promotional brand of the Bedford Business Improvement District (BID)  
which promotes the interest of over 500 Bedford town centre businesses*

Bedford Business Improvement District (BED) was one of 12 towns which piloted the business-led model back in 2005; 300 BEDs are now established around the country. Bedford is in the third year of its third term.

The BedfordBED vision is to create a vibrant environment and broaden the role of the town centre beyond shopping towards being a great place for people to spend time. The 2015-2020 Business Plan details three key priorities:-



*To market and promote Bedford town centre and make Bedford a destination through the presentation of high quality events.*

*To enhance the visitor experience and develop the customer offer.*

*To continue to forge strong partnerships, working with others to create a vibrant, economically strong and attractive town for residents and visitors alike.*



During 2017/18, a number of significant areas of business were addressed to support businesses and meet the plans of the Bedford BID Company five year business plan including:-

A restructure of how we offer services to our town centre businesses through the introduction of BID Champions resulting in enhanced engagement and interactions whilst providing the latest information from the BID which is of commercial value to BID members.

The completion of consumer research designed to inform marketing campaigns and help businesses to grow offering employees an environment with good choices of facilities, shops and restaurants.

Funding support for the provision of two PSCOs in attempt to improve uniform visibility in the town and enable the development of Alternative Powers to address A.S.B.

Launch of Give a Hand Up not a Hand Out poster campaign working with Bedford Homeless and Community Safety Partnerships.

Introduction of the latest social media platforms into the marketing mix including videos.

Increased redemption rates to over £1m worth of Love Bedford gift vouchers.

Development of programmes to enhance skills for businesses including training for the evening economy businesses whilst also providing Bed-Safe admin support to this valuable sector.

Representation from BID businesses in the Bedfordshire Business Awards.

Expanded the BID relationship with Bedford College utilising their links to over 12,000 students and 1,200 staff using staff intranet and e-magazines.

Designer Weekend free prize draw to promote the refurbished Mayson's Menswear on High Street and to cultivate contacts for the consumer database.

Enhanced reporting to businesses through the BID briefing and networking breakfasts.



Having good internal controls and corporate governance procedures are important for a BID. This leaflet is intended to demonstrate that income received is spent well and that there are good internal governance controls to ensure that this happens. Full Accounts and performance reports including the BedfordBID networking and briefing breakfast presentations, AGM papers and five year business plan are all available for download at [www.lovebedford.co.uk](http://www.lovebedford.co.uk) or call 01234 404500.

Project expenditure has not declined with over 70% spent on services and 10% on overheads.

BedfordBID contributes to the British BIDs National survey which measures good practice by collecting quantitative and qualitative data through one to one research of BIDs. The data is analysed and verified for publication at the BritishBIDs annual conference and thereafter on their website. The levy collection cost per hereditaments: National Guidelines suggest a maximum charge of £35 per hereditament. Bedford is £25 and Overheads industry criteria acceptable level is 20%; BedfordBID 10%.

The bottom-line success of BedfordBID is demonstrated in its increase in foot flow which during 2017/18 continued to buck the trend both nationally and regionally, despite reduced visitor numbers in October and December, caused in part by poor weather conditions and less support for late night opening.





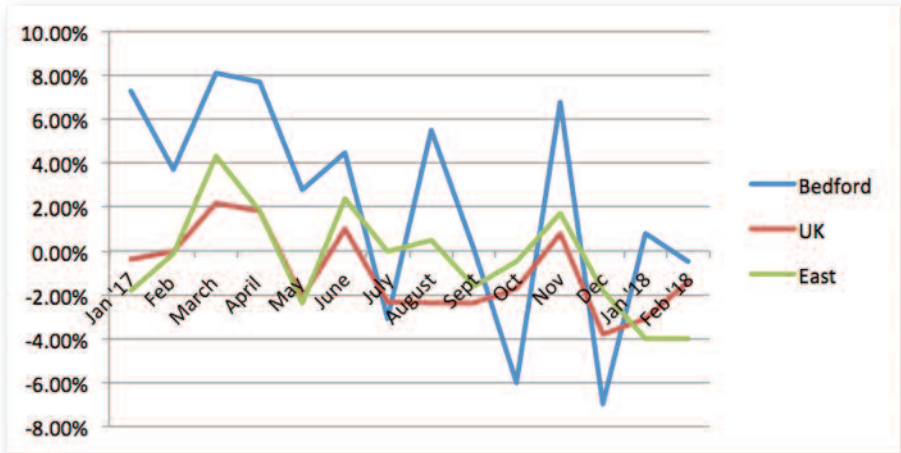
Supporting and promoting a plethora of events, Love Bedford branded promotions and town centre FREE parking messages were key elements of the marketing for the town. The multifaceted marketing campaigns also included door to door, printed publications, PR, regional press and radio, online & social media platforms all of which have contributed to the promotion of the town centre and its businesses, helping to attract new investment.



In the spring of 2017, a new Instagram campaign was launched featuring a variety of BID businesses which became the back drop to a BBC report and coincided with key promotional themes linked to the 20k+ door to door BID magazine distribution and the Brooks Hair & Beauty Show. Its success led to a summer campaign attracting c50k links, spring boarding a further campaign for Christmas 2018.



## Footfall figures



Source of Statistics: The national high street index is a collaboration between Springboard Research Ltd and the Association of Town Centre Management to deliver a national performance index based on footfall in town and city centres. Data for the High Street index has been gathered by Springboard from around 100 million pedestrian flows per month in around 140 UK towns and cities



The dedicated events section on the **Love Bedford** website is now one of the most popular. It has developed a reputation as the 'go to' site for the definitive guide to the town with unique users in excess of 113k. Third party collaborations and ever-popular events last year contributed to the spikes in visitor numbers including Love Bedford Day, Comic Convention, Chilli Fest, High Street Showcase and pre-Christmas lights event with Paw Patrol costumed characters and real reindeer which attracted +82% WoW between 3pm and 8.00pm.

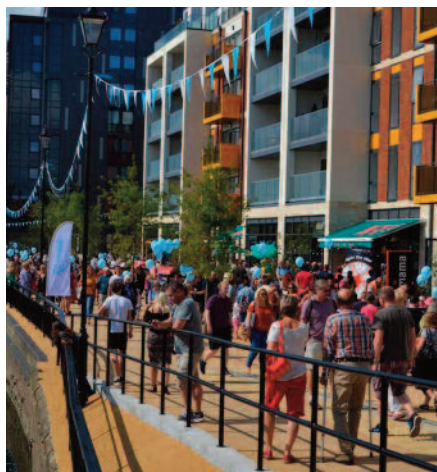
Bedford also welcomed the opening of the new **Riverside Bedford** complex which, during the launch weekend, attracted +7% growth in foot flow into the town vs. -1.8% national comparison like for like.

The Love Bedford town centre gift voucher scheme includes over 70% of independently-run businesses and has now exceeded the £1m target generating cash directly back into various BID zone businesses. The online voucher sales tripled against the previous Christmas and a new micro site was introduced to highlight new members.

BedfordBID's representation in the Bedfordshire Business Awards included Large Business, Customer Service, Small Business and Young Business person of the Year categories. Engagement with businesses is further demonstrated through an increased participation in features and advertising in the Love Bedford publications distributed to over 20k homes and industrial estates (B2B

edition). Thirty multi-branded BID business e-shots have taken place during the year to a growing database of over 4000 harvested by competitions and the website Hello! bar. Opening rates circa 31% and click-through rates @ 3.5% which is above average. Engagement with businesses also extends into Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and a recently launched closed FB page for confidential matters. There are over 20k 'followers'.

During 2017/18, 164,151 e-shots were delivered. Peak open rate was 26.59% vs. industry standard of 20.96% (retail). Click-through rates vary subject to campaign message e.g. Mother's Day 55% open rate and 7.25 click through. New businesses 55% open rate and 13.35 click through; benchmark 21.21% open rate and 2.33% click through. Business database: business workshop skills open rate 22% and click through 1.26%, GDPR open rate 30%, click through 3%; benchmark 20.9% open and 2.73% click through rates.



Businesses committed to the Mystery Shop campaign last Christmas which supported 25 businesses with 1-2-1 advice from industry experts Shopper Anonymous and the recently launched Bedford town centre business club mentoring and education initiative proved added value with comments from businesses including Gallone's Ice Cream Parlour.

**“Having taken part in last year's Business Club I have approached this year with a positive can do attitude. Staying focused on the elements that generate real worth within my business arena. The networking opportunities within the course structure have proven invaluable and moved our business to another level. I wholeheartedly encourage anyone who has the opportunity to sign up this year to grab it with both hands.”**

**Martin Keys,  
Gallone's Ice Cream Parlour**

Utilitrack continue to partner Bedford-BID offering a 'One Stop Shop' to help levy-paying businesses check their current energy and telecoms/broadband tariffs against the market's best buys. To date the total savings Utilitrack have managed to secure savings for BID members is £60,685.





BedfordBID's added value is also demonstrated by a number of B2B initiatives, this includes a conduit for B2B cross marketing opportunities and relationship development through the BID breakfasts, the visiting and promotion of new business arrivals, featured business promotions on the Love Bedford website and directory. Plus the dedicated B2B publication for the promotion of the non-retail sector. Attendance at the BedfordBID breakfast has increased to an average of 70, culminating this year with important insights into the proposals for the High Street from Chief Officers of Highways & Planning plus Economic Growth development around Bedford as part of the Master visioning process.

Bedford was declared as the preferred location and "most enjoyed" by visitors despite the recent opening of neighbouring Rushden Lakes development.

The Intercept Study research also concluded that the main reason for visiting is shopping and the Castle Quay was the most liked and most preferred area. This study is also being used to help shape the future sustainability of the town in which businesses can prosper and offer employees an environment with good choices of facilities, shops and restaurants.

Regular editorials in local media has also increased including front page coverage with FREE introductory text and branded front cover of rural publications distributed to over 90k household including new housing developments. Column inches conversion is circa £12k.



During the second half of 2017/18, Bedford BID restructured how to offer services to town centre businesses with a new skills set for the frontline team which included online completion of paperwork at business visits to ensure that every business has a presence on the Love Bedford website. Providing up to date information about the latest opportunities of commercial value to them is also a priority. The Bedford College Intranet is now providing further opportunities with a direct link to staff and over 12k local students.

Reports for environment issues and removal of graffiti continue with essential services such as the recruitment to Retail RadioLink and Exclusion scheme which has over 240 members. Enforcing PSPO restrictions such as cycling in pedestrianised areas is now being imposed by local authority Enforcement Officers. Bedford BID continue to deliver the WipeOut graffiti monitoring and reporting for action programme as well as being the critical link to emergency services and the town's CCTV.

Coupled with the investment in two dedicated BID PCSOs, measures are also in hand to address specific issues relating to persistent rough sleepers, begging, street drinking and general ASB in the town centre. From Bedfordshire Police a PC with experience of the 'alternative powers' is working with the BID PCSOs to address the more persistent offenders. BID is also working in partnership with the dedicated multi-agency officer who is addressing homelessness in the town. In endeavouring to improve the visibility of officers in the

town, the BID helped facilitate a new town centre police hub which opened in December. The last meeting with the Bedfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner resulted in a decision that BID contact the Minister for Policing direct to try and address the issue of the imbalance of funds available to Bedford to cover its policing needs.

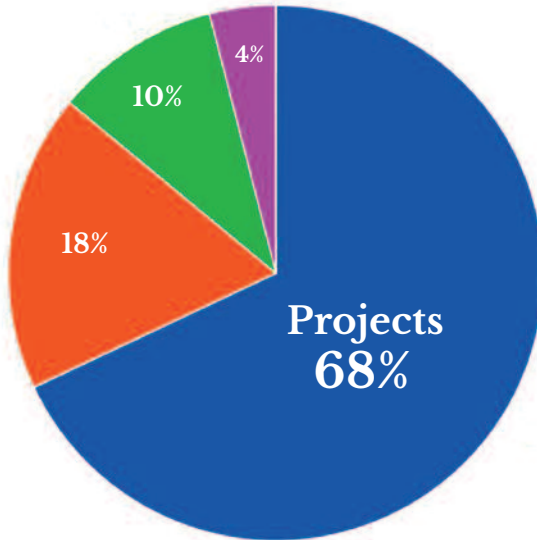
The BID is now also working with the BedSafe Licensees group boosting its support to the evening and nighttime economy with the provision of administrative assistance, a trial of Database Intranet for Safer Communities, funding of the BIIAB Award in Responsible Alcohol Retailing along with the sponsorship of the Taxi Marshal scheme.

The evening and late night economy section is currently the third most popular search on our website and is at the top of any Google search such as 'What's on tonight in Bedford?'

A new measurement of community support has included sponsorship of the Community Cohesion business awards and the numerous raffle prizes in the form of Love Bedford gift vouchers to a variety of charitable groups.



# How we spend your money



■ Projects   ■ Management   ■ Overheads   ■ Sustainability

*Projects include : Improving the Visitor Experience, Love Bedford (marketing and promotion) and partnerships with -*



## Get involved

BedfordBID regularly deals with a number of enquiries from businesses as well as your issues; we listen and act upon your concerns.

To contact BedfordBID call 01234 404500, email at [info@lovebedford.co.uk](mailto:info@lovebedford.co.uk); Twitter @lovebedford, Facebook Love Bedford and Instagram lovebedford1.

BedfordBID board meeting open sessions dates are displayed on our web site [www.lovebedford.co.uk](http://www.lovebedford.co.uk). Look out for invitations to the AGM plus B2B Breakfast updates and networking meetings or contact us for a further copy of the year planner printed calendar. To join the BedfordBID closed Facebook page, to receive updates on police activity in the town centre, contact us.



**The full list of BID services is included in the five year plan , a copy of which is available on the website, together with the 2018/19 Year Planner and 2017 AGM brochure report.**