



BedfordBID
Business Improvement District
Funded by Town Centre Businesses

BedfordBID

CREATING VITALITY AND PROSPERITY

THE NEXT FIVE YEARS **1ST APRIL 2015 - 31ST MARCH 2020**

A Business Plan for the renewal of the
Bedford Business Improvement District (BID)

WE'RE IN IT TOGETHER...





FOREWORD

It is very rare for anyone to come into a busy Town Centre just to visit a single shop or business. We come to a Town Centre to enjoy ourselves, to browse the shops, take a leisurely coffee, maybe do our banking, enjoy a meal or stroll through a museum or gallery. No organisation, no matter how successful, can attract people into town on their own. It is therefore in everyone's interest that local businesses work closely together to provide a Town Centre experience that draws people in and excites them.

Just as it takes a whole family of schools, colleges and Universities to educate our children, it takes a family of businesses to serve our town. Cuts to local authority budgets also mean they have to work collectively with business to maximise money to keep our Town Centre competitive.

Bedford should be very proud that it was one of the first to see the benefits of bringing businesses together and pooling money to improve the town through Bedford BID.



That far-sightedness and intelligent approach meant businesses and our Borough Council approved the BID again even in a period of recession. It is no coincidence that Bedford weathered the economic storm well, with fewer empty units than most towns, lower unemployment and even more top names coming into Bedford.

Bedford College is a BID enthusiast. As one of Bedford's big success stories of recent years we now train 1 in 3 of our young people, 1 in 10 local adults, and work with 1 in 20 VAT-registered local businesses. Our job is to provide skilled workers who will serve Bedford and spend their money here too. This year Bedford BID is seeking a further term. We look forward to our Council and our businesses working closely again to ensure the success of our Town Centre, and commit to playing our part in that.

Ian Pryce
Chief Executive
Bedford College
and BedfordBID levy payer

YOUR TOWN, YOUR VOTE, YOUR BID

WHAT UNDERPINS BedfordBID?



The BID model provides a platform for businesses to decide on the priorities for their town and how they want their money spent.

BedfordBID wants businesses to be inspired to accomplish more together. We want businesses to be proactive in taking responsibility for improving the area in which they work but this can only be achieved by engagement, partnership and working together.

The Business Improvement District model provides investment and engagement through a separate, independent body (BedfordBID Limited) where businesses decide on the priorities and how they want their money spent.

Bedford was the first county town to become a Business Improvement District (BID) in 2005.

From the original 12 to currently over 180, this coalition Government has declared that “BIDs are the future” and more BIDs are planned following the recent announcement of the £500,000 fund now made available by Government to help establish the successful growth of new BIDs within England.

Rae Levene
BedfordBID



OUR VISION

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 – work, visit, stay and live.

OUR AIMS AND OBJECTIVES FOR BID3

1ST APRIL 2015 – 31ST MARCH 2020

1. To market and promote Bedford Town Centre and make Bedford a destination through the presentation of high quality events.
2. Enhancing the visitor experience and develop the customer offer.
3. To continue to forge strong partnerships, working with others to create a vibrant, economically strong and attractive town for residents and visitors alike.
4. To be sustainable.



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INTRODUCTION

Bedford is developing and evolving. By Christmas 2015, the landscape will have changed with the reopening of a newly designed bus station and launch of a brand new Riverside Development including a seven-screen cinema, a Premier Inn as a 100-bedroom hotel, national restaurant operators together with a mixture of private and affordable residential dwellings, and a pedestrian footbridge over the river.

The completed scheme will provide Bedford Town Centre with a destination that is predicted to attract up to 500,000 people per year enriching the night time economy and creating over 250 jobs. A target opening date is set in time for Christmas 2015.

However, there is a consensus that once the new developments are complete, the adjacent areas within our town in comparison may well look neglected. It is therefore essential that the Town Centre benefits from enhancements to the environment, enabling the town to be of an excellent standard throughout and not just in chosen areas. Existing businesses will need support during the early periods of the new development.

The new major retail development at Rushden Lakes, an out of town shopping facility in East Northants, is also likely to impact upon the popularity of Bedford's Town Centre for shoppers living in the north of the county. Essential to Bedford Town Centre (as to any Town Centre) is growth with over 7,000 houses expected to be built in our catchment area within the next few years.

Whereas Bedford achieves a strong market share from within its core and total catchment, in reality it is likely that Bedford falls short of achieving its full market potential. This is because the affluent shoppers within the catchment will be shopping in the nearby towns of Cambridge and Milton Keynes. As Bedford is located within an area with the most affluent Wealthy Achievers found in rural areas, a targeted marketing approach will be necessary to attract them to the town.

In May 2012 field research undertaken by BedfordBID identified specific answers with what to do and those factors that were likely to increase future visitation frequency. In June 2013 the Citizen's Panel Town Centre Survey came to similar conclusions that a focus on improving the overall environment and visitor experience, including travel and parking arrangements, is needed. Tactical changes are not enough to give the town the parking facility that it requires.

Having an attractive Town Centre as well as a critical mass of retailing is also an important element of the package needed to attract new businesses, employers and employment to a town.

By partnering with our important stakeholders, neighbouring towns and industry organisations to support this Proposal, BedfordBID will be able to continue what they have started. This will allow us to build on the powerful and distinctive promotion of the town while continually enhancing the streetscape environment and visitor experience. In doing so, our town will be well positioned to secure a more prosperous future for businesses within the BID area.

Directors of BedfordBID

Volunteers representing levy/business rates-paying large and small businesses including national chains, independent businesses, Bedford Borough Council, retail, non-retail, day and night time economy.

THE LAST 5 YEARS

OVERVIEW

In response to the tougher economic conditions, BedfordBID has restructured and redirected its resources and additionally introduced new services to add value and create real money savings for its businesses.

A greater emphasis was made on creating compelling reasons to attract people into the town through an annual events programme as well as the introduction of a town guide app to ease the journey to/from and around the town.

To further help enhance the visitor experience, a customer service initiative was launched to demonstrate the exceptional customer service reputation in the town. Customer loyalty programmes such as the Love Bedford Town Centre gift voucher scheme has helped our local economy grow stronger through over £700k of sales.

The dedicated Town Centre police unit closed in 2011, however, BedfordBID's Exclusion and Retail RadioLink crime prevention scheme, which works in collaboration with Town Centre businesses, Bedfordshire Police and CCTV, is now at its highest membership level and the scheme's performance was recognised in 2013 with a distinction by the Association of Business Crime Partnerships.

Marketing communications were remodelled to embrace the wider offer of the town to help promote as a destination including specific late night economy campaigns. Businesses were given the opportunity to 'take their businesses to the streets' through such initiatives as the Food Festival, Love Fashion and the High Street Showcase.

Cross marketing and business networking opportunities were provided through the introduction of B2B breakfasts and the refreshed board of directors became more prominent, visiting their neighbours as part of the BID3 consultations. Transparency was intensified to provide detailed accounts to all fully paid up levy payers.

The business cost saving initiative Utilitrack, enabled savings of just over £11k and BedfordBID are now part of all consultations for the town from the Local Plan to approvals for Street Trading pitches.

BedfordBID were also responsible for submitting the successful Portas Pilot application in May 2012 which attracted over £50k of further investment into the town as well as setting up the Town Team which is chaired by BedfordBID. Whilst the outcomes and successes of the Portas Pilot Bedford do not form part of this plan, successes include the introduction of training and mentoring for existing businesses, incorporating developing an on line presence, social media, marketing and business planning plus, grants for start-up businesses and a shop front improvement grant scheme. Sponsorship of events designed to bring people into the town and creative treatments to 'wrap' empty shops to improve the aesthetics of the town proved successful. This was achieved by working in partnership with Bedford Borough Council and their empty shops strategy.



THE LAST 5 YEARS

OUR PROJECTS

How BedfordBID benefitted your business.
The main themes of BID2 were:-

1. BE SAFE, BE SMILING MAKING THE TOWN SAFER AND FRIENDLIER

Bluecaps act as the primary link between BedfordBID, businesses, Police and CCTV. They ensure businesses are fully aware and able to participate in BedfordBID projects e.g. Retail RadioLink & Exclusion Scheme, Childsafe and the many promotional activities carried out including the Love Bedford gift vouchers. They also welcome, guide and assist visitors in the BedfordBID area providing help and advice to enable them to gain the maximum benefit and enjoyment from their visits.

2. COME AROUND TO BEDFORD CONSISTENT AND CO-ORDINATED MARKETING AND PROMOTION OF BEDFORD TOWN CENTRE

- Loyalty programmes i.e. Town Centre vouchers, Reward card
- 'In Bedford' campaigns
- Radio and press advertising for both day and evening economies
- 'In town' events
- Business networking event and dedicated marketing material
- Service directory
- Town Centre map & guide, development of the www.lovebedford website and new town guide app

3. SETTING THE SCENE ENHANCING CLEANSING AND MAINTENANCE TO MAKE THE TOWN CENTRE LOOK BETTER.

Bluecaps also enhance the public realm by acting as 'eyes and ears' in the BedfordBID area, responding to all matters affecting the quality of the BID environment by monitoring, recording and reporting relevant information for remedial action as necessary i.e. the WipeOut Scheme which cleans graffiti on privately owned business properties which is administered by BedfordBID and carried out in partnership and free of charge by Bedford Borough Council.

4. SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

Dedicated practical support for small and independent businesses

Investment in the town -
Townscape Heritage Initiative

Small Business Rates Relief advice support

...as well as lobbying and generally addressing your issues - listening and acting upon your concerns.



THE LAST 5 YEARS

SUCCESSSES

HIGHLIGHTS

Bedford Town Centre's shop vacancy rate continues to fall, bucking the national trend and outstripping neighbouring towns. The figures, released by Experian in 2014, showed Bedford Town Centre's empty floor space rate has fallen from 10.7% in 2013 to 9.2% this year, well below the national average of 10.6 %, which saw a slight increase over the same period.

The figures confirm that Bedford also outperforms the national average for the number of individual vacant shop units, which again are far higher in neighbouring towns including Luton, Milton Keynes and Northampton. The town's churn is also down (the number of business openings vs. closures).

Despite the challenging economic climate, foot flow has also maintained a healthy balance and during the course of the past five years, exceeded the national and regional trends.



Practical support and advice has also been given to small independent businesses to help retain them in the town including savings on small business rates relief and café seating licence fees. BedfordBID also:-

- Increased membership of the Retail RadioLink & Exclusion scheme from 180 to 240
- Attained Safer Business Award **Distinction** Accreditation through Association of Business Crime Partnerships
- Established links with the Community Safety Partnership Action Group and pushed to welcomed back dedicated police officers into the town
- Introduced a variety of new FREE events and sponsorship arrangements to enable compelling reasons to visit the town and promote the wider offer. These included the sponsorship of the John Bunyan Community Boat, designed to make the most of the tourism potential and our beautiful river, a Culture Trail to celebrate the reopening of The Higgins Art Gallery Museum, Bedfringe, Busking Festival, Pop Up cinema, Comic Convention, Film Festival and Poetry Trail plus a variety of trails for our independent businesses to participate in.
- Generated an average of £10,000 per year of FREE positive editorial coverage about the town
- Increased visits to the BedfordBID Love Bedford website to over 50,000.
- Generated 5000 downloads at launch of the Bedford Town Guide app and produced new illustrative maps of the town for those who prefer hard copies to better inform and welcome our visitors.
- Promoted investment in the town through the sale of over £700k of Love Bedford Town Centre gift vouchers, increased redemption rates to an average of over 90% and reached an unprecedented level of participation peaking at over 270 businesses redeeming the vouchers.
- Saved BID levy payers to date £11,869 on their utility bills through the local partnership with Utilitrack and assisted claims relief and back payments on small business rates.
- Continued to enforce a ZERO tolerance through the Town Centre graffiti removal scheme plus offer a friendly, helpful welcome to our town by the BedfordBID Bluecaps

More detail about BedfordBID's delivery in **Appendix 1**

BID3 - 1ST APRIL 2015 – 31ST MARCH 2020

HOW WE CONSULTED WITH YOU...

BUSINESS AND CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

With the forthcoming renewal in mind, BedfordBID invited businesses to offer their opinions on what is important to their business and the town. Feedback was analysed and informs this Proposal. The consultation process included:-

- BedfordBID Board of Directors (which includes representatives from non-retail, service sector, evening and late night economy, local newspaper, Harpur Centre and Bedford Borough Council),
- Face to face discussions with top levy payers, national retailers and their head offices who also include representation on the National High Streets Forum
- Face to face discussions with Howard Centre businesses and private landlords
- Bedford College
- Bedfordshire Police
- Bedford Borough Council
- Harpur Trust
- Non retail sector
- Local Councillors
- Face to face discussions with non-levy payers
- Presentations at BedfordBID breakfast networking and 'open' board meetings
- Members of the BedSafe Evening Economy Group
- Stakeholders from new Riverside North Development
- Members of the public
- Access to findings from the Customer Panel 2013 (2014 not available until end of August)



YOUR VIEWS - WHAT YOU SAID YOU WANT TO CONTINUE

- ✓ *Taxi Marshals*
- ✓ *Retail RadioLink & Exclusion Scheme*
- ✓ *WipeOut (graffiti monitoring and management)*
- ✓ *Marketing & Promotions*
- ✓ *Bluecaps*
- ✓ *FREE parking*
- ✓ *Performance monitoring*
- ✓ *Addressing your issues - listening and acting upon your concerns*
- ✓ *Practical support for small and independent businesses including business costs advice*
- ✓ *Driving up standards - ensuring the local authorities, police and other stakeholders fulfil their obligations*
- ✓ *Point of contact for your queries and concerns*
- ✓ *Influencing change - lobbying against street catering, Late Night Levy and lack of police presence*
- ✓ *Influencing the longer term agenda - sustainability*
- ✓ *Keeping you informed - keeping you up to date and helping you engage with future plans.*

VISITOR'S VIEWS

WHAT DO VISITORS SAY?

In 2012 BedfordBID conducted field research amongst non and lapsed users of Bedford Town Centre from a 30 mile radius of the Town Centre. Opinions were strong. The conclusions drawn identified specific answers with what to do and those factors that are likely to increase future visitation frequency. Through the efforts of the BedfordBID and others, things have improved but some of these are still relevant - empty units, run down environment, perception of safety and not enough up market shops and services.



More of what our non/lapsed visitors say they want...

- Better higher quality shops and restaurants
- New shops - Fat Face, White Stuff, joules, decent sports shop, HMV/CD shop
- More toilets open on Sundays and evenings
- Cheaper parking
- More buses
- Cleaner areas
- Places to sit and relax
- Better supported markets
- Sunday antique fair in the summer
- Less rubbish and chewing gum
- New parking machines in Lurke Street
- Pedestrianisation of the high street



BedfordBID's influence is just as important as its budget. Through consultation and dialogue with those whose remit it is, BedfordBID intends to help address some of these concerns. Therefore, BID3 also intends to continue to focus on improving the overall environment, travel and parking and to play a part in enhancing the environment and experience to raise the profile of the town to attract more visitors.

BedfordBID: YOUR VIEWS

WHAT SOME OF YOU SAY YOU WANT NEW FROM BID3

1ST APRIL 2015 – 31ST MARCH 2020

- To reignite the character and charm of a County town
- Landlords to smarten up their buildings
- Eradicate vacant units
- Clean up our town
- Reduce business rates
- More customers of the 'right' kind
- 'Good' staff
- Park and Ride river bus
- Night time economy parking
- FREE parking / resolve parking machines issues
- Toilets on Howard Street
- More flexible traffic wardens, relaxed approach with camera car
- Enforcement action on derelict properties
- Action against fly tipping
- Better managed and specialist markets
- Quarterly meetings with larger businesses
- Changes/improvements to road systems, investment in better infrastructure
- Improved signage and way finding

Again, not all of these are within the control or power of the BedfordBID but the board will work with others towards seeing many of these come to fruition.



THE NEXT FIVE YEARS 2015-2020 RENEWAL PROPOSALS

BEDFORD BUSINESSES SHOWING UK THE WAY; NATIONAL CONTEXT

In July 2014 the Association of Town and City Management launched The Manifesto for Town and City Centres – A Blueprint for Effective Management – which concluded that “our town and city centres will only ever be successful with targeted and intelligent interventions that differ from place to place and when based upon solid evidence and clear action. We must build upon the track record of BIDs, Town Centre management, Portas Pilots, Town Teams and community-led groups to ensure the management of town and city centres becomes a professional service everywhere”
Martin Blackwell, Chief Executive, Association of Town & City Management

The BID model provides a platform for businesses to decide on the priorities for their town and how they want their money spent, the concept also relies on a positive relationship with the relevant local authority. There are a variety of roles and responsibilities that a local authority is required to take on as custodian of the BID Regulations; as Rating List Provider; as Service Provider for the purposes of Baseline Agreements; as Ballot Holder and as Levy Collection Agency.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES FOR BID3

1ST APRIL 2015 – 31ST MARCH 2020

1. To market and promote Bedford Town Centre and make Bedford a destination through the presentation of high quality events.
2. Enhancing the visitor experience and develop the customer offer.
3. To continue to forge strong partnerships, working with others to create a vibrant, economically strong and attractive town for residents and visitors alike.
4. To be sustainable.

We want to make sure visitors know about us and choose us as a destination. They need to know about the town's offer and be enticed by other added value activities and events. We want people to talk positively about the town when they leave and return in the future. We also know loyalty is important and we want to foster the support of our local community.

An emphasis on how to enhance the trading environment and experience is a key theme throughout this Proposal to help cultivate an attractive and welcoming town as well as how the BedfordBID will continue to support a thriving Town Centre in the interests of all levy-payers.



THE NEXT FIVE YEARS 2015-2020 RENEWAL PROPOSALS

Our vision is to create a vibrant and sustainable environment by broadening the role of the Town Centre beyond shopping towards being a great place for people to spend time – work, visit, stay and live.

Our mission is to create a successfully promoted, economically sound, safe, attractive and well-managed Town Centre for visitors, customers, businesses, employees and investors.

The BID's influence comes from businesses coming together and agreeing to put a sum into a pot to improve something beyond their own doorstep. The thrust of this renewal proposal is to continue with successful initiatives (as consulted with our businesses) as well as demonstrate a shared interest above self-interest through a series of customer led 'enhancements' which are NOT statutory obligations of Bedford Borough Council or other parties.

The conclusions to the consultations with stakeholders and customer research, has been the driving force behind the BID3 Proposals. These are designed to cover both the day and evening economies.

We will:-

- Market and promote Bedford Town Centre and make Bedford a destination through the presentation of high quality events.
- Enhance the visitor experience and customer offer.
- Continue to forge strong partnerships and work with others to create a vibrant, economically strong and attractive town for residents and visitors alike.
- Be sustainable.

By the continuation of:-

- The BedfordBID Bluecaps who act as the primary link between BedfordBID, businesses, Police, CCTV and visitors to make the town safer, cleaner and friendlier.
- The award winning Retail RadioLink & Exclusion crime prevention scheme and Childsafe to aid the safe reunion of lost/missing children.
- Town Centre Gift Vouchers to support the local economy and keep investment in the town.
- A comprehensive Marketing and promotions programme.
- WipeOut (zero tolerance on graffiti in the BedfordBID area) scheme.

- Sponsorship of both the Taxi Marshals who enable the safe and friendly dispersal of visitors during the evening from the Town Centre and Best Bar None Awards designed to raise standards in operating responsibly and demonstrating a commitment to reducing alcohol related crime.
- B2B networking and promotion of the BID area businesses.
- FREE customer service training.
- Advice on small business rates relief, hardship and cost savings.
- Listening and acting upon your concerns offering practical advice and support to businesses to address their issues.
- Retailer meetings ensuring the town's retailers work together in partnership, especially at peak trading times such as Christmas, which is essential to the smooth running of the town. This provides the information and feedback required to promote "the whole Bedford Town Centre offer".

THE NEXT FIVE YEARS 2015-2020 RENEWAL PROPOSALS

New for 2015-2020 with
NO increase in the levy rate:-

1. Additional revenue streams through Affiliate Voluntary membership, event sponsorship and utility saving commissions.
2. Increase and expand an events programme to include festivals which capture the wide ethnic diversity and 'County town' sense of the town.
3. A welcome scheme to improve our gateways into the town.
4. A beautiful welcome – strategically placed street furniture and enhancement of the flower beds in the centre of town.
5. A deep clean to complement the existing cleansing programme of the town into the peripheral areas of the BID and at specific times i.e. biennial River Festival.
6. Enhancement of the Christmas lights to include peripheral areas of the BID area to help make the town look attractive and make Christmas shopping more pleasurable.
7. Expanding the WipeOut graffiti scheme to include the monitoring, recording and reporting of fly tipping on private land in the BID area for remedial action as necessary by Bedford Borough Council.
8. Empty shops dressing within the BID area to create a vibrant and welcoming impression to residents and visitors alike.

BedfordBID will also be enhancing its reporting to businesses on the measurement and evaluation of performance as well as ongoing engagement about what BedfordBID is doing to benefit business.



BedfordBID LEVY ARRANGEMENTS

1ST APRIL 2015 – 31ST MARCH 2020

Includes levy rate, de minimus, exemptions, affiliate voluntary membership and arrangements for Pop Ups, vacant units, the ballot/proxy votes and financial management.

Bedford Borough Council will carry out the ballot. It will be conducted through a postal vote. Ballot papers will be sent out to the appropriate person/organisation with any relevant documentation by 15 September 2014, to be returned no later than 16 October 2014 by 5pm. The result will be announced the following day.

Each business ratepayer will have a vote provided a) they are shown on the Billing Authority's records as liable to pay National Non-Domestic Rates (Business Rates) for a hereditament located within the defined BID area on the day the notice of ballot (28th August 2014) is given by Bedford Borough Council) they will be liable to pay a BID levy should the proposals be approved. Where a hereditament (rateable property) is vacant, undergoing refurbishment or being demolished, and there is a liability for Non-Domestic Rates, the registered business ratepayer will be entitled to vote.

Each person entitled to vote will have one vote in respect of each hereditament in the defined area where business rates are payable.

A proxy vote is available and details will be sent out with ballot papers.

The vote will have to meet two tests for BedfordBID to go ahead. First a majority in favour (51%) of those that vote is required and secondly the aggregate rateable value of those that vote in favour must be greater than those that vote no.

The BID levy will be charged on all hereditaments listed in the local Non-Domestic Rating List and which are located within the BID area (as defined in this Plan) (subject to the exemptions detailed below). Where any hereditament newly created during the BID term is located wholly or partly within the geographical area of the BID as defined in the plan the ratepayer shall become liable to payment of the BID levy subject to any exemptions or discounts as set out below. In the event that the curtilage of a newly created hereditament lies partly inside and partly outside the boundary of the BID area shown on the plan, then the boundary of the BID area shall be construed as to extend to encompass the whole curtilage of the new hereditament. The list of streets within the boundary of the BID shall be construed to include the names of any new streets which may be named within the BID area during the period of the BID.

The annual BID levy will be set at 2% (£0.02 in the £) of the Rateable Value shown in the Local Non-Domestic Rating List (as at the First of April of each year). A BID levy

will be payable for each chargeable period within the duration of the BID term. The BID levy will be payable by the non-domestic ratepayer. Where the ratepayer changes during the course of the financial year, the BID levy will be apportioned accordingly and calculated on a daily basis.

Where a property is taken out of the Rating List (e.g. due to demolition or due to a split or merged assessment), the BID levy will be due up to the day before the effective date of the removal from the Rating List and the annual BID levy will be apportioned accordingly.

Where a new assessment is brought into the Rating List (e.g. a newly erected property or a property resulting from a split or merger), the BID levy will be due for the new assessment from the effective date of the entry in the Rating List and the annual BID levy will be apportioned accordingly.

The commencement date of the BID arrangements is the first day of April 2015 and the duration of the BID arrangements is for

5 years ending on the last day of March 2020.

The following hereditaments will be exempt from the BID levy

- i) Hereditaments shown in the local Non-Domestic Rating List as at the First of April each year of the BID with a rateable value of less than £8100 will be exempt from the BID levy.
- ii) Hereditaments that are occupied wholly or mainly by a registered charity (or one that is exempt from registration) as office accommodation for the charitable purposes of that charity or of that and other charities (this exemption may apply, for example, to offices occupied by charities such as Citizens Advice Bureau).

The following hereditaments will have a discounted BID levy

DISCRETIONARY DISCOUNTS

The billing authority may at its discretion and only with the agreement of the BID Body award a discount of up to 100% of the BID levy for any financial year where:

- i) The billing authority has made an award of relief from Non-Domestic Rates on the grounds of hardship for the same period – in these circumstances the amount of the discount shall be in the same proportion to the BID liability for the period as the rate relief is to the rate liability for the same period; or,

- ii) The business of the levy payer is not conducted or established for profit, there are exceptional or unusual circumstances and it is considered to be reasonable to make an award having regard to the interests of the BID levy payers.

With the exception of hereditaments outlined above who will receive exemptions, no individual hereditament within the BID area will be disregarded or exempted from the BID levy.

There will be no other reduction to the BID levy. Any forms of exemptions, relief or discounts prescribed in the Local Government Finance Act 1988, or regulations made under that or any other relevant Act, will not apply (subject to any requirements of the Local Government Act 2003 and the Business Improvement District (England) Regulations 2004). Those ratepayers liable to pay Non-Domestic Rates in respect of unoccupied and part occupied hereditaments will be liable for the full BID levy.

The chargeable period will be the financial year commencing on 1st April each year and ending on 31st March the following year. The levy payable for each chargeable period will be due in one payment on the First day of May, or 14 days after the issue of the demand notice, whichever date is later.

Bedford Borough Council will collect the BID levy and place in a separate BID Revenue Account. Funds raised through the levy will

be transferred to BedfordBID to meet the cost of providing the BID services on a regular agreed basis net of collection costs. The BedfordBID Company will keep a prudent level of reserve. Bedford Borough Council will provide timely year-end financial statements including the amount of the BID levy and the amount of the BID levy collected.

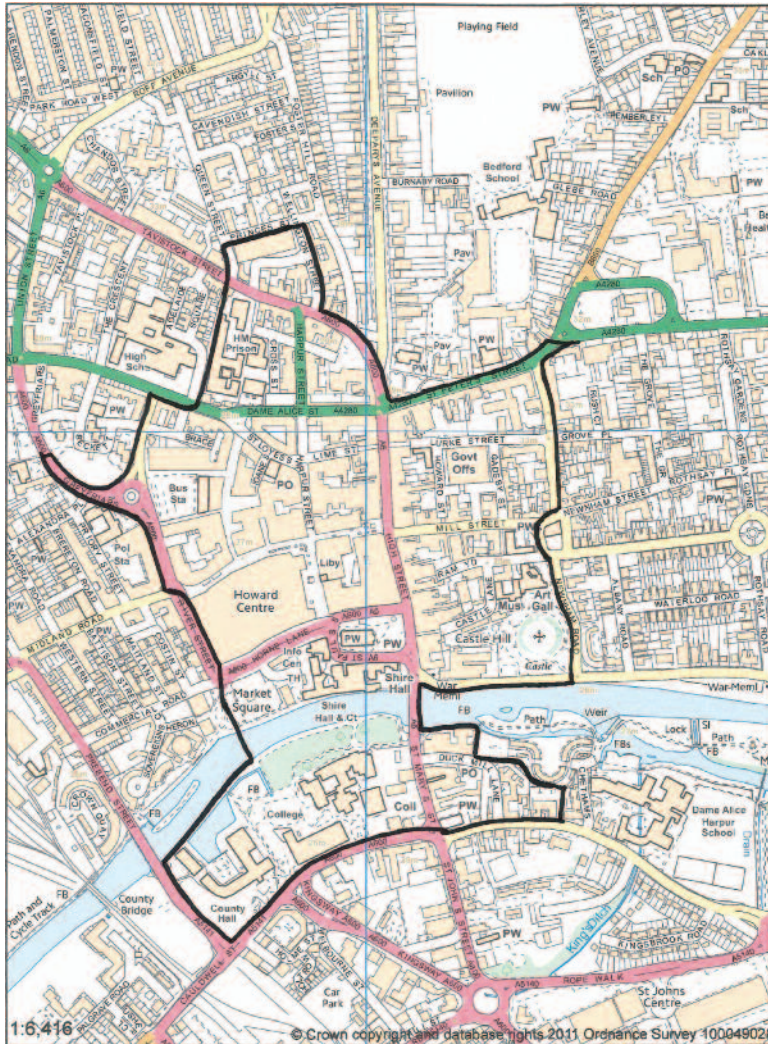
The BedfordBID Company will endeavour to supplement the BID levy payment by raising finance from other sources such as land and property owners, public bodies, and other relevant funding streams.

ALTERATIONS OF BID ARRANGEMENTS

The BID levy rate or the BID area cannot be altered without another ballot.

The duration of the BID, five years, is likely to mean that circumstances and conditions will change which will affect the business plan and projects. In such cases the BedfordBID may alter projects to reflect these changing circumstances and conditions. It will do so in consultation with businesses and the public agencies. The exact nature of the consultation will be agreed by the BedfordBID Board of Directors.

THE BedfordBID BOUNDARY



The BedfordBID Area Boundary (above) covers the following streets in Bedford Town Centre.

Allhallows, Brace Street, Bromham Road (2-16, up to Hassett St), Cardington Road (part), Castle Lane (between High St & Newnham Rd), Cauldwell Street (North Side), Clair Court, Dame Alice Street, Dane Street, Derby Place, Duke Street, Gadsby Street, Greenhill Street, Greyfriars, Gwyn Street, Harpur Centre, Harpur Street, Hassett Street, Hawes Court, High Street, Horne Lane, Howard Centre, Howard Street, James Street, Lime Street, Lurke Street, Midland Road (1-65 & 2-40), Mill Street, Mill Yard, Paradine Court, Peel St, Princes St, Queen St (up to Princes St), Ram Yard, River Street (East side), Rose Yard, Saffron Close, Silver Street, St Cuthbert's Street, St Loyes Street, St Mary's Street, St Paul's Square, St Peter's Street (up to Goldington Road), Tavistock Street (1-43 & 2-60), The Arcade, The Broadway, The Embankment (High St to Newnham Rd), Thurlow Street, Wellington St (up to Princes St) and West Arcade.

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HOW WILL YOUR MONEY BE SPENT FROM 1ST APRIL 2015- 31ST MARCH 2020?

The legislation for a BID does not allow the duplication of services that are the statutory obligation of the Council.

PROJECTED FIVE YEAR BUDGET 2015 - 2020

| INDICATIVE BUDGET 2015-2020 | YR1 | RF | YR3 | RF | YR5 | TOTAL |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|
| | 2015/16 | YR2 2016/17 | 2017/18 | YR4 2018/19 | 2019/20 | |
| INCOME (ex VAT) | | | | | | |
| BID levy payers gross income* | 480,000 | 492,000 | 504,000 | 504,000 | 504,000 | 2,484,000 |
| Voluntary income - Other** | 12,600 | 12,600 | 12,600 | 12,600 | 12,600 | 63,000 |
| Voluntary income - Affiliate Voluntary Membership | | 500 | 500 | 500 | 500 | 2,000 |
| Additional income - Utilitrack commissions | 2,800 | 4,300 | 7,500 | 11,500 | 14,250 | 40,350 |
| Additional income - Events sponsorship | 500 | 1,000 | 1,500 | 2,000 | 2,000 | 7,000 |
| Central Government & European Funding grants i.e. SEMLEP | - | 10,000 | | | 2,000 | 12,000 |
| Arts Council | - | - | 10,000 | | 10,000 | 20,000 |
| TOTAL INCOME | 495,900 | 520,400 | 536,100 | 530,600 | 545,350 | 2,628,350 |
| EXPENDITURE (ex VAT) | | | | | | |
| Marketing, Promotions & Events (page 26) | 198,500 | 203,500 | 223,500 | 208,500 | 203,000 | 1,037,000 |
| Improving the Visitor Experience (page 30) | 113,500 | 144,000 | 134,500 | 141,500 | 125,000 | 658,500 |
| Partnerships - Supporting Business, Reporting and Influencing (page 32) | 10,560 | 10,560 | 10,560 | 10,560 | 10,560 | 52,800 |
| Sustainability (page 33) | 13,000 | 2,000 | 5,000 | 7,000 | 35,500 | 62,500 |
| Management | 68,375 | 68,375 | 70,000 | 70,000 | 70,000 | 346,750 |
| Operating costs | 43,000 | 43,000 | 43,000 | 43,000 | 53,000 | 225,000 |
| Subtotal | 446,935 | 471,435 | 486,560 | 480,560 | 497,060 | 2,382,550 |
| Bad debt provision | 25,000 | 25,000 | 25,000 | 25,000 | 25,000 | 125,000 |
| Contingency @ average 5% | 23,965 | 23,965 | 24,540 | 25,040 | 23,290 | 120,800 |
| TOTAL EXPENDITURE | 495,900 | 520,400 | 536,100 | 530,600 | 545,350 | 2,628,350 |
| Operating surplus in year (income less expenditure) | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Operating reserve b/forward | 53,000 | 53,000 | 53,000 | 53,000 | 53,000 | |
| Operating reserve c/forward*** | 53,000 | 53,000 | 53,000 | 53,000 | 53,000 | - |

*BID proposals are based on the same rate in the £ as the current £0.02 and an uplift in the yield over the 2015-2020 period to include Riverside North – it is anticipated that when the Riverside North development is completed, it will represent a net overall increase in the rateable value for the BID area. The actual increase will depend on final valuations. An increase in net rateable value of, say £1m would increase the annual BID levy by £20,000.

Revaluation from 1 April 2017 – this is the regular revaluation of rateable values. The revaluation was original due from 1 April 2015 but was postponed for two years due to the recession. Changes to rateable values could increase or decrease the overall yield depending on changes to rental values since the last valuation on 1 April 2010.

**Assumptions subject to Bedford Borough Council's approved budgets and elected Mayor from April 2015.

***Operating reserve is based on BID2 actuals for additional known costs for projects where invoices are not yet received, plus costs to tide over the projects and running of Bedford BID until the first annual payments of levies from Bedford Borough Council is paid in June

Yr1 assumes the Christmas lights enhancement and gateway signage with allowances for investigative works to be carried out to implement empty shops and improved technology for fly tipping monitoring and reporting in Yr. 2.

Yrs. 2 and 4 assumes River Festival.

Yr2 also provides for a second instalment for Christmas lights enhancement as well as the deep clean in advance of the River Festival (2016).

Yrs. 3 & 5 will take the income from SEMLEP/Arts Council to support the enhanced festival programme and job/growth creation.

The uplift in Yr5 in the Sustainability line includes the on-costs for BID4/closure costs of BID3.



1 MARKETING, PROMOTIONS & EVENTS

TO MARKET AND PROMOTE BEDFORD TOWN CENTRE AND MAKE BEDFORD A DESTINATION THROUGH THE PRESENTATION OF HIGH QUALITY EVENTS.

WE WANT...

- To ensure our town is known, that we attract new customers and foster loyalty in those that are here.
- To build on Bedford's distinctive offer promoting the unique characteristics and diversity of our town, creating a distinctive, positive reputation for our Town Centre for all sectors, on all streets.
- To increase footfall and sales through more events and using the culture, character and choice characteristics including the river, independents and large retailers. We will embrace the new 'civic square' into our programming and the biennial River Festival.
- Develop the concept of 'taking to the streets' for businesses to take part in Pop Up markets
- To develop an income strategy relative to specific events
- To identify our key target audiences and ensure that they are made aware of what Bedford Town Centre has to offer; through tailored local and regional advertising, town guide app, an informative website, regular events, offers and incentives.
- Continue to promote FREE car parking at Christmas
- Continue to operate the BedfordBID Voucher Scheme which keeps spend in Bedford Town Centre
- Continue to arrange successful business networking events, Service Directory and B2B promotion for the commercial office sector.



PROMOTING RETAIL SECTORS & STREETS

We will complete essential research to understand the town assets, shoot the photography and develop the tools to continue powerfully promoting the different aspects of the town's attributes to relevant customers. Examples of this are our sector specific high quality magazines which promote Bedford's qualities and highlight specific businesses found in each part of the town i.e. Food Festival, Love Fashion, Love Christmas and B2B.

The Next 5 Years:

Based on businesses feedback we will continue to work on driving more foot flow around the different streets, and to focus on specific sectors like culture, character, convenience, food & drink, evening economy and business sector etc. We will highlight these sectors and areas of the town within our promotional material and use a mixture of technology, incentives and mapping to direct customers, ensuring they find your business wherever you are.

ATTRACTING CUSTOMERS

BedfordBID has been developing a distinctive and rigorous regional advertising schedule aimed at attracting visitors from neighbouring towns and rural areas, located within a 30-minute drive. Media space and different media types were carefully selected to achieve the best return on investment and raise awareness in areas and at times where knowledge of the town was low.

The Next 5 Years:

We will build on this strategy by developing a marketing plan to raise the profile of Bedford Town Centre to attract visitors, promoting the town to the wider audiences using a range of media types to extend our reach to more and more customers. We will continue with on-platform advertising and bus sides to target audiences in the Bedford, St Neots, Milton Keynes and hinterland, promote our seasonal destination status whilst keeping our roots as a traditional county town.



We will endeavour to:-

- Reposition Bedford Town Centre as the region's logical choice for business and leisure
- Raise the Profile by creating a sense of vibrancy and change
- Change perceptions and be seen as "greatly improved"
- Harness the power of those promoting Bedford and "piggy back" onto those communicating the changes
- Build on the town's Unique Selling Points - heritage, culture and the river
- An impetus is needed to build Bedford's offer as distinctive from its larger competitors so it can assume a complementary position in the retail hierarchy as well as a destination particularly during such times as the biennial River Festival.

To attract customers from neighbouring areas and stop leakage to other destinations while building loyalty and fostering community spirit.

We will actively and consistently promote the town's proposition and aim to increase sales through events and promotions. We must also continue to develop loyalty and pride in the town and embrace emerging technologies.

EMBRACING TECHNOLOGY

www.lovebedford.co.uk was redesigned and relaunched in 2014 and is now compatible with today's mobile devices. The website has the capacity for businesses to be represented by listing your services, opening hours and offers. Further improvements will be explored to offer the facility for online purchasing of the Love Bedford Gift vouchers and information to aid new business arrival decisions. BedfordBID's social media is already linked to and from the main website and traditional press campaigns. The town guide app will continue to feature local businesses and provide the town's customers with information to support their visits.

SOCIAL MEDIA: JOINING THE CONVERSATION

With 40% of 13-24 year olds visiting Facebook more than 10 times a day and 58% using Twitter "all the time", nurturing a social media strategy is an area that BedfordBID will develop to help establish the town in the minds of our younger shoppers, as they are our next generation. Through the Facebook page, Bedford BID will establish a regular rapport with users; including competitions, event information, photos and chatter about what's going on in town.

1 MARKETING, PROMOTIONS & EVENTS

OUR EVENING ECONOMY

Bedford's vibrant and safe evening culture has also been promoted by BedfordBID within the town's press; radio advertising and town guide app. It also provides individual business marketing opportunities including the Food and Drink Festival and Taste Trail through 30,000 copies of the Love Food and Drink brochure dining guide, listing all bars, clubs.

BedfordBID will continue to promote the evening economy through the Love Bedford website, advertising campaigns including generic Bedford guides, financing Taxi Marshals who enable a safe and friendly dispersal of visitors during the evening from the Town Centre. We will continue to sponsor the Best Bar None Award scheme and provide funds for assessments and BIIAB Level 1 training in Responsible Alcohol Retailing. This enables bar staff from various premises in Bedford to achieve the qualification plus encourage a growth in the number of Town Centre venues entering the scheme.

BedfordBID can also support evening economy businesses with issues and act as an advocate on national policy changes such as the 'late night levy' and help the town gain accreditation for having a well managed and safe evening economy.

SUPPORTING THE NON RETAIL SECTOR

Having an attractive Town Centre as well as a critical mass of retailing and entertainment, is also an important element of the package needed to retain and attract new employers plus employment to a town.

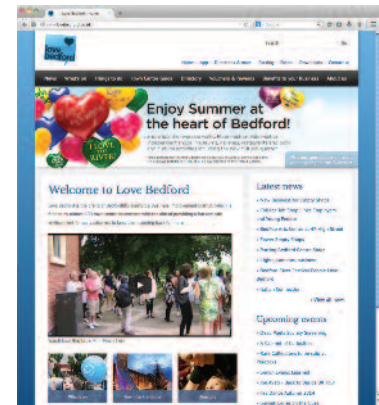
Over the next five years, BedfordBID will also promote new business arrivals; be a conduit for B2B cross marketing opportunities and relationship development; promote on the website, town guide app and directory; include in Independent trails; arrange networking events throughout the year; produce a dedicated B2B publication for the promotion of the non retail sector and continue to engage with everyone through the Bluecaps whose remit also includes helping to keep the town safe, clean and offer a friendly welcome.

HARNESSING THE STRENGTH OF OUR BRAND

The brand of Love Bedford was introduced at the beginning of 2011. Its scope for creating an engaging brand concept and positioning for Bedford for all core audiences (business, consumer and community), and applicable across all media (print, digital, poster, spoken word etc.) will be further optimised.

WEBSITE

BedfordBID's website is not only pivotal to the delivery and fulfilment of marketing activity but also to the provision of 'tourism' services. Appreciating there is an 'on the ground' Tourist Information Centre (TIC), the website not only needs to showcase what Bedford Town Centre has to offer visitors but also needs to provide up-to-date information.



1 MARKETING, PROMOTIONS & EVENTS

BUILDING LOYALTY & STOPPING LEAKAGE

To prevent "leakage" of customers to other neighbouring towns, BedfordBID has devised a number of initiatives including the BedfordBID Town Centre Gift Voucher scheme, Reward Card, Town Trails, Independents' Day and national competition, FREE parking, Radio and Social Media competitions plus focused on special events and sectors such as Valentine's Day, Food Festival and Christmas.

The Next 5 Years:

The town will face increasing competition from out of town shopping destinations and shopping developments within our 30 minute drive radius and to a certain extent the new Riverside North Development scheme. To cultivate by growing loyalty and 'stop leakage', BedfordBID will continue to devise innovative promotions, make use of emerging technology and adapt to changing trends over the next five years. As a start, BedfordBID will relaunch the Reward Card and issue 2000 Loyalty Cards to registered customers. This initiative will also form the basis of a season-driven e-marketing strategy, announcing store offers and events to cardholders.

EVENTS: DRIVING VISITS & BUILDING AWARENESS

The events were devised to attract a mix of regional and local visitors, with some aimed specifically at fostering pride of place within the local businesses and community but ultimately to bring people into the town and enhance their 'experience'.

The Next 5 Years:

Moving forward, BedfordBID aims to establish more events in the heart of the Town Centre to complement the town and its offering; especially ones that will cover costs and help us develop strategic partnerships to support the town. Our plans are to expand into themed festivals and develop attractions that draw on Bedford's historical aspects. We will also collaborate with Bedford Borough Council on events such as the biennial River Festival and Christmas lights sponsorship and piggyback with other events where we can. We will use our events to promote different parts of the town, streets or sectors such as the Cultural quarter or the evening economy.



INCREASING FOOTFALL

Driving footfall is the name of the game to the 'right' audience. We will work to continue this by ensuring the town is well managed, appealing and promoted. We will also be constantly monitoring our impact and the health of the town so we can respond accordingly.

APPEALING TO STUDENTS

BedfordBID has established close links to Bedford College and to a lesser extent the University of Bedford. As well as providing information about the town to students at fresher's events, award ceremonies etc, we will explore the possibility of inviting volunteers to help with events and promotions. To develop this area further, BID will consult with students on how best to attract their loyalty in order to procure the student pound for the town.



2 ENHANCING THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE AND DEVELOP THE CUSTOMER OFFER

PEOPLE ARE ENTITLED TO LIVE AND WORK IN OR VISIT CLEAN, SAFE, ATTRACTIVE AND VIBRANT TOWN CENTRES.

In 2012 BedfordBID conducted field research amongst non and lapsed users of Bedford Town Centre from within a 30 mile radius of the Town Centre. Opinions were strong. Conclusions drawn identified specific answers with what to do and those factors that were likely to increase future visitation frequency amongst this sector. Particular weaknesses included the number of empty units, run down environment, perception of safety, lack of retail choice and not enough up market shops and services. Not all of this is within the remit or powers of BedfordBID, but through consultation and dialogue with those whose remit it is, the BID intends to help address some of these concerns.



A WELCOME TO DELIGHT

BedfordBID will introduce a welcome scheme to delight and provide a 'welcome' to ensure our town is easy to navigate with the right information at the customers' fingertips. When customers arrive, we want to ensure they have the best experience possible. We know impressions matter and 'the welcome' is all important. This includes everything from gateway signage, Christmas decorations, navigation and guides to shop fronts, window displays and general ambiance of the Town Centre.

Businesses beyond the Town Centre and in the periphery of the BID area will benefit from enhanced Christmas lights and deep cleaning. This will complement the existing provision and Bedford Borough Council's cleaning programme at specific times.

BedfordBID will take on an empty shops dressing role to include liaison with landlords and organise empty shop window displays or 'jackets' to improve their appearance and that of the BID area overall.

To help ensure a high standard and attractive appearance for the public realm, BedfordBID will also be looking at creative ways of providing and maintaining the flower beds in Silver Street.

FRIENDLIER, SAFER AND CLEANER

The Bluecaps will continue to help make the town friendlier, safer, and cleaner and enhance the public realm through such schemes as the BedfordBID Retail RadioLink & Exclusion Order scheme; Childsafe and WipeOut which is our graffiti monitoring, recording and reporting for action programme.

Bluecaps work and interact with not just members of the public but also our retailers, businesses, emergency services, council officials, special event promoters and street cleansing & highways engineers. They are often the first point of call for deterring antisocial behaviour and dealing with first aid treatments. Bluecaps will continue their principal function of acting as the primary link between BedfordBID and businesses ensuring all are fully aware and able to participate in all our projects with the aim of helping to improve the commercial viability and profile of the area.

We plan to expand the successful WipeOut scheme where Bluecaps already work in partnership with Bedford Borough Council to identify and report eye level graffiti which is then removed by the Council. These same processes will be introduced to address fly tipping on private land in the BID area.

To help drive up standards, investment will be made in upgrading the monitoring, recording and reporting procedures of the Bluecaps as well as possible enhancements to the team to help deter anti-social behaviour as well as strategically placed street furniture to help deter cyclists in the pedestrianised areas and provide a welcome rest for our loyal and frequent elderly customers.

We will...

Continue the award winning Safer Business Retail RadioLink & Exclusion Scheme and develop with renewed objectives from 2015 to include:-

- Increasing the membership across both day and night time economy
- Reducing retail crime
- Improving partnership/cross 'border' working and intelligence
- Reducing costs; generate income and improve cost effectiveness for members. This will include the review of the current radio supplier/contract
- Gain Safer Business Award accreditation again in 2016

Continue to develop Town Centre partnerships with national chains and independents working together to address issues.

Continue to raise awareness of Town Centre issues through appropriate channels i.e. CTAG and BedSafe whilst maintaining effective relationships direct with Bedfordshire Police and through the BedfordBID Retail RadioLink & Exclusion Scheme Steering Group particularly in terms of police presence in the town.

Develop a PR strategy 'to communicate' to change perceptions.

Record and monitor visitor perceptions to Bedford Town Centre.

Continue to sponsor the Best Bar None national award scheme promoting responsible management and operation of alcohol licensed Town Centre premises.

Finance further training for bar staff for the pub/club sector to gain an Award in Responsible Alcohol Retailing (ARAR) from the British Institute of Inn keeping (BII)

Continue to fund the Taxi Marshals scheme designed to aid safe dispersal from the Town Centre and to assist bona fide licensed vehicles to use the lay-bys, and to assist members of the public to hire these vehicles as provided by the law.

Expand and build upon the free customer service training initiative.

3 PARTNERSHIPS

BedfordBID will continue to forge strong partnerships. Working with others, we will aim to create a vibrant, economically sound and attractive town for residents and visitors alike with enhanced levels of engagement through:

- a) Bedford Borough Community Safety Partnership,
- b) Association of Business Crime Partnerships,
- c) BedfordBID Steering Group and Retail RadioLink meetings,
- d) Licensees Forum,
- e) Chair of Portas Pilot Town Team,
- f) Regular meetings with Officers from Environmental Services, Estates, Licensing, Highways and Economic Development teams,
- g) Retailer meetings.

BedfordBID is also committed to help Bedford grow through job creation.

BedfordBID WILL ALSO...

Continue to consult with BID businesses to keep you informed and involved on matters of relevance to the enhancement of the trading area as well as enrich partnerships through BritishBIDs, ATCM and National High Streets Forum.

Continue to provide a 'point of contact' and business support through various means:-

- To listen, be a voice for businesses, and provide insight and leadership on how the town evolves and is managed.
- To work on your behalf with Bedford Council to continue to address your issues and represent your interests.
- To offer new ways to achieve added value, cost saving initiatives and reduce business costs whilst continuing to provide dedicated support for small and independent businesses with advice on small business rates and hardship reliefs

- Explore initiatives to consider i.e. trade waste schemes, waste and recycling collections and unlimited access to a stress free, cost saving 'local' recruitment advertising tool.
- To support businesses to adapt to new retailing platforms and technologies. We want to offer businesses all the help they can get as we understand the competitive environment and challenges.
- To heighten our visibility and improve accessibility for our businesses by a more prominent Town Centre location.
- B2B networking events



4 SUSTAINABILITY

Through measurable success, BedfordBID is committed to demonstrate to all our stakeholders that the Business Improvement District is beneficial to its levy payers. It will continue to enhance the trading and streetscape environment and visitor experience. Whilst there is no intention to marginalise the efforts or importance of the role BedfordBID plays in lobbying and “joining the dots” collaboration, the way various groups work as ‘cyclones’ would also benefit from a greater focus from BedfordBID.

- a) Research
- b) ‘Membership’
- c) Funding
- d) Resource
- e) Portas Pilot Bedford Town Team
- f) Retailer meetings.

a) RESEARCH

BedfordBID will;-

Undertake to raise awareness and understanding of the value of that BedfordBID has to the visitor economy in the local area.

Provide relevant statistics to support business/infrastructure development.

Strengthen the evaluation of BedfordBID’s marketing campaigns

Evidence the value of ‘membership’ of BedfordBID and seek to increase its ‘members’

Monitor the marketing activity of other BIDs to identify best practice

Keep up to date on trends and developments within the industry and provide intelligence to decision-makers.

b) MEMBERSHIP

How does an organisation responsible for promoting the whole effectively demonstrate its value to individual ‘members’?

BedfordBID currently has over 550 levy paying properties within a ‘community’ of over 630 businesses. BedfordBID is responsible for promoting the whole of the BID offer to potential customers. By getting potential visitors and investors to engage positively with Bedford, we create a fertile environment in which our

businesses can promote their particular organisation/business.

The role BedfordBID plays in this process can be challenging to evaluate. The activity outlined in the ‘research’ section (above) combined with a Marketing and Communications programme, will help counter this problem.

BedfordBID has to be clear about its relationship with de minimus and voluntary ‘members’. Businesses in the BID area will be named and featured in our marketing activity; we will not discriminate against the value of our de minimus partners.

However, there may be occasions (usually PR-related) where it is necessary to promote a non ‘member’ in order to, for example, secure PR coverage. We will view each case individually. If, by including we secure significant benefits to the Business Improvement District businesses and the Town Centre, we will go ahead. When this happens we will communicate and use the situation to leverage them to either contributing financially or consider joining.

BedfordBID will:-

Successfully demonstrate (and communicate) the value of being part of the Business Improvement District.

Develop an ‘affiliate membership’ for businesses outside the BID area.

Host four B2B networking events and distribute newsletters between April and March each year.

4 SUSTAINABILITY

c) FUNDING AND RESOURCE

BedfordBID's core activities are currently funded by levy payers plus miscellaneous income from utility commissions and a contribution from Bedford Borough Council towards the footfall monitoring system. BedfordBID will endeavour to generate additional income for BID3 through:-

Additional contributions from Bedford Borough Council towards the proposals to enhance Christmas lights, flower beds and deep cleansing in the BID area.

Affiliate voluntary membership - A voluntary membership scheme for businesses outside of the BedfordBID providing businesses the opportunity to engage with, and benefit from, the BID whilst not being compelled to pay a mandatory levy. For those voluntary members, the annual contribution will be a fixed annual fee, with the minimum contribution of £100 per year. As well as benefitting from the overall scheme, they will then get the added benefit of inclusion on the Love Bedford website, business directory and in specified events and promotions. Voluntary members will be excluded from representation on the Board of Directors but able to attend open meetings and the AGM to make comments. Voluntary members will have no voting powers.

Event sponsorship - partnerships with businesses outside the BID Boundary and located in the Town Centre area will be established. This will provide the opportunity for those businesses to benefit from defined BID services such as the Love Bedford website. Other opportunities may be offered where they are considered to add value to the town's offer. A sponsorship scheme for companies that wish to take a more active role in supporting the Town Centre will also be established.

Utilitrack will continue to provide all BedfordBID levy payers with the opportunity to benchmark the rates in their energy contracts against the best available rates in the market. Utilitrack are independent of all suppliers and do not favour one supplier over another. Levy payers who engage Utilitrack will be presented with an easy to read report listing all the tariffs suitable for their contract renewal. An Account Manager dedicated to the BID will provide a consistent point of contact to help with the transfer from one contract to another.

Utilitrack Telecom will facilitate a similar review of levy payers landline, broadband and mobile phone contracts. The analysis undertaken of BID business current communications will ensure their needs are being met and they are not paying for services they no longer need.

From April 2017 levy payers will enjoy the benefits of the deregulation of the water industry. Utilitrack will, subject to Ofwat's further announcements, be able to help review BID businesses expenditure on water and sewage services.

Utilitrack will support all its activity with case studies via its website and the Love Bedford site; together with monthly meetings between its Account Manager and the Blue Caps.

BedfordBID will seek Central and European funding through SEMLEP, the local enterprise partnership for the South East Midlands, consisting of representatives of the public and private sectors to create strong, sustainable and balanced growth across the South East Midlands together with grant opportunities from the Arts Council.

If BedfordBID is to achieve the objectives outlined in this proposal, a structured payment plan is to be sustained with an activity plan matching the correct level and timing of income payments from Bedford Borough Council, the billing authority responsible for the collection of the levies for BedfordBID.

4 SUSTAINABILITY

d) RESOURCES

In 2011/12 BedfordBID restructured the BID office and Bluecap resource to improve effectiveness and enable a greater emphasis on the delivery of our projects in accordance with actual income received.

The 'office' headcount was reduced from two full and two part time staff to two full time members including the new Director of Operations. The Bluecap team was reduced from three full and three part time members to two full and two part time staff. Moving forward, whereas the emphasis will be for the Bluecaps to continue contributing to the aim of making Bedford Town Centre safer, cleaner and friendlier, a review will be undertaken on the possible enhancement of the team for a dedicated member of staff to be focused on developing the Retail RadioLink & Exclusion scheme, crime prevention and reduction of ASB initiatives. There is also an external agency that covers PR for BedfordBID.



BedfordBID will...

Deliver the objectives to meet the secured funding outlined in this proposal.

Employ staff with vitality, energy and passion to continually champion the benefits of being part of a Business Improvement District including meeting and greeting new businesses with a new Welcome Pack. With all the work we do on our brand image; it's the people that our businesses employ that will ultimately define it.

Recruit and train staff as appropriate to the skills required for their role and performance measure against job requirements aligned to the business plan.

Produce a measureable marketing plan for 2015-2020.

Continue to operate monthly cash accounts with an annual operating surplus, bad debt provision and contingency in accordance with British BIDs best practice guidelines.

Prepare a succession plan for the Chair of BedfordBID, board of directors and membership rotation.

e) PORTAS PILOT BEDFORD TOWN TEAM

BedfordBID was responsible for establishing the Bedford Town Team and successful application for 'Portas' funding. BedfordBID will continue to Chair and support this collaborative initiative which ultimately is aimed at bringing together different personalities and developing relationships to work together in the interests of Bedford Town Centre.

f) RETAILER MEETINGS

Ensuring the town's retailers work together in partnership, especially at peak trading times such as Christmas, is essential to the smooth running of the town. This provides the information and feedback required to promote "the whole Bedford town centre offering".

REPORTING & EVALUATING:

We are constantly listening and responding to feedback from our stakeholders. Analysis has enabled us to direct resources and respond to the challenging and changing economic environment and local needs.

Over the next five years we will be even more adaptable and flexible. We will continue to evaluate all of our work and provide details of all key activities, insights and learning, and demonstrate a return on investment.

We will set clear financial and operational objectives, monitor and review performance and deliver against given objectives and targets to a high standard

We will enhance our communication and transparency and, working with BritishBIDs, review KPIs to include industry best practice standards.

ON SITE INTELLIGENCE

As our Town Centre environment changes and we develop further promotions, events and marketing, understanding and monitoring visitors to the town takes on even more importance. Moving forward we plan to continue to measure footfall but further develop our partnerships with the Harpur and Howard Centres to ensure we have a full understanding of how the town is performing. We will also introduce exit surveys as well as a follow up to the field research undertaken in 2012.

BedfordBID will continue to measure shop vacancies and new business activity by sector and location. We will monitor performance against local and national benchmarks to provide useful analysis and interpretation that can be passed on.

COMPANY REPORTING & TRANSPARENCY

Published Baseline Agreements and Service Level Agreements will be negotiated with Bedford Borough Council and will be available on request. We will be investigating British BIDs Accreditation to ensure our quality management systems are robust. BedfordBID will also provide annual reporting of activities and results to include:

- Performance review against KPIs and financial statements
- New investment in the area and new businesses activity
- Business feedback and satisfaction survey
- Consumer perception surveys
- Numbers of issues reported and sorted by BedfordBID within set timescales
- Extent of cost saving initiatives offered
- Media coverage analysed by editorial value equivalent/reach and circulation/key message communication
- Visits to Love Bedford website
- Stakeholder feedback
- BritishBIDs annual survey



LIFE WITHOUT BEDFORD BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID)

If businesses vote “No”, the BID goes and everything we deliver goes too. Over £2.5m investment in the town over the next five years will be lost. Without a BID the town cannot be supported by the Council in the same way hence the necessity for local businesses to keep the BID going.

The BID and the projects it carries out DO NOT and CANNOT replace those services statutorily provided by the public agencies such as The Police and Bedford Borough Council. The BID can only provide projects and services over and above.

The BID model provides investment and engagement through a separate, independent body where businesses decide on the priorities and how they want their money spent. The funds collected are ring-fenced and used only to deliver a structured and guaranteed set of activities voted on by the businesses in the BID.

Business rates are a national tax that is collected by Bedford Borough Council. They retain 49%. Businesses have no say in how that money is distributed or spent.

If the vote is ‘NO’, the BedfordBID will cease to exist on 31st March 2015. All the services provided by it will stop immediately at that time.

This will mean:-

- No Retail RadioLink or elements of the BedSafe scheme
- No Bluecaps
- No dedicated advertising or promotions – lose visitors to competing nearby towns
- No Town Centre vouchers
- No town guide app, maps and guides
- No Town Centre business directory, website or social media
- No BID business led events
- No Taxi Marshals who provide an invaluable service to enable the safe and friendly dispersal of visitors during the evening from the Town Centre.
- No graffiti cleaning
- No B2B networking
- No FREE Christmas parking
- No practical support to address issues arising
- No cost saving advantages to offer

But ultimately the town will lose the opportunity for businesses to drive the support that is needed to those areas which they feel are important to their business and the town. BedfordBID is an independent, private, Not for Profit Company, formed and managed by businesses in the Town Centre. It operates solely to deliver projects that are paid for and requested by businesses. BUSINESS agrees the projects; BUSINESS controls and manage how the money is spent.



BedfordBID YOUR BID YOUR BOARD

The governance of the BedfordBID is undertaken by a team of levy/business rates-paying large and small businesses who volunteer to sit on the BedfordBID Board. A list of our Directors and contact details is also on our website together with the invitation to become a member/director and associated forms.

A credible and professional board, made up of the following members from national chains and independent businesses with local and industry expertise including retail marketing and tourism:-

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Board Chairperson | Rae Levene - Park Woodfine Heald Mellow |
| Directors | Kerry Cash - 5th Avenue Hair & Beauty Spa (vice Chair) |
| | Ismail Anilmis - McDonalds |
| | Paul Dawson - The Rose and Chair of BedSafe evening economy Licensees Forum |
| | Michael Green - Blue Arrow |
| | Kevin Kavanagh - Frescoes Coffee House |
| | Samantha Laycock - Harpur Centre and Director of Huntingdon BID |
| | Steve McBrearty - Cash Converters |
| | Cllr Charles Royden - Bedford Borough Council Deputy Mayor |
| | Christina Rowe - BedfordBID Director of Operations and Chair of Town Team |
| | Joanne Spencer - Kitchen Outlet Store |
| | Mark Thompson - The Re-Use Centre |
| | Greg Warwick - Jeeves Gentlemen's Hair & Grooming Salon and Chair of High Street Forum |

Bedfordshire Police attend alongside invited guests including Councillors at the alternate 'open' board meetings. This invitation is also open to all businesses within the BID area

PRINCIPAL ACTIVITY:

To initiate and promote the establishment of a Business Improvement District (BID) within Bedford Town Centre and be responsible for the implementation of the BID proposals and any alteration and renewal proposals for the BID which are designed to enhance the trading environment within the designated area of the Business Improvement District area of Bedford.

*Major responsibilities:

- Formulation and oversight of policies and procedures
- Financial management, including adoption and oversight of the annual budget
- Oversight of programme planning and evaluation
- Review of Organisational and programmatic reports
- Promotion of the Company i.e. communication and outreach

*Members of the board share these responsibilities while acting in the interest of the BedfordBID Company. Each member is expected to make important recommendations based on his or her experience and vantage point in the community.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

WE WILL

- Measure our success on an agreed set of Key Performance Indicators
- Promote Bedford's competitive advantage over other towns under the brand of Love Bedford
- Promote "the whole Bedford Town Centre offer" on the Love Bedford website by events/attractions offer compelling reason to attract visitors to the Town Centre including de minimus businesses who will still benefit from BID activity.
- Exploit the media to portray the needs and interests of members.
- Unite all interested parties, from the public and private sectors, who share the common desire to 'make Bedford better' with a view to attracting new business to the town.
- Lobby to ensure that the views of all businesses in the BID area are represented.
- Be creative and innovative in our provision of place marketing.
- Campaign to raise the profile of the importance of the visitor economy to Bedford.
- Seek additional funding.
- Remain independent and have no party political alignment.
- Outsource specialist services as and when required to keep the running costs at a minimum.
- Make every best endeavour to provide regular up to date information to the benefit of all levy payers.

WE WON'T

- Take on responsibilities from other organisations or associations that fall outside our strategic priorities
- Replace those services statutorily provided by the public agencies such as the Police and Bedford Borough Council (cleansing and maintenance, street lighting, highways and roads).
- Take responsibility for business owners not instructing their staff to receive Bluecaps/BID information into their premises or communicate within their businesses.
- Spread our resources too widely, losing potential impact
- Support non-priority activity
- Measure our success by the distribution of literature
- Devise campaigns or projects on a 'win vote' principle
- We will promote the whole Bedford but we won't name individual organisations who are not 'members' within our promotional campaigns unless it is in the best interest of our 'members' to do so

BedfordBID HOW WE COMMUNICATE WITH YOU...

HOW DO YOU KNOW WHAT BedfordBID IS DOING FOR YOU?

OPEN MEETINGS

BedfordBID holds regular 'open' board meetings when representatives of the wider business community of the Town Centre are invited to attend along with ward and local councillors. Dates are displayed on our website www.lovebedford.co.uk

B2B BREAKFAST

B2B Breakfast networking meetings have been recently introduced providing businesses the opportunity to meet and promote to fellow businesses, learn more about BedfordBID and hear about developments affecting the town.



BUSINESS VISITS

All businesses are visited regularly by a member of the BedfordBID team. Bluecaps capture regular feedback from businesses in the BID area and report back in terms of unprompted reaction and responses to audits when delivering the latest edition of the BedfordBID newsletters and invitations to participate in marketing and promotional activity to their benefit.

OPEN DOOR POLICY

We realise it's important that businesses are able to air current concerns that are affecting their business right now. Therefore, both the BID team and members of the BID Board have an open door policy when it comes to listening to your feedback or formulating plans of support. We make our contact details available on all communications.

BedfordBID BOARD

The Director of Operations meets, at least, on a six weekly basis with the Board, to report on performance, financial updates and ongoing issues as well as through ad hoc communication as and when necessary including regular 'drop ins' to their businesses. The Director also has regular meetings with other directors on specific topics outside of the forma meeting cycle.

www.lovebedford.co.uk

www.lovebedford.co.uk is regularly updated with details of our activities and how to get involved as well as key information regarding latest news and developments within the Town Centre. Newsletters are hand delivered to all businesses and regular emails are sent out relating to BedfordBID activities and promotions that businesses can get involved in plus hard copies for those without internet facilities.

ACCOLADES

In May 2012 Bedford was one of the first 12 towns to be awarded funding as part of the **Portas Pilot scheme**. In October, Bedford was chosen to host the National High Streets Forum at which the Minister Brandon Lewis said that Bedford was an example of where businesses led the way in promoting and supporting their own trading environment. Joining the Minister in Bedford was Mary Portas who applauded the innovative ways in which the volunteer Town Team was using the grant.



In June 2012 BedfordBID was awarded the distinction of accreditation by the Association of Business Crime Partnership's **Safer Business Award**.



In April 2014 BedfordBID was invited to participate in an **Audience with Brandon Lewis MP**, Minister for High Streets regarding issues facing Town Centres and BIDs



The Independent of the Year competition ran throughout July and served as a free and easy tool to celebrate independent businesses and drive traffic to their doors. BedfordBID decided to take on this challenge having noted the large amount of benefit to the town. Bedford was 2nd in the level of nominated businesses in the country and Simi and Lola are now in the National competition at the end of July helping put Bedford on the map!



THE LAST 5 YEARS - WHAT WE DELIVERED

APPENDIX 1

HELPING CUSTOMERS DISCOVER YOU – New town guide app, maps, guides and trails

WORKING WITH PARTNERS – Increased levels of engagement through:-

- Bedford Borough Community Safety Partnership
- Association of Business Crime Partnerships
- BedfordBID Steering Group and Retail RadioLink & Exclusion scheme meetings
- Licensees Forum
- Portas Pilot Town Team Chair plus
- Regular meetings with officers from Environmental Services, Estates, Economic Development, Licensing and Highways teams.
- Consultations – Town Centre pedestrian signage, cycling on pedestrianised areas, spitting and urinating on public surfaces, roads, pavements and streets and the Local Plan.

REGENERATION OF THE HIGH STREET - contributed towards the Townscape Heritage Initiative.

GENERATED over £50k of additional income into the town through the Portas Pilot Scheme.

WELCOMED back 'resident' police officers into the Town Centre.

SPONSORED the Best Bar None national award scheme promoting responsible management and operation of alcohol licensed premises.

FINANCED training for bar staff for the pub/club sector to gain an Award in Responsible Alcohol Retailing (ARAR) from the the British Institute of Inn keeping (BII) and negotiated reduced rates for replacement radios and batteries as well as a new defibrillator in the town.

PROVIDED FREE customer service auditing and training exclusive to businesses in the BID area to establish their customer satisfaction levels with practical advice on how to 'up sell'.

REDUCED OVERHEADS to provide funds for additional marketing activity.

INCREASED Town Centre events and sponsorships to create a vibrant experience and attract visitors including FREE events and promotions such as 'indie' trails, Culture Trail (to support the reopening of The Higgins), BedFringe, Open Air Popup Cinema, the inaugural Bedford Film Festival, launch of the John Bunyan Community Boat and sponsorship of the annual Christmas Fireworks display which enabled the 'launch' date and time to best benefit the Town Centre and businesses and the UK's first ever Women's International Cycle Tour event.

INCREASED social media platform followers.

FINANCED FREE parking at Christmas.

REMODELLED the Indulge glossy brochure to include wider offer and increase opportunities for businesses to participate.

REMODELLED Be Beautiful promotion to include 'on the streets' activity.

RELAUNCHED the Love Bedford website to mobile device compatible.

INTRODUCED new town guide app.

PROMOTED evening economy through dedicated campaigns.

LAUNCHED B2B networking, marketing and advertising opportunities.

INTRODUCED business cost savings initiative on utilities.

PIGGY BACKED onto the national Independents of the Year campaign and entered the national competition to raise the profile of the town.

EXPRESSED OUR OPPOSITION to a night time levy direct to Yvette Cooper MP and Police Crime Commissioner.

REPRESENTED business interests in numerous issues including the proposed introduction of competitive street vendors which was refused plus closure of public toilets which are now being reopened to the benefit of the elderly/disabled visitors to the town.

ENHANCED governance and expanded breath of knowledge and expertise of Directors.

APPOINTED five new directors onto the board.





For more information, please
call us on **01234 404500**

www.lovebedford.co.uk