

YOUR BID
BEDFORDBID
INDEPENDENT, BUSINESS-LED
FUNDED BY
TOWN CENTRE
BUSINESSES



THE NEXT FIVE YEARS
1ST APRIL 2020 - 31ST MARCH 2025

Summary of the Proposed BID Arrangements for the renewal of the Bedford Business Improvement District (BID)



WHSmith

Warren James
JEWELLER OUTLET

vision express



INTRODUCTION

On 17th October 2019, a ballot will be held proposing the renewal of the Bedford Business Improvement District (BID) for a further five years.

BedfordBID was among the first twelve to pilot a Business Improvement District in 2005. Town centres are evolving. Given the impact that on-line shopping, changing customer needs and expectations are having on town centres, Government, investors and business leaders now recognise BIDs as the best way to keep our towns alive. Consequently, there are now over three hundred BIDs across the UK.

Over the years BedfordBID has proven to be responsive to the needs of town centre businesses in order to tackle immediate issues and will continue to do so. The BedfordBID is a sustainable, professional means of maintaining a local vibrant town centre. An organisation, speaking with authority on behalf 500+ businesses to the Police, Local Authority and other agencies is key to a collaborated approach in ever changing times.

BedfordBID provides local expertise and support to the town seven days a week, whilst proactively reinvesting the funds into the area, therefore supporting and subsidising our unique independents. Collectively, it unlocks £400k of investment into the town to be spent on initiatives driven by businesses. There is no similar model or likely to be in the near future.

Whilst the thrust of our proposals for the next five years is to continue with successful initiatives (as consulted with businesses), the outcome of the BID4 consultation process has determined that businesses would like to see more emphasis on: -

- ▶ Safety
- ▶ Supporting independent businesses
- ▶ More advertising and promotion of the town
- ▶ Creating vibrancy in the town
- ▶ Helping to address the too many number of people homeless and sleeping rough in the town centre
- ▶ Filling empty shops
- ▶ Cheaper parking

The aim of the BedfordBID renewal 2020-2025 proposal is to:-



Provide a welcoming environment and experience for businesses to prosper



Create a vibrant destination, working with partners to develop changes to compete whilst promoting and celebrating what's unique about the town for both day and evening economy.



Support businesses with training and education designed to adapt with the changes in customer behaviour.



Demonstrate how BedfordBID will enhance communication channels to engage and report back to businesses.

BEDFORD BID

RENEWAL PROPOSAL

2020 - 2025



No change to the current BID boundary; an upgraded boundary map now defines properties on the boundary line



No change to the levy rate of 2%; allowances for instalments and changes to the threshold to align with the statutory 100% small business rates relief has been included.



No change to the financial management arrangements for the Bedford BID where the levies are collected by Bedford Borough Council then passed to Bedford BID to be spent as businesses have decided.

BEDFORD BID; OUR MISSION

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 promise

To build on the hard work of the past fourteen years and address your priorities head-on through the delivery of the Business Plan set out in the following pages under four key themes:



By the continuation of...

- ✔ Street team BedfordBID Champions tackling issues facing our businesses on a daily basis.
- ✔ Love Bedford, the successful customer-facing brand created by Bedford Business Improvement District (BID) to promote over 500 town centre businesses large and small, retail, services and experiences.
- ✔ Love Bedford **NOW!**, celebrating what's unique about the whole town – website, offers, social media, business videos, updates, radio, outdoor, direct mail, door drops and direct marketing (including database cultivating).
- ✔ Zero tolerance to graffiti or StreetLink and Clean Streets daily reporting and monitoring.
- ✔ ChildSafe, first aid and reuniting lost children and vulnerable individuals.
- ✔ Retail RadioLink & Exclusion scheme – a valuable security asset for businesses and links to CCTV and Enforcement Officers.
- ✔ BeBAC (BedfordBID Businesses against Crime) day and evening economies reporting and providing essential evidence to Bedfordshire Police.
- ✔ BedfordBID Night Team to operate taxi marshalling and tackle town centre matters.
- ✔ Coordinated marketing to a local and regional audience of Bedford town centre as a whole.
- ✔ Wider reach seasonal marketing campaigns including bus sides, car parks and railway station billboard/ posters to attract a wider reach.
- ✔ Business services magazine, multi branded business e-shots, raising business profiles and publicity.
- ✔ Business networking forums, briefing and updating businesses on important town centre matters that impact upon their business.
- ✔ Love Bedford events, festivals or town centre trails.
- ✔ Coordinated Christmas marketing at one of the busiest times of the year.
- ✔ Christmas lights enhancements around the town and at major gateways.
- ✔ Love Bedford gift vouchers and cash redemptions (over £1m to date).
- ✔ Business utilities savings through BID partner Utilitrack.
- ✔ Direct link for help and support for queries.
- ✔ A voice for businesses on issues affecting the town and championing independent businesses.
- ✔ Business support providing training, mentioning, mystery shoppers and customer experience and advice programmes.
- ✔ Support to BedSafe and BIIA Responsible Alcohol Training for evening economy businesses
- ✔ Business representation at a national level.



And introduction new for 2020 – 2025:-

Key themes as a consequence of the consultation with stakeholders for the BID4 included in the full BID4 renewal Business Plan:-

1. New capital project – supporting High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ), four-year programme of physical improvements, community engagement and cultural activities focusing on the High Street and immediate adjoining roads
2. Increase in BID threshold from £8100 to £12000 to align with the statutory 100% small business rates relief relieving 130 independently-run small businesses of the BID levy. Plus staged payments upon request
3. Affiliate membership to generate revenue but not to the detriment of service to BID zone members whilst facilitating extension of BID schemes at areas which impact upon the town i.e. Midland Road East. (Additional resource funded through income stream).
4. Introduce town centre outdoor screen(s) to promote on site BID businesses, what's New, Offers and What's On to extend dwell time and encourage repeat visits.
5. Provide education and training to help businesses make an asset of their physical retail space and their staff by creating opportunities to interact with customers that cannot be found online.
6. Make permanent the trail BID night team extension to Taxi Marshal service
7. Moving forward, the intention is to invite community group representation to further support the balanced approach to the work of BedfordBID and development of a culture and central purpose that unites the community and attracts them to the town centre.

BID levy money is ring-fenced for use only on BID projects. BIDs cannot subsidise local authority statutory obligations, however, BIDs can enhance services.

GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The BedfordBID Company Ltd is a non-local authority BID Body and is responsible for providing the business improvement district services for the Bedford Town Centre BID. The Company is appointed as the BID Body through the ballot process every five years.

BedfordBID operates as a private, independent company that consists of a board elected by BedfordBID levy paying members and includes volunteers representing levy/business rates-paying large and small businesses including national chains, independent businesses, Bedford Borough Council, retail, non-retail, day and evening economy.

BedfordBID will be financed by a levy on the businesses in the designated area together with voluntary contributions and other income generated through affiliate memberships and Utilitrack commissions etc.

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 16th September 2019, to be returned no later than 17 October 2019 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 (29th August 2019) is given by Bedford Borough Council and b) 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 (more than 50%) 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 an existing or 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 (on 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 2020 and the duration of the BID arrangements is for 5 years ending on the last day of March 2025.

The following hereditaments will be exempt from the BID levy

- i) Hereditaments shown in the local Non-Domestic Rating List on the First of April each year of the BID with a rateable value of the “specified rateable value” or less will be exempt from the BID levy for that year. The specified rateable value is the higher of £12,000 or the maximum rateable value for that year at which a ratepayer may be entitled to 100% small business rate relief.
- 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. Two installment payments a month apart can be arranged upon request in advance to Bedford Borough Council.

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

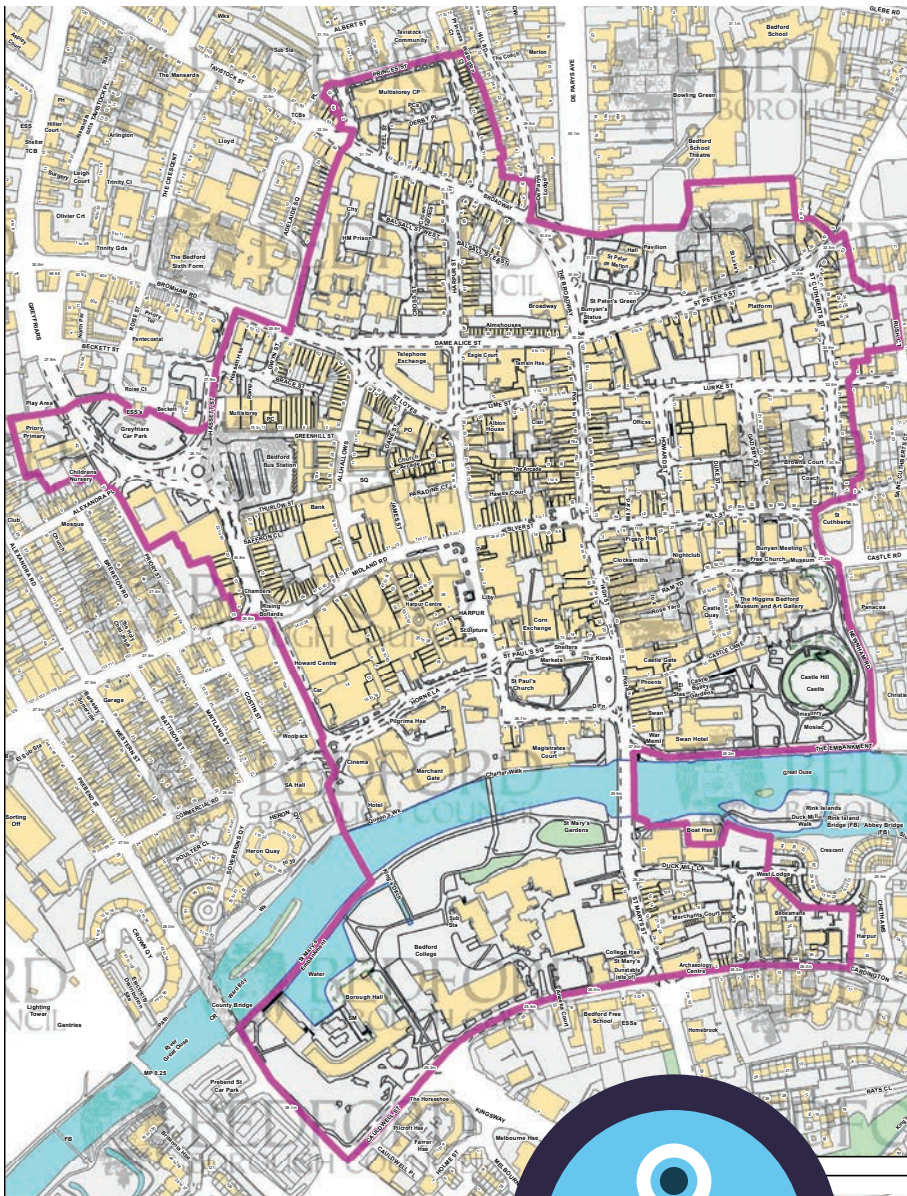
The BID levy rate or the BID area cannot be altered without another ballot.

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.

If you are unsure about the rateable value of your property, please contact the Valuation Officer on 03000 501501 or visit their website: www.gov.uk/correct-your-business-rates

THE BEDFORD BID BOUNDARY AREA MAP RENEWAL

Upgraded version using improved technology to better define property outlines on the boundary line and street listings included in the BID area.



The BedfordBID area boundary (above) covers the following streets in Bedford Town Centre:

Allhallows, Balsall Street East, Balsall Street West, Bedesman Lane, Brace Street, Bromham Road (2-16, up to Hassett St), Browns Court, Cardington Road (2-30), Castle Lane, Castle Road (Castle Lane to junction with St Cuthbert’s Church roundabout), Cauldwell Street (North Side), Clair Court, Church Arcade, Cross Street, Dame Alice Street, Dane Street, Derby Place, Duck Mill Lane (part), Duke Street, Gadsby Street, Greenhill Street, Greyfriars (1-25 & 2-Priory School), Gwyn Street, Harpur Centre, Harpur Street, Hassett Street (East side), Hawes Court, High Street, Horne Lane, Howard Centre, Howard Street, James Street, Lime Street, Lurke Street, Mayes Yard, Merchants Court, Midland Road (1-65 & 2-40), Mill Street, Mill Yard, Newnham Road (West side), Paradine Court, Peel Street, Prebend Street (Cauldwell St junction to County Bridge), Princes Street, Queen Street (up to Princes St), Ram Yard, River Street (East side), Riverside Square, 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 (including Bedford School and Church), Tavistock Street (1-49 & 2-60), The Arcade, The Broadway, The Embankment (High St to Newnham Rd), Thurlow Street, Wellington St (up to Princes St).





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BedfordBID

Business Improvement District
Funded by Town Centre Businesses

For further information please contact:-

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Full ballot arrangements are available at
www.lovebedford.co.uk