



BedfordBID
Business Improvement District
Funded by Town Centre Businesses

BedfordBID

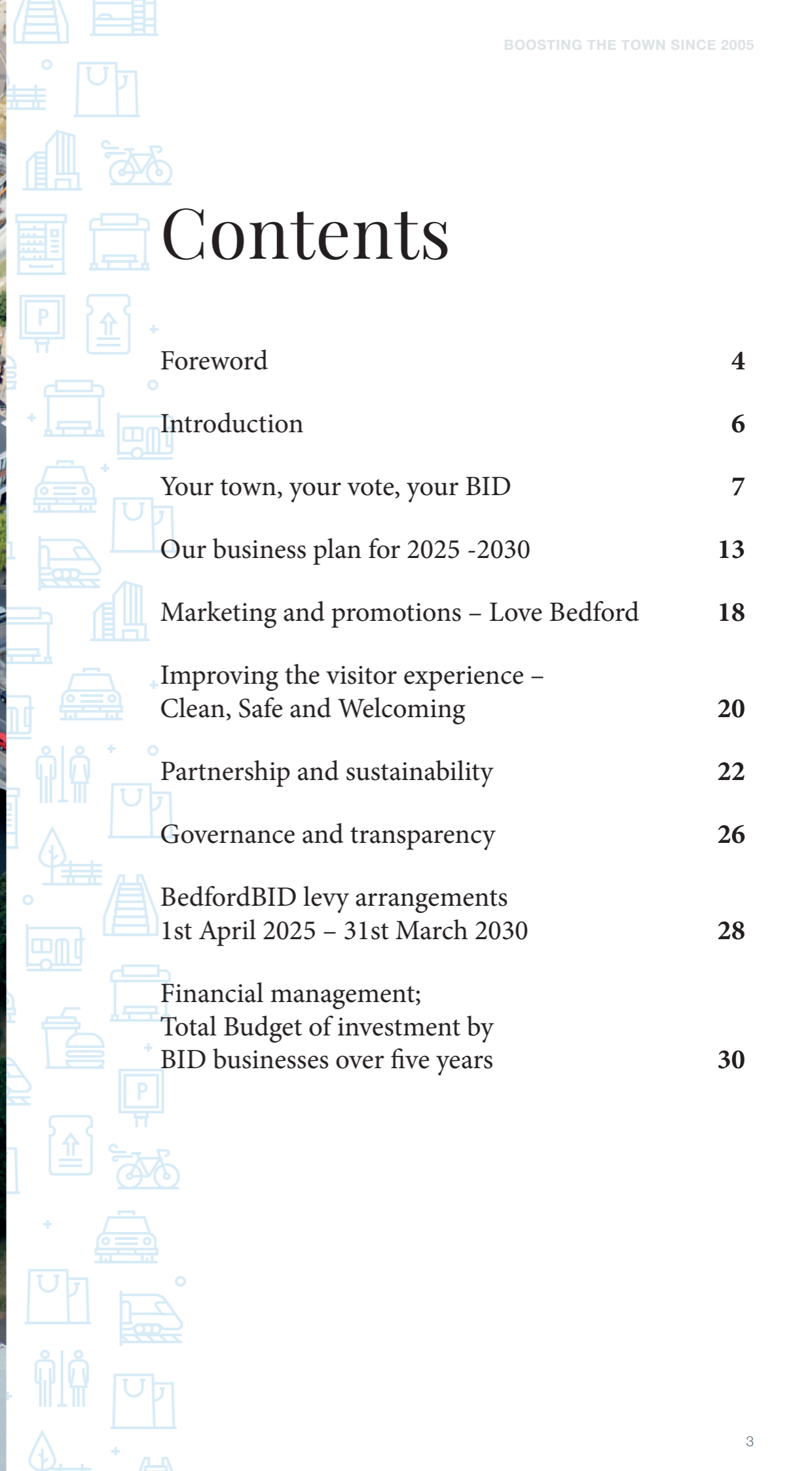
Your BID Led by
business, for business



Boosting
the town since 2015

Renewal Proposal
Business Plan April 2025 – March 2030

www.lovebedford.co.uk



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Foreword

BedfordBID (Business Improvement District) is unique for the town as we are solely focused and dedicated to enhancing Bedford town for you, engaging businesses in local regeneration and sharing ambitions for longer term impact on jobs, skills and new development.

The independent, business-led organisation was one of the first twelve BIDs to see the benefits of bringing businesses together and pooling money to improve the town. There are now 341 active BIDs in the British Isles as of the end of March 2024.

The far-sightedness, collaboration and intelligent approach meant businesses and our Borough Council approved the BID again and again, even in periods of recession. The BedfordBID model enables the larger businesses to unselfishly support smaller, non-levy paying businesses. Bids are recognised by stakeholders, Landlords and major retailers as a useful "all for one" body. It provides local expertise and support to the town 24/7.

Collectively, the Business Improvement model unlocks circa £308k per annum to fund activities ring fenced to support economic growth determined by BID businesses. BIDs cannot subsidise local authority statutory obligations and/or public agencies, however BIDs can enhance services. There is no other method or similar model to raise this amount locally or likely to be in the near future.

This renewal plan outlines our circa **£1.5 million, five-year programme** of initiatives and activities from April 2025 as the town continues to evolve, further plans emerge and a very different economy develops:-

The **Bedford Town Deal Board** has already announced business cases, approved by Central Government, giving the green light to start delivering positive changes through projects which included Bedford College Health Science and Digital Skills Centre, the Midland Road regeneration and public realm improvements, the regeneration and restoration of St Paul's Square, and improvements to the Greyfriars junction helping to bring forward new developments.

More recently, £10m has been allocated in the Council's forward capital programme. The vision aims to revitalise the town centres of Bedford and Kempston into "vibrant hubs that offer shopping, services for the community, and leisure, cultural, business and residential spaces, with distinctive quarters that reflect history, heritage and culture." See [Town Centre Delivery Programme](#).

The former Debenhams Store has been purchased by Bedford Borough Council which is a crucial move in efforts to revitalise the High Street and establish a vibrant community hub.

Universal UK Project (Universal Destinations & Experiences) have acquired a 476-acre parcel of land just south of Bedford with the goal of exploring a potential new theme park and resort experience at this site. The project has the potential to deliver transformative economic change across Bedford Borough, including the centre of Bedford. The Department of Media, Culture and Sport are leading

from central government's position on the **Universal UK Project (Universal Destinations & Experiences)**. They are meeting regularly with Bedford Borough Council in a collaborative and productive way to deliver transformative change as a foreign direct inward investor.

East West Rail (EWR) believes it is key to unlocking the potential that lies ahead, helping Bedford to become a vibrant destination, attracting visitors, enabling businesses to prosper and fostering a strong sense of community. The investment in Bedford station as a result of EWR would create a welcoming environment for people arriving in the town, helping the area become a more attractive destination for shopping, leisure, and hospitality. Should the Universal resort proposals go ahead, EWR would provide a crucial link to this exciting new leisure venture, supporting local economic growth and employment. Both major investors have welcomed the BID as a key strategic stakeholder being the voice for Bedford businesses.



Introduction

BedfordBID, has been boosting the town for almost 20 years. We are now approaching the end of our fourth, five-year term and, for our work to continue, there will be a ballot in October 2024 asking you to vote YES for another five-year term starting 1st April 2025.

The five-year fixed term helps keep us sharp and focussed on the current issues and makes us measure and demonstrate our impact. This proposal has been produced by the BedfordBID team based on feedback received from town centre businesses and stakeholders through the BID5 consultation process.

Creating a vibrant town centre requires people and a focus on addressing what puts people off coming and how we encourage more of what draws people in.

The next five years will include the emphasis on the town's assets: the river, markets, historic heritage and a conducive environment which is essential for businesses to flourish.

The positive **Love Bedford** marketing brand is at the heart of what BedfordBID does. Over the next five years, there will also be a greater focus on communication and building upon past successful events to help market Bedford as a destination ensuring local businesses are featured prominently in promotions and increase visitor numbers by improving the overall experience.

Change is happening at a rapid rate in high streets and town centres. Flexibility and fluidity is therefore called for with regular updates. With the growth of online businesses, e 4 commerce and more flexible work policies, BedfordBID also has a shared ambition to work

with partners to make a positive difference to improving trading, reducing costs through economies of scale and saving money where possible.

The governance and management of the BedfordBID continues to evolve, finding more flexible ways of working to fit in with new additional roles, commitments and personal responsibilities.

Communications will be enhanced to promote the BID's activities and successes. There will be more frequent open meetings, bringing back the popular BID Breakfast meetings to facilitate business networking whilst fostering a sense of community among local businesses to facilitate partnerships to drive mutual growth.

There is plenty to continue with to ensure Bedford develops further as a successful, prosperous business community and an enjoyable place to work, visit, study and live in.

We are now seeking renewal for a fifth five-year term. Now is not the time to reduce the voice of businesses in our town. Businesses have a clear stake in creating the conditions to revitalise their town centre.

This renewal plan outlines our circa **£1.5 million, five-year programme** of initiatives and activities from April 2025



Your town, your vote, your BID

Who we are and what we do.

Bedford Business Improvement District (BID) is an independent not-for-profit organisation, funded by and representing businesses in Bedford town centre, dedicated to creating a town where businesses can thrive, and people want to be.

Every 5 years there is a ballot, where all eligible businesses and organisations have a vote. BedfordBID's next ballot is in October 2024, and if successful we will start our fifth term from April 2025 – March 2030.

We listen and work in partnership with Bedford's businesses representing them at a local and national level, to provide services which adds value promotes safety, can save them money and give them insight into the town centre.

We work to create an attractive and welcoming town centre through the promotion of events and helping to maintain the towns appearance and appeal as well as communicate information and opportunities for all business sectors of commercial value to them.

Promoting the positive reputation of the town is at the heart of BedfordBID. We are responsible for the successful consumer facing brand – Love Bedford – promoting over 600 businesses, including local independent businesses, what's on, offers and events in the town centre.

What we do

BedfordBID levy money is ring-fenced for use only on BID projects and services. BIDs cannot substitute local authority statutory obligations; however, BIDs can enhance services. Our role is to support Bedford's business community and provide projects and services in addition to the services already provided by Bedford Borough Council and Bedfordshire Police. All our work adds to the statutory services they provide and wouldn't happen if BedfordBID didn't exist.



BedfordBID
Business Improvement District
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A snapshot of what your levy contributes to and BedfordBID's role



Provide www.lovebedford.co.uk website, social media platforms and marketing campaigns to spotlight businesses and promote town centre including town centre gift voucher loyalty scheme.



Provide opportunities to participate in large major events and scale up existing events for wider benefit of town centre businesses and higher profile advertising reach.



Manage the BedfordBID Retail Radio Link daytime live essential communications between businesses, CCTV, security teams and police along with the night net system allowing pubs, leisure and nightclub teams to liaise directly.



Introduced and developed the BedfordBID Business Against Crime (BeBAC) initiative for our day and night economy. This is a business crime partnership reduction platform to help tackle anti-social behaviour, shoplifting and other town-based crime.



Provide BedfordBID Champions 'eyes and ears' street team to report cleanliness and safety matters and ensure issues are rapidly addressed to help maintain the town's appearance and appeal including graffiti removal, weekend night team and Taxi Marshals. There are five members of the team including two dedicated SIA licenced operators who are part of the hybrid night team.



Build strong working relationships with town centre community teams and operations focused on reducing shoplifting and ASB with a shared ambition to work with partners to improve the overall town centre experience.



Fund, install and monitor town centre defibrillators.



Report the discovery of rough sleepers and/or signposting to the appropriate services for accommodation or support and/or request to address abandoned bedding. This enables further professional interactions as required.



All referrals which relate to Bedford Borough come through to the outreach team and are then tracked and coordinated daily by the dedicated Council staff.



When the rough sleepers are on private land, we liaise with the landowner/agent if required. When this happened in the past at Riverside, the landlord boarded up the area which resolved this problem.



Our weekend night team are scheduled to start work early evening with the prime objective of moving on beggars and/or providing handouts which signpost the individuals to further support.



Launch of Tap and Donate contactless donation point located at IMPAKT in The Arcade in association with Bedford Homeless Partnership to support Bedford's Real Change Fund for the homeless.



Administer BedSafe meetings, the exclusion scheme, insurance and enabled BedSafe National Pubwatch Award 2021.



Provide support with crime reduction and safety initiatives including Bedfordshire Police Highgate forum, Operation Firefly, Safer Streets campaign, Ask Angela, Hollie Guard and Police & Crime Commissioner Annual Business Conference.



Communicating and signposting matters of importance and interest to businesses including signposting businesses to where and how to access the financial support measures over the COVID pandemic and during lockdown periods, consultations and renewal of Public Space Protection Orders.



Christmas – coordinated additional Christmas lights enhancements, events and festivities.



Sponsor, promote and support events in association with Bedford Borough Council, community groups i.e. Bedford Creative Arts and stakeholders to benefit town centre business community including Bedford College, Freshers Fair, Hair & Beauty Show, Annual Achievements Ceremony, Christmas window dressing competition, Independents Month, Small Business Saturday, Totally Local Fiver Fest, Welcome Back campaigns post-COVID, Town centre big green spruce up, Jubilee weekend celebrations, British Science Week, Father's Day, Mother's Day, Bank Holiday weekends, Italian Festival, Bedfringe. Comic Convention and seasonal trails.



Operate ChildSafe wristband initiative.



Facilitate business reductions with local utility bill cost savings company Utilitrack.



Promote Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Scheme, recruitment and training businesses.



Membership of the Partnership Board whose purpose was to oversee the development and delivery of the High Street Heritage Action Zone programme in the town centre. This was designed to secure lasting improvements to our historic high street through physical interventions alongside a cultural programme with a focus on community engagement.



Arranged interim temporary 'dressing' and cleaning of former Debenhams and Beales units to coincide with the completion of High Street works pre-Christmas festivities and deter ASB longer term.



Directors play roles within the Bedford Town Deal Board, High Street Heritage Action Zone Partnership Board, Community Safety Partnership, Bedford Inclusive Town and BBC Enhance Partnership / Bus Service Improvement Plan for a joined up approach and meeting the needs of the business community.

Additional number of smaller, independent businesses now exempt from the BID levy.

4,550

graffiti, fly tipping, damaged power boxes, StreetLink, street cleansing and highway engineers reports completed and resolved.

User logins
7,395
night time

216
members of
Wipe:Out scheme
(zero tolerance on graffiti).

What have we delivered for you over the last 5 years

Over the last five years,

The biggest businesses support the smallest via the BID. **The smallest outlets do not pay** the levy but still benefit from the activities and can take part in promotions. In April 2020, BedfordBID further increased the levy threshold to align with the statutory 100% small business rates relief relieving over 130 independently run small businesses of the BID levy.

We supported exciting interventions and marketing campaigns to promote businesses and bring people to the town. These ranged from family fun events, a programme of Christmas festivities, competitions, trails, empty shops Pride of Place POP Bedford creative hub pop-up initiative, town centre digital artworks, bespoke Christmas lights, free bike servicing, introducing children to STEM concepts LEGO fun day, Heritage Trail and Bedford Heritage promotional leaflet.

Working in collaboration with partners, BedfordBID supported Bedford Creative Art's team of artists to create new interactive artworks for members of the public to enjoy that celebrate Bedford's heritage in unusual ways. Three artworks were painted in the town centre celebrating different aspects of Bedford's heritage in the style of old hand-painted advertising signs/murals ghost signs.

The reimagined Love Bedford website emerged as a leading platform for promoting Bedford town centre alongside a refocused marketing team providing fresh, regular online content on Love Bedford platforms. Tickets were sold for the Bedford Park Concerts/Summer Sessions concerts at town centre businesses and on Love Bedford online platforms without a booking fee creating a "real ripple effect" with people coming into town who might not have come here before and then get a drink or something to eat.

"...it brings people from all over the country to visit our town. The events help boost our local economy with local hotels, bars, restaurants, buses, taxis, and car parks all benefiting from the concerts. These concerts, alongside the Bedford River Festival, put Bedford on the map as an event destination" Bedford Borough Council

BedfordBID also arranged useful information for concert goers on a dedicated concert's page, such as nearest parking, town centre accommodation, taxis, toilet facilities and late night bars and clubs so you could keep the party going in town! Golden ticket giveaways involved 25 participating town centre businesses and videos of town centre businesses were broadcast from the stage throughout the concerts.

346
members of
BeBAC



All opportunities are promoted through the regular Love Bedford newsletters and/or our SM platforms which all businesses should be following.

Our SM activity reaches the heart of our community with

€11,000

Facebook followers, 61% of them Bedford based.

Our Reels reach
13.3k
on-followers who could become potential new customers; and over

9,000
followers on X formally known as Twitter.

Over
223,552
people see our marketing campaigns on average per year.

Active exclusions
25
day time,
night time
80

Businesses can contact us through the BedfordBID Champion street team, our Business e-shots and send over any promotions so we can, in turn, share them on our social media and in various publications where we are featured.



Town centre defibrillators checked EVERY week at five separate sites around town centre

User logins
7,429
day time

227
members of BedfordBID Retail RadioLink & Exclusion scheme including environmental officers and Bedfordshire Police.



circa
543
town centre events listed and posted each year

Our Instagram platforms reaches over
16,000
accounts with 58% based in Bedford.

Over
£9k
Love Bedford gift vouchers have been donated to local charitable causes.

Our Love Bedford e-newsletters reaches more than 5,000 subscribers. We also write about businesses and events in the town centre for local publications and recently completed content for the East Anglia Group tourism publication. The Love Bedford website is updated daily.



Over £1m has been reinvested back into town centre businesses through the Love Bedford voucher scheme.

We supported exciting interventions and marketing campaigns to promote businesses and bring people to the town.



A capacity crowd saw international stars including Avril Lavigne, Nile Rodgers & Chic and Pete Tong perform over two weekends alongside the BedfordBID videos showcasing town centre businesses.



Our business plan for 2025 -2030

The BedfordBID collated and listened to your views to help shape our focus and priorities for the next term five-year term 2025-2030.

Methodology

The insight was gathered in two ways. Firstly, an online business survey open to all businesses in the BID zone which began in the autumn of 2023 and then via follow-up focus groups in the spring of 2024 for wider, more in-depth conversations with levy payers and to explore any further themes. Respondents included key stakeholders.

“Raising the profile of the many fantastic smaller businesses that proliferate in town is key. Local events put Bedford on the map and drive local trade and prosperity.”

Earlier this year, BedfordBID alongside partners, celebrated the completion of a £1.76m joint investment 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.

During the COVID pandemic, BedfordBID worked with industry groups and leading sector partnerships to lobby central government calling for urgent assistance of the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Sector. An Additional Restrictions Grant fund was awarded and funded a Spring 2022 marketing campaign of town centre business hero videos and social media shorts later used at major outdoor events including Bedford River Festival and Concerts in the Parks/Summer Sessions.

Businesses were kept abreast of what and how to access the Government support grants whilst BedfordBID also promoted essential businesses and new business models to help sustain cash flow and broadcast support campaigns in between lockdowns – such as Eat Out to Help Out and #openforbusiness campaign and safe compliant initiatives such as BioMisting.

BedfordBID jointly funded Bedford’s first and very own Tap to Donate machine in 2021 to support the homeless. Attendance at the Green Business event culminated in the launch of and subsequent on-going Great Big Green Week and town centre BIG GREEN BRUSH UP!

The frontline team worked with partners to conduct a number of business community engagements to support

the issuing of Community Behaviour Orders and other crime prevention initiatives ranging from Safer Streets campaign, thefts, breach of CBOs, robbery, burglary and possession of drugs etc. 2021 culminated with the National Pubwatch Award to BedSafe.

As the ‘eyes and ears’ of the town, the BedfordBID street team continued to operate the Retail RadioLink communication network and processed all matter of enquiries and issues from first aid to leaking shops/ vandalised windows and immediate reporting of latest graffiti, spillages, ASB.

In collaboration with Bedford Borough Council, we communicated numerous matters of vital importance and represented your views for consultations. Over the past five years, collaborating with Bedford Borough Council, these have included Town Visioning and Public Space Projection Order renewal set to tackle street drinking and related ASB. In early 2024, we provided recommendations to be applied to the Rough Sleeper Strategy. Progress has already been made using the various recommendations provided by BedfordBID and in July 2023 BedfordBID provided feedback to assess content for the new Community Safety Plan 2023-26.

We were invited to join the Partnership Board of bus operators and key stakeholders to develop the Bus Service Improvement Plan. Directors also play key roles within the Bedford Town Deal Board, High Street Heritage Action Zone Partnership Board, Community Safety Partnership, Bedford Inclusive Town for a joined up approach and to meet the needs of the business community.

What you told us; what you feel is of key importance ...

53%
Town Centre Events

49%
Business Promotions

39%
Marketing & Promotions

28%
Social Media

29%
Visitor Experience



You also said...

- 1 Safety and Security:** increase safety, reduce theft, and address antisocial behaviour to ensure both staff and customers feel secure.

- 2 Promotion and Marketing:** promote Bedford and individual businesses more effectively, leveraging marketing strategies and events to attract visitors and enhance visibility. Build on past successful events and market Bedford as a destination. Leverage social media and ensure local businesses are featured prominently in promotions. Have more regular events.

- 3 Attracting Footfall:** increase the number of visitors to Bedford's town centre through events, promotions, and improving the overall experience.

- 4 Cleanliness:** concerns that a dirty environment deters visitors. There is a call for more efforts to keep Bedford tidy.

- 5 Economic Growth:** attract sustainable commercial investments and new businesses is seen as crucial for Bedford's economic health. Respondents expressed the need for a variety of shops and entertainment options to make the town more appealing and to fill empty units.

- 6 Community Support:** support small businesses enhancing social media presence and organise community events.

- 7 Homelessness:** has a negative impact on the town's image and visitor experience. There is a call for solutions to address and reduce homelessness.

- 8 Customer Experience:** improve the overall experience for visitors with cleanliness, safety, and the availability of diverse and quality businesses.

- 9 Communication and Promotion:** improve communication and promotion of the BID's activities and successes. Businesses were unaware of what the BID does and how it benefits them, leading to the undervaluation of its efforts. Plan activities to target key groups for example College/University Students/Hospital Workers/New Parents.

- 10 Business Support and Collaboration:** more frequent meetings, bring back the popular BID Breakfasts, share promotional opportunities, and foster a sense of community among local businesses and facilitate partnerships to drive mutual growth.



BID Satisfaction 

All survey participants were asked to rate their satisfaction with Bedford BID on a scale of 1-10.

The average score across responses was **7.53**.

You said ..

Positive Interactions: helpful and supportive BID staff as reasons for high ratings.

Perceived Effectiveness: BID is seen as doing a great job overall, with specific mentions of good communication and beneficial services.

Areas for Improvement: whilst the BID is doing well, there is still room for improvement. This includes requests for more visibility, better support, and more effective promotions.

Limited Visibility and Engagement: not seeing enough of the BID or feeling that promotions favour some businesses over others.

Lack of Awareness: a lack of knowledge about the BID's activities or benefits, suggesting a need for better communication and transparency.

Quick and effective responses to inquiries and suggestions were seen as crucial to maintaining trust and engagement with the BID.

“ As a family-run business, promoting our store and getting the word out is always a struggle, so any additional support is great.

“ Loads of good stuff is happening, but businesses are not always aware.

“ The marketing of local business that you did several years ago was superb we use our video on a regular basis and then talk about the BID -the marketing you do for the town with Easter trails etc is great and I would like to see you keep this up. Town centre events are also a great crowd puller.

“ Cleanliness is important, as people want to shop in a clean environment. We need a more variety of shops and brands, such as children's shops or entertainment such as bowling.

“ I think they are doing a great job at helping local business and the town and always looking for ways to improve.

Overarching Vision – Bedford Borough Council

“Create town centres that people are proud to live in and excited to visit” The ambition for the town centre reflects the fact that there has already been investment in the High Street Heritage Action Zone and the Town Deal. There has also been work on specific areas of Bedford Town Centre and new projects will be launched across the town but will have more of a focus on areas that have not benefitted from funding and investment in recent years. These will be delivered through a series of short-, medium- and long-term projects.

Source: Bedford Borough Council Vision and Capital Delivery Program 2024

The key themes to delivering the vision focus on:

- Building on and enhancing the variety of markets
- Creating distinctive areas that reflect our heritage, cultures and unique features
- Delivering environmental and public space improvements
- Developing key sites
- Encouraging people to discover lesser known, interesting areas
- Ensuring that they are well maintained, clean and accessible
- Improving the approaches that lead into them
- Using the river and parks to create more appealing and connected environments
- Working in partnership to make them even safer, more welcoming and attractive

You told us what you wanted our BID priorities to be ...

- Governance i.e. more regular meetings and enhanced engagement.
- Engagement/visibility with businesses making it clearer the benefit of BID to businesses.
- More town centre events.
- Improve visitor experience of safety and helping to reduce ASB in the town centre.
- More advertising and promotion.
- Economic Growth: Attracting sustainable commercial investments and new businesses expressing the need for a variety of shops and entertainment options to make the town more appealing and to fill empty units.

BedfordBID vision for Bedford town centre is for Bedford to be a vibrant and thriving town centre. A place to work, visit, study and live in where everyone has an amazing experience.

The aim of the BedfordBID renewal 2025-2030 is to continue to **make a positive difference to place and to:-**

- Work collaboratively with Bedford Borough Council to help deliver for the town and to attract strong sustainable commercial investment.
- Work in collaboration with Bedford Borough Council to bring more people into Bedford town centre with providing a welcoming environment and experience where businesses can thrive and people want to be.
- Create a vibrant destination with events and promotions celebrating what’s good about the town for both day and evening economies.
- Enhance BedfordBID visibility and communication promotion of the BID’s activities and successes.

“St Pauls Square seems to be constantly left out of anything going on in the town centre. We need footfall in this area, especially since Wilko’s closed down. Our footfall is down since then. More use of the market area would be good, especially on Sunday’s and days when the market isn’t here.

“BedfordBID weekend night team are supportive and incredible. Dez is impeccable at his job It does a good job for all of the town centre area.

“The town should focus on reducing antisocial behaviour (including anyone drinking on the green or in the town) (a constant police presence would be good), reducing litter, not allowing begging in the town centre which doesn’t help anyone, and encouraging businesses to setup shop.

“Really good promotion but I think it needs a bit more forward-planning to promote upcoming stuff.



Marketing and promotions – Love Bedford

Love Bedford is the successful customer-facing brand created by Bedford Business Improvement District (BID) to promote over 600 town centre businesses large and small, retail, services and experiences.

Creating a vibrant town centre requires people and a focus on concentrating on resolving what puts people off coming and do more of what draws people into the town. The next five years will include the emphasis on communicating the town's assets: the river, retail, leisure offer, markets, arts and culture experiences, heritage and a conducive environment which is essential for businesses to flourish.

Marketing and promotional activities are important to attracting visitors to the town centre. Successful past events were highlighted and the need for continued efforts to market Bedford as a destination.

Specific marketing strategies such as leveraging social media and ensuring local businesses are featured prominently in promotions were mentioned as critical to the town's success.

Whilst town centre events were viewed positively, having more regular events is wanted.

Attract Footfall: aim to increase the number of visitors to Bedford's town centre as a common priority through events, promotions, and

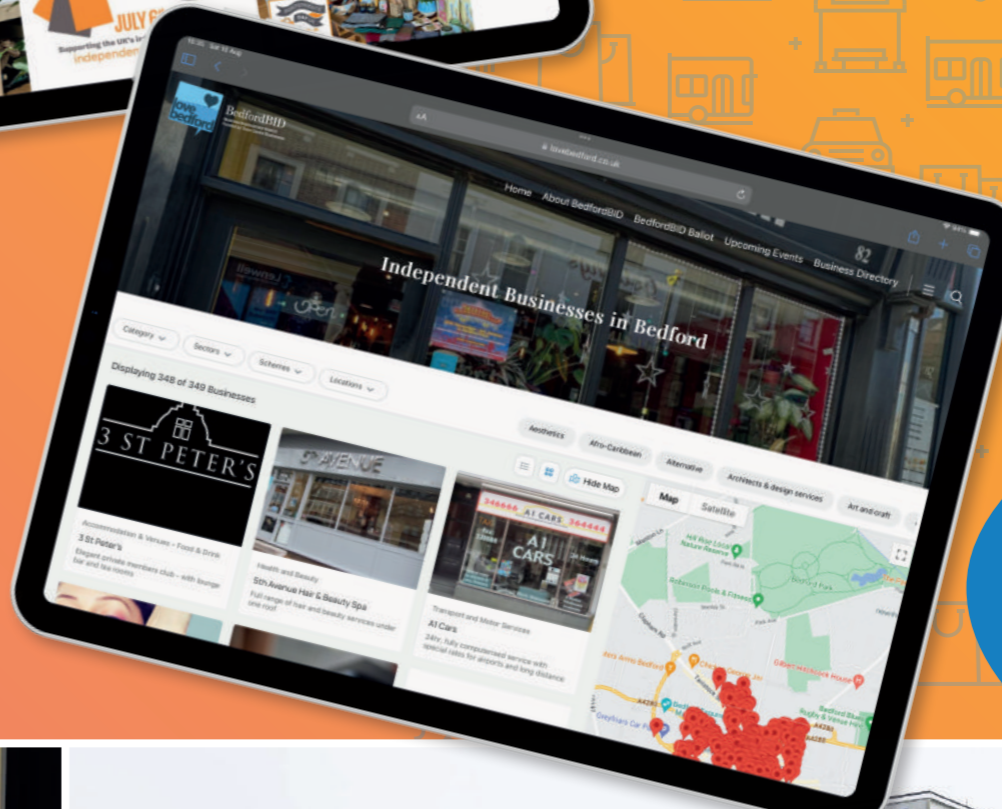
improving the overall experience. We will continue to promote a strong program of events, including a mix of large and smaller events.

Promotion and Marketing: promote Bedford and individual businesses more effectively with measurable results, leveraging marketing strategies and events to attract visitors and enhance visibility.

Promote something new and interesting to do and experience one event/activity each year in Bedford which helps support footfall and dwell time in the town centre.

Continue to celebrate and promote Bedford BID businesses and organisations by managing and generating content for the consumer brand and website www.lovebedford.co.uk and provide year-round advertising, PR and social media.

Investigate options to build loyalty with the Love Bedford gift voucher scheme to increase local spend in the town centre and corporate sales or bulk orders as well as promote savings opportunities through micro site Love Bedford Offers through our microsite.



Having events in town makes us aware of footfall of what could help our business and occasionally having a stall outside our shop. Eg the Christmas market



Investigate the best way to outreach to potential customers in the surrounding towns and villages to encourage them to visit i.e. social media, local notice boards, and or ads in local papers etc.

Continue to work collaboratively with local stakeholders and the Council, with particular focus on events, promoting the town.

Introduce targeted activity to key groups of potential customers to help attract more footfall i.e. College Students, University Students, Hospital Staff, Office Workers, New Parents.

Support local communities and small businesses enhancing social media presence and organise community events.

We will continue to promote a strong program of events, including a mix of large and smaller events.



Improving the visitor experience – Clean, Safe and Welcoming

Having an attractive town centre as well as a critical mass of relevant retailing and entertainment, is an important element needed to retain and attract new businesses plus employment to a town.

What you said ...



Safety and Cleanliness: the Retail Radio Link was viewed as essential and to lose was described as being 'catastrophic' due to leaving day and night businesses feeling 'cut-off' and without support.

A recurring theme was the importance of maintaining a safe and clean environment. Participants stressed that a clean town centre attracts more visitors and gives an impression of safety.

There were mentions of improvements in cleanliness, and efforts to make the town centre feel safer, though challenges remain due to changing police personnel and ongoing incidents.



Customer Experience: Improving the overall experience for visitors is a priority, encompassing factors such as cleanliness, safety, and the availability of diverse and quality businesses.



Homelessness: The issue of homelessness was frequently mentioned, with respondents noting its negative impact on the town's image and visitor experience. There is a call for solutions to address and reduce homelessness.



In BID5 we will continue to ...

- Work collaboratively with local stakeholders and the Council, with particular focus on events, promoting the town, cleanliness and how to best fill empty units.
- Provide day and weekend BedfordBID Champions who have been an integral part of Bedford's business life to be the 'eyes' and 'ears' of the BID zone and link between members and the BedfordBID team. They pass on issues and concerns as well as communicate information and opportunities for all business sectors. They also act as the face of BedfordBID to visitors, providing information and share the aspiration for a safe, clean and welcoming environment.
- Manage the crime and disorder reduction initiative BedfordBID Business Against Crime Scheme (BeBAC) to help businesses identify criminals through the sharing of intelligence and reporting of incidents within BedfordBID businesses including the nighttime economy.
- Manage the Retail Radio Link & Exclusion Scheme (RRL&E) delivering training for businesses, handling service requests from radio users including BedSafe for the nighttime economy sector.
- Operate ChildSafe wristbands to reunite lost children and vulnerable adults as well as first aid cover to BID members and visitors.
- Provide direct investment in Christmas lights enhancements at gateways and peripheral areas of the BID area to help create a warm welcome over the festive period.
- Collaborate with partners, stakeholders, schools, voluntary groups and take part in The Great BID Green Week / Tidy Up, litter picking. Engage with businesses to ensure that their employees understand the importance of sustainability and how it affects their daily operations. This should include providing training programs that focus on eco-friendly practices, such as reducing energy consumption, water usage, waste management.
- Scope out the parameters to establish a 'Town centre Environmental Business package'.
- Review printed material to be available from a pending Bedford Visitor Information Centre, produce pocketbook maps and update large map locations e.g. at Lurke Street car park.

I believe social media is a key tool to get information out there for the public to view is key to getting people out and about and in town. In terms of events I believe it's another good way to get members of the public involved and different events can bring a new set of individuals to the town centre. In terms of decor your environment and where you choose to stop is big on the overall cleanliness and presentation of the centre this again can attract customers to come and shop frequently due to the aesthetic alone.

Partnership and sustainability

Transparency, accountability and integrity. Ensuring a genuine business-led initiative in a business community that recognises affinity to its place.



Businesses want the BID to take a more active role in connecting businesses and facilitating partnerships to drive mutual growth.



Business Community Support:

What you said ...

There is a sense that businesses were unaware of what the BID does and how it benefits them, leading to the undervaluation of its efforts.

Business Support and Collaboration: stronger collaboration among businesses and between businesses and the BID and the Council to deliver for the town.

Businesses want the BID to take a more active role in connecting businesses and facilitating partnerships to drive mutual growth.

In BID5 we will ...

- 👍 Have a robust communication plan to update businesses in the BID zone about the BID's activities and successes. Ensure communication covers multiple channels.
- 👍 Update and maintain a master database of BID zone businesses and use digital solutions to make communication and marketing/promotions more efficient and easier for both levy payers and the BID team. For example, sending an automatic message each month to all Levy Payers asking for details of upcoming promotions for the BID team to promote, with notifications sent to the BID team with all the details.
- 👍 Arrange more frequent and effective meetings, re-introducing BID Breakfasts as a way to share information with the businesses, share promotional opportunities and seek feedback and increase the sense of community networking among local businesses to facilitate partnership to drive mutual growth. We will increase BID presence at various stakeholder meetings and work collaboratively with the Council to deliver for the town.

- 👍 Gather ongoing feedback from levy payers and regular survey results to monitor the town's economic 'health' to enable an informed position to respond practically and proactively to issues and concerns.
- 👍 Have a robust programme for regular promotion of new Member recruitment and non-executive Director vacancy updates.
- 👍 Continue to work with industry partners and BritishBIDs Nationwide BID Survey as an essential resource in charting the development and evaluation of the BID industry.
- 👍 Continue to liaise with British BIDs and explore accreditation to ensure our quality management systems are robust and recognised.
- 👍 Continue to provide annual reporting of the main sections of the Business Plan activities including measurable results.
- 👍 Review transparency, accountability and integrity protocols to ensure a genuine business-led initiative voluntary board from the BID zone business community that recognises affinity to its place.
- 👍 **Economic Growth:** share the aspiration to attract sustainable commercial investments and new businesses sharing respondents need for a variety of shops and entertainment options to make the town more appealing and to fill empty units.
- 👍 Develop a Voluntary Contribution scheme of likeminded businesses who want to benefit from the track record of BedfordBID schemes and support Bedford town centre's prosperity.
- 👍 Enable free utility cost evaluation service through local company Utilitrack.
- 👍 Explore and scope necessary consultations for the expansion of the BID zone area for a BID6 recommendation.
- 👍 Renegotiate the levy collection charge in line with industry norm with Bedford Borough Council given the reduction in number of levy paying businesses from April 2025.
- 👍 Provide 1-2-1 forums for businesses to hear what BedfordBID is doing for businesses.
- 👍 **OPEN MEETINGS** BedfordBID to hold regular 'open' board meetings when representatives of the wider business community of the town centre are invited to attend. Dates will be displayed on our website www.lovebedford.co.uk
- 👍 **BEDFORDBID BRIEFING AND NETWORKING BREAKFASTS** will be held once a quarter 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 will be visited regularly by a member of the BedfordBID team. BedfordBID Champions capture regular feedback from businesses in the BID area and exchange information, particularly in relation to invitations to participate in marketing and promotional activity to their benefit.
- 👍 Regularly update www.lovebedford.co.uk with details of our activities and how to get involved as well as key information regarding latest news and developments within town centre.



Over the years ...

The BedfordBID has had a mandate for almost twenty years. Business Improvement Districts are a nationally recognised model in town centres. There are now over 340. Over the years, the BedfordBID has invested and delivered a variety of longer term, successful initiatives providing a legacy aimed at benefiting both businesses and visitors including:-

- ✓ The creation of the Love Bedford consumer facing promotional brand and online platforms.
- ✓ Outdoor café seating; cost intervention irrespective of size of business, number of tables & chairs, space used.
- ✓ Messing about on the river. BedfordBID had the foresight to see the positive impact the Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway John Bunyan Community Boat could have on town centre and so provided part of the initial start-up funding to launch.
- ✓ Love Bedford gift voucher scheme. Over £1m investment back into town centre shops with over 230 businesses, 78% of which are independents and up to 90% redemption rates. Love Bedford Gift Vouchers help promote a circular economy and can be used in restaurants, cafes, bars, hairdressers, beauty salons, travel agents and even estate agents.
- ✓ The Bedford Businesses Against Crime (BeBAC) partnership is a secure, BedfordBID members-only website for both day and evening economy businesses signed up to the scheme to help identify criminals and provide essential evidence to facilitate prosecutions/exclusions from town centre where necessary.
- ✓ Creation and introduction of the Retail Radio Link live communications between businesses and partners encompassing night net. We also supply, manage and assist with any repair/fault/requirement of radios for all licensed venues and CCTV within the BID zone. We also arrange and pay for the antennae Ofcom licence as well as support NTE Night Time Economy premises with general assistance in any issues they may be facing.
- ✓ Wipe:Out is BedfordBID's zero tolerance to graffiti, working in conjunction with Bedford Borough Council. BedfordBID logs, photographs and arranges the removal of graffiti helping to keep our town centre graffiti-free.
- ✓ ChildSafe works to ensure children are safer at events in Bedford Town Centre, with the help of special ChildSafe wristbands.
- ✓ Local company Utilitrack were introduced to provide a 'One Stop Shop' to help levy-paying businesses check and reduce their current energy and telecoms/broadband tariffs against the market's best buys.
- ✓ We administer the BedSafe group (town centre licensees) to ensure on-going organising membership, meeting invites, minutes and communications. BedfordBID also covers the insurance costs and in the past has provided accredited training courses for venue staff to attend. In 2021 the scheme won the National Pubwatch of the Year award.
- ✓ The BedfordBID weekend night team/Taxi Marshalls consists of two SIA-licensed operators, and supports Bedford's town centre on Friday and Saturday nights from 7pm to 4am. They assist the public, collaborate with door staff, CCTV teams, and police, and help beggars and rough sleepers. Additionally, they oversee BedfordBID's Taxi Marshalling, ensuring only legal taxis operate and maintaining order. The team provides weekly reports and body-cam footage for incident reporting as necessary.



Love Bedford

Life WITHOUT the BID in Bedford

If the BID fails to gain the level of support required at the BID ballot, the services and support we offer and the projects we manage and deliver will be lost. More importantly, the town will lose out on circa £1.5m over 5 years of additional investment to support the projects and initiatives contained in this BID proposal.

Over 300 other towns and cities in the UK have BIDs, and local places like Milton Keynes, Cambridge, Luton and Northampton have BIDs investing in their locations. A no vote means we will not be able to deliver the projects and services set out in this business plan such as...

- ✗ No Love Bedford website, social media or marketing campaigns to spotlight your business and promote the town centre.
- ✗ No Retail Radio Link community radios, our live link between businesses, CCTV and Police.
- ✗ No single dedicated voice to raise business concerns about Bedford town centre.
- ✗ The loss of the Love Bedford media profiles.
- ✗ The closure of the Love Bedford business directory and visitor website www.lovebedford.co.uk
- ✗ No marketing interventions, loss or significant scaling back of key events and festivities in the town that are delivered and/or supported by the BID team, including Christmas Extravaganza, and other seasonal activities.
- ✗ The town will also lose BID support at the Bedford River Festival and other major events.
- ✗ No joined up partnership approach with Community Safety Partnership, Bedfordshire Police, and Bedford Borough Council.
- ✗ No investments into developing the local Business Crime Reduction Partnership BeBAC to tackle anti-social behaviour, shoplifting and other town-based crime.
- ✗ No investment and support for BedSafe/Nighttime Economy and Taxi Marshals.
- ✗ No dedicated BedfordBID 'eyes and ears' frontline street team tackling daily issues facing our business community or reporting street cleansing, graffiti removal, beggars and rough sleepers for ongoing support.
- ✗ No ChildSafe, first aid and reuniting lost children and vulnerable individuals.
- ✗ No business networking forums, briefing and updating businesses on important town centre matters that impact upon their business.
- ✗ No additional Christmas lights or festivities enhancements.
- ✗ No Love Bedford gift voucher cash redemptions.
- ✗ No business utilities savings.
- ✗ A reduced voice for businesses on issues affecting the town or business representation at a national level.

If BedfordBID is not successful in the ballot, all current activities and services will cease on 31st March 2025.

Governance and transparency

Who runs BedfordBID?

The Business Improvement District model provides management and engagement through a separate, independent body (BedfordBID Limited) with businesses having decided upon priorities of how they want their money spent.

Love Bedford is the successful customer-facing brand created and operated by the BedfordBID team to promote the interests of over 600 town centre businesses large and small, retail, services and experiences.

The BedfordBID Company is limited by guarantee and is not-for profit. It has a board of volunteer directors who represent the town centre's business community, including independent businesses, hospitality sector, private sector, multi national retailers, business services, Bedford College and Bedford Borough Council. The BedfordBID is independent from the local Authority. BedfordBID will obtain Baseline Services Statements from Bedford Borough Council for the duration of the term. These documents will be available on our website.

Throughout the term we produce an annual report and audited annual accounts for each financial year, which are publicly available to members on our website and presented at the annual meeting. To find out more about BedfordBID's board of directors and the team, please visit our website www.lovebedford.co.uk

The Board of Directors

BedfordBID's Directors volunteer their time who meet and communicate at regular intervals throughout the year. The Board of Directors is legally responsible for the management of the Company in the most efficient, effective and accountable manner. The Board consists of representatives of a cross-section of skills and sectors.

Whilst there is no maximum number of Members of the Company, the number of Board Directors shall not be less than four nor more than fifteen as stated in the Articles of Association. How to become a Member/join the Board of Directors www.lovebedford.co.uk/about/

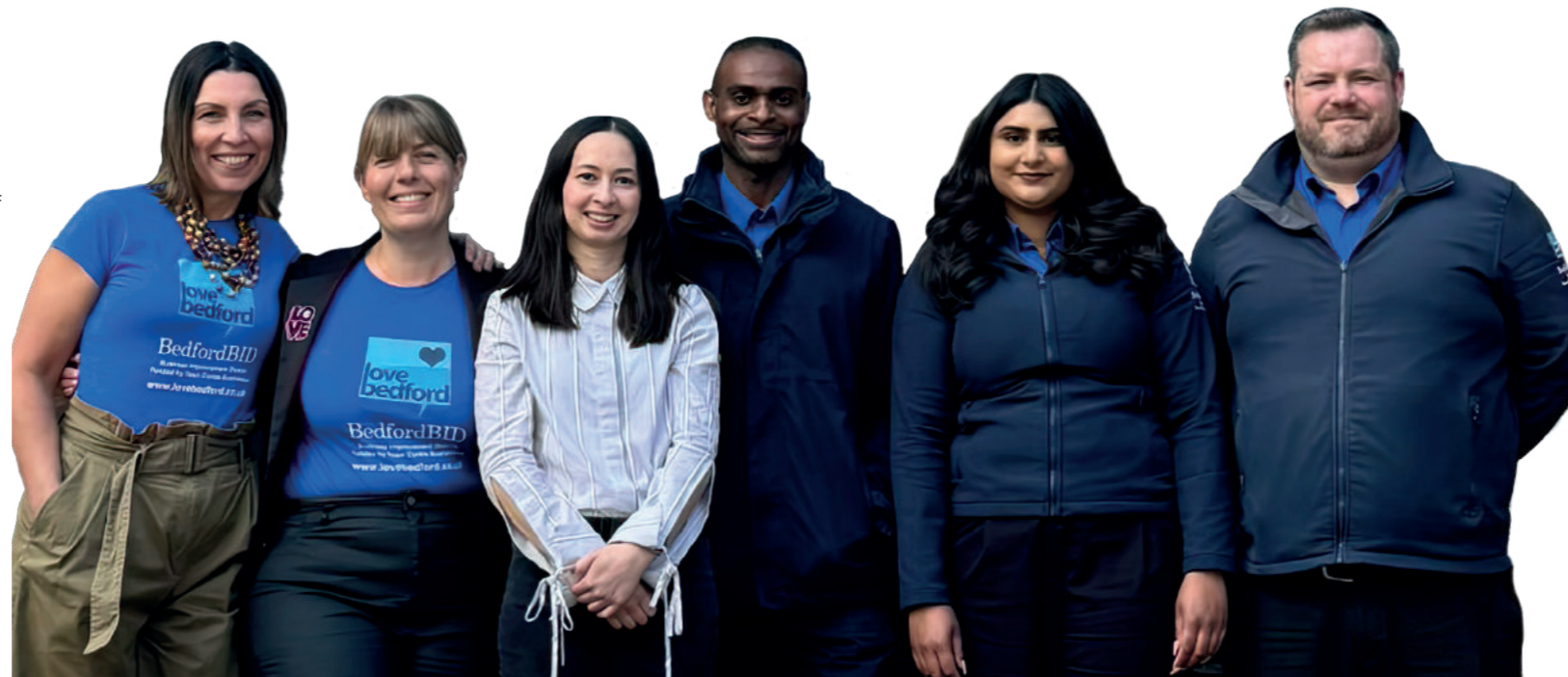
The BedfordBID volunteer Board of non-executive Directors consists of:-

Shaun Barnett	Leaders Lettings
Martin Keys	Gallone's Ice Cream Parlour
Samantha Laycock (Chair)	Harpur Centre
Tony Moliterno	Mayfair Financial & Mortgage Consultants
Dave Roffey	Bedford College
Christina Rowe	BedfordBID
Cllr Andrea Spice	Portfolio Holder For Economic Growth, Planning and Prosperity (including Town centres)
Dean Thompson	Bedford Swan Hotel
Greg Warwick	Jeeves Gentleman's Hair & Grooming

The position of Chair of BedfordBID Board of Directors is voted upon and elected by the Directors who are ratified by the Members at the AGM. Governance explained. <https://lovebedford.co.uk/about/>

The Team

BedfordBID is staffed by both full and part time experienced personnel, whose role is to deliver the business plan, its projects and services. Managed by the Executive Director, the team provides a broad range of experience, expertise and skills. Throughout the term, we produce an annual report of GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT business plan delivery.



Full annual accounts together with governance process, annual review, business meetings documents are published online. <https://lovebedford.co.uk/downloads/>

Government, industry professionals, investors and business leaders identify Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) as the primary vehicles for engaging town centre businesses on a range of issues from economic development to net zero, including them in appropriate programmes and funding opportunities.

BedfordBID is a sustainable, professional means of maintaining a local vibrant town centre. An organisation, speaking with authority on behalf 600+ businesses to the Police, Local Authority and other agencies is key to a collaborated approach in ever changing times.

Bids are recognised by stakeholders, Landlords and major retailers as a useful "all for one" body. It provides local expertise and support to the town 24/7, whilst proactively reinvesting the funds into the area, therefore supporting and subsidising our unique independents. Collectively, we unlock c£308k of investment into the town to be spent on initiatives driven by businesses each year. There is no similar model or likely to be in the near future.

Marketing and Promotions and supporting town centre events are the largest part of our budget as they provide visitors 'a reason to visit Bedford' and our businesses therefore benefit with sales and linked business promotions.

It's been around for decades and has had hundreds of towns follow suit. It not only helps with Marketing and Promotions, but it also enhances stakeholder safety with the RadioLink, stock loss, business support and networking.



The BedfordBID 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, 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).

Bedford BID levy arrangements 1st April 2025 – 31st March 2030

Includes levy rate, de minimus, exemptions, affiliate voluntary contribution and arrangements for 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 16th September 2024, to be returned no later than 17 October 2024 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 2024) 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 Bedford BID 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 2025 and the duration of the BID arrangements is for 5 years ending on the last day of March 2030.

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 or other relevant regulation). 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 Bedford BID to meet the cost of providing the BID services on a regular agreed basis net of collection costs. The Bedford BID 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 Bedford BID 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 Bedford BID 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 Bedford BID 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:

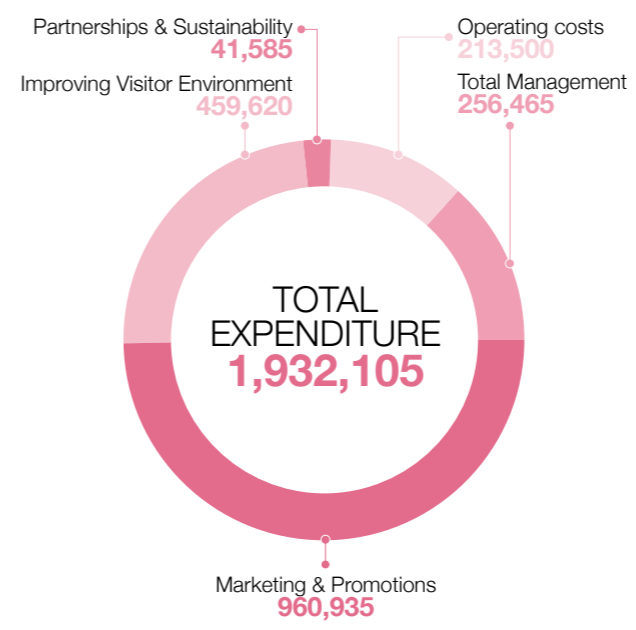
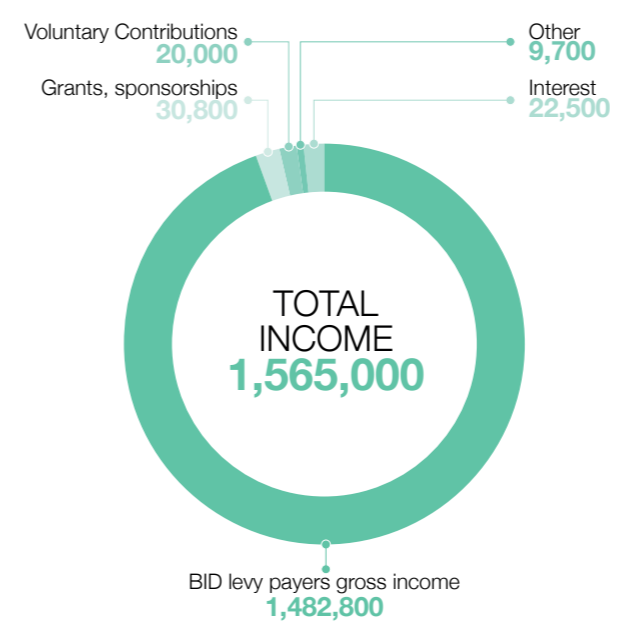
www.gov.uk/correct-your-business-rates

Financial management; Total Budget of investment by BID businesses over five years

INDICATIVE BUDGET 2025-2030	YR1 2025/26	YR2 2026/27	YR3 2027/28	YR4 2028/29	YR5 2029/30
INCOME (ex VAT)					
BID levy payers gross income*	295,680	295,680	295,680	295,680	295,680
Additional income - Grants, sponsorships **	6,160	6,160	6,160	6,160	6,160
Additional income - Voluntary Contributions ***	0	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Additional income - Other ****	1,940	1,940	1,940	1,940	1,940
Interest	4,500	4,500	4,500	4,500	4,500
TOTAL INCOME	308,280	313,280	313,280	313,280	313,280
EXPENDITURE (ex VAT)					
Marketing & Promotions - Love Bedford	190,187	200,187	185,187	200,187	185,187
Improving Visitor Environment - Safe, Clean & Welcoming	91,924	91,924	91,924	91,924	91,924
Partnerships & Sustainability	6,717	10,717	6,717	10,717	6,717
Operating costs	42,700	42,700	42,700	42,700	42,700
Total Management	51,293	51,293	51,293	51,293	51,293
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	382,821	396,821	377,821	396,821	377,821
Accumulated available reserve b/f 371,460	-371,460	-296,919	-212,378	-147,837	-63,296
Operating income surplus b/f	-296,919	-213,378	-147,837	-64,296	1,000
Operating retained reserves b/f	67,000	67,000	67,000	67,000	67,000
Operating retained reserves c/f	67,000	67,000	67,000	67,000	67,000

Notes:
 The BID finances table represents an indicative budget based on estimated levy income from the ratings list at the time of writing.
 * BID renewal proposals are based on the same rate in the £ as current £0.02
 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. Changes to rateable values could increase or decrease the overall yield on changes to rental values. Where the ratepayer changes during the course of the financial year, the BID levy will be apportioned accordingly and calculated on a daily basis.
 **Grants and sponsorships are estimated at 2% of levy yield
 *** Voluntary Contributions assumes all definite interested parties to date to commence YR2 at the latest.

Operating retained reserve is based on BID4 actuals for additional known costs for projects where invoices are not yet received, plus costs to tide over the projects and running of BedfordBID until first annual payments of levies from Bedford Borough Council is paid in June. Baseline costs based on 2023/24 actuals.



What next?

- 1 Read the business plan and contact BedfordBID on 01234 404500 or drop into the office at BedfordBID (Business Improvement District), Suite 8, Marks Mews, 37 Castle Lane, Bedford, MK40 3NT or ask any Board member if you have any questions.
- 2 A Notice of Ballot will be sent to you on 29th August 2024 setting out the BID arrangements.
- 3 The Ballot Papers will arrive by post by 19th September 2024.
- 4 Complete the Ballot Papers at your earliest convenience and return in the postage paid envelope provided. 'YES' will ensure the BID is retained for a further five years.
- 5 **Ballot papers must be received at Bedford Borough Council by 5pm 17th October 2024 for your vote to be counted.** The result will be announced the following day.

There will be a sealed Ballot Box located on Reception at Borough Hall.

Eligible voting rate payers will be able to cast their vote into the ballot box between the hours of 8.30am – 5.00pm Monday – Friday and no later than 5pm on Thursday 17 October 2024.
- 6 If the majority of BID members by number and rateable value are in favour, BedfordBID services will continue and the additional commitments set out in the Business Plan will be delivered. The new term would commence 1st April 2025.
- 7 In the event of a NO vote, BID legislation covers closures and reserves and the BedfordBID Company Memorandum & Articles of Association (dissolution clause details) sets out DISSOLUTION for the winding-up and dissolution of the Company which shall have effect.

What is a Business Improvement District?



**love
bedford**

The Bedford Business Improvement District (BID) is a business-led organisation funded by businesses in a defined commercial area, charged in addition to their business rates. They are established following a vote of eligible businesses within a defined area and governed by legislation. BIDs enable businesses to have a sense of ownership of their local areas and raise funding for the delivery of projects and services, set out in a BID Proposal and business plan, for the benefit of themselves and their locality.

BIDS are for a five-year period following a successful ballot and regulated by legislation contained in the Local Government Act and the Business Improvement District (England) Regulations.

During the term of the BID, all businesses defined within the BID Area are required to pay the mandatory levy, irrespective of their vote in the ballot.

BedfordBID was one of the first of twelve BIDs established in 2005 following a vote of local businesses. In 2010 ,2015 and 2020, this was renewed for a second, third and fourth five-year term. BedfordBID has been in operation for almost twenty years.

There are now over 340 BIDs in the UK; a demonstration of their growing importance to business communities locally and across the country.

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

Love Bedford is the successful customer-facing brand funded by the Bedford Business Improvement District (BID) business community to help promote town centre businesses, large and small, retail, services.

All funding generated is ring-fenced for the benefit of the local area.



For further information please contact:-

**BedfordBID (Business Improvement District)
Suite 8, Marks Mews
37 Castle Lane
Bedford, MK40 3NT**

Phone 01234 404500 or Email info@lovebedford.co.uk

BedfordBID
Business Improvement District
Funded by Town Centre Businesses

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