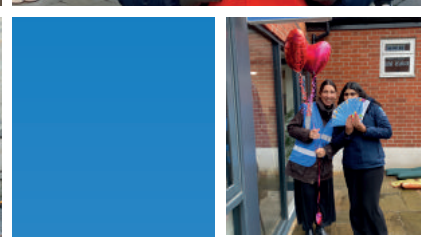


BedfordBID  
Business Improvement District  
Funded by Town Centre Businesses

# BedfordBID

Your BID Led by business, for business



## The next five years

+ 1st April 2025 – 31st March 2030

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

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

# Introduction

On 17th October 2024, 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 a way to keep our towns alive. Consequently, there are now over 340 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 600+ 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, whilst proactively reinvesting the funds into the area, therefore supporting and subsidising our unique independents. Collectively, it unlocks c£300k p/a 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 BID5 consultation process has determined that businesses would like to see more emphasis on: -

- Governance i.e. more regular meetings and enhanced engagement.
- Engagement/visibility with businesses making it clearer the benefit of BedfordBID 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.



## The aim of the BedfordBID renewal 2025-2030 proposal 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.

# BedfordBID Renewal proposal 2025 – 2030

This renewal Proposal for the next five years includes:-

No change to the current BID boundary; a boundary map defines properties on the boundary line.



No change to the levy rate of 2%; allowances for instalments and continuation of the reduced threshold in line with small business rates relief is included and reinvestment of reserves.



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



## BedfordBID; Our Vision

The 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.



## Our promise

To build on our progress made since 2005 and address your priorities head-on through the delivery of the Business Plan developed through the BID5 consultation process under three key themes:

Marketing and Promotions – Love Bedford.



Improving the Visitor Experience – Clean, Safe and Welcoming.



Partnership and Sustainability – Business Support and Collaborations.



### By the continuation of ...

- ✓ Promoting the positive and emphasis on the town's assets through the successful consumer-facing brand Love Bedford brand.
- ✓ Provide the [www.lovebedford.co.uk](http://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.
- ✓ Attracting footfall through the promotion of a strong programme of events (both large and small) and promotions that improve the overall experience.
- ✓ Provide BedfordBID Champions 'eyes and ears' street team to report cleanliness and safety issues and ensure rapidly addressed to help maintain the town's appearance and appeal.
- ✓ Zero tolerance on graffiti.
- ✓ ChildSafe, first aid and reuniting lost children and vulnerable individuals.
- ✓ Manage the BedfordBID Retail RadioLink 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.
- ✓ BeBAC (BedfordBID Businesses against Crime) initiative for day and night time economy business crime partnership reduction platform to help tackle anti-social behaviour, shoplifting and other town-based crime providing essential evidence to Bedfordshire Police.
- ✓ BedfordBID Night Team to operate taxi marshalling and tackle town centre matters.
- ✓ Administer BedSafe meetings, the banned scheme, insurance and radios.
- ✓ Multi branded business e-shots, raising business profiles and publicity.
- ✓ Business networking, briefing and updating businesses on important town centre matters that impact upon their business.
- ✓ Annual reporting of the main sections of the Business Plan activities including measurable results.
- ✓ Coordinated Christmas marketing campaigns and festivities.
- ✓ Christmas lights enhancements around the town and at major gateways.
- ✓ Business utility savings through BID partner Utilitrack.
- ✓ Direct link for business community help and support for queries.
- ✓ A voice for businesses on issues affecting the town and championing independent businesses concerns.
- ✓ Business representation at a national level and with industry partners including BritishBIDs, the National BID Survey and training/accreditation courses.



### And introduction new for 2025 – 2030: -

#### Key themes as a consequence of the consultation process for the BID5 included in the full BID5 renewal Business Plan e.g.: -

- 1 Create a robust communications plan to regularly update businesses in the BID zone about the BID's activities and successes, ensuring communications cover multiple channels.
- 2 Update and maintain a master database of BID zone businesses and use digital solutions to make communications and marketing/promotions more effective and easier for both levy payers and the BID team.
- 3 Arrange more frequent and effective meetings with the re-introduction of the successful BID Breakfasts as a way to share information with businesses, share promotional opportunities and seek feedback to increase the sense of community networking to drive mutual growth.
- 4 Gather ongoing feedback and undertake regular surveys to monitor the town's economic 'health' to enable an informed position to respond practically and proactively to business issues and concerns.
- 5 Regularly promote new Member recruitment and non-executive Board of Directors vacancy updates.
- 6 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 of business.
- 7 Develop a Voluntary Contribution scheme to generate revenue but not to the detriment of service to BID zone members.
- 8 Scope out the parameters to establish a 'Town Centre Environmental Business package'.
- 9 Investigate options to build loyalty through the Love Bedford Gift Voucher scheme to increase local spend in the town centre and corporate sales.
- 10 Review BedfordBID printed material to be available for a pending Bedford Visitor Information Centre.
- 11 Review intention is to invite community group representation at BID meetings 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.
- 12 Explore and scope necessary consultations for the expansion of the BID zone area for a possible BID6 recommendation.

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

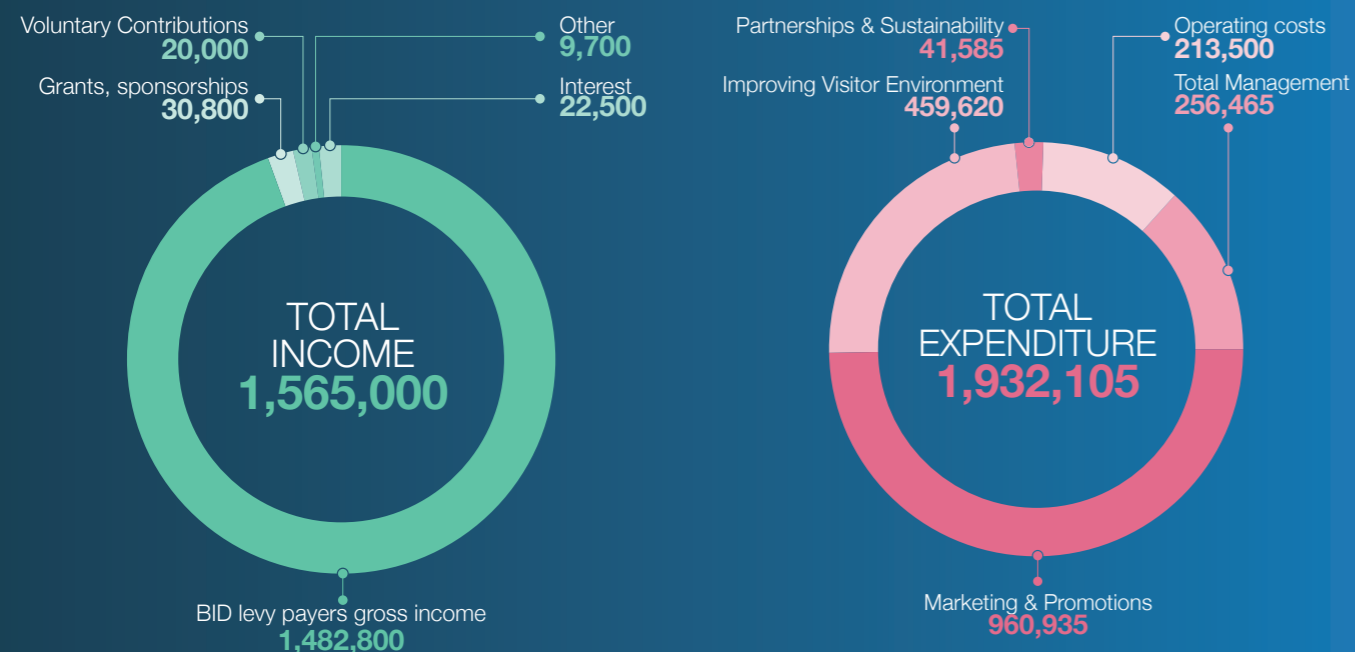
# Governance and arrangements

The BedfordBID Company Ltd is a non-local authority BID Body and is responsible for providing the Business Improvement District (BID) 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, Bedford College, retail, non-retail, day and evening economy.

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

Throughout the term, we produce an annual report and audited accounts for each financial year, which are publicly available to members on our website and presented at the annual meeting.



For indicative annual budget figures, please see the full Business Plan for further detail.

# BedfordBID 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 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 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 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](http://www.gov.uk/correct-your-business-rates)

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**The BedfordBID Boundary Area map renewal**

**Defined property outlines on the boundary line and street listings included in the BID zone.**

**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 Hasset 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, Hasset 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).





**BedfordBID**

Business Improvement District  
Funded by Town Centre Businesses

**For further information please contact:-**

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