

BID Business Plan



Making Our Town Centre Even Better for Our Businesses
April 2025 – March 2030

From my business to your business – why we need to vote YES to the BID

Running a business is never an easy ride, that's not just the case for the hospitality industry, it's pretty much true for anyone in the current climate. We will all be facing different challenges and opportunities and undoubtedly need to have an intense focus on our own individual businesses to try and make them thrive. But all businesses within the town, regardless of size or sector benefit from the town being as vibrant as we can make it. It's my belief that having a Business Improvement District (BID), guided, and represented by the businesses of the town gives us a collective voice and strength, and therefore the best possible chance of making our town a great place to do business.



I've been a businessman in and around Bury St Edmunds for all of my working life. I opened our first Gusto Pronto establishment, The One Bull, not long before the BID was created. I've seen the benefits of it from the early days and am happy to give my time freely as a board member to help shape what it does for the town centre.

Free training courses for staff; Promoting our town centre to a range of audiences including staging major events to bring people here or through traditional and social media; Negotiations with the authorities on matters directly affecting our businesses such as parking or policing issues; Improving our visual environment with flowers in the summer and Christmas lights in winter are all things that wouldn't happen without our BID.

Board decisions are made by representatives of different businesses from across the town – all of whom volunteer for the role. If the BID didn't exist, I think we'd all have to work much harder to keep Bury St Edmunds town centre in the hearts and minds of all but the most frequent customers and I urge you to vote YES to continue reaping these benefits.

David Marjoram
Chair, Our Bury St Edmunds BID

Why voting YES makes good business sense

Since our last ballot in 2019 we've all experienced so much change including the pandemic, lockdowns, workers being furloughed, council budget cuts, increased utility costs plus a general cost of living crisis. During this time the BID has consistently supported its members.

We're mindful of the costs our members face which is why the next term's BID levy will see the smallest increase ever of just 0.15%. For many businesses their rateable value has reduced since the 2017 evaluation, which will mean they will pay less than they currently do. The overall impact of the new charges though is that the total annual levy income will be less than it was in 2020. We are maintaining our position that what the BID levy members pay in year 1 will be the same in year 5.



The challenge for myself and our Directors is to ensure that the quality of the service and activities the BID provides for its members continues to represent good value for money and we are confident this can be achieved.

Our productive partnership work with a number of authorities, organisations and groups will continue because the BID, can achieve far more when working with others. The whole purpose of the BID is to generate additional benefits for our members, and I believe our track record, clearly illustrates this. The BID is making a really positive impact upon our town centre and the BID team want to continue this, on your behalf, throughout our next five-year term.

To be able to do this we need you, our members, to vote yes in the forthcoming ballot.

Mark Cordell
Chief Executive Officer, Our Bury St Edmunds BID

The national landscape

Every town and city in the country is undergoing a period of substantial change following the disruption of the Covid pandemic and changes to the economy. The way in which we use our town centres, for shopping, work, and leisure has altered faster than many could have predicted.

Yet, one thing that hasn't changed is that places with BIDs, like Bury St Edmunds, generally perform better than those without any such sustainable funding model.

There are now over 330 BIDs in the UK, the majority in town and city centres in England. Suffolk has 4 other BIDs in Ipswich, Newmarket, Lowestoft, and Felixstowe. The BID movement is influential locally, regionally, and nationally and continues to make a real difference in places.

The historic town of Bury St Edmunds continues to thrive as a destination for unique shopping and dining experiences, with numerous top quality independent businesses plus popular national brands.

Surrounded by countryside, it was the home of Saint Edmund, the original patron Saint of England and has developed as a tourist destination with 1,000 years of history to explore.

The Abbey was one of the richest, largest, and most powerful Benedictine monasteries in England. There are beautiful outdoor spaces to explore and a plentiful arts scene including theatre, live music, film, and art.

Bury St Edmunds has had a BID since 2010 and this Business Plan details just some of the investment made. The next 5 years will build upon these achievements.

Achievements since 2020

1. Covid Support

Bury Bouncing Back campaign

Feedback to Westminster via MP

Dedicated Covid support for businesses

Accessing & receiving of financial support.

2. Free Training

Courses provided including;

First Aid

Fire Marshal

Food Safety

Social media/digital marketing

Alcohol licensing

Neurodiversity

3. Free Annual Public Events

Spring Fayre

Motorsports East

Food & Drink Festival

Seasonal Trails

Christmas Lights Event

Skating rink at Arc

4. Promotion / Marketing

Launched new mobile friendly BID website

Town Centre Gift Card

LoyalFree App

Virtual High Street

Destination Marketing

Dog friendly & Ale Trail campaigns

Independents' Week

Promotional Videos

#LoveYourTown campaign.

Digital Marketing

5. Environmental

Free Graffiti removal

Hanging baskets sponsorship

Support for the rickshaw, pedal cab & cycle delivery scheme

Ink cartridge recycling for defibrillators

New rewards based bottle and cans recycling machine.

6. Saving You Money

Free 'business health' clinics

Free advice to reduce utility costs & card transaction charges

Waste/recycling advice

7. TV / News Coverage

National press visits for travel journalists

Photo/video library for journalists & tour operators

Frequently working with film makers/content creator

Featured by local/ regional media almost every week

Some of the numbers from the last 5-years include:

£400,000 in additional external income generated to support the town centre

More than 250,000 visitors to the free admission BID events

14% increase in town centre footfall on 2019 (pre-Covid) *

1,250 free training places for member businesses' staff

3,500 users of the town's LoyalFree app generating over 52,000 interactions

11 years of 'Free from 3' parking on Tuesdays

£140,000 worth of shop local generated spend from our Town Centre Gift Cards

75 businesses accepting the Town Centre Gift Card

150,000 town centre maps promoting businesses distributed

70% of businesses surveyed rate the prosperity of the town as 'positive' **

99% of visitors (30% above the national average) would recommend the town to others

8% increase in town centre footfall Jan – Dec '23 based on previous year *

600,000 annual users visited our websites during the last year

60,000 people follow our social media channels

Since the tourism brand was launched, trips to Bury increased by 22.84%***

Visitor spend increased by 9.21% ***

Total value of tourism to the local economy was up by £4million ***

Over 1 million views of our Bury St Edmunds promotional videos

50+ national press trips arranged since 2020

50,000+ Ale Trail maps distributed

100,000+ individual Christmas light energy saving LED bulbs

200 hanging baskets supported every summer

4 new defibrillators installed to help save lives

*MRI OnLocation for Footfall analytics report 2023

** People & Places survey on behalf of Our Bury St Edmunds BID Autumn 2023

*** Economic Impact of Tourism, Bury St Edmunds 2022 and 2016 Destination Research Reports

Research and consultation

In the autumn of 2023 People and Places Insight carried out a town centre benchmarking exercise including engaging with every BID member, seeking their views on the current state of Bury St Edmunds town centre, what was working for them and what issues they would like to be addressed and improved.

Their feedback has contributed to the identifying of our 4 priorities, linked objectives and actions within our business plan.

Additionally, BID staff have personally interacted with over 100 businesses since the autumn seeking to ascertain the key issues they want us to work on.

This year we have held two “Coffee and Catch up” sessions for members to attend and meet up with the BID team and Directors and have a third planned for May.

This is all in addition to the regular weekly e newsletter (previously a plain text based email) that we send to our members.

Plans for the next 5-years:

Theme 1 - Making Our Town Centre Even Better

Continue to work with the police to reduce retail crime & anti-social behaviour

- Encourage the reporting of incidents
- Improve the quantity & quality of the exchange of information
- Have a visible & regular Police Presence

Maintain & further develop our partnership with Bury in Bloom

- Fund the provision of around 200 floral displays
- Consider opportunities to improve the floral displays
- Work with Bury in Bloom in seeking regional & national awards

Deliver free to attend, high quality events

- Two major two day events Spring Fayre & Food & Drink Festival
- Christmas Lights Event
- Consider additional events and encourage other organisations to do the same

Provide the Christmas lights, including maintenance and upgrades

- Maintain & where appropriate improve the existing stock
- Ensure use of LED bulbs only
- Consider expanding coverage of the displays

Improve the physical environment

- Working with partners to improve the physical infrastructure of the town centre
- Improve physical signage
- Remove graffiti promptly

Theme 2 - Providing Support For Our Members

Representing the views of businesses to the statutory authorities

- Regularly interact & update our MP on business & town centre issues
- Liaising and working in partnership with our three Councils
- Representing the views of our business in the local media

Provide free training courses

- Continue to offer First Aid, Fire Marshall, Food Safety, Neurodiversity etc
- Seek to add courses to the training portfolio in response to business needs
- Provide access to specialised training from external providers

Free advertising of your job vacancies

- Posting vacancies on our website
- Reminding the public of these vacancies through social media posts
- Attending job fairs & liaising with external organisations i.e. Job Centre plus

Initiatives to increase the Local Economy

- Endeavour to increase the numbers of businesses accepting our Gift Card
- Promotion of the benefits of our Gift Card
- Encourage people to “shop local”

Respond to business needs & requests

- Signpost members to appropriate organisations for assistance including funding
- Respond promptly & positively to enquires from our members
- Keep members updated about town centre and local economy related issues

Theme 3 - Marketing Our Town

Continue to raise awareness of the town centre offer to local residents

- Increase visitors to the Our Bury St Edmunds website by use of video, blogs etc.
- Utilising Our Bury St Edmunds social media channels to increase engagement
- Continue to develop a positive relationship with local media outlets

Continue to raise greater awareness about Bury St Edmunds as a visitor destination

- Further develop new & engaging content for the Bury St Edmunds & Beyond website
- Continue to create original & authentic national digital marketing campaigns
- Seek to increase the readership of our tourism consumer e-news

Provide visitors with accurate information to enhance their visit to the town centre

- Continue to use Our Bury St Edmunds & Bury St Edmunds & Beyond marketing channels including websites & social media
- Provision of free printed information such as maps, visitor guides, ale trail leaflets etc
- Continue to work with local partners, tour & coach operators so they can provide accurate information about the town centre to their customers

Continue to grow engagement with our audiences through our digital, print, media & offline marketing

- Continue to maximise our positive relationship with national media outlets
- Creating new content to engage with existing & new audiences through our blogs, competitions & videos
- Maximise our reputation as the Foodie Capital of Suffolk & home to a large number of Independent businesses

Further develop BID & partnership developed products to bring more people to the town centre

- Find new ways to promote & strengthen existing BID visitor products
- Continue to maximise the promotion of partnership products
- Working with partners on developing new products & accessing funding

Theme 4 - Make Our Town Centre More Environmentally Friendly

Work in partnership on town centre green initiatives

- Interact and engage with WSC & SCC
- Identify suitable & effective external providers to assist reducing the carbon footprint of members
- Identify new & innovative schemes & activities for our members to consider

Support our businesses to become greener

- Signpost businesses to accessible grant funding
- Identify appropriate training & information provision for our members
- Assist our members to achieve the ambitions of the Carbon Charter for Suffolk

Continue to support & explore new business waste & recycling schemes

- Work with WSC regarding new statutory legislation in managing waste
- Seek to identify suitable external providers to work with our members on this issue
- Identify funding & relevant information to assist our members in improving their recycling

Provide access to experts for our businesses who require advice on utility & operational costs

- Identify operationally & cost effective providers of these services
- Ensure there are benefits for BID members provided by these providers
- Provide examples of best practice/success elsewhere

Work towards reducing our own carbon footprint

- Identify steps & implement actions that can be taken to reduce the Carbon Footprint of the BID
- Reducing the environmental impact of Our Bury St Edmunds branded products
- Identify training & relevant information to enable the BID to become more environmentally friendly

BID Rules

The Ballot

1. Civica will send those responsible for properties or hereditaments to be subject to the BID a ballot paper prior to 7th June 2024.
2. Each property or hereditament subject to the BID will be entitled to one vote in respect of the BID Proposal in a 28-day postal ballot which will commence on 7th June 2024, and close at 5pm on 4th July 2024. Ballot papers received after 5pm on that date will not be counted. The result of the ballot is due to be announced on the following day.
3. In order for the proposal to be successful at ballot the result will need to meet, as a minimum, two independent criteria which are: (a) of those ballots returned by the close, those voting in favour of the New Term proposal must exceed those voting against it, and (b) of those ballot papers returned by the close, the total rateable value of those properties or hereditaments which vote in favour, must exceed the total of those voting against.
4. If successful at ballot, the BID will commence delivery of services on 1st April 2025 (being 270 days after the scheduled date of declaration) and will continue for a period of 5 years to 31st March 2030.

The Levy

1. The levy rate to be paid by each property or hereditament annually is to be calculated as 2.15% of its rateable value, as of 1st April 2025.
The charge will apply to all properties and hereditaments.
2. Only properties or hereditaments with a rateable value of £10,000 or more will be eligible for payment of the levy.
3. The number of properties or hereditaments liable for the levy is approximately 430.
4. The levy will be charged annually in advance for each chargeable period to be April to March each year, starting in 2025. It will be apportioned on a daily basis according to changes of ratepayer during any year.
5. In all instances, any national ratings revaluations within the term of the BID will be disregarded for levy calculation purposes. Revaluations resulting from appeals will take effect from the next chargeable day with no back-dated refunds.
6. The owners of all untenanted properties or hereditaments will be liable for payment of the levy, including those subject of refurbishment or redecoration.
7. Charitable organisations that are subject to relief on their business rates liability will not pay a levy save as for such premises used by them for retail, leisure, and hospitality where the full levy will apply.

8. West Suffolk Council will be responsible for collection of the levy. The collection charge will be £7,200; this equates to £18 per hereditament and 1.8% of anticipated billed levy.

Accountability and Transparency

1. BSE BIDCO Limited (Company Number 09480444) a not-for-profit organisation, limited by guarantee, will be the BID Body and is the BID Proposer.
2. The Directors of the BID (the 'Board') shall continue to be representative of levy-paying businesses. Some Board members may be elected, with others nominated to ensure suitable expertise and representation. The Board will have responsibility for governance matters such as financial arrangements, contractual obligations, human resources, standards, performance, and compliance.
3. From time to time, the Board shall appoint a Chair.
4. The Board may form such sub-groups that from time to time become necessary.
5. Provided that the BID is meeting its overall objectives, the Board shall have the ability to vary service delivery and expenditure allocation according to the changing demands of levy payers. However, any change to the BID boundary or to the levy rate proposals may require an Alteration Ballot.
6. The Company shall meet with the Council, as the Billing Authority at least twice in each year to monitor service delivery, levy collection and financial management issues.
7. Levy paying businesses may become Members of the BID Company.
8. The BID will file annual accounts compiled by independent accountants with Companies House. An annual report on activities, including finances, will be published. An Annual Meeting for Members and levy payers will be held.
9. An Operating Agreement, which includes the Council's Baseline service commitments, has been agreed in principle.
10. Notification of the intention to hold a ballot was sent to the Secretary of State on 12th February 2024.

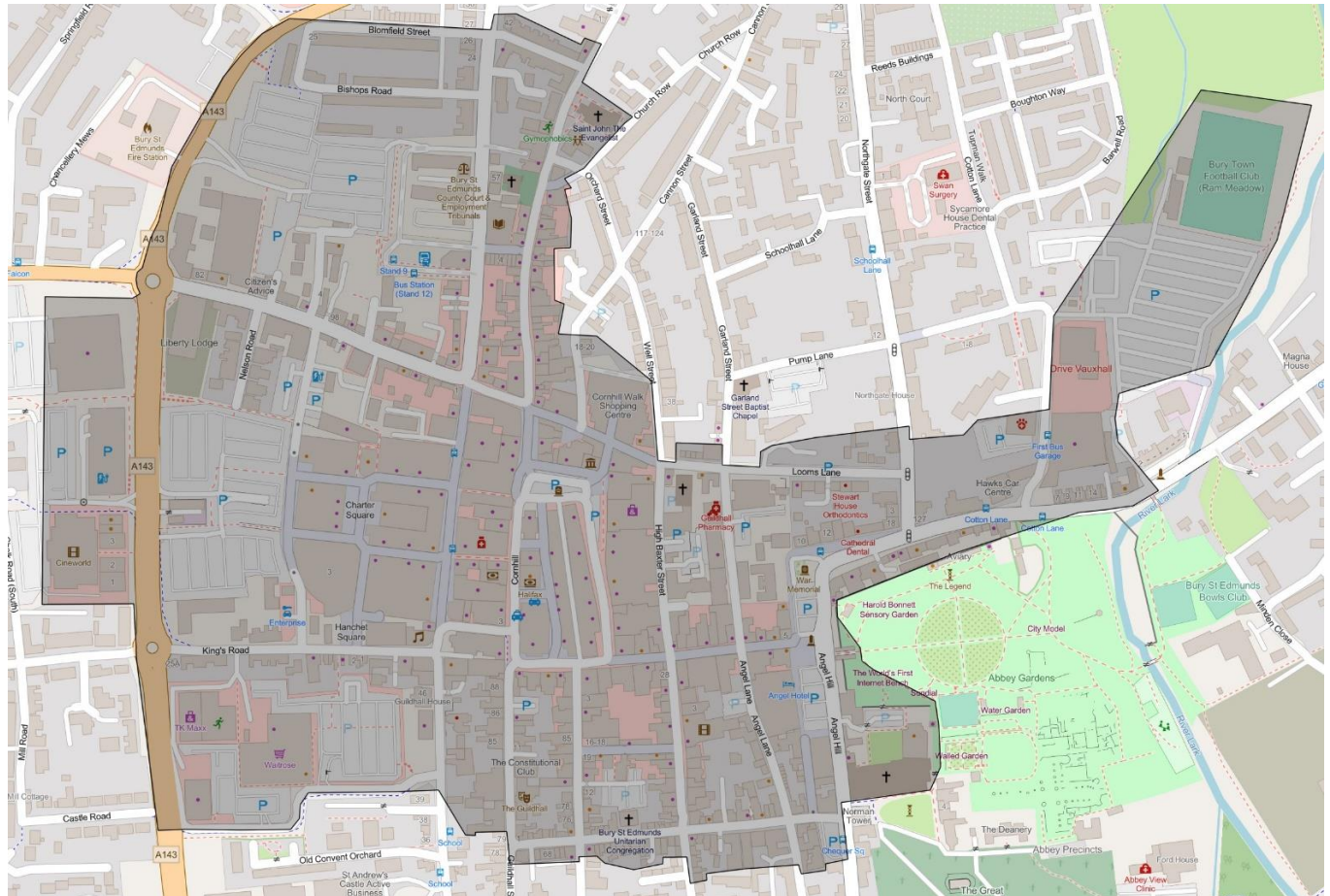
Finances

1. A cautious approach has been adopted to budgeting for the BID term.
2. A levy collection rate of 95% has been assumed.
3. Based upon the anticipated collection rate, the average annual levy available to be spent by the BID for the term is £380,000.
4. Anticipated reserves of £15,000 should remain by the end of the term.
5. A contingency of £60,000 has been included (14% of average annual expenditure).
6. The additional income provision within the budget for the new term of the BID takes account of historic performance and known commitments. It totals £175,000, being 9.2% of the estimated levy to be collected.
7. Operating costs of the BID are estimated as 5% of total expenditure.
8. There are no costs relating to the development of the new BID that will need to be repaid during the term.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
Income						
Levy	£380,000	£380,000	£380,000	£380,000	£380,000	£1,900,000
Additional Income	£35,000	£35,000	£35,000	£35,000	£35,000	£175,000
Total Income	£415,000	£415,000	£415,000	£415,000	£415,000	£2,075,000
Expenditure						
Visitor Experience	£155,000	£155,000	£155,000	£155,000	£155,000	£775,000
Marketing & Promotion	£140,000	£140,000	£140,000	£140,000	£140,000	£700,000
Improving Business	£80,000	£80,000	£80,000	£80,000	£80,000	£400,000
Greener Town	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	£100,000
Management costs	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	£100,000
Contingency	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£15,000	£15,000	£60,000
Total Expenditure	£425,000	£425,000	£425,000	£430,000	£430,000	£2,135,000
Surplus/Deficit	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£15,000	£15,000	£60,000
Reserves	£65,000	£55,000	£45,000	£30,000	£15,000	£15,000

BID area and list of streets

The proposed BID area is the same as during the existing term and encompasses an area of the town centre as indicated below, together with a list of the streets (or part of) contained therein:



Abbeygate St.	Cornhill Walk	Langton Place	School Yard
Angel Hill	Cotton Lane	Lower Baxter St.	Sergeants Walk
Angel Lane	Eastgate St.	Looms Lane	St Johns Street
Auction St.	Elseys Yard	Market Thoroughfare	Short Brackland
Brentgovel St.	Gosnold St.	Mustow St.	St. Andrews Street North
Buttermarket	Guildhall St.	Northgate St.	St. Andrews Street South
Central Walk	Hanchet Sq.	Parkway	The Traverse
Charter Sq.	Hatter St.	Prospect Row	Whiting St.
Churchgate St.	High Baxter St.	Risbygate St.	Woolhall St.
Cornhill	Kings Road	Robert Boby Way	Tavern Lane