



BedfordBID
Business Improvement District
Funded by Town Centre Businesses

BedfordBID

CREATING VITALITY AND PROSPERITY

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

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

INTRODUCTION

On 16th October 2014, a ballot will be held proposing the renewal of the Bedford Business Improvement District (BID) for a further five years.

In 2005 Bedford was one of the first BIDs in the country to be set up and has been benefiting the town for a fruitful nine years.

Despite the recent challenging economic climate, Bedford has managed to achieve growth in its performance and the town is now benefiting from the confidence being shown by new developments, new business openings and reduction in churn. Whereas Bedford achieves a strong market share from within its core and total catchment, in reality it is likely that Bedford falls short of achieving its full market potential and therefore holds more opportunity to increase its reach.

The thrust of our proposal for the next five years is to continue with successful initiatives (as consulted with our businesses) and to demonstrate the shared interest which our businesses show above self-interest. This will be through a series of customer led 'enhancements' designed to improve the environment and customer experience. None of these are the statutory obligation of Bedford Borough Council or provided by public agencies.

BedfordBID wants businesses to be proactive in taking responsibility for improving the area in which they

work but this needs to be achieved together. We also want businesses to be inspired to accomplish more, together. The key to the BID is just as much about its ability to influence as its budget. This influence comes from businesses coming together to improve something beyond their own doorstep.

If the BID was to cease the result would be the loss of over £2.5m investment into the town over the next five years which would not be forthcoming from any other source.

BedfordBID

RENEWAL PROPOSAL 2015-2020

This renewal Proposal for the next five years includes

- no change to the current BID boundary,
- no increases to the levy rate of 2%.
- no change to exemptions nor 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.

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

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

We will:-

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

By the continuation of:-

- The BedfordBID Bluecaps who act as the primary link between BedfordBID, businesses, Police, CCTV and visitors to make the town safer, cleaner and friendlier.
- The award winning Retail RadioLink & Exclusion crime prevention scheme and Childsafe to aid the safe reunion of lost/missing children.
- Town Centre Gift Vouchers to support the local economy and keep investment in the town.
- A comprehensive marketing and promotions programme.
- WipeOut (zero tolerance on graffiti in the BedfordBID area) scheme.
- Sponsorship of both the Taxi Marshals who enable the safe and friendly dispersal of visitors during the evening from the town centre and Best Bar None Awards designed to raise standards in operating responsibly and demonstrating a commitment to reducing alcohol related crime.
- B2B networking and promotion of the BID area businesses.
- FREE customer service training.
- Advice on small business rates relief, hardship and cost savings.
- Listening and acting upon your concerns offering practical advice and support to businesses to address their issues.
- Retailer meetings ensuring the town's retailers work together in partnership, especially at peak trading times such as Christmas, which is essential to the smooth running of the town. This provides the information and feedback required to promote "the whole Bedford Town Centre offer".

And introduce new for 2015-2020:-

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

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

BASELINE SERVICES

All our services will be enhancements and will not replace any of the statutory obligations of the local authority or statutory bodies.

GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

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

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

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

Bedford Borough Council will carry out the ballot. It will be conducted through a postal vote. Ballot papers must be returned no later than 16 October 2014 by 5pm. The result will be announced the following day.

Each business ratepayer will have a vote provided a) they are shown on the Billing Authority's records as liable to pay National Non-Domestic Rates (Business Rates) for a hereditament located within the defined BID area on the day the notice of ballot (28th August 2014) is given by Bedford Borough Council 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.

For BedfordBID to continue to operate, the vote will have to meet two tests for BedfordBID to go

ahead. First a majority in favour (51%) of those that vote is required and secondly the aggregate rateable value of those that vote in favour must be greater than those that vote no.

The annual BID levy will be set at 2% (£0.02 in the £) of the Rateable Value shown in the Local Non-Domestic Rating List (as at the First of April of each year). A BID levy will be payable for each chargeable period within the duration of the BID term. The BID levy will be payable by the non-domestic ratepayer. Where the ratepayer changes during the course of the financial year, the BID levy will be apportioned accordingly and calculated on a daily basis.

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

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

The commencement date of the BID arrangements is the First day of April 2015 and the duration of the BID arrangements is for 5 years ending on the last day of March 2020 after which a ballot will again be required in order to continue. Before this period, BedfordBID may choose to seek renewal of the BID, again by ballot.

The following hereditaments will be exempt from the BID levy

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

The following hereditaments will have a discounted BID levy.

DISCRETIONARY DISCOUNTS

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

- i) The billing authority has made an award of relief from Non-Domestic Rates on the grounds of hardship for the same period - in these circumstances the amount of the discount shall be in the same proportion to the BID liability for the period as the rate relief is to the rate liability for the same period; or,
- ii) The business of the levy payer is not conducted or established for profit, there are exceptional or unusual circumstances and it is considered to be reasonable to make an award having regard to the interests of the BID levy payers.

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

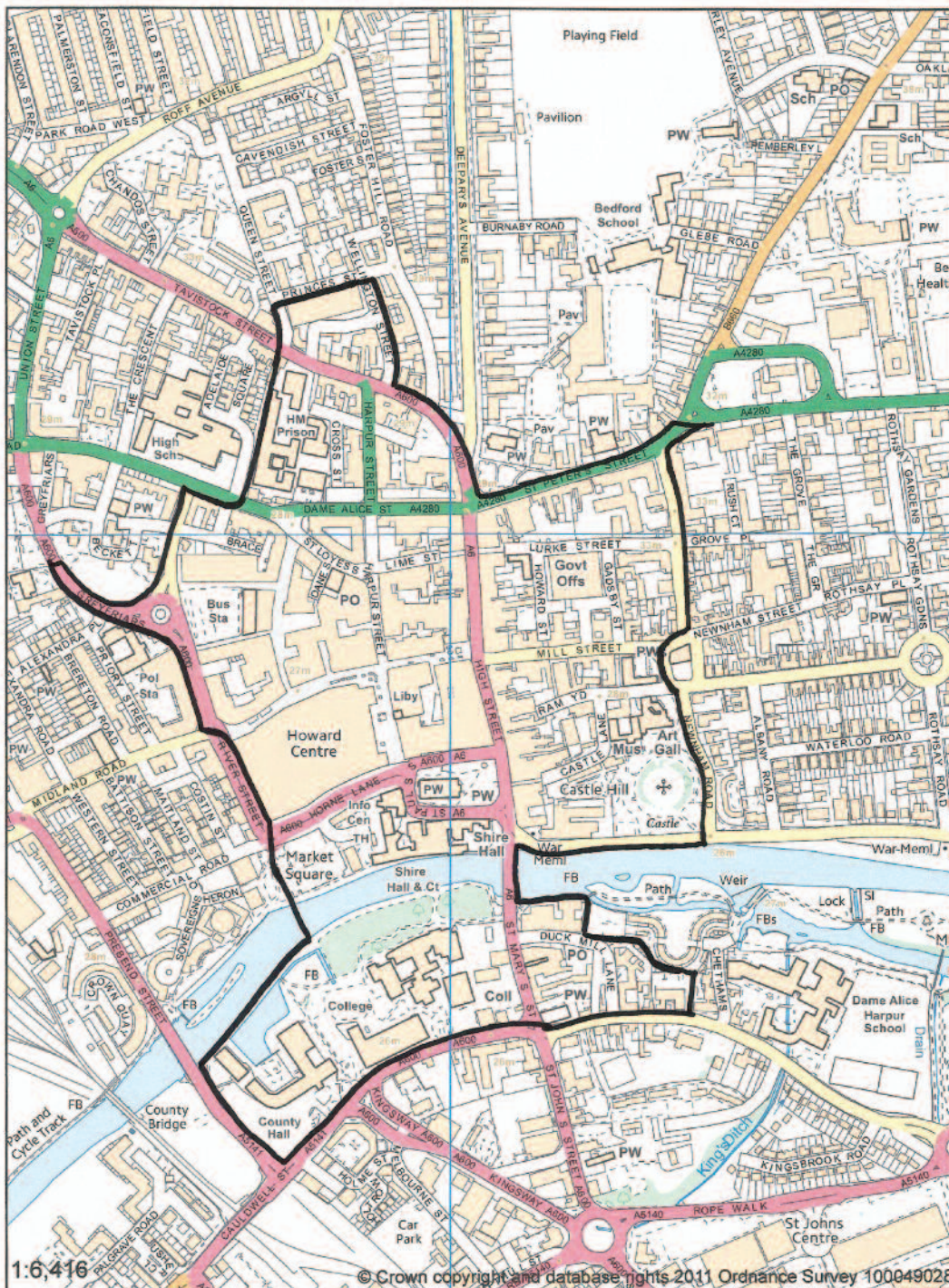
There will be no other reduction to the BID levy. Any forms of exemptions, relief or discounts prescribed in the Local Government Finance Act 1988, or regulations made under that or any other relevant Act, will not apply (subject to any requirements of the Local Government Act 2003 and the Business Improvement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

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

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

The full business plan and proposal can be obtained by visiting the website www.lovebedford.co.uk or by calling 01234 404500.

THE BedfordBID BOUNDARY



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

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

1:6,416

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