

2025-2030 BID Proposal & Business Plan



Stourbridge
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT



www.stourbridgebid.com

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Stourbridge Business Improvement District (BID) Proposal and Business Plan 2025 – 2030

1. Foreword

Message from the Chair of the Stourbridge BID Steering Group

I am proud to be writing the introduction to this Proposal and Business Plan for the Stourbridge Business Improvement District (BID). Over the last 18 months we have been working hard conducting surveys, consultations, workshops and learning from other BIDs across the UK. Based on this work we have identified a set of initiatives that we believe will make a real difference to the success and prosperity of the Stourbridge town centre business community.

The last few years in particular have been extremely challenging for businesses with the COVID pandemic, soaring energy costs and the cost of living crisis to contend with. A BID in Stourbridge will give us a mechanism to pull different organisations, businesses and agencies together from the private, public and voluntary sectors so that we can work as one in developing our town centre and its reputation as an attractive, vibrant, historical, market town.

This BID Business Plan has been created by a volunteer working group of business people like you with a wide range of business experience, representing your interests. They have given their time freely because they believe in the future of Stourbridge and are willing to play their part in helping to shape it. This plan sets out projects and initiatives which will support businesses in the town centre and which, we believe, will make a positive difference to your business.

Our cumulative investment will provide a business-driven focus to ensure essential improvements to Stourbridge town centre, a means of promoting the offer and changing perceptions. This investment will also set standards in the town centre which reflect our own aspirations as businesses, with a budget, over the five-year BID lifetime of around £1 million.

This is a realistic plan with realistic targets at a realistic cost. It is a chance for us to come together and lead the way in which the town centre presents itself and is perceived. Let's not allow this unique opportunity to slip away. Please look out for the ballot papers which will be in the post in October and make sure to vote **YES** to ensure that we can shape the future of our town together.

Aaron Powell

Chair of Stourbridge BID Steering Group and Manager of Ryemarket Shopping Centre

2. Steering Group Members

The Stourbridge BID Steering Group has been guiding the development of this BID and is the body which has proposed the BID for the purposes of the BID Statutory Provisions.

A totally separate and independent company will be set up, limited by guarantee and will be responsible for the implementation of the BID plan. The membership of the board of the company will be open to all businesses and organisations in the BID area.

The current members of the BID Steering Group are as follows:

Name	Business Name
Aaron Powell (Chair)	Ryemarket Shopping Centre
Tim Robbins (Vice Chair)	Nickolls and Perks
Becky Pickin	Dudley CVS
Caz Barratt	Ecomaniax
Charlie Mainprice	Truly Scrumptious Boutique
Jayne Jukes	Tesco
Lee Newman	Record Culture
Mani Sohal	Barclays Bank
Mark Reynolds	The Hop Vault
Sarah Poultney	Claptrap the Venue
Sean Lloyd	Claptrap the Venue
Stu Eaves	King Edward VI College
Zoe Gmaj	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

We would also like to thank Councillor Cat Eccles MP for her support on the Steering Group as Councillor for Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council prior to her standing as candidate and subsequent election as MP for Stourbridge.

We would also like to thank a number of other people that have supported the Steering Group through its journey as well as thanking individuals from a wide range of businesses and organisations for their participation in workshops, interviews and surveys as part of the development of this BID Proposal and Business Plan.

3. Executive Summary

3.1. BID background

Business Improvement Districts are created by businesses and organisations which come together to collaborate on initiatives that improve the location where they trade or do business. Business Improvement Districts are driven by participating businesses - who work together to draw up a business plan which is voted on and, if agreed, is then funded through a levy based on business rateable values, as well as trying to lever in additional funding where possible for investment into the delivery of projects for the benefit of businesses.

This levy is collected by the council and paid directly to the Business Improvement District company. This is a not for profit company which will be set up by the businesses and will be accountable to the businesses in Stourbridge town centre to manage the Business Improvement District business plan.

3.2. The benefits of the Stourbridge BID

With the economic challenges as a result of COVID, soaring energy costs and high inflation and the dynamic change of the commercial world impacting on the way we live and work, the need for businesses to work together for a better future has never been greater.

There is a lot to do and there are many opportunities which a BID could exploit to the benefit of businesses and organisations across all sectors within Stourbridge. This BID Proposal and Business Plan has a clear goal for the town centre to build on its unique strengths such as the rich heritage in the glass industry and unique independent businesses. It will enable businesses to share in the celebration and promotion of Stourbridge's assets and attract new businesses to the town to increase its overall appeal and attractiveness as a destination and to also promote as a great place to live, work and do business.

The benefits of a BID do not just come from the ability to deliver projects and services from a guaranteed budget but come from the collective influence of the businesses in the BID area. It will have the influence to change key issues which impact upon the operation and success of your businesses such as promotion of the town centre, crime and safety issues and attractiveness of the town centre for your clients, customers and everyone who lives and works here.

The collective voice of businesses working together also translates into productive relationships and outcomes, and when working with other organisations and public bodies, the ability to influence more strategic issues.

The plan has been developed to ensure that it:

- is balanced to cover all business sectors
- builds on the successes of working together to date as part of the development of this BID
- clearly defines the role of the BID
- seeks to create and take advantage of new opportunities
- has focussed activity but remains relevant for next five years
- has deliverable and achievable objectives

It takes account of the changes which have occurred that affect the way in which the business environment operates in recent years and clearly lays out a business-led programme of investment to tackle issues identified by businesses with the aim of creating a positive and more profitable trading environment to potentially benefit all business sectors.

3.3. Finance

This levy will be collected on behalf of the Business Improvement District (BID) by the 'Billing Authority' Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, which has responsibility for the public administration and collection of business rates of the area covered by the BID. The levy will then be paid directly to the BID Company in its entirety. This charge is payable by non-domestic rate payers in the defined BID area which meet the levy criteria, regardless of whether or not they voted in the BID ballot, or how they actually voted. It is collected by the 'Billing Authority' in much the same way as business rates.

The budgeted income over the five-year period of the BID is planned to be of the order of £1 million. The income will be made up of some £835,000 from the levy revenues and a sum of around £80,000 from other sources such as grants, voluntary private and public sector contributions (see income and expenditure tables in Section 15).

The BID Company for Stourbridge BID, will be a not-for-profit company, directed and controlled by nominated business people who manage the Business Improvement District business plan and are directly accountable to the businesses trading in Stourbridge town centre.

The way the BID Levy charge is calculated is defined in the Levy Criteria Section 16.

3.4. The Area

The proposed Stourbridge BID area includes all businesses located within the ring road, to the south east of the ring road, the key transport hub of the train station and bus station is included along with the professional service businesses located along Hagley Road.

3.5. The Vision

Through a business-led programme our vision is:

'To promote Stourbridge and develop its reputation as an attractive, vibrant, historical, market town'.

3.6. Strategic Objectives

The BID investment programme will be delivered through the three key strategic objectives and their related activities and projects:

Objective 1: Showcase and promote Stourbridge

To create a vibrant town centre which has a strong sense of identity and a positive awareness locally, regionally and nationally.

Objective 2: Create a welcoming, safe and attractive Stourbridge

Work with organisations and businesses in public, private and voluntary sectors to create a place which looks and feels great for families, the local community, businesses and visitors to our town centre.

Objective 3: Support businesses in Stourbridge

Strive to achieve the best for businesses and organisations in Stourbridge town centre, encouraging everyone to work together to create a positive working environment, a great place to develop a business and a strong business community.

3.7. BID Term

Subject to a successful vote in October 2024, it is proposed that the new BID will start on 1st April 2025 and operate until 31st March 2030.

4. How a BID works

4.1. Background

A Business Improvement District (BID) is a precisely defined geographical area within which the businesses have voted to invest collectively in local improvements to enhance their trading environment.

BIDs were enabled by parliament through the Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004. This legislation was based on the experience of some twenty years of successful BID activity in America and Canada. Since 2004, over 320 BIDs have been proposed and approved by business communities in England and Wales. These include Wolverhampton, Kidderminster and Worcester. Larger cities such as Birmingham, Manchester and London have a number of BIDs with Central BID (Birmingham's city centre BID), Colmore BID and the Jewellery Quarter BID being a few of the 11 BIDs in Birmingham.

There are more than 250 BID areas which have been operating for more than five years and have gone through a renewal ballot and more than 120 have now entered their third term having gone through a third ballot and 40 into their fourth term. In most cases BIDs going on to a second and further terms have received even greater endorsements in the vote than they did the first time. BIDs have brought significant improvements to the trading environment of the businesses based in these locations. Further information about BIDs is available on the BID Foundation website <https://www.placemanagement.org/the-bid-foundation/>.

The lifetime of the BID is prescribed by the Regulations and is set at no more than 5 years. It is possible for a BID to be extended by proposing a new Business Plan at the end of the BID lifetime for a fresh formal vote by the businesses.

The purposes of a BID are to provide new or expanded works and services or environmental enhancements within the prescribed BID area, funded via a BID Levy charge. All services /improvements will be additional to those already provided by Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council. This charge is payable by non-domestic rate payers and is collected by the Council in much the same way as business rates. The manner in which the BID Levy charge is calculated is defined in the Levy Criteria Section 16.

All works and services will be contracted by an incorporated BID body for the Stourbridge BID area. The objectives and aspirations of the Stourbridge BID are set out in this BID Proposal and Business Plan.

This business plan has been prepared in line with best practice and with reference to the 'Industry Criteria and Guidance' prepared for Revo in association with: Association of Town and City Management, the Association of Convenience Stores, the British Retail Consortium and the British Property Federation.

A set of definitions for terms used throughout this document is contained in Appendix 1.

4.2. The vote

To succeed the ballot has to pass two tests: A simple majority vote of those who vote must register a 'YES' and the aggregate rateable value of those who vote 'YES' must be greater than that of those that vote 'NO'.

If these two criteria are met, the Business Plan is activated and all businesses in the area concerned will be required to pay the levy.

The persons entitled to vote, and be liable for the levy, are the ratepayers of non-domestic premises in the Business Improvement District which fall within the levy criteria outlined in Section 16. Properties with a rateable value of less than £12,001 will be excluded from the vote and levy.

The Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council's Returning Officer will represent the Ballot Holder of the Business Improvement District ballot. For details of voting procedures and how you can confirm persons entitled to vote, contact Electoral Services on 01384 817665 or by e mailing Mike.Saunders@dudley.gov.uk

4.3. Alteration of arrangements

The Business Improvement District, its boundaries, business plan and the levy percentage cannot be altered without an alteration ballot, although its board can adjust projects and spend as they feel appropriate, provided the basic tenets and budgets are not compromised. This is explained in more detail in Stourbridge Budget and Finances Section 15.

4.4. The levy

A levy of 2.5% of a premises' rateable value is proposed for businesses with a rateable value (RV) of £12,001 or more which fall within the levy criteria laid down in Section 16.

This levy arrangement will generate around £835,000 of ring-fenced funding over the five-year life of the BID and will also be used to lever in additional funds where possible. This will be used to fund the projects identified in this Business Plan.

4.5. Duration and commencement date of BID Arrangements

Subject to the successful ballot in October 2024 our proposal is for the Arrangements for the Stourbridge Business Improvement District Proposal and Business Plan to operate for five years and to commence, on the 1st April 2025. After five years, in 2030, it can be extended or renewed – but only after being subject to a renewal ballot.

5. Timescales

BID Ballot – Ballot Date INDICATIVE TIMETABLE

Action Point	Action	Day and Date
1	Notice by BID Proposer to Billing Authority & Secretary of State of intention to hold ballot (at least 84 days before Ballot Holder requested to hold ballot Action Point 4)	Fri 24 May 2024
2	Voluntary stage - issue voter nomination letter to check voter list	Fri 09 August 2024
	Receive voter nominations back from potential levy payers	Wed 28 August 2024
3	Establish Register of Businesses as specified in BID proposal	Target Date: Thu 12 September 2024
		Latest Date: Thu 19 September 2024
4	BID Proposer requests Billing Authority to instruct Ballot Holder to hold a Ballot (BID proposals need to be completed)	Target Date: Thu 29 August 2024
		Latest Date: Thu 19 September 2024
5	Billing Authority formally requests Ballot Holder to hold ballot	Target Date: Mon 09 September 2024
		Latest Date: Thu 19 September 2024
6	Ballot Holder publishes Notice of Ballot (latest date = 42 days before ballot day) also to send copy to Secretary of State , a copy of the published notice of ballot, as per Schedule 2 3(d) of the 2004 Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations	Target Date: Thu 12 September 2024
		Latest Date: Thu 19 September 2024
7	BID Proposer or Ballot Holder mail out copies of the BID Prospectus to potential levy payers	Target Date: Thu 12 September 2024
		Latest Date: Thu 19 September 2024
9	Ballot Holder issues Letter to Business Ratepayers to give information about the ballot and identify named person to receive ballot paper (latest date is 42 days before Ballot Day)	Target Date: Thu 12 September 2024
		Latest Date: Thu 19 September 2024
9	Ballot Holder Issues ballot papers (at least 28 days before Ballot Day)	Thu 03 October 2024
10	Last day to appoint a proxy (tenth day before Ballot Day)	Mon 21 October 2024
11	Lost ballot papers – earliest date for issuing a replacement for a lost ballot paper (where papers not received by the 4th working day before the ballot)	Fri 25 October 2024
12	Spoilt ballot papers – last day/deadline to apply for a replacement ballot paper for a spoilt ballot paper (not later than 3 working days before the ballot)	Mon 28 October 2024
13	Ballot Day (up to 5pm)	Thu 31 October 2024
14	Count and announcement of result	Fri 01 November 2024
15	Disposal of ballot papers	Sat 03 May 2025

6. Working together will make a difference

The last few years have been challenging for town and city centres across the UK with many left with the scars of the COVID-19 pandemic, high energy costs and high inflation. The national economy is in uncertain times and whatever happens, many challenges lie ahead and the commercial world continues to change at an ever-increasing pace.

Besides the challenges of the economy, lifestyles have been changing and influencing the way in which we use our time and spend our money. Technology continues to develop and change the way we live and work as individuals and operate as businesses.

Trends and changes which impact upon town and city centres such as the increase in online shopping had already started before COVID, but over the last few years many of these trends have accelerated.

It is clear that many of these changes will have a permanent impact upon the way in which town and city centres operate and the opportunities and challenges which businesses are grappling with, such as many employees remain working from home or using their office based within the town centre in a different way.

In this very uncertain world, it is difficult to make any predictions for the long term. However, one thing is becoming clear; people are starting to value their local towns and centres more. Town and city centres are becoming hubs for their local community for all aspects of people's lives. They will not simply be shopping destinations but places where people will want to live, work and spend their leisure time in a flexible way.

We need to think about ways in which we can work together to take advantage of these new opportunities and create a town centre which is welcoming, safe and forward-thinking that serves both the businesses and local community. Within Stourbridge there is a strong sense of community and businesses are keen to improve the town even further, ensuring that the town has a distinct identity and is a safe, attractive and enjoyable place to be.

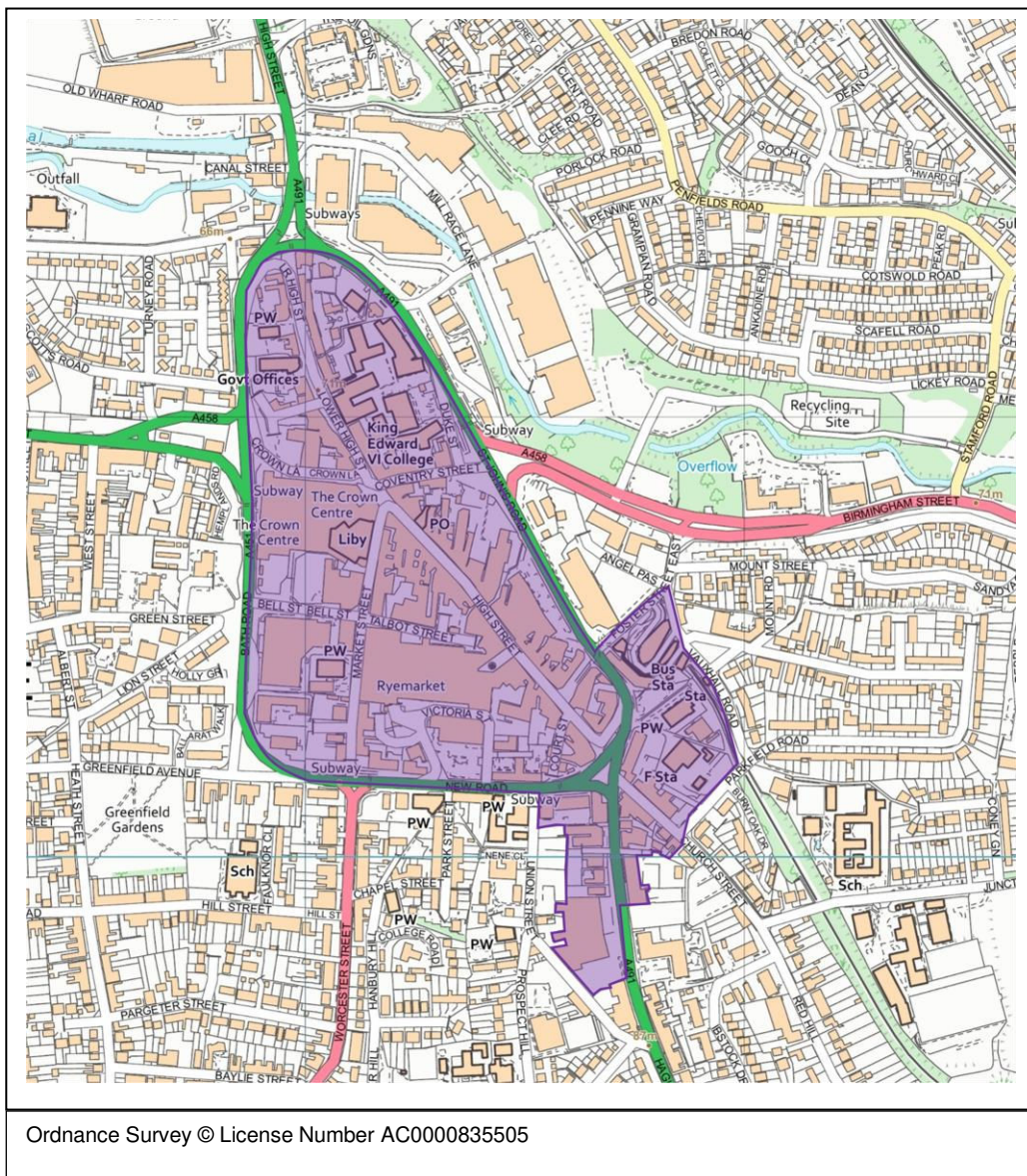
The extensive surveys, discussions with key stakeholders and working groups undertaken to develop this BID Proposal identified a clear desire expressed by businesses and organisations from Stourbridge town centre to work closely together and with Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council and other key stakeholders to raise the town's profile and improve the appeal to visitors and businesses. This collective and focused approach will serve to improve the trading and operating environment and allow existing businesses to flourish and grow and attract new business investment.

Stourbridge town centre has a lot to offer, with a great sense of heritage, retail and leisure offer and a vibrant College. It has great connections to Birmingham city centre which enables it to offer an alternative to those who work and live in Birmingham and not simply a great asset to the residents of Stourbridge. Stourbridge is within easy reach of large audiences and business markets but does not currently fully tap into the great potential of its own assets by working together as a cohesive business community and promoting its collective strength.

Taking on board all of the above, this Business Plan has identified opportunities and taken account of the needs and challenges faced by all business sectors across the BID area. By working together and with strategic partners including the Council and key stakeholders through a Business Improvement District there is huge potential to continue the momentum to make Stourbridge a great place to visit, live, work and grow a business.

7. Where the Stourbridge will BID operate

The shaded area on the map below shows the boundary of the proposed Stourbridge BID area. A list of roads and streets within the BID area is shown in Appendix 2.



The Stourbridge BID Area has been selected to cover the commercial core of the town centre and includes businesses to the southeast which consider themselves to be very much part of the town centre life and community.

The Stourbridge Business Improvement District geographical boundary follows the line of the ring road from St Johns Road to the east, New Road in the south, to the southeast the boundary diverts from the ring road to include the transport hub made up of the bus station and Stourbridge railway station and runs along Hagley Road to include the professional service businesses with the boundary ending at and excluding 42 Hagley Rd, returning to the ring road before heading north again to the western side of the town centre up Bath Rd.

The aim of the BID Area is to bring the Stourbridge business community together to act with one voice with an open policy to encourage dialogue and involvement from other businesses and

organisations which may not be in the area but have a direct stake in the town centre.

A full list of streets within the BID area is shown in Appendix 2. All non-domestic hereditaments within the BID area will, if the BID is approved, be liable for the BID levy (as defined in Section 16).

The BID covers those businesses, whose rateable value is £12,001 or greater. Thus banks, building societies, car parks, council facilities, the College, restaurants, clubs and pubs, estate agents, leisure operators, some charities, recruitment agents, retail and health and beauty outlets, office based businesses and organisations, and transport and travel agents other non-domestic hereditaments are included within the BID and will, subject to the detailed levy criteria in Section 16, contribute to the BID's collective funding and activities flowing from the combined budget.

The BID Area includes any smaller business areas located off these roads or streets that are located within the boundary of the BID Area defined by the shaded area illustrated on the map and any other road or street, even if they are not listed in Appendix 2 and will include any new road or street which is developed or created during the life of the BID which is within the BID Area.

8. Services provided by the Public Bodies

8.1. Council's Support for Stourbridge BID

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council fully supports the Stourbridge BID. In particular, it endorses the fundamental principle of additionality within the BID by providing baseline service statements outlining the provision of existing services from the Council to businesses at their current level (subject to budgetary constraints) across the Stourbridge BID area.

Thus, in line with BID legislation, BID services within the Stourbridge BID will be additional to (not in substitution for) those provided by the Council. If there is a need for any change in service levels provided by the Council these will not be disproportionate to other parts of Stourbridge outside the BID area.

The Council's commitment to the Stourbridge BID and the working relationships between the Council and Stourbridge BID Company will be set out in complementary documents agreed between the two parties:

- An Operating Agreement which sets out the Council's Operational Support to the BID on a number of specific issues.
- A set of Baseline Service Statements, each defining the benchmark for a specific service provided by the Council and other agencies within the BID area.

8.2. Council's Vision for the BID

Beyond its clear commitments set out in the Operating Agreement, the Council welcomes the opportunity offered by the BID disciplines to continue to develop the strong and dynamic partnership between them and Stourbridge's businesses. Over the next five years of the BID, the council intend that this forward-looking evolution of their relationship with businesses should:

- Develop a serious dialogue with Stourbridge businesses through the BID Board and its management team on issues that can promote a stronger trading environment conducive to investment, business development and growth and a stronger community of businesses serving the businesses themselves and all those who live and work in the area.
- Work collaboratively and in partnership with the BID to ensure that the opportunities offered through the BID can be maximised and any investment or joint initiatives are as effective as possible.

8.3. Council Services for Business

Businesses will continue to benefit from all the standard council services provided from Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council for the benefit of all stakeholders in the town (cleaning, access, safety, maintenance and public amenities). In addition, the Council delivers a wide range of services either directly or indirectly specifically for businesses, these include:

- Commercial Properties and Council land use
- Planning and Building Control
- Environmental Health and Safety
- Pollution Control support
- Food safety
- Trading Standards
- Workplace health and safety
- Business startup advice and signposting
- Grants, help and support

- Licensing
- Commercial Waste and recycling
- Business Rates
- Tendering for council business

Details of these services can be found on the Council's website www.dudley.gov.uk/business/

8.4. Individual Baseline Statements

In full support of the above commitments, Heads of Service within the council will continue to have in place Baseline Statements on the specific services they are responsible for. These documents define the benchmarks for the provision of these services and the fact that any change will not disproportionately impact upon the BID area more than any other area outside the BID within the Borough's administrative boundary.

They also cover how the services will be measured. The council attaches particular importance to the incorporation of value for money principles and measures within all the Baseline Statements.

The Baseline Services from Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council are defined below:

- CCTV
- Community Safety
- Environmental Health
- Events and Marketing
- Festive lighting
- Grounds Maintenance and Arboricultural Services
- Health and Safety Public Protection - inc Pollution Control
- Highways Maintenance
- Licensing
- Parking and traffic Management
- Projects and Placemaking
- Public Transport
- Regeneration (Corporate Projects)
- Street Cleansing and Waste Service
- Street Lighting
- Tourism
- Winter Gritting

Other authorities

- Police

The process of creating the baseline agreements proves valuable to both the service providers and the BID company. The development of these partnerships and the additional focus on the services provided in the area, will give tangible benefits over and above those derived from the projects outlined below.

8.5. Council's Operational Support for Stourbridge BID

The Council's support for the BID will take practical shape in the following specific ways:

- Conducting, through the Council's Democratic Services, the formal BID vote in accordance with current BID legislation and procedures.
- Assuming a positive outcome to the BID vote, collecting the BID levy defined in the BID

Business Plan from Stourbridge businesses and transferring the levy sums direct to the Stourbridge BID Company. The council will pay the gross levy sums to the Stourbridge BID Company within 30 days of collecting it.

- Nominate a Councillor to sit as a Director on the BID Company Board.
- Provide a senior Council officer to provide a business-focused dynamic link on all BID matters with senior Council staff.
- Paying the appropriate BID levy set out in the Business Plan in respect of all its own hereditaments within the Stourbridge town centre BID area.

8.6. Monitoring and Review

The council is committed to the regular monitoring of the operation of the BID Operating Agreement and reviewing its effectiveness in conjunction with Stourbridge BID Company. This will be carried out as follows:

- The Council monitors performance of key services through the Council's Business Plan with monitoring reported to the Cabinet. Where there is a specific issue with service delivery within the BID area the respective Head of Service will discuss this with the Stourbridge BID Company.
- There will be annual reviews of each of the specific services for which a Baseline Statement is shown above. This will be led by the Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council that will discuss with the Stourbridge BID how the service commitments have been actually delivered during the period, and if necessary update the service levels to reflect the services each will be provided in the following year. These reviews will be scheduled to best effect for the Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council and Stourbridge BID Company's yearly budgeting cycles.

8.7. Monitoring of basic service provision

The Baseline Service Statements from Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council set out the discretionary and statutory services which are delivered to and relevant to the BID area so that it is clear that the BID's activities are totally additional and complementary.

Provision of Baseline Statements will allow the BID Company to regularly appraise the delivery of core services and compare them with the details in the statements. From experience elsewhere we know this has an impact on delivery and helps to guarantee that money provided to the authorities via the business rates mechanism is targeted appropriately and well spent. This means that local businesses have some influence over business rates investment in their area and the effectiveness of local authority service provision.

9. The Research and Consultation Process

9.1. Background

As a result of funding from the Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council the BID Steering Group has commissioned extensive research across a wide range of businesses, organisations and stakeholders to ensure that the plan which has emerged has an in depth understanding of the views and aspirations of the businesses in the area as well as an appreciation of the perceptions of those who visit and work in Stourbridge.

Research and findings from the surveys and interactions with businesses and organisations from across Stourbridge town centre has been considered, in shaping the ultimate vision, objectives and their associated activities.

9.2. Aims of the research

The aims of the research were to:

- Identify the key issues which impact upon all businesses in the area across all business sectors and to develop solutions to address them which will help businesses achieve their own internal objectives
- Review and assess any related strategies and plans for the area which potentially impact upon and complement the aims and objectives of the BID proposal
- Identify and assess the impact and the relative importance of different potential initiatives on businesses
- Ensure that the Vision, Objectives and their associated activities reflect the business challenges and opportunities for the immediate term and the next five years.

9.3. Research and consultation activity

The research encouraged participation from all businesses across the town centre and involved the following activity:

- In January 2024, a detailed survey was produced to get the views of businesses in the BID area.
- All potential levy paying businesses in the BID area were mailed survey forms and asked to complete them seeking their opinions on a variety of issues, through ebulletins, during a visit from a BID representative and via the BID website. All businesses were provided with the opportunity to meet with a member of the development team in person, via telephone or video call.
- All potential levy paying businesses were included in mail shots and publicity including newsletters and e-bulletins where e-mail addresses were available.
- 305 personal business visits were made in total, with 117 of these being unique visits which represents 75% of the 157 occupied and trading businesses which meet the levy criteria having had a visit to discuss the BID.
- A total of 59% of businesses which met the levy criteria completed detailed four-page surveys.
- A number of meetings were carried out over the development period where all businesses were invited to discuss their challenges, opportunities and vision for the future of the town centre. These included a discussion event and a budget setting workshop.
- The newly set up BID website and e-bulletins were used to invite feedback and opportunities for businesses to contact the development team to discuss the potential BID.
- Active participation and decision making by the Steering Group set up for the specific purpose of developing this plan.

10. Strategies and Plans

In determining the focus of the BID Business Plan it is important to ensure that it complements existing strategies and plans to ensure that the BID can deliver as much value as possible for the levy payer and contribute towards the development and regeneration of Stourbridge town centre. This also enables the BID to bring different parties together more easily and to make efficient use of the BID budget and resources available.

During the course of the development of this BID plan businesses started to come together in communicating and sharing intelligence with each other about crime and safety issues. This is potentially something which the BID will be able to pick up and develop to make this activity even more effective.

A presentation was also given to the Steering Group by officers of the Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council of the Stourbridge Town Centre Plan which was funded by the West Midlands City Regions Sustainable Transport Settlement fund. This includes some exciting plans for the town centre including changes at the gateways and public spaces in the town centre, greening the town centre and improving the look and feel and improving the retail offer and range of events and activities. The results of the public consultation on this plan also refer to the development of the BID and how, if successful it will support local businesses, market the town and give businesses a joint voice, with the opportunity to directly influence positive improvements for the town to attract more visitors.

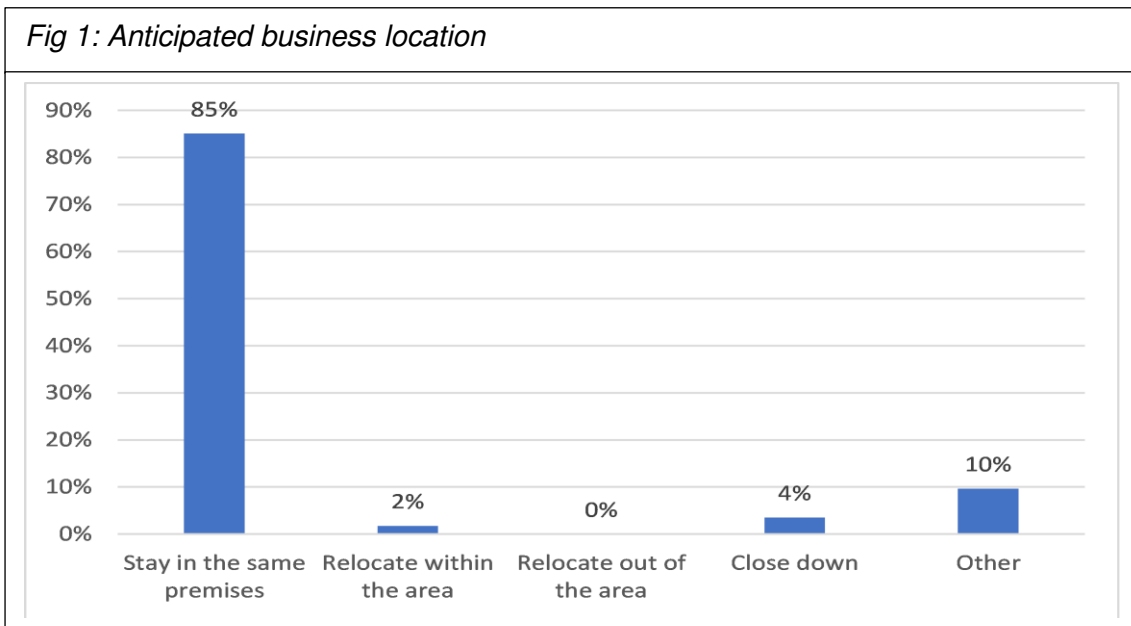
We believe that this BID Proposal and Business Plan complements this Town Centre Plan and working together with the Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council will ensure that businesses will be able to capitalise on the opportunities this presents.

11. Research results

11.1. Business feedback

Surveys were carried out across a range of businesses from all sectors and sizes of Stourbridge.

Despite the economic uncertainty and cost of living challenges, the confidence to remain trading in Stourbridge is strong. 85% of businesses surveyed anticipate that they will stay in the same premises. Only 4% of the businesses surveyed stated that they planned to close down.



11.2. Showcase and promote Stourbridge

In the survey, 'Promotion and awareness of reasons to visit' ranked within the top five aspects that are either very or quite poor in the town centre. Also in the survey, 'Develop the Stourbridge identity and branding to attract more visitors' ranked as the third most beneficial future BID project, with 85% of businesses surveyed saying that this would be beneficial to them. Also scoring highly for future projects was 'Develop marketing and promotion for Stourbridge town centre and its events' with 77% saying that this would be beneficial to them.

In the discussion events, the most discussed topic was about the commercial attractiveness of Stourbridge. Comments relating to commercial attractiveness included improving vacant unit appeal, some sectors of businesses being oversubscribed/overpopulated and developing the evening offer in Stourbridge.

In the discussion event, suggestions for future projects for the BID to deliver included raising awareness of the town through videos, social media, newsletters and a website, a VR experience on the heritage and culture of the town, competitions linked with art and music and marketing events such as trails and QR codes.

Within the Steering Group meetings it was felt that this is where the BID can make the most significant contribution by taking a leading role in defining and developing the identity of Stourbridge to promote, showcase and raise the profile of Stourbridge town centre.

11.3. Create a welcoming, safe and attractive Stourbridge

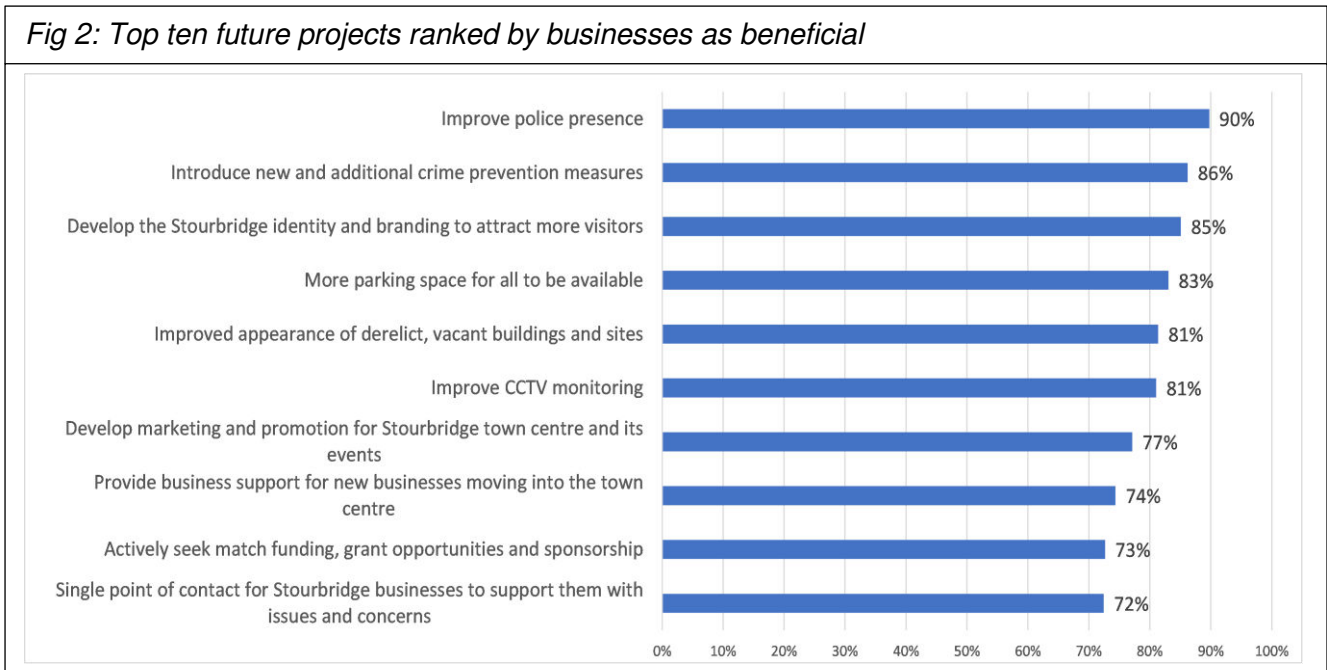
From the survey results it is clear that reducing crime and enhancing safety is important to businesses in Stourbridge and is something that needs to be addressed. Four out of the top six aspects for being very poor or quite poor were all crime and safety related, with ‘Street begging and rough sleepers’ at the top with 85%, followed by ‘Drug and drink issues on the streets’ at 69%. Additionally, six out of the top seven aspects for the question ‘is it important for your business?’ were crime and safety related, with ‘Crime and safety generally’ and ‘Street begging and rough sleepers’ scoring joint second for importance with 87%. This was followed by ‘Police support for your business’ with 85%.

Also in the survey, the top two most beneficial future BID projects for businesses were crime and safety related, with 95% of businesses surveyed saying that ‘Improve police presence’ would be beneficial to them. This was followed by ‘Introduce new and additional crime prevention measures’ with 86%.

For suggestions for future projects, comments that fell into the category of Crime and ASB were the second most suggested. Comments included increasing Police presence, improving the CCTV and more support for the homeless and rough sleepers. Comments from the discussion events included not feeling safe at night, Stourbridge being ‘easy pickings’ because there is less police presence and that frequent homeless/beggars reduce desirability in the town centre.

Another important part of this objective is the accessibility into Stourbridge town centre and for suggestions for future projects, comments that fell into the category of Access were the most suggested. This included comments such as increased options for parking for both customers and staff including more long stay parking, cheaper parking and improving access for pedestrians. Also in the survey, the aspect that was at the top of the list for businesses for importance was ‘Availability of business/customer parking’ with 88%. ‘Availability of business/customer parking’ also was ranked second for being either very poor or quite poor by businesses, with 72%.

Fig 2: Top ten future projects ranked by businesses as beneficial



The other part of the objective is the attractiveness of the town centre, and this includes environmental improvements such as floral displays and festive lighting, as well as events that animate the town centre. In the survey, ‘Events and animation on the streets’ was in the top ten for being either very poor or quite poor, with 57% of businesses surveyed giving it one of those rankings. Comments from the survey around environmental improvements included making the town feel more welcoming with

a market town feel by having greener spaces and outdoor seating, improving the appearance of some shop fronts and some targeted cleaning such as jet washing and weeding to make the town look more attractive.

Given the feedback from businesses via surveys, workshops and one-to-ones, the Steering Group decided that the most effective way of achieving this objective, given its limited budget, was to work closely with others and encourage and lobby others to work with the BID and businesses.

11.4. Support businesses in Stourbridge

In the discussion events, the third most discussed topic was around business community in the town centre. Comments included there being no single point of contact for businesses and any issues they might have, there being little knowledge of who manages what and there needing to be co-ordination of businesses in the town. There were also comments that there are some networking opportunities for businesses in place, however these could be developed further. It was also suggested that there could be some opportunity to develop co-working spaces. There was the consensus that having a BID Manager employed following a positive yes vote for the BID could help with all of these points.

In the survey, 72% of businesses said that a ‘Single point of contact for Stourbridge businesses to support them with issues and concerns’ would be beneficial to them. This highlights another valuable contribution that a BID will make in supporting the businesses in Stourbridge town centre.

Fig 3: Top ten aspects ranked by businesses as important



12. The BID's response

Following our extensive research three key project areas for Stourbridge BID have emerged reflecting the key issues and opportunities identified by the businesses and visitors. The activities within each of the project areas have been specifically designed to address and take advantage of these.

It is evident that Stourbridge was exposed, even before COVID to the same changing dynamics effecting the way in which people use all towns and city centres. Since the start of 2020, these changes have simply accelerated and now is an ideal time to assess the needs of businesses building a plan for the future.

The BID will act as a catalyst for businesses and organisations to come together and play a key role in this new and exciting era in the life of this town. This BID Proposal and Business Plan has been designed to ensure that the activities benefit as wide a range of businesses as possible. It will do this by promoting Stourbridge and developing its reputation as an attractive, vibrant, historical, market town.

12.1. The role of the BID

All businesses and organisations stand to benefit from these additional projects and activities which have been identified by businesses across Stourbridge as being crucial to their future:

- To act as the voice for businesses in Stourbridge and represent their interests within the context and framework of this BID Proposal and Business Plan
- To position Stourbridge and build its profile as a destination of choice for local residents and visitors.
- To work collaboratively and strategically, representing business interests to encourage growth, development and investment of businesses in Stourbridge.

12.2. How delivery will be monitored

Monitoring and measuring the performance and effectiveness of the BID activities is an integral and essential part of the plan. Businesses need to be confident that their levy money is being invested as productively as possible to maximise results.

The effectiveness of the measures undertaken will be gauged by key performance indicators monitored and relevant for each project area, including footfall, customer surveys, business surveys, photographic evidence, vacant properties and footfall trends. These measures and key performance indicators are identified for each objective and need to be monitored on a regular basis throughout the life of the BID.

13. Vision and Objectives

Assuming a positive BID vote by a majority of businesses by both rateable value and number of hereditaments, BID operations will start on 1st April 2025 and will continue for a total of 5 years.

13.1. The Vision

Through a business-led programme our vision is:

'To promote Stourbridge and develop its reputation as an attractive, vibrant, historical, market town'.

13.2. Objectives

The BID investment programme will be delivered through the three key strategic objectives and their related activities and projects:

Objective 1: Showcase and promote Stourbridge

To create a vibrant town centre which has a strong sense of identity and a positive awareness locally, regionally and nationally.

Objective 2: Create a welcoming, safe and attractive Stourbridge

Work with organisations and businesses in public, private and voluntary sectors to create a place which looks and feels great for families, the local community, businesses and visitors to our town centre.

Objective 3: Support businesses in Stourbridge

Strive to achieve the best for businesses and organisations in Stourbridge town centre, encouraging everyone to work together to create a positive working environment, a great place to develop a business and a strong business community.

13.3. Objectives, Activities, Projects, Measures and Results

Objective 1: Showcase and promote Stourbridge

To create a vibrant town centre which has a strong sense of identity and a positive awareness locally, regionally and nationally.

Amount the BID will spend:

An average budget of £40,000 p.a. with a total of £200,000 over five years.

Activities and Projects

- a. Work with others and take a leading role in defining and developing the identity of Stourbridge to promote, showcase and raise the profile of Stourbridge town centre and its successful organisations and businesses as a great place to visit, invest, work and study.
- b. Deliver campaigns to encourage customer loyalty and spend in retail and hospitality businesses and increase the use of professional services and other organisations based in the town centre.
- c. Support and promote the arts, culture and leisure offer in Stourbridge town centre so that it becomes an important reason to visit and stay in and around Stourbridge both day and night.
- d. Develop the use of digital and social media channels, traditional marketing and PR which

informs and increases awareness of Stourbridge as a town, its events and all it has to offer, in a way which is consistent with its identity, to visitors and businesses alike.

- e. Develop communications between businesses to promote awareness of BID activities and issues and opportunities which may affect trading conditions and the local environment.

Measures and Results

- Footfall to the area which is stronger than national high street trends
- Increased dwell times
- Increased awareness of Stourbridge
- Increased levels of sales activity for businesses in Stourbridge
- Positive media exposure locally and regionally measured through numbers of articles, publications, reach, click-throughs on digital media and value through using advertising value equivalent. (a.v.e)
- Numbers of businesses actively engaged in BID activities and the use of and their association with Stourbridge in their own marketing and promotion.

Objective 2: Create a welcoming, safe and attractive Stourbridge

Work with organisations and businesses in public, private and voluntary sectors to create a place which looks and feels great for families, the local community, businesses and visitors to our town centre.

Amount the BID will spend:

An average budget of £50,000 p.a. with a total of £250,000 over five years.

Activities and Projects

- a. Support and encourage initiatives which protect and enhance the public realm, the buildings and other physical attributes of Stourbridge town centre, in ways which complement and develop the characteristics of the town.
- b. Support initiatives that improve access to and orientation of visitors to the town centre and enable them to find their way safely and enjoyably around the town centre.
- c. Improve the appearance and vibrancy of the streets and open spaces by adding colour and decoration and when appropriate using additional floral displays and festive and creative lighting.
- d. Work with the Businesses, Police, Local Authority, CCTV, voluntary organisations and agencies in tackling business crime, antisocial behaviour, street drinking and begging on the streets.
- e. Work with businesses and organisations to develop and organise events which benefit businesses and create interest, animation and a reason to visit and builds the reputation of Stourbridge town centre as a great place to be.

Measures and Results

- Improved visitor and business perception of the sense of community and business safety
- Improved perception of access and moving around
- Reduction of incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour
- Regular flow of information and sharing of intelligence to support business crime prevention
- Increased reporting of incidents and crime and anti-social behaviour
- Improved perceptions by visitors of physical attractiveness
- Increased number of events and street entertainment and a greater perception of things happening

Objective 3: Support Businesses in Stourbridge

Strive to achieve the best for businesses and organisations in Stourbridge town centre, encouraging everyone to work together to create a positive working environment, a great place to develop a business and a strong business community.

Amount the BID will spend:

An average budget of £32,000 p.a. with a total of £160,000 over five years.

Activities and Projects

- a) Work with the local authority, partner organisations and other businesses to develop a commercial, retail, leisure, arts and cultural framework for the town centre and support its implementation with partners.
- b) Encourage and support relationships between the King Edward VI College, businesses and organisations which seek to develop skills and have a positive impact upon businesses, the college and the future development of the town centre community.
- c) Work with others to develop links between businesses in the town centre and between them and businesses in the surrounding area to encourage a sense of a community of Stourbridge businesses.
- d) Promote and develop customer service excellence through award schemes which profile businesses, organisations and individuals and celebrates, recognises and promotes a great town centre.
- e) Work closely with emergency services, the local authorities' statutory services and other key stakeholders during times of national or local incidents, emergency situations or economic or logistically challenging periods to maintain a safe and positive experience for visitors and workers and support businesses in Stourbridge town centre.

Measures and Results

- Reduced levels of vacant and derelict properties across the town centre.
- Number of businesses participating in award schemes
- Increased level of investment in existing and new businesses
- Increased range of businesses and organisations
- Increased numbers of students working closely with businesses or working on community projects to improve the town centre.
- Numbers of businesses engaged in BID activities.

14. Organisation, Resources and Delivery

The preparation of this plan has been managed by the Stourbridge BID Steering Group. It has been made up of a cross section of businesses and organisations from across Stourbridge town centre together with representatives from Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council.

A new and separate company will be set up to act as the BID Company. It will be a not-for-profit company, limited by guarantee which will be legally and operationally responsible to the businesses in the BID area, for the delivery of the BID proposal and business plan and its associated activities and will act on their behalf.

The Board will be responsible for the governance of the BID Company and for creating a management structure which will aim to encourage continuous business involvement in determining priorities and shaping and evolving activities within the terms of this BID Proposal and Business Plan. All businesses will be encouraged to be actively involved in the BID and associated working groups to represent the levy payers.

The Board will be elected by the members of the BID company, drawn predominantly from those paying a levy in the area and made up of a representative cross-section of the businesses and stakeholders of the area and key agencies associated with the successful delivery of the BID project. It will be driven by the private sector and will provide an opportunity to include a Councillor from Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council.

The main role of the Board is to safeguard the interests of levy payers by ensuring that the business operates in line with the BID plan, is professional and offers consistent value for money in line with its targets. The Board will ensure that the implementation of the BID will be monitored and delivered cost effectively, through keeping overheads to a minimum and using methods which will optimise the use of the revenue budget and add real value to the delivery of the plan.

The Board will provide a consistent, collective and effective voice for the businesses in Stourbridge. All roles on the Board and specific working groups are voluntary and are undertaken with a commitment to represent the interests of all businesses in the area.

Collaborative working will be actively encouraged to build upon the sense of the business community in the area and ensure that the skills and resources available for delivery of the BID are enhanced and deliver best value.

There will also be hands-on project and contract management to support the initiatives from the working groups. This support will provide administrative support to the BID Company, coordinate activity with partner organisations and ensure cost-effective delivery of projects through tendering and careful project and contract management.

The Stourbridge BID financial accounts and governance arrangements will be independently scrutinised and the effectiveness of the measures undertaken will be gauged by key performance indicators for each project area, including footfall, customer surveys, business surveys, photographic evidence and retail turnover movement full measures are identified in this plan with each objective.

Besides regular newsletters and other forms of bulletins, there will be an annual report providing details on activities and performance of the company against the objectives of the delivery plan for the previous year. All levy payers shall be entitled to be members of the BID Company. There will be an annual general meeting at which all members are invited to attend and vote and at which Directors will be retired by rotation providing an opportunity for new Directors to be elected in accordance with the articles of the company.

15. Stourbridge Budget and Finances

15.1. Balancing the Budget

The last few years have presented the businesses and organisations of Stourbridge and across the UK with unprecedented and significant challenges. March 2020 saw the start of the COVID lockdown, since then, rising energy costs and general inflation has presented further challenges just as businesses were hoping for recovery. The economy appears to have stabilised but confidence is still fragile and everyone is having to adjust to rapidly changing lifestyles which mean that there is a need for constant evolution of business.

Given these economic challenges the BID Steering Group have tried to balance the costs to businesses with the requirement to generate sufficient funds to provide support and make a tangible difference to the business environment in Stourbridge.

The investment being sought from businesses in the BID area is modest in relation to what can be achieved. For the smallest business in the Business Improvement District, the cost is equivalent to less than a bar of chocolate a day.

The BID will seek to leverage in additional cash funding, grants and value in kind, to support the delivery of this plan and add to the investment made by the Stourbridge businesses through the BID.

With a 2.5% of rateable value of £12,001 and above in year 1, the indicative costs to a business would be:

Rateable Value	Levy Rate	Annual	This equates to: Weekly	This equates to: Daily
£1 - £12,000	Zero	Zero	Zero	Zero
£12,001	2.50%	£300	£5.77	£0.82
£15,000	2.50%	£375	£7.21	£1.03
£25,000	2.50%	£625	£12.02	£1.71
£35,000	2.50%	£875	£16.83	£2.40
£50,000	2.50%	£1,250	£24.04	£3.42

15.2. Stourbridge BID 5 year Budget: 2025-2030

Income Based on Levy at 2.5%							% to
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total	total
BID levy revenue (Note 1)	£ 160,576	£ 163,788	£ 167,063	£ 170,405	£ 173,813	£ 835,644	91%
Other Income (Note 2)	£ 15,000	£ 15,300	£ 15,606	£ 15,918	£ 16,236	£ 78,061	9%
Total Income	£ 175,576	£ 179,088	£ 182,669	£ 186,323	£ 190,049	£ 913,705	100%
Expenditure							
Objective 1 – Showcase and promote Stourbridge	£ 41,250	£ 40,974	£ 40,692	£ 40,404	£ 40,111	£ 203,431	23%
Objective 2 - Create a welcoming, safe and attractive Stourbridge	£ 52,000	£ 51,652	£ 51,296	£ 50,934	£ 50,564	£ 256,446	29%
Objective 3 - Support businesses in Stourbridge	£ 32,447	£ 32,230	£ 32,008	£ 31,782	£ 31,551	£ 160,017	18%
Central Management Costs, Administration, Office (Note 3)	£ 36,000	£ 36,720	£ 37,454	£ 38,203	£ 38,968	£ 187,345	21%
Levy Collection costs from Council	£ 5,850	£ 5,967	£ 6,086	£ 6,208	£ 6,332	£ 30,444	3%
Contingency (Note 4)	£ 8,029	£ 8,189	£ 8,353	£ 8,520	£ 8,691	£ 41,782	5%
Total Expenditure	£ 175,576	£ 175,731	£ 175,890	£ 176,052	£ 176,217	£ 879,465	100%
Accrual for Renewal (Note 5)	£ -	£ 3,356	£ 6,779	£ 10,271	£ 13,832	£ 34,238	

Notes

- Assumes a 2% per annum inflation
- Including income from landlords, associate members of the BID and other sources (including in-kind)
- Central admin, office and fixed overheads
- Calculated as 5% of total levy billed
- Accrual retained from levy revenue to provide for costs of renewal of the BID for any additional term, otherwise they will be spent on additional projects in the final year

15.3. Costs of developing the BID

The costs incurred in undertaking the research and developing this Business Improvement District Proposal and Business plan and the costs for holding the ballot have been met by Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, for which we give sincere thanks.

15.4. Sources of Additional Funding

The BID Company intends to seek additional funding where possible to increase the benefits that can be delivered by the BID to businesses. Other possible income sources will include grants where the criteria match the aims of the business plan, voluntary contributions from property owners, companies and organisations outside the BID area and those not liable for the levy. It is estimated that this could be around £80,000 over the five-year period.

Through discussion, developers, property owners and other stakeholders in the area will be invited to participate in the Business Improvement District and improve delivery against the business plan objectives even further.

15.5. Application of Funds and Alteration of BID Arrangements

The BID funds will be ring-fenced and will be controlled by participating businesses. Details of the BID Company's accountability to businesses are given in Section 12. The BID's Response.

As part of the Alteration of BID Arrangements (also see Section 4.3), the budget headings and the project costs can be altered within the constraints of the revenue received through the levy. The Stourbridge BID Company are empowered to move funds between budget headings and between financial years to provide the services which best meet the requirements of the BID area within the

framework of the BID Proposal and Business Plan's objectives. Such adjustments will be fully accountable to the businesses through the performance monitoring arrangements as per the 'measures and results' identified against each Objective set out in Section 13.

15.6. Governance and management of the BID Budget

In order to ensure that the projects remain relevant and continue to address needs and priorities of the businesses in Stourbridge during its five-year life, the Board of the Stourbridge BID Company may from time to time make modifications to the budget allocations for each of the main projects and the management and administration of the BID.

It will be the responsibility of the Board to make adjustments to the allocations of expenditure budget as and when they deem appropriate and to ensure that all the main aims of the BID, stated in Section 13 continue to be addressed and that all BID activity contributes towards the achievement of the vision. The Board will also monitor and gauge the effectiveness of the BID operations and activities.

16. Levy Criteria for Stourbridge BID

Every BID must establish its own levy rules. Reference has been made to the 'Industry Criteria and Guidance Notes' prepared for Revo in association with; ATCM, ACS, BRC and BPF in developing the rules which will apply to the Stourbridge BID.

Business Improvement Districts use rateable values of businesses as a means of calculating levy and determining the associated criteria. This provides the basis for an equitable approach to charging to reflect the value which businesses will receive in services and support from the activities of the BID.

The Stourbridge Steering Group has tried to balance the ambitions of businesses in the BID plan against the affordability of the levy and the requirement to ensure that the BID is able to deliver best value.

A hereditament is defined in Section 115 (1) of the General Rate Act 1967 (the 1967 Act) as: 'property which is or may become liable to a rate, being a unit of such property which is, or would fall to be, shown as a separate item in the valuation list'. For the purposes of this levy criteria the words, 'land, 'properties' and 'premises' will also be interpreted as a hereditament.

1. Assuming a positive BID vote by a majority of businesses by number and rateable value (R.V) of those who vote, the BID levy will be charged on all hereditaments listed in the local Non-Domestic Rating List located within the BID area. This applies irrespective of whether or how a business has voted in the formal BID ballot. Legislation within the Local Government Finance Act (2003) enables the local authority to issue a bill for the levy to any property which meets the levy criteria at any time, during the life of the BID. The levy is collected by the Billing Authority, Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council. The Stourbridge BID Company will invoice the Billing Authority, Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, for the levy collected for exclusive use of the BID.
2. All businesses shown on the Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council's (the Billing Authority) NNDR billing system on the day the ballot holder publishes the notice of the ballot at least 42 days before the day of the ballot shown as the liable party (for the purposes of this Ballot taken as the 19th September 2024, subject to final check and audit, will be entitled to vote for the BID proposal in a 28 day postal ballot which will commence on 3rd October 2024, with the close of ballot at 5pm on 31st October 2024. The result will be announced as soon as possible thereafter.
3. If successful at the ballot, the BID will commence operation on 1st April 2025 and will be for a fixed term of 5 years. Levy bills will be issued for the first payment due on the 1st April 2025 and on the 1st April each year thereafter. (See paragraphs 10 and 11 for more detail).
4. The levy amounts for ratepayers who have business premises will be applied as follows:
 - a. The BID levy will be 2.5% of the 2023 rateable value shown on Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council's (the billing authority's) NNDR billing system as at 19th September 2024 for each defined premises within the scope of the BID, with the exception of those premises with a rateable value of less than £12,001 on the billing authority's NNDR billing system as at 19th September 2024.
 - b. The total levy payable in any one chargeable period by any one ratepayer for any single hereditament with a rateable value of £460,000 or more, as shown on billing authority's NNDR billing system as at 19th September 2024, will be no more than £11,500 in year 1 as defined in paragraph 3 of this criteria. This equates to 2.5% of £460,000. The levy for future years for any single hereditament with a rateable value of £460,000 or more will be based upon 2.5% of the £460,000 cap in year 1 and index linked as per the inflationary increases outlined in this Section 16 paragraph 7.
 - c. The levy amount for a ratepayer who is an educational university or college of higher

- or further education or school and is registered as a charitable organisation, will pay 1.25% of the 2023 rateable value shown on Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council's (the billing authority's) NNDR billing system as at 19th September 2024 for each defined premises within the scope of the BID, with the exception of those premises with a rateable value of less than £12,001.
- d. Ratepayers with a rateable value of less than £12,001 will pay nothing for these properties and will not have a vote for these properties although they will enjoy the benefits that come with trading in the BID area.
5. The levy will be due from businesses, organisations or individuals who are liable to pay business rates, including un-occupied properties other than those that are exempt within the criteria laid out in Section 16 of this BID Proposal and Business Plan (this section).
 6. The liable person is the ratepayer liable for occupied or unoccupied premises at any point in the year of the collection of the levy. In accordance with the Non-Domestic Rating (Collection and Enforcement) (Local Lists) Regulations 1989 (S.I. 1989/1058) and the Non-Domestic Rating (Collection and Enforcement) (Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 1989 (S.I. 1989/1060), Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council will be responsible for the imposition, administration, collection, recovery and application of the BID levy. The Council will also be responsible for any enforcement action that may be appropriate in case of non-payment of the levy.
 7. There will be an annual inflationary increase of all levy charges year on year for the duration of the Business Improvement District. This will be a minimum of 2% increase year on year or the inflation percentage as determined by the Consumer Price Index as at the 1st November of the year before the next billing process, whichever is the greater, rounded to the nearest hundredth of one percent. (e.g. if a levy bill is £400 based on 2.5% of a rateable value of £16,000, if inflation is applied to this at a level of 2% then the new levy percentage would be 2.55% giving a levy of £408). Negative inflation will not apply. Inflation will not apply for the first full billing cycle in 2025.
 8. The BID financial year will last for 365 days (366 in a leap year) between 1st April and 31st March.
 9. The BID's chargeable period is a year or part of a year, broken down into daily charges based on the rateable value as at 19th September 2024. The chargeable period will normally last for 365 days (366 in a leap year). The daily BID levy charge for each individual ratepayer is to be calculated by multiplying its rateable value by the BID percentage levy and dividing the result by the number of days in the financial year.
 10. The first chargeable period will be from 1st April 2025 to the 31st March 2026 and from 1st April for each year thereafter.
 11. The only exceptions to the due date of the 1st April each year as stated in paragraph 10 above, is where a proportional liability exists due to any change in circumstances identified in this Section 16 'Levy Criteria for Stourbridge BID', in which case, the levy charge will fall due 14 days after the demand is issued. The BID Levy liability is calculated on a daily basis based on the position as at the "end of the day" - midnight. If there is a change of occupier part way through the chargeable period the BID Levy liability will be recalculated for the outgoing occupier on this basis (so for example: if someone moves out on, 1st June 2025, then their liability ceases on 31st May 2025 and they do not pay a levy for 1st June 2025). The BID levy liability will then fall to whoever qualifies under this levy criteria and any levy calculated on a pro-rata basis.
 12. The levy will be charged for each chargeable period in advance and is to be paid in full by the

due date. At the start of the chargeable period, the bill is issued based on the assumption that the levy payer remains in occupation throughout the course of the financial year. Any business which ceases to become the liable party during the period must apply to the Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, the Billing Authority for a refund for the remainder of the period.

13. The BID levy is payable in one installment. This installment date will be specified on the Demand Notice. The notice will be served as soon as practicable after the Billing Authority becomes aware of a BID levy liability and the liability will be calculated from the effective date of any of the following changes being recorded on the Rating List:
 - a. **New premises**, or properties which were not on the rate valuation list at the 19th September 2024 but become subject to rates in the BID area or new streets raised in the BID area since that date will be expected to pay a BID Levy based on the % criteria for that year, in relation to its new/current rateable value with effect from the date at which it becomes subject to a business rates charge.
 - b. **Where property is split**, two or more BID levies should be charged at the appropriate levy rate % of the new/current rateable values of the revised premises from the effective date of the split valuation.
 - c. **Where premises are merged** the BID Levy should be charged at the appropriate levy rate % of the new/current rateable value of the merged property from the effective date of the merged valuation.
 - d. **Any change of use or ownership** (or the creation of a new business within the BID boundary) will be liable to the levy rate % current at the time of the change.
 - e. **Adjustments** will be made for changes in occupation or if a property is deleted from the rating list or is relisted on the rating list revised bills or credits will be issued. The charge or refund amount will be calculated pro rata between the date of the change in occupation and the date of the financial year end.
 - f. **No amendments** will be made to the rateable value of any property in the BID area as a result of any general or property specific re-valuation other than for the criteria listed above whether or not it is applied retrospectively to a point in time prior to the 19th September 2024.

14. No other relief will be given to any class of non-domestic ratepayer and there is no distinction made between occupied or unoccupied hereditaments, both occupancy status attracting the full BID levy, unless it is a hereditament:
 - a. whose owner or occupier is prohibited by law from using it for the primary purpose for which it was originally intended, for clarity and for the purposes of this levy criteria it will only cover a property where the prohibition by law results in no 'value or benefit' to the possessor and at the discretion of the BID.
 - b. which is kept vacant by reason of action taken by or on behalf of the Crown or any local or public authority with a view to prohibiting the occupation of the hereditament or to acquiring it;
 - c. which is included in the Schedule of monuments compiled under section 1 of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979(b).
 - d. where, in respect of the owner's estate, there subsists a bankruptcy order within the meaning of section 381(2) of the Insolvency Act 1986(c).
 - e. whose owner is entitled to possession of the hereditament in his capacity as trustee under a deed of arrangement to which the Deeds of Arrangement Act 1914(d) applies.
 - f. whose owner is a company in administration within the meaning of paragraph 1 of Schedule B1 to the Insolvency Act 1986 and as amended in the Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2021, or is subject to an administration order made under the former administration provisions within the meaning of article 3 of the Enterprise Act 2002 (Commencement No. 4 and Transitional Provisions and Savings) Order 2003;

- g. whose owner is a company in 'Company Voluntary Arrangement' within the meaning of Insolvency Act 1986 and all and any legislative amendments made thereafter and during the lifetime of the BID.
- h. whose owner is entitled to possession of the hereditament in his capacity as liquidator by virtue of an order made under section 112 or section 145 of the Insolvency Act 1986.
- i. where it is a hostel or organisation which provides a place of refuge, rehabilitation or support, guidance, advice or counselling and where the rates are paid by an organisation which is a registered charity.
- j. where it is a property which is mainly or wholly used as a Food Bank.
- k. where the property is wholly or mainly used as a museum and where the main function of the organisation is to promote, curate and display the culture and heritage of Stourbridge and where the rates are paid by an organisation which is a registered charity.
- l. where it is a building registered for religious worship

in which case the hereditament will be exempt for the period of time where any one of these criteria apply.

15. For clarity a hereditament which is the subject of a building preservation notice within the meaning of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990(a) or is included in a list compiled under section 1 of that Act will be subject to levy unless its use is covered by any of the other exemptions listed in Section 16 of this BID Proposal and Business Plan (this section).
16. The levy will be due from businesses or individuals who are liable to pay business rates, from any hereditaments on any roads which have not yet been constructed or named at the time of the ballot and any new hereditaments built or created within the shaded area of the map shown in Section 7 in this Proposal and Business Plan which fall within the levy criteria of Section 16, from the 19th September 2024 at any time during the life of the BID but which are not specifically identified on the map in Section 7, with effect from the date at which their rateable value takes effect.
17. The BID levy contribution will not be reassessed if the rateable value is amended after the end of the BID. New or altered properties entered into the valuation list will become liable for the levy from the date they appear in the list as specified above.
18. Businesses with a rateable value of less than £12,001 will be exempt from the levy and will not be permitted to vote in the ballot. Any business with a rateable value which falls below this will be encouraged to enter into a voluntary arrangement direct with the BID Company so that they can benefit from the full range of services provided by the BID.
19. Subject to this criteria stated above and within the BID boundary as defined in this document, the BID levy is a statutorily compulsory payment regardless of whether the business exercised its vote or voted against the BID.

17. Risk analysis

17.1. The responsibilities of BID Company

The BID Company will be a legal entity and a significant business in its own right. It will not only have all the attendant risks and responsibilities that go with this but also, subject to the vote in favour of the BID, will have a mandate from the businesses in the area to deliver the BID Business Plan. This is a significant responsibility which has an influence over the commercial prosperity of Stourbridge, the businesses in the area and their staff who rely upon it for their living.

It is important therefore, to articulate some of the external and internal issues that have a direct bearing on the ability of the Company to trade successfully, as well as highlight the consequences of not adopting the principles of the BID and the benefits that accrue from the delivery of the plan.

17.2. BIDs in other places

BIDs have been proving their worth and commercial value across the UK over the last twenty years as effective mechanisms to improve trading environments for all sorts and types of businesses. Over the last few years, during the challenges faced by businesses during the pandemic and cost of living crisis, BIDs have stepped up to provide whatever support they can to their businesses.

Where BIDs have reached the end of their first term many have often seen even greater votes in favour and larger turnouts than the first time of voting. They are seen as providing businesses with very effective returns on investment.

There are many towns and cities around Stourbridge that have BIDs including Wolverhampton, Kidderminster and Worcester, West Bromwich, Bridgnorth and even in smaller places such as Harborne Village.

17.3. Working with key partners

In order to deliver exceptional value for money within the framework of the aims and objectives of the plan, the BID will work closely with other key stakeholders such as property owners, developers, the Local Authorities and the Police. It will seek, wherever possible to influence larger projects to the benefit of its own aims while supporting others to achieve their own objectives.

In working with others, the over-riding principle of the BID should not be compromised i.e. that the BID is providing services and benefits additional to those which would have happened if the BID had not been in existence.

17.4. Sustainable mechanism for developing Stourbridge

The BID is a unique mechanism which combines solid business support with a compulsory payment scheme which creates benefit for all on an equitable basis. It also guarantees constant cash flow to deliver the projects and priorities identified by the businesses. It provides a solid platform for the BID Company to control costs, plan over the longer term and rise to the expectations of its stakeholders.

A contingency is contained within each of the project areas, meaning, that should the income from the additional voluntary contributions fall short of those budgeted for any period, costs can be adjusted accordingly.

In the unlikely event that circumstances beyond the control of the BID Company mean that it fails to bring about the benefits envisaged, the business electorate will have the final say. At the end of the 5 years, if no discernible difference is detected then a vote against renewal can simply “switch off” the

BID and with it all business contributions.

There is no plan to rely upon bank or other financial support other than the levy and so there is no prospect of financial insecurity. In any event, the Company will produce monthly management accounts and financial forecasts for information for the Board, nominated by the levy payers. Appointed auditors will produce end-of-year accounts, made available to all contributors and the Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council and these will be filed at Companies House in the normal way.

The Company will be VAT registered to ensure that the tax can be reclaimed on expenditure. It is also anticipated that it will benefit from mutual trading status meaning that it is exempt from any Corporation Tax liability.

18. Final thoughts

I have been privileged, over the last eighteen months to work closely with business people who have been committed to creating a new opportunity for all businesses across the whole of Stourbridge. It is a place which has a sense of community but is seeking direction, a sense of purpose and a clear identity in a rapidly changing world.

A Business Improvement District provides us with an opportunity to forge even stronger links between us and work on projects which we initiate and which are important to us as committed and hardworking business people. Without a BID, there will be no collective voice or mechanism through which you can shape or control the support you receive and businesses will continue to face the challenges and uncertainties of the future alone.

This plan provides us with a clear direction for a new exciting era in Stourbridge. I urge you to get involved and work together for the future of the town and our businesses by voting YES in the ballot in October.

Aaron Powell

Chair of Stourbridge BID Steering Group and Manager of Ryemarket Shopping Centre

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Definitions

The following terms, used throughout this Proposal document, shall have the same meaning as provided in the Local Government Act 2003 and the Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004.

- “BID” means Business Improvement District.
- This document is a BID proposal for the purposes of the Act. If approved it will become the BID arrangements which govern the way in which the BID levy can be used.
- “the 2003 Act” means the Local Government Act 2003.
- “the 1988 Act” means the Local Government Finance Act 1988.
- “the COVID Act” means the 2020 Coronavirus Act, Chapter 7, Part 1, Section 79.
- “BID ballot” means a ballot under Section 49(1) of the Local Government Act, 2003.
- “BID body” means, the body (whether corporate or not corporate) responsible for the implementation of the arrangements in this case defined in the plan as the ‘Stourbridge BID Company’ whose final company name has yet to be determined.
- “BID proposer” means a person who draws up BID proposals in the plan the ‘Stourbridge BID Steering Group’.
- “commencement date” subject to regulation 9(12) of the Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004, means the day, pursuant to Section 53 of the 2003 Act, the BID arrangements are to come into force.
- “hereditament” means anything which is or is treated as being a hereditament by virtue of the provisions of or any provisions made under Section 64 of the 1988 Act including any hereditament to which regulation 6 of the Non-Domestic Rating (Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 1989 applies but otherwise excluding any hereditament to which regulations made under Section 64(3)(b) of the 1988 Act apply.
- “renewal ballot” means a ballot under Section 54(2) of the 2003 Act.
- “BID Levy” means a charge imposed on the non-domestic ratepayers, or a class of such ratepayers in the district.

Appendix 2 – Streets included in the BID Area

Listed alphabetically, roads (Listed Alphabetically) and limits to road/street if any

Street name	Limitations
Bell Street	None
Church Street	Between St Johns Road and Parkfield Road
Court Street	None
Coventry Street	None
Crown Centre	None
Crown Lane	None
Drury Lane	None
Foster Street	Between High Street and Angel Passage
Hagley Road	Up to and excluding 42 Hagley Road
High Street	Between Lower High Street and New Road
Lower High Street	None
Market Street	None
New Road	None
Parkfield Road	Between Church Street and Vauxhall Road
Queen Street	None
Ryemarket	None
St Johns Road	None
Talbot Street	None
Vauxhall Road	Western side of the road between Foster Street East and Parkfield Road
Victoria Passage	None
Victoria Street	None

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Partnerships for Better Business Ltd

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Further information

For more information about the BID or to discuss any aspect of this business plan please contact the BID Development Team Tel: 01562 540233 or email: info@StourbridgeBID.com or visit www.StourbridgeBID.com



Stourbridge

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT



www.stourbridgebid.com