

Annual Report

2019



2019



2019 marked the fifth year for Luton Business Improvement District (BID), with our many BID-funded projects leading to positive changes throughout the town centre.

The BID has continued to work in partnership with other agencies to improve safety, the environment and to bring a packed calendar of events into the town centre.

Fostering a sense of pride has also been a focus, with the BID working hard to positively change perceptions of the town and to promote all the business sectors.

2019 also marked the year of our renewal ballot, with businesses voting YES to a further five years as a BID – ensuring further for 2020-2025 worth around £2million (turn to the back page to read more).

Here we look back at a busy 12 months and the BID's 2019 highlights and achievements...

Vision

BIDs allow businesses in a defined area and business sector(s) to vote on which additional services they want to invest in, to improve their trading environment. Luton BID's vision (2014-2019), through a business-led programme of investment, has been:

"To develop an energetic and entrepreneurial business community that is ambitious, innovative and always resourceful which connects, inspires and strengthens the

business sector and creates cohesion, a vibrant town centre, a great visitor experience and a sense of pride in our town."

Meet our Directors

Thank you to all our Directors who volunteer their time – without any remuneration – to steer the BID and ensure that all projects and BID events are in line with the business plan objectives that businesses voted for.



Objective 1

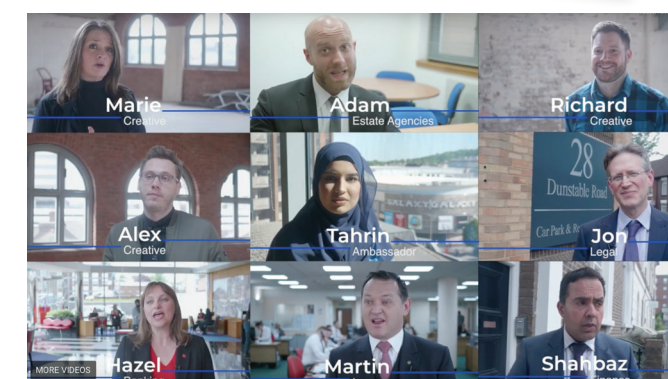
Promotion

To identify, develop and promote the strengths, characteristics and the business offer of Luton town centre to positively change perceptions of the town, locally regionally and nationally.



Positive media headlines, a year-round social media campaign and a constantly updated website – just part of the BID's commitment to promoting Luton town centre.

As well as promoting the town centre to existing and potential visitors, we also work hard to communicate with you – our BID businesses through weekly e-newsletters and quarterly printed newsletters.



Professional services

Our new, online directory of professional services means browsers can now easily search for town centre agents, accountants, insurance firms, solicitors, creative businesses and more.

Our mini film promoting the sector has already been viewed by thousands. Here are the viewing statistics from just one of our Facebook posts linking to the film:



Social Media engagement

- Twitter** - monthly impressions of 30,000-40,000
- Facebook** - excellent engagement and reach (in December alone our posts and photos reached over 13,000). In 2019 we promoted 19 events on Facebook, reached 81,800 people and secured 3,400 event responses.



Small Business Saturday

Thank you to all the businesses that helped us mark this special event on December 7th. Small Business Saturday is a national campaign aimed at promoting and celebrating small businesses during a critical retail period.

Social Media in the last 12 months:



Objective 2

Environment



Clean and tidy

Our BID-funded glutton vacuuming machine has collected cigarette butts, chewing gum and other items of hard-to-reach litter – contributing to a cleaner Luton town centre in 2019.

During our Community Tidy Day, which was supported by more than 50 volunteers and local school pupils, shrubs were planted, street furniture was cleaned and litter picked.



Floral displays

For the fifth year Luton BID provided floral displays – 16 three tier planters, 51 hanging baskets and 15 barrier baskets, located along George Street, Market Hill, Bute Street, St Mary's Road, Mill Street and outside the train station.

Every summer businesses, residents and visitors tell us just how much they love our flowers. Having blooming and beautiful flower-filled streets brings an added vibrancy to the town centre and a sense of pride, that we are confident improves the visitor experience for all.



To ensure that the town centre and all its different areas present an accessible and appealing environment which attracts business investment, encourages visitors to stay longer and fosters a pride in the town.

Objective 3

Experience

To provide a safe, attractive and appealing experience for visitors and workers in Luton town centre to enjoy.

The BID held and supported a series of events in 2019



Christmas

The BID provided PJ Masks at the lights switch on, roaming entertainment and music from Luton Concert Band – on Saturdays leading up to Christmas.





Our friendly BID Ambassadors helping businesses and the public



Helping our town achieve **Purple Flag status**



SOS Bus and Street Pastors

Luton BID continued to support the SOS Bus and Street Pastors in Luton town centre by sponsoring radios to help keep the town safer at night-time.

Radio scheme subsidy

Luton BID continued a scheme to subsidise the digital business crime prevention radio scheme, enabling businesses to share intelligence and boost safety and security.

Ambassadors

Our three Ambassadors are Verity, Usman and Tahrin. This uniformed trio's role includes patrolling the town centre, supporting businesses and welcoming visitors.

Evening Economy

Luton town centre's 'Purple Flag' status was renewed, with Purple Flag judges praising our 'entertaining', 'diverse', 'safe' and 'enjoyable' nightlife.

Objective 4

Working Together

To build on the strengths of the businesses in Luton town centre, to support and promote growth, development, investment and a sense of businesses community.

Mystery Shopping

Luton town centre businesses were praised for their excellent customer service, with more than 55 companies receiving top awards and six awarded a 100% customer service rating at the Luton BID Mystery Shopping Business Awards.

Businesses of all sizes and types - ranging from boutiques and salons, to chains, independents and professional services - took part in our Mystery Shopping Business Awards, with the ceremony taking place at Luton's UK Centre for Carnival Arts.

Footfall

Luton BID continued to fund five footfall cameras, positioned in Park Street, Manchester Street, Bute Street and George Street. These continue to be used to measure visitor numbers. Luton town centre saw a small drop in footfall of 0.1% against 2018 which compares favourably against town centres across the UK which on average saw a drop of 2.2% and towns and cities in the East seeing reductions on average of 3.3%.

Car Parking Schemes

Luton BID continued its partnership with The Mall Luton and Luton Town Football Club running two reduced rate car parking schemes for people working for town centre businesses, helping to make working in Luton cheaper for individuals and to reduce overheads for businesses.

Our new BID as of January 2020



It's a Yes

Last year businesses in Luton town centre voted in favour of a further five years of BID status, thus securing £2million which will be spent on improving the area.

68% of businesses by number and 73% by aggregate rateable value voted in favour of the new BID, which came into effect on 1st January 2020.

New Vision

Support business growth and investment in the town centre and build pride, loyalty and positive perceptions of Luton as a whole.

The four objectives for the new BID (2020-2025) are:

Promotion:

To identify, develop and promote the strengths, characteristics and the business offer of Luton town centre to increase positive perceptions and loyalty of the town, locally regionally and nationally.

Environment:

To ensure that the town centre and all its different areas present a distinctive, accessible and appealing environment which attracts business investment, encourages visitors to stay longer and fosters a pride in the town.

Experience:

To provide a safe and enjoyable experience for visitors and workers in Luton town centre to enjoy.

Growth and Investment:

To build on the strengths of the business community to support and promote growth, development and investment.



"The only way in which the Luton can realise its full potential is to work effectively and together as a single community of businesses and organisations who share the same vision and goal for the town."

Gavin O'Brien, Co-Director of Clearhead, Chair of the Luton BID Board

HOW TO PAY YOUR LEVY

Every business in Luton town centre is required to pay a levy. This is in addition to Business Rates and needs to be paid separately, regardless of how you pay Business Rates. Prompt payment will help ensure that the objectives that were voted on in the Business Plan come to fruition.

You can pay the levy in the following ways:

- **Online or telephone**, please visit luton.gov.uk/payonline or telephone our 24 hour payment line on **0300 456 2725** and follow the instructions.
 - **By cash or cheque** at our Payment Kiosk located in the **Customer Service Centre, Town Hall, Luton LU1 2BQ**.
 - **Bank Transfer** (via your own bank's website) Create a new payee for Luton Borough Council and use the following account details:
Lloyds Bank, sort code **30-66-76**, Account number **172 56 862**
please quote your eight-digit account number in the reference box.
- Please always quote your BID account reference. This is an eight-digit number starting with a 5.**

If you have any questions regarding payment of your levy, please contact the revenues office at Luton Borough Council. Tel: 0300 790 0349 or email revenuesNNDR@luton.gov.uk

Luton BID has helped to attract over

£139,000

of investment into Luton in 2019, including Arts Council Funding and money to help address homelessness.

If you would like to get more involved, to suggest projects, are interested in joining our board of directors or a working group, we would love to hear from you.

Call the BID office on:
01582 510657
and speak to our BID Manager, Fergus McLardy or email:
info@lutonbid.org

Our Finances

Income

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| Levy (9 months April-December) | £25,100.71 |
| Grant funding for events | £14,790.00 |
| Carry forward for events from previous year | £30,000.00 |
| Reserves | £44,000.00 |
| | £339,791.7 |

Expenditure

| | Budget per objective | Combined (actual + committed) |
|---------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Promotion | £46,560 | £62,419 |
| Environment | £39,850 | £44,342 |
| Experience | £125,105 | £134,274 |
| Working Together | £24,200 | £17,647 |
| Central Admin & Overheads | £29,990 | £22,425 |
| Levy Collection costs | £18,000 | £18,000 |
| BID Renewal | £39,000 | £39,120 |
| Contingency | £15,000 | |
| Totals | £337,705 | £338,228 |

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Luton BID Ltd is project managed by Partnerships for Better Business Ltd. (pfbb UK). This guide is produced by Luton BID based on the information provided by the organiser's of these events.

