

February 2021



OUR REMIT AT LUTON BID IS TO SUPPORT YOU, OUR LEVY PAYERS

Throughout 2020, as the challenges and difficulties continued, Luton BID reworked and adapted projects to boost, promote and support our town centre BID businesses.

2020 marked the start of the second five-year term for Luton BID and thus our sixth year in operation.

Many of this year's BID-funded projects were redesigned to enable us to support town centre businesses through the COVID-19 pandemic and address the challenges that businesses have faced.

The BID has continued to work in partnership with other agencies to improve safety, the environment

and to support businesses on issues including complying to local and national restrictions and accessing grants.

Fostering a sense of pride has continued to be a focus, with the BID working hard to positively change perceptions of the town centre and to promote businesses and the people who work in the town centre.

Here we look back at a busy 12 months and the BID's 2020 highlights and achievements.

LUTON BID VISION

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

MEET OUR BID TEAM

All of our BID projects are delivered by our BID Management company, Partnerships for Better Business Ltd and Fergus McLardy who is our BID Project Manager. Fergus is supported by our BID Ambassador Usman Salim.



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.



Gavin O'Brien
Chair of the Board



Roy Greening
Director



Sian Timoney
Director



Abbas Shaffi
Director



Marie Kirbyshaw
Director



Martin Blower
Director



Gary Sweet
Director



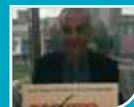
Thanbi Haque
Director



Paul Andrews
Director



Andy Calvert
Director



Bashir Dalvi
Director



Gordon Brady
Director

ADDRESSING COVID RESTRICTIONS IN OUR TOWN CENTRE AND SUPPORTING BUSINESSES

Luton BID initiated and is an active partner of the Town Operation group and has led the Town Communications group, working with key partners across the town to ensure a consistent and positive approach to making adaptations in our town, helping visitors feel and stay safe and ensuring consistent and cohesive messaging.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING To manage COVID-19 in our Town Centre

Luton BID has influenced, supported and led several activities including:

- Identification of pinch points and hot spot locations for social distancing
- Installation of sanitisation stations
- Additional cleansing
- Guidance signage in line with government regulations
- Working with businesses on queue management and use of outdoor space
- One-way systems in key areas
- Information points for the public to help remind visitors to adhere to social distancing, wear face coverings and use one-way systems



- Involvement in a social media film to promote key safety measures – increasing confidence and visits to the town centre and reinforcing social distancing
- Management of outdoor spaces, including street cafés and temporary seating areas
- Promotion of industry standards, beyond the government's COVID-19 secure certification

BUSINESS SUPPORT to help businesses operate, adapt and recover

Luton BID has provided a tremendous amount of additional support. **We have:**

- Assisted and supported over 60 businesses to apply for grants via Luton Council
- Directed businesses to other funding options
- Provided regular updates and guidance on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme
- Compiled a Business Continuity Log which is updated on a regular basis to show which businesses are open, trading online or offering home delivery etc.
- Developed a Business Support Guide, which is updated regularly and contains all the latest advice and information plus useful links to further guidance
- Hosted COVID-19 business support webinars and advised businesses as part of online events hosted by Luton Council and the University of Bedfordshire
- Offered bespoke advice to hospitality and evening/night-time economy businesses
- Been influential in partnership social media projects such as **#LutonTogetherMovingForward**
- Produced and distributed 185 COVID-19 Business Recovery Support packs – receiving an excellent response to this scheme
- Started to distribute additional social distancing floor vinyls and face covering posters



COVID-19 BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS

to help businesses keep up to date with changing regulations and guidance.

Luton BID has been publishing regular and ongoing communications during the COVID-19 pandemic to assist town centre businesses with the latest government guidance and support. We continue to:

- Issue regular ebulletins with links to advice, information, financial support, and the latest government guidance
- Send bespoke ebulletins offering guidance for reopening to different sector areas including retailers, hospitality

businesses, hairdressers and barbers, beauty services, tattoo parlours, and gyms and sports venues

- Use social media to signpost BID businesses and shoppers to useful information
- Issue a number of press releases detailing Luton BID activities and projects
- Hold webinars to guide businesses through the recovery to return to work
- Update our COVID-19 webpage which contains links to relevant websites such as Gov.UK, Public Health, Federation of Small Businesses and more

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.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES DIRECTORY

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



SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

Reach and follower numbers continued to increase throughout 2020, with the BID posting more content than ever before and securing excellent interaction and engagement from the public.

FACEBOOK HIGHLIGHTS

OUR TWO MOST POPULAR POSTS:

- We posted the BID's new film about town centre Covid safety measures in June. It was viewed by just under 2,000 people for a total 878 minutes.
- Our most popular post of the year, in June, focused on the BID's story about businesses adapting to reopening, featuring the Galaxy, among other businesses. It was read by over 4,000 people, with 175 liking, commenting and sharing

Followers: **over 1,750** **up by 70+**

Likes: **over 1,700** **up by 60**

Engagement **monthly average 10K**

Followers: **over 2,530** **up by 200**

Total impressions across the year: **339,600**

Instagram Followers: **over 1,000** **up by 250**

YouTube Our channel is packed with films about businesses, our town centre and the changes made to support safe visiting during the COVID-19 pandemic.



During November and December, Luton BID encouraged safe Christmas shopping—encouraging visitors to visit the town centre during off peak times, and promoting a consistent message: Shop Local, Eat Local, Stay Safe in Luton Town Centre.

Due to the national COVID-19 restrictions we redesigned our Christmas promotion plans and focused on promoting businesses that were adapting and working in different ways in order to operate.

SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY

Thank you to all the businesses that helped us mark this special event on 5th December. Small Business Saturday is a national campaign aimed at promoting and celebrating small businesses during a critical retail period. This year was particularly pertinent because of the impact of COVID-19 on businesses. This linked into our Shop Local, Eat Local, Stay Safe campaign.



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

As well as promoting safety through the COVID-19 pandemic, we also work hard to communicate with you – our BID businesses - through e-newsletters. We have been sending on average two per week, but often more when there is important information to share.

We have also continued to produce regular printed and digital newsletters (available via our website).

OBJECTIVE **2**

ENVIRONMENT

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.



LUTON BUSINESS HEROES

We are all too aware that COVID-19 has placed extraordinary demands on Luton town centre shops, businesses, and staff – and yet, all thanks to the incredible dedication, courage, determination, and commitment of people working and trading in the area, it continues to be a special and unique destination.

That is why Luton BID has recognised and celebrated the most inspiring individuals in our town centre – our 'Business Heroes'.

We have been regularly showcasing workers or business owners within the BID area who have gone above and beyond during the pandemic.

NEW CLEANING MACHINE



A powerful new vacuum machine launched in Luton town centre and was used throughout the lockdowns to make the streets cleaner and safer.

The professional Max Vac cleaner has been funded by Luton BID until 2024 and uses a lengthy nozzle and sweeper to blitz hard-to-reach litter, cigarette butts and chewing gum from pavement cracks and kerbsides.

The Max Vac Max Wind, which is set to work cleaning

Luton town centre every day, incorporates the suction nozzle of the Glutton Machine previously purchased by Luton BID as well as being an efficient sweeping machine.

The machine is funded by Luton BID with Luton Council supporting with operational staff and storage facilities.



PLANTERS

6 large planters have been relocated from Kimpton Road into the town centre -to make the area a more attractive place to visit and work

Luton BID has funded the refurbishment of the planters as part of its commitment to the local environment. Each of the planters have been filled with beautiful flowers and shrubs and will be in full bloom by Spring.

OBJECTIVE **3**

EXPERIENCE

To provide a safe, attractive and appealing experience for visitors and workers to enjoy

UNIFORMED STAFF

We have restructured the BID Ambassador Team and now have one Ambassador and a BID funded dedicated town centre Enforcement Officer. This post is matched with a second dedicated town centre Enforcement Officer provided by Luton Council.



These Enforcement Officers assist in addressing the anti-social behaviour issues in the town centre and will work with other agencies and uniformed staff in the town centre to tackle begging, street drinking and environmental crimes including fly tipping.

CRIME & SAFETY

Luton BID has been liaising with and supporting Bedfordshire Police and other agencies to monitor crime and safety in the area during COVID-19.

The BID team has also been communicating with businesses in the area to help them put the correct measures and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in place.



BIG CHANGE LUTON

Luton BID is proud to be a key partner in the Big Change Luton programme - a scheme led by the Luton Homeless Partnership which enables town centre visitors to donate to homeless services using contactless donation points.

The BID's support has included working with more than 20 organisations to promote the project and funding the payment points in the Travel Centre by the station (just off Bute Street) and The Mall Luton. Over £2,500 has been raised so far.

LBAC/LUTON SAFE

We work closely with Luton Business Against Crime (LBAC) and Luton Safe to help support businesses in the retail and evening economy sectors. This includes being part of regular meetings, sharing information with these businesses and passing on their feedback.

SOS BUS & 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.



PURPLE FLAG

Luton town centre's Purple Flag status was renewed with judges praising the town's partnership working.

OBJECTIVE **4**

GROWTH & INVESTMENT

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

TOWN CENTRE MASTER PLAN

Luton BID has taken a leading role in the development of the Town Centre Master Plan. The BID is represented on the Master Plan Advisory Group and we have responded officially to the consultation process. We have also promoted the consultation to BID businesses including the recent workshops looking at the different parts of the town centre.

FOOTFALL

Luton BID continued to fund footfall cameras, positioned in Park Street, Manchester Street, Bute Street and George Street. In January, a new sensor-based system was installed using central government funding. This can identify any areas where there are large gatherings of people and monitor entry points, timings, dwell times and consumer movement.

The town centre has seen significant decreases in footfall due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. As of the end of December the town centre had seen 32% less people as compared to 2019.



CAR PARKING SCHEME



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

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 or if 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.
- **Bank Transfer** (via your own banks website). Create a new payee for Luton Borough Council and use the following account details: **Lloyds Bank**, sort code **30-66-76**, Account No. **172 56 862**

Please quote your eight-digit account number in the reference box.

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 revenuesNDR@luton.gov.uk

OUR FINANCES Unaudited accounts including estimated accruals as of January 2021

Luton BID has spent money against the four key BID objectives and money to date has or will be spent as follows (as at Jan 2021):

EXPENDITURE

	Budget (per objective)	Combined (actual & committed)
Promotion	£56,257.93	£56,119.89
Environment	£32,541.43	£31,527.40
Experience	£83,211.43	£80,970.45
Growth and Investment	£27,521.43	£31,327.92
Central Admin & Overheads	£28,609.60	£24,540.65
Levy Collection costs	£13,850.00	£13,850.00
Totals	£241,991.82	£238,336.31

As a result of deferred payment recovery, levy revenue for this financial year to date has of course been much lower than would normally be expected at £242,050.02. The BID, as always tried to ensure that it has delivered maximum value to businesses for the levy revenue it receives and leverage in additional funding wherever possible. This year, as a result of lobbying with the consortium of membership organisations British BIDs, Association of Town and City Management and the BID Foundation it also received £17,130.96 worth of funding as part of the Government's BID's COVID Resilience Fund.

Match funding and inkind contributions of £69,000 were achieved through Luton Council part funding two dedicated Town Centre Enforcement Officers and covering the operating costs of the new cleaning machine.



Our town – Our future

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For more details on all these projects contact us




 LutonBID

Luton BID Ltd is project managed by Partnerships for Better Business Ltd. (pfbb UK)