



WALTON-ON-THAMES

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT



Summary Business Plan

2019 - 2024



INTRODUCTION

Walton-on-Thames is a desirable town which has attracted substantial investment in the town centre over recent years. The proposed Business Improvement District (BID) includes a modern shopping centre which is complimented by key streets. Together they support a large proportion of independent shops, offices and services, all of which are located in a central position, a short walk from the banks of the River Thames.

The town has a number of organisations and individuals who volunteer tirelessly to support a range of initiatives including an events programme and litter picks. You told us that you appreciate this effort. However, this is not a sustainable model for the future as funding is not predictable and this makes long term planning difficult and relies on the effort of volunteers.

We will work closely with you to ensure businesses are at the forefront of leading and shaping what happens in Walton-on-Thames and how it is managed.

Like many of our towns and cities today, Walton-on-Thames is at a crossroads. It needs to refresh and revitalise but achieving that will present challenges. Individuals and organisations need to play an active role in the transformation that needs to occur. Elmbridge Borough Council, Walton-on-Thames Trading Alliance (WoTTA) and The Heart, working with businesses have achieved plenty, in recent years, but with the formalisation of this support, through the creation of a Business Improvement District (BID), we can achieve so much more.

Together we can embrace the opportunity for greater input, influence, control and self-determination, by providing a new energy and long term funding stream to make this happen.

This Summary Business Plan is designed to outline priorities identified by you which will reinvigorate Walton-on-Thames and enable you all to meet the challenges and benefit from the undoubted opportunities that lie ahead. Your support is critical if the BID is to go ahead.

Over the past few months, businesses in Walton-on-Thames have been telling the BID Team how they would like to see the town improved. Open business meetings, surveys, one-to-one discussions and presentations have formed a detailed consultation process about the BID's priorities.

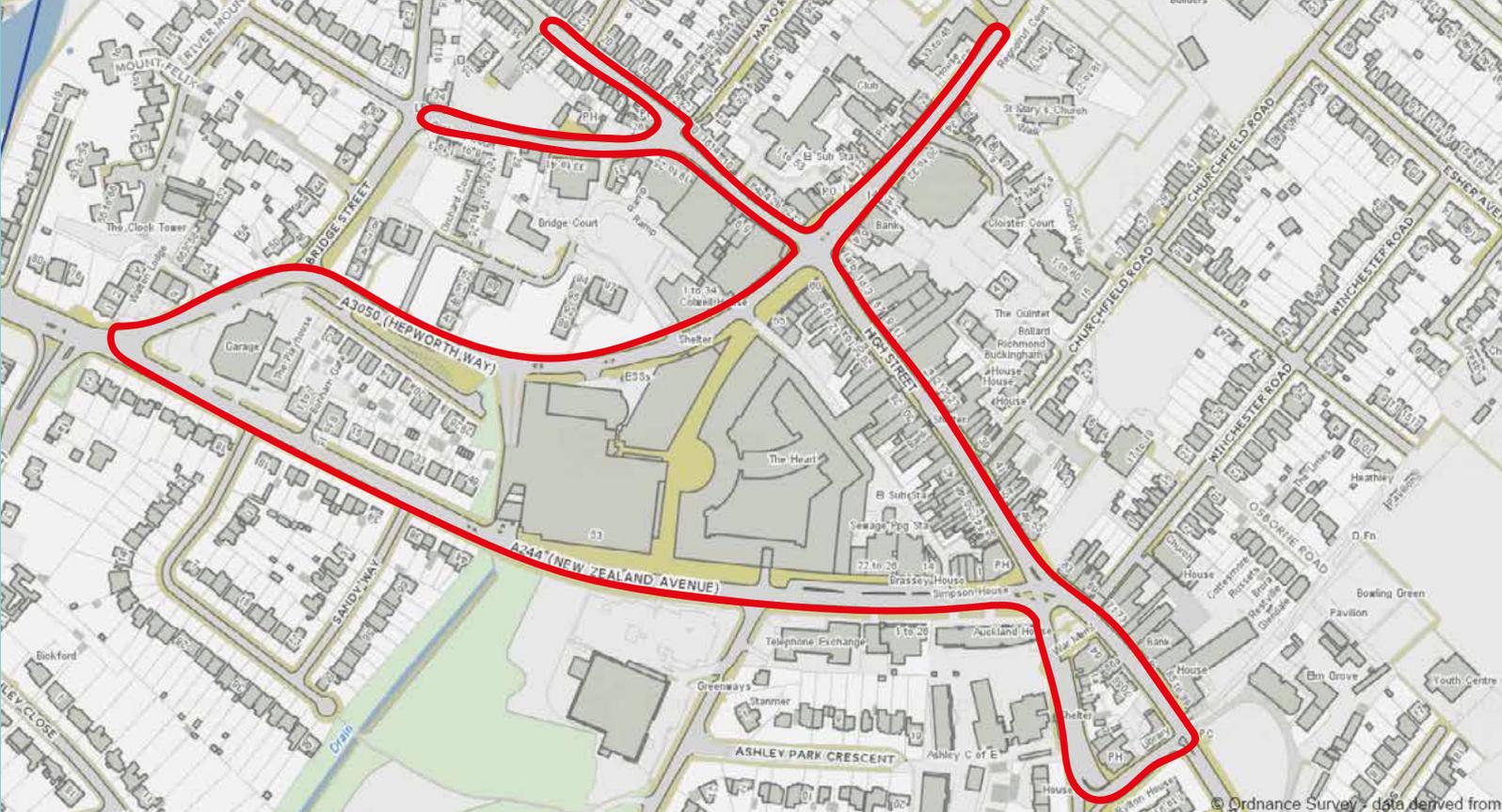
This document sets out what businesses have said they would like a BID to deliver. The priorities set out overleaf will only go ahead if businesses vote 'YES' to introduce a BID in Walton-on-Thames. This ballot will be carried out independently of the BID organisers. You will receive a copy of the full and final BID Business Plan later in the year, followed by ballot papers in February 2020.

Your feedback is important to us so please let us have your views and comments on the priorities outlined in this plan.

For a BID to be introduced, the vote must meet two conditions:

1. Over 50% of businesses that vote, must vote in favour of the BID
2. Of the businesses that vote, those voting yes must represent greater total rateable value than the ones that vote no.

There are more than 300 BIDs operating all over the UK, including Kingston upon Thames, Guildford, Camberley, Caterham and Oxted.



The boundary includes properties on both sides of the street unless otherwise stated.

THE BID AREA

COMPETING FOR THE FUTURE

Walton-on-Thames BID will be made up of all the organisations located in the BID area who have a business rateable value. The BID will be a voice for businesses and the body that will ensure the town is responding to the challenges and opportunities that you have told us about. It will ensure Walton-on-Thames is recognised and celebrated as an attractive destination, with a unique identity which enables it to stand out locally and nationally. The BID is the chance to shape what is happening in Walton-on-Thames and deliver the priorities which you have identified.

Walton-on-Thames has a great deal to offer but in common with other town centres up and down the country, retail restructuring and failure has led to the closure of units and to a perceived decline in footfall and strong competition from other centres.

There is an impression that locals looking to shop at branded stores are more likely to travel to competing centres, like Kingston upon Thames, where there is greater choice. However, we know that shoppers and visitors are increasingly looking for 'an experience' when they come into a town centre and a strong independent offering contributes greatly to the decision about where to spend leisure time. The town has a good mix of independent traders which should be promoted to gain advantage.

**50% OF
BUSINESSES WILL
PAY NO MORE THAN
£1 PER DAY.**



FUNDING

BIDs are for and funded by the businesses located within the BID boundary. If businesses vote 'yes' for the Walton-on-Thames BID, the levy will raise approximately £179,000 per annum for five years.

This equates to almost £900,000 to deliver improvements that will directly benefit you.

If the BID vote is successful, all eligible businesses will pay a levy of 1.5% of the rateable value of the business per annum. Charities will only be excluded if they have no commercial activity. Non-profit organisations will be exempt from paying the levy.

The table below gives an example of what the BID levy could be for your business.

Rateable Value	Maximum Annual Levy	Maximum Daily Equivalent Cost
£10,000	£150	£0.14
£25,000	£375	£1.03
£50,000	£750	£2.06
£100,000	£1,500	£4.11
£200,000	£3,000	£8.22



**THE BID
COMPANY** |

The BID will be run by an independent, not-for-profit company, which will be led by a board elected by businesses paying the levy within the BID area. The board will be accountable to all levy payers. Any levy paying business will be able to stand to be elected to the Board of Directors. Board Director positions will be voluntary and will not be paid.

All of the funding for the BID will be ring-fenced and can only be spent on the priorities that you have agreed to in the formal Business Plan.

As an independent, private company, the BID can also seek additional financial contributions and match-funding on priorities to ensure local businesses get even better value for money and that we can invest in exciting opportunities for Walton-on-Thames town centre. The BID will last for five years and during that time it will have to show how it is benefiting your business.

This is your opportunity to create an investment fund of nearly £900,000 in Walton-on-Thames and lead the way to securing its future and making the changes businesses want to see. Through a BID, businesses can respond to the challenges facing the town and seize the opportunity to put Walton-on-Thames securely on the map and ensure it is a well marketed destination and a great place to visit, work and live.

VOTE 'YES' TO A BID FOR WALTON-ON-THAMES AND SECURE THE DELIVERY OF YOUR PRIORITIES

You have told us what you would like the BIDs priorities to be - these are outlined overleaf.



You told us:

'We like what WoTTA does and members support them with a financial contribution, but not everyone does and we don't think that is fair.'

'The Heart puts on regular quality markets. However we need more markets and events in surrounding streets, so we can capitalise on the positive footfall and energy in the town on market days.'



MARKETING, PROMOTION AND EVENTS

Vote 'YES' and the BID will deliver:

- Destination marketing to promote the town centre and BID businesses.
- Encourage local people to spend locally.
- Develop a comprehensive Walton-on-Thames BID website showcasing the town centre, promoting offers, sharing information and as a means of communication and engaging with businesses.
- Develop a sustainable events programme which will deliver new events and shopping festivals. These will either be delivered directly by the BID or by funding partners on behalf of the BID.
- Provide funding to WoTTA to enable them to continue to deliver events which businesses perceive add value to the town centre e.g. The Festival of Light and Heritage Day. This will give WoTTA the financial stability to deliver and expend such events.
- An events programme in the High Street. The BID Task Group have identified the need for a programme to support the High Street and four provisional road closures have been agreed in this location over a twelve month period. We will work with partners to ensure the programme meets your needs and creates more footfall and promotional opportunities.

You told us:

'We welcome the initiatives that have been adopted to combat anti-social behaviour in the town centre but my business is suffering from shoplifting by groups and individuals well known to the Police.'

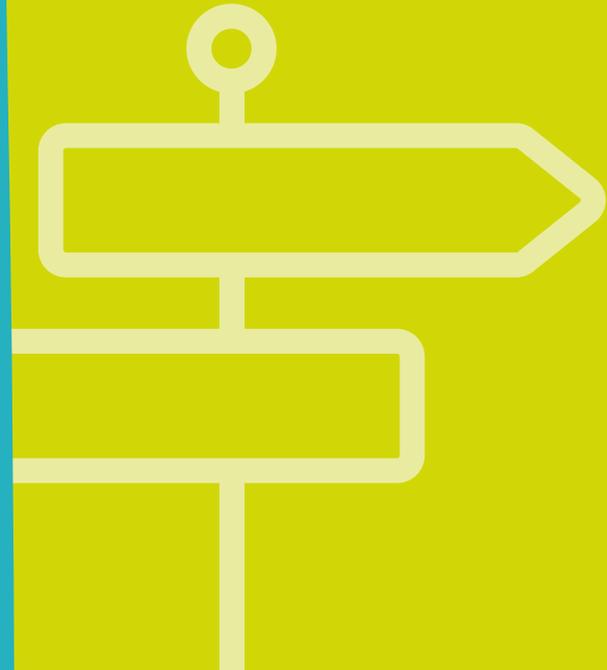
'There are areas within the town centre which are being used for drug dealing and criminality and my staff are afraid to walk through them.'

'New visitors seem to find it difficult to find their way around. The river is on our door step but there is nothing to encourage those visiting the river to come and explore what the town centre has to offer.'

'There is plenty parking in the town but visitors don't know where it is and if there are any spaces available. Parking is expensive if you stay for any significant length of time.'

'Bridge Street could make more of its independent feel – could you look at pedestrianising the street at weekends so people and families could enjoy the space more?'

SAFE, WELCOMING AND ACCESSIBLE



Vote 'YES' and the BID can:

- Work with the Police and other business owners to identify the areas where anti social behaviour still exists and put pressure on the police and local authorities to use the powers they have available to combat this.
- Develop a strategy to reduce shoplifting in the town centre which may include joint initiatives with the police and radio alert schemes.
- Lobby partners to provide enhanced lighting in areas that are inadequately lit and which provide opportunities for crime.
- Undertake a way-finding review to include but not be limited to; the approach to Walton Bridge, the route from the river to Bridge Street and a route from the railway station to the town centre.
- Invest in a comprehensive review of parking to understand capacity, pricing and accessibility, with a view to making recommendations to Surrey County Council to increase 30 minute bays in the vicinity of independent shops. Additionally, for the BID to install electronic indicator boards to show available capacity and locations of car parks. New technologies should be used to improve the visitor parking experience where possible.
- Review and recommend changes to Bridge Street which could include it becoming a 'Quarter' to enjoy weekend and/or occasional pedestrianisation to promote its unique independent feel and location close to the river.

CLEAN AND GREEN

Vote 'YES' and the BID can:

- Work with partners to ensure that cleansing and maintenance standards are monitored and continue to improve.
- Undertake an annual deep clean which is in addition to the cleaning which is already delivered by Elmbridge Borough Council.
- Provide additional floral displays including hanging baskets and planters to enhance areas which have been previously neglected.
- Investigate ways to promote cycling as a means of accessing the town centre.

You told us:

During the consultation you used the words 'smelly', 'dirty' and 'grey' to describe the town centre. You also told us that you think the litter pick is a great idea but sometimes the town could really do with a spring clean. You also suggest more floral planters around the town could brighten the place up.

You told us:

'There is no group specifically representing business – we would be so much stronger if we had a voice and could lobby for the changes we need. With so many empty units in town we want to see new investment coming in and for us all to make cost savings where we can.'

BACKING BUSINESS

Vote 'YES' and the BID can deliver:

- An influential lobbying group, working on behalf of businesses to ensure that your views are heard and represented at the highest level by all relevant agencies.
- A way to save your business money through negotiating with providers of recycling, trade waste, insurance and banking charges to drive down costs of these contracts, ensuring you don't see any reduction in the high standard of service, and critically, saving you time and money.
- Regular information about the business environment by publishing updates so you are kept aware of information and opportunities which may impact your business. This will include but will not be limited to, information relating to planning applications, grants that you can access, business openings and closures.
- The source of information and key contacts to link you with the right people or organisations that can assist you.

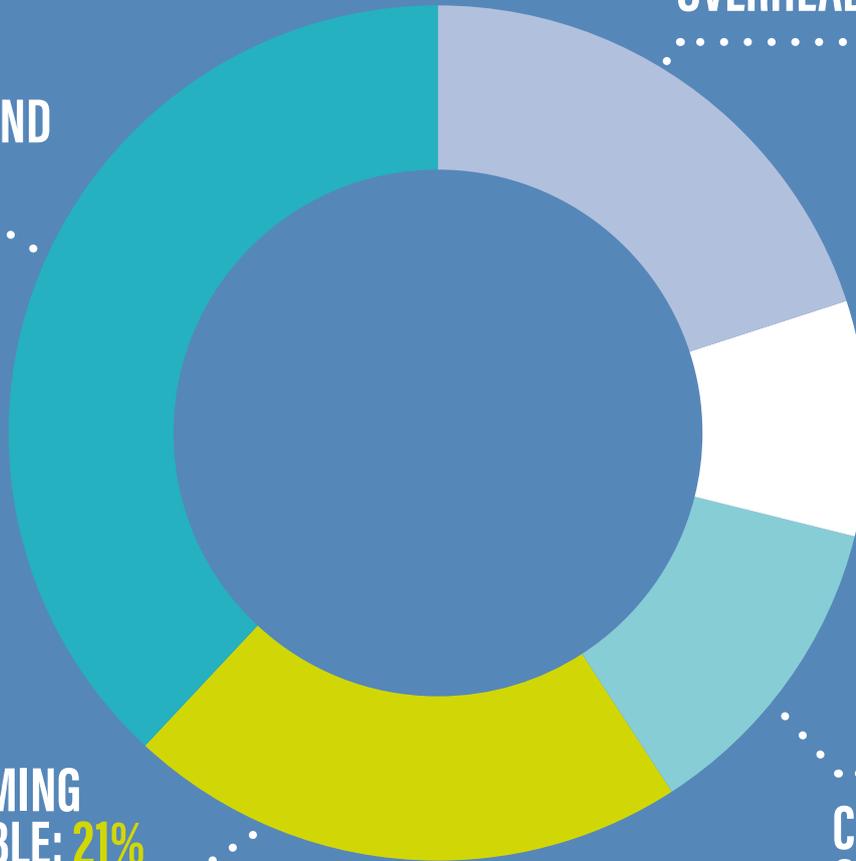
**MARKETING,
PROMOTION AND
EVENTS: 38%**

OVERHEADS: 20%

**BACKING
BUSINESS: 9%**

**SAFE, WELCOMING
AND ACCESSIBLE: 21%**

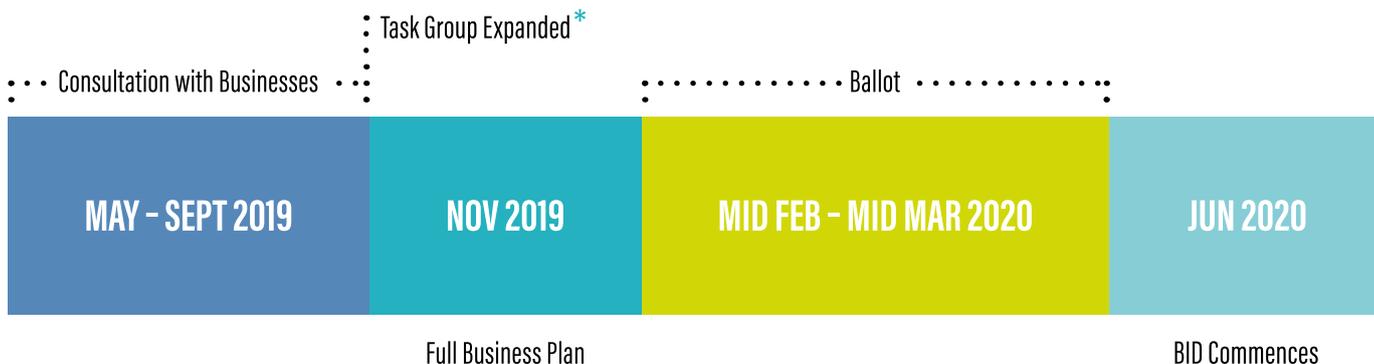
**CLEAN AND
GREEN: 12%**



WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The timeline gives you an idea of how the BID Development will progress. What we want you to do now is look through this Draft Summary Business Plan and give us your feedback. We want your views and comments on whether the priorities and services we are proposing and the resources allocated are right. Is there anything we have missed or should be particularly concentrating on?

Let us know, as all responses will be considered whilst we prepare the final and more detailed Full Business Plan. Please send your comments to **sue@themosaicpartnership.co.uk** by 11th October.



* Please let us know if you would like to take an active role on the BID Task Group, which requires the equivalent of half a day per month.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are BIDs?

BIDs are an arrangement whereby businesses come together and decide which improvements they feel could be made in their town or city centre, and also how they will implement these improvements and what it will cost them. BIDs are financed and controlled by the businesses within the selected area. A BID will deliver additional priorities and services to those already provided by public bodies.

Why do businesses support BIDs?

A BID is a mechanism which allows businesses to raise a sum of money to manage and deliver priorities that they have identified and believe will improve their trading environment, ultimately increasing trade for those businesses who are paying for the improvements.

How is a BID monitored?

Like any good business plan, specific key performance indicators (KPIs) are set and performance is monitored against the KPIs by the BID board. The BID Company is answerable to the businesses that pay the BID levy, and will be required to monitor and inform its members on its progress towards the agreed KPIs.

How does an area become a BID?

Normally a 'BID Task Group' is set up which is responsible for putting together a detailed business plan setting out the priorities it aims to deliver on behalf of the businesses in the BID area. This is based on a detailed consultation process with businesses. The business plan will include the priorities, cost, delivery guarantees, performance indicators and the management structure. A confidential postal vote is held, all the businesses that would pay the BID levy get a vote. To become a BID a majority of those that vote must be in favour by number and rateable value. A successful BID then has a mandate for a maximum of 5 years after which the BID would need to seek re-ballot.

Who pays for a BID?

Once priorities and services have been agreed by businesses, along with how they are going to be delivered and managed, they are costed up and set out in a detailed business plan. The cost to each business is worked out on a pro rata basis. 'This is called the 'BID LEVY'. An independent and formal vote then takes place on the agreed priorities and services and if the majority vote is YES then ALL within the BID area HAVE to pay. The BID levy is normally paid by the occupiers of a property. In addition, BIDs can draw in other voluntary funding, grants and 'in kind' contributions to supplement the BID levy.

Does this mean the Local Authority will stop delivering services?

BID money can only be used to carry out priorities/ services ADDITIONAL to those that public services have to provide. Prior to the BID Business Plan being produced, the current services being delivered by all public agencies including the Local Authority and Police are benchmarked. This means the Local Authority has to continue to deliver that level of service for the period of the BID. The BID company can agree to provide additional resources to deliver a higher level of service over and above the benchmarked level if this is what businesses have identified.



**For more information about
the BID please visit our website:**

WWW.WALTONBID.CO.UK



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