

# THE 17TH ANNUAL BID SURVEY AND REPORT 2023

# British BIDs<sup>TM</sup>

Leading the BID industry

## Business Improvement Districts in the British Isles



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# Business Improvement Districts in the British Isles: The 2023 National Survey

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND KEY HEADLINES

The active BID community in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Ireland totalled 335 [332 in the last survey] at the end of September 2023, representing 132,962 [121,485] businesses, investing £150,316,106 [£144,735,669], into their local economies.

This is an increase of three BIDs, 11,477 businesses and £5,580,437, 3.8% percentage points in income growth over last year.

There continues to be an increasing differentiation in the types of BIDs, as different communities and groups of business respond to a changing environment. BIDs in tourism, food and drink, and area-wide BIDs, as well as Business Park, Industrial and Cultural and Commercial BIDs are becoming increasingly evident.

However, it is clear that the initial fast growth has come to an end and a more steady development is now the norm.

8 [2022, 10] new BIDs came into being in the past twelve months since September 1, 2022, with a continuing range of different types of BIDs evident, this is fewer than previous years

There are currently 61 [2022, 53] BIDs that are in the development stage, with ballots coming up in the next year or so. This is an increase on the number that were developing in the last survey. This suggests a continued enthusiasm and increasing perceived benefit to local business communities.

There has been a total of 986 BIDs ballots since 2004, of which 861 have been successful, a success rate of 87%.

The analysis of ballot outcomes by term of current 335 successful BID ballots suggest that success increases with each term, as BID teams get more confident at meeting the needs of their levy payers.

84 BIDs have come to ballot in the past 12 months, an average of seven a month; either new or at various stages of their term, giving a sense of the workload of the national head office levy payers who cast their votes across the whole country.

Eight new BIDs came into being during the past 12 months; and although the turnout figures were four percentage points below the 12-month norm, the votes in favour and by RV were both above the 12-month norm, 4.2 and 5.8 percentage points respectively.

6 BIDs failed at ballot in the last twelve months. Of the 6, all but 1 failed by number of votes, and 3 also failed by the rateable value, suggesting an increased involvement of the national levy payers, for whom BIDs are now a serious investment decision for their head offices.

Most local authorities were very supportive at ballot, with most BIDs ranking their local authorities with scores of between 50-100

BIDs were asked if they had had problems with ballot papers in their ballot; and 50% had had problems, and from the 70 BID ballots in the survey, the average was some 10% of ballot papers lost, with some losing 25%

The average turnout % for all the ballots is 45.1%,

Of 335 BIDs, 299 [89%] were using a % levy rate, with a median at 1.5%

The distribution of hereditaments suggests that half of all BIDs have fewer than 385 hereditaments, the largest number is 2500 and currently nine BIDs have more than 1000 hereditaments.

The total number of hereditaments across all BIDs in the survey this year is 132,962 [121,485], an increase of 11,477 from 2022.

From the population of 335 active BIDs, the total BID levy income raised and spent across the British Isles is £150,316,106

Levy income and expenditure varies widely across the BIDs, with the smallest collecting and spending £14,639 and the largest £4,100,000 per annum.

Half of all the BIDs – having a levy income of £294,278 [285,691] or less; and 75% of all BIDs having a levy income of £522,034 [£486,556] or less.

There are now 31 BIDs with levy incomes of £1million or over; all are in the major cities, where rateable values and thus income is higher; and the highest levy amount is £4,100,000.

Most BIDs [73%] also generate non-levy income from more formal sources, such as entrepreneurial activities, grant income, government funding, or local authority grants.

The median figure for additional external income is £46,061 [£60,000] and the highest amount is £4,848,485n [£930,000]; the total estimated additional income is £21,758,676 [£27,111,662], amounting to an increase of 15% of BID income across the country.

Some 35% [2022 48%, 2021 51.9%] of the BID industry reported investment income by way of projects and government funding as a direct result of their BID activity, although others recognised investment has been achieved but it is very difficult to quantify. It is now very much part of the role of BIDs to work with Town Fund and levelling up applications, but the amounts of money and the time scales are not easy to track. From the Town Funding alone some £3.6 billion is being spent over a five-year period, affecting some 50% BIDs.

The data suggest that some £316,006,806 [2022 £353,846,754] is going into business communities each year from outside investment.

The five-year data for all BID income and thus investment expenditure is a positive story, a current projection of £488,081,588 showing growth in levy income but reduced additional entrepreneurial income and leveraged inward investment

This year 2023 24% are applying an annual inflation factor, a further reduction of 4 percentage points. Now that inflation is becoming more evident, we might expect to see an increase in this factor.

Most BIDs aim to ensure that no levy payment is less than the cost of collection, others keep their threshold at or below the level of the current government Small Business Rate Relief threshold of either £12,000 [59%] or the tapered figure of £15,000 [75%].

Most BIDs opt to give charities and other key players a discount on their levy, although this is becoming less prevalent over time, particularly in relation to discounts on commercially trading charity shops

10% of BIDs have no collection charge made to them by their local authority. This is a reduction

from last year, where some 30% of BIDs were not paying for collection. The median collection costs figure – that which 50% of BIDs are below – is £10,000.

The median Levy collection rate is 92% although the lowest was 55% collected.

BIDs employed some 944 [2022, 993.58; 2021 1,040] full time equivalent staff, a decrease of 48 on 2022.

The gender balance amongst BID chief executives and managers, based on simple forename analysis, has moved very strongly, from almost exactly 50:50 male:female in 2019 to 46:54 male:female in 2021, and in 2022 44:55, and in 2023 it is 46:54 male:female.

From the survey response, external staff, that is staff working for the BID but not on payroll, are used by 78% of BIDs, [2022,73%; 2021, 60%]; this includes staff working in security, marketing, and general operational activities including rangers and other staff.

One trend is for BIDs to be fully managed by external consultants, thus saving direct staffing costs and ensuring a wide range of expertise that can be called upon. Some 18.6% [2022, 15% ;2021, 20%] of the sample described themselves as being managed in this fashion and it will be interesting to see if BID Boards continue this trend in the future.

There are 2988 members of BID boards across the British Isles [2022, 2,807; 2021,2,754],

86% [2022, 84% ;2021 78%] of BIDs reported having property owners involved in their boards, with a median number of 1 and a maximum of 13; and there are 494 [2022, 522] property owner board members across the British Isles

88% of BIDs have Local Authority representation, and there are 252 Local Authority board members across the industry.

The median number of women on boards being 3, and an estimated 1018 [2022, 970 2021, 882] women board members across the industry, this still only amounts to 34% of all BID board members

There are 288 [2022, 213; 2021 177] black, Asian and minority ethnic directors across the British Isles, with the highest number on a board being 6

92% of BIDs make their accounts publicly available to their levy payers. Of course, Companies House requires that all registered companies lodge accounts with them.

Each BID needs an operating agreement with its local authority; 96% have, but some still don't have them.

76% of BIDs feel that their agreements work well or moderately well; but some 20% feel that they don't,

Interestingly, 65% of BIDs already had some local community involvement on their boards, and 60% of those were using their local Councillors to fulfil this role at the moment.

On the other hand, some 20% of BIDs were very committed to the philosophy of businesses are paying the levy and should be allowed to run the BID as they needed and expected to.

44% of BIDs were engaging with ESG issues for either themselves or their levy payers

BIDs are still evolving in their thinking on support for professional services, with 51% [2022, 55%;



2021,58%] of the respondents feeling it was relevant. There were examples of BIDs providing support for their service and professional sector levy paying members, in the areas of utilities cost reduction – waste, power, recycling – and in the areas of free wireless, Wi-Fi support and broadband provision

41% [2022, 24%] of BIDs are very concerned over the impact of these increasingly relaxed development rights

Most BIDs (68.4%) are involved in their Business Crime Reduction Partnerships, Pub and Shop Watch and other local policing projects

The majority of support is around Pub and Shop watch, rangers and wardens, street pastors, policing and PCSOs, radios, cameras and software packages etc.

Many BIDs are also involved in wider projects around taxi marshals, Betfair support, Best Bar None awards etc.

The survey data suggest that some 30% of all BIDs are engaged in one or other of the government levelling up project lines, with some involved in several, although 20% are not expecting to receive any funding.

## **THE PURPOSE OF THE 17TH NATIONAL SURVEY 2023**

The twelve months since the last survey continue to be turbulent; along with the continuing effects of the Covid-19, other major concerns are emerging. Climate change, with a major heatwave in the summers of 2022 and 2023, a war in Ukraine, with a concomitant impact on fuel and food supplies and prices, a further change of political leadership in Great Britain & NI, the impact of Brexit, and an increase in inflation. The government brought in an abortive growth plan<sup>1</sup> at the end of 2022, and then some major perturbations as the government moved away from the growth agenda and focussed on stability under a new Prime Minister and Chancellor.

All this has had an impact on the business community and thus Business Improvement Districts.

At the same time, government has indicated that it is considering a review of BID arrangements<sup>2</sup>. British BIDs [Bb], alongside The BID Foundation, Institute of Place Management, and the Association of Town and City Management have been responding to this review with representatives from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and all four organisations have worked on a joint submission to the Government<sup>3</sup>.

Thus, and this year in particular, the purpose and uses of this 17th annual national survey are important. As ever, it allows a snapshot to be taken of the BID community in the British Isles for policy makers, both local and national; it allows chief executives of BIDs to benchmark themselves against their peers and colleagues; it allows boards of BIDs to both benchmark and identify key performance indicators for their BIDs; it allows levy payers and members of BIDs to ensure that they are getting all the services that they should, and it allows new and developing BIDs to design their services and operations in the most effective fashion.

It is designed to be used by different audiences for different needs; to be dipped into when needed, rather than a continuous piece of text and we hope it gives a sense of continuity to BID colleagues at this difficult time.

The previous thirteen reports, from 2010 onward, are available on the British BIDs [Bb] website<sup>4</sup>.

## **THE DATA SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY 2023**

There are two sources for this survey: the core data for the whole BID industry, and a qualitative sample of the BID industry.

### **The core data for the whole BID industry**

The core data for all BIDs across the British Isles are gathered throughout the year by way of detailed news, social media and literature searching, which is used for the weekly British BIDs Ballot Watch.

These are then collated and made available on the Bb Index on the British BIDs Website. For BIDs coming up to ballot, the business plans are collected and analysed to ensure the data are as accurate as possible. These data have been gathered consistently since this survey began, and the total population is now 988 records of individual BIDs and their ballots.

These data sets change regularly, as ballots take place every week, and information is then uploaded as it becomes available, but the survey has tried to bring together as much relevant data as possible at the data collection date of October 12, 2023. Throughout this report, any data from the previous year's survey are provided in the text in [ ... ]for comparative purposes.

## **A qualitative survey**

There was also an individual BID questionnaire, collecting more qualitative data, using the on-line service Alchemer. This was issued by personal email in July 2023 to the 332 managers or chief executives of all the BIDs in the British Isles for whom contact details were available. BIDs were also contacted by email and telephone during the survey to remind them of the deadlines and the value of the survey. The closing date was October 6, 2023.

111 [33%] BID managers or chief executives provided these further qualitative data by responding to this on-line questionnaire. Although response rates vary slightly in each of the various sections, as BIDs for a variety of reasons, primarily pressure of work, were more or less able to provide full data, we believe that they provide an accurate picture of the state of the BID industry.

## ***The analysis***

The report is very consciously data focused, showing the medians and distributions of key data sets, providing histograms and pie charts of the relevant data so that the distributions can be seen easily and clearly. For many of the data sets the median – the position mid-way along the data distribution and thus representing the level below which half of all BIDs are positioned – is often the most useful.

## Active BIDs in the British Isles

The active BID community in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Ireland totalled 335 [332 in the last survey] at the end of September 2023, representing 132,962 [121,485] businesses, investing £150,316,106 [£144,735,669], into their local economies.

This is an increase of three BID, 11,477 businesses and £5,580,437, 3.8% percentage points in income growth over last year.

After the Covid-19 pandemic there were clearly concerns about the survival of BID, particularly those coming to ballot following the lockdowns. These fears were unfounded and after a dip during the pandemic year the number of BID has increased over pre-pandemic levels.

BID are distributed widely across the five administrations of the British Isles<sup>5</sup>; a Google map shows this spread; from Lerwick in the Shetlands to St Ives in Cornwall



Figure 1 Map of BID in the British Isles

## Types of Business Improvement District

There continues to be an increasing differentiation in the types of BIDs, as different communities and groups of business respond to a changing environment. BIDs in tourism, food and drink, and area-wide BIDs, as well as Business Park, Industrial and Cultural and Commercial BIDs are becoming increasingly evident.

British BIDs has regular national meetings of groupings of BIDs in both Industrial<sup>6</sup> and Coastal areas<sup>7</sup> which are well attended and very successful in bringing together specific and specialist issues.

Table 1: Types of active BID across the British Isles on October 12, 2023

BID TYPE	COUNT	NO OF HEREDITAMENTS	LEVY INCOME
Accommodation	2	78	£954,000
Area Bid	11	4,091	£13,272,559
Business Park	12	2,444	£3,016,140
City Centre	32	21,753	£27,575,779
Commercial	4	1,624	£6,667,521
Culture & Commerce	1	450	£1,302,441
Destination	4	3,727	£2,261,602
Digital BID	1	386	£70,000
Food & Drink	1	35	£14,639
Industrial	16	2,971	£2,428,436
Industrial Park	3	516	£245,000
Leisure	2	1,200	£2,477,811
Mixed Area	16	5,272	£14,287,834
Property Owner	4	268	£6,979,779
Retail	1	418	£745,623
Retail & Leisure	3	1,601	£5,197,454
Tourism	7	3,505	£2,185,450
Town Centre	213	82,203	£60,028,886
Town Centre/Tourism	2	420	£605,152
Total	335	132,962	£150,316,106

## Countries and regions

Clearly BIDs are local, reflecting the needs, aspirations, and numbers of their local business communities. Nonetheless, it is useful to see the key distributions across the British Isles and the more detailed regional data give some sense of the wide geographical spread of BIDs.

Table 2: National and regional data for active BIDs

REGION	COUNT	NO OF HEREDITAMENTS	LEVY INCOME
East Midlands	10	5,657	£4,650,752
East of England	29	10,922	£9,706,441
Greater London	75	23,792	£60,056,636
Ireland	5	7,013	£4,991,213
North East England	6	2,870	£2,939,617
North West England	34	11,256	£11,110,569
Northern Ireland	8	3,088	£2,993,228
Scotland	34	10,846	£6,333,121
South East England	40	16,731	£14,135,545
South West England	32	13,812	£10,147,836
Wales	14	4,246	£3,127,024
West Midlands	31	12,951	£11,528,461
Yorkshire and the Humber	17	9,778	£8,595,663
Total	335	132,962	£150,316,106

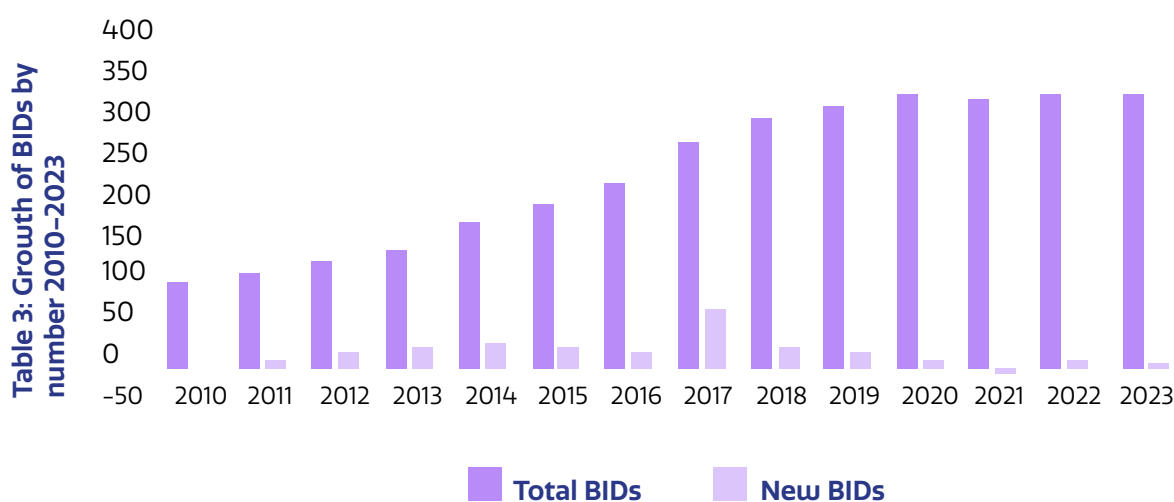
## Annual increase in BID numbers 2010–2023

The emergence of new BIDs has been impressive since the first BID became operational in 2005. In the past 13 years new BIDs have come into existence in every year except the Covid-19 year of 2021, albeit with a slightly varied annual growth rate, and the data is presented here both as a table and a graph. However, it is clear that the initial fast growth has come to an end and a more steady development is now the norm.

Table 3: Growth of BIDs by number 2010–2023

SURVEY YEAR	NUMBER OF BIDs	GROWTH IN BIDs	TOTAL LEVY INVESTMENT	TOTAL HEREDITAMENTS
2010	102		£23,483,888	
2011	112	10	£22,085,567	19,353
2012	129	17	£39,883,454	54,110
2013	150	21	£51,847,486	64,150
2014	179	29	£63,000,000	59,771
2015	203	28	£80,124,969	71,703
2016	227	37	£78,659,124	78,549
2017	283	26	£99,971,741	106,262
2018	305	29	£110,575,380	120,735
2019	321	18	£125,205,608	128,785
2020	329	6	£132,493,286	133,163
2021	324	-5	£134,979,983	125,023
2022	332	8	£144,735,669	121,485
2023	335	3	£150,316,106	132,962

## BIDs in the British Isles 2010–2023



## New BIDs 2022–23

8 [2022, 10] new BIDs came into being in the past twelve months since September 1, 2022, with a continuing range of different types of BIDs evident, this is fewer than previous years and the growth of BIDs may be slowing

Table 4: New BIDs in 2023 by type

TERMS AND OUTCOMES	BALLOT RESULTS
Accommodation	2
Area Bid	2
Town Centre	4
Grand Total	8

## Developing BIDs 2023

The number of new BIDs being developed is a key strategic issue and the story here remains strong. There are currently 61 [2022, 53] BIDs that are in the development stage, with ballots coming up in the next year or so. This is an increase on the number that were developing in the last survey, some of last year’s survey have come to successful ballot and new developing BIDs have emerged. This suggests a continued enthusiasm and increasing perceived benefit to local business communities.

There is always some complexity in identifying a developing BID; for this work, we have taken notifications from the developing BIDs themselves, and have searched the literature, particularly local newspapers, as widely as possible.

These 61 developing BIDs vary by country and region, with both Scotland and Wales seeing them as key drivers of new development.

Table 5: Developing BIDs by Country and Region

REGION	BID STATUS
East Midlands	3
East of England	5
Greater London	8
North West England	3
Scotland	13
South East England	12
South West England	5
Wales	3
West Midlands	4
Yorkshire and the Humber	3
Grand Total	61



## **BID Loan Fund: Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC)**

The BID Loan Fund was an initiative established in 2013 to assist with the development of new BIDs in town and city BIDs in England. It is currently not available, although British BIDs are pressing for a renewal and the scheme is still being reviewed by DLUHC.

The number of loans that were awarded was 33 and the amount of loans granted was £1,086,135 in total. The scheme was administered on behalf of the then Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) by British BIDs through the National BIDs Advisory Board. Funding methods are also available in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, under different funding mechanisms. Upon a successful ballot outcome, loans were repaid from levy receipts and, as repayments were made, further tranches of loans could be made available. Thus, over the past few years 11 tranches were allocated.

## **Ballot matters**

### **Ballots and outcomes 2004–2023**

BIDs are normally established by quinquennial ballots; in England, Scotland Wales and NI, each BID must gain a simple majority of the votes cast, as well as a majority of the rateable values [RV] of all those votes cast. The relevant local authority, or its nominated agent, runs the ballot; in order to continue beyond each term, a further ballot is also required, normally, nowadays, every five years. Thus, with 335 BIDs, there will be some 65 ballots a year, an average of just over five per month. Most ballots tend to take place in the spring and the autumn as they are often timed to fit in with the local authority electoral cycle or the start of the financial year.

The ballot criteria in Scotland require four criteria to be achieved; the turnout must be greater than 25% by both rateable value and number of voters, and approval must be greater than 50% by ballot and RV.

### **All Ballots all BIDs 2004 – 2023**

The data on Ballots and their outcomes are always complex to map, but since the legislation in 2004, our data suggest that there has been a total of 986 BIDs ballots, of which 861 have been successful, a success rate of 87%. Some BIDs have gone to ballot at least once, and some several times as they continue for further terms. Some BIDs have ceased mid-term and others have ceased at the end of a term, by not going to ballot. 101 ballots have failed out of the 986 ballots – a failure rate of 10.2%, but of those 101, some 20 have then gone on to a successful ballot.

Table 6: All BIDs ballot outcomes 2004-2023 showing outcomes by %

TERMS AND OUTCOMES	BALLOT RESULTS	TURNOUT	IN FAVOUR BY NUMBER	IN FAVOUR BY RV
1ST TERM	380	43.0	74.0	75.9
2ND TERM	281	46.1	75.5	79.9
3RD TERM	140	46.3	82.1	85.1
4TH TERM	54	45.4	82.2	87.9
5TH TERM	6	41.7	88.2	90.2
Alteration Ballot	1			
Ceased end of 1st term	9	41.9	71.3	73.1
Ceased end of 2nd term	1	46.0	76.0	63.0
Ceased in 1st Term	8	34.0	64.6	72.6
Ceased In 2nd Term	1	55.0	80.0	86.0
Challenge Upheld	1	31.0	68.0	90.0
Challenged and a rebalot held	1		51.0	55.0
UNSUCCESSFUL	96	46.4	46.9	47.5
Unsuccessful at ballot for second term	2		55.4	65.6
Unsuccessful at ballot for fourth term	1			
Unsuccessful at second term ballot	2	51.0	48.9	68.4
Did not go to ballot.	1			
Ballot suspended due to COVID-19	1			
Total	986	44.7	73.3	76.4

## Ballots for Current BIDs

The analysis of ballot outcomes by term of current 335 successful BID ballots suggest that success increases with each term, as BID teams get more confident at meeting the needs of their levy payers.

However, the data for the current 335 BIDs, show that whilst the ballot outcomes by number are 5.6 and by RV are 6.3 percentage points above the 18-year averages, the turnout is 2.3 percentage points below this long-term norm, reflecting inter alia issues with postal delivery of ballot papers, covid and working from home.

Table 7: Ballot data for all the current 335 BIDs

CURRENT TERM	NUMBER OF BIDs	TURN OUT %	IN FAVOUR BY NUMBER %	IN FAVOUR BY RV %
1ST TERM	62	38.0	75.2	79.5
2ND TERM	137	42.4	76.3	80.2
3RD TERM	82	44.0	83.8	86.2
4TH TERM	48	45.3	81.6	87.2
5TH TERM	6	41.7	88.2	90.2
Grand Total	335	42.5	78.9	82.7

## Ballots during the past twelve months 2022–23

84 BIDs have come to ballot in the past 12 months, an average of seven a month, either new or at various stages of their term, giving a sense of the workload of the national head office levy payers who cast their votes across the whole country.

6 ballots were unsuccessful in the past twelve months, resulting in a failure rate of 7%; this failure rate, lower than the 18-year average, is a useful measure of the value that many levy payers put on their BIDs.

Table 8: BIDs which have come to ballot in the last 12 months.

TERMS AND OUTCOMES	BALLOT RESULTS	TURN OUT	IN FAVOUR BY NUMBER	IN FAVOUR BY RV
1ST TERM	8	36.5	80.5	87.2
2ND TERM	29	38.4	73.5	81.2
3RD TERM	23	44.5	84.1	86.1
4TH TERM	14	45.3	77.6	84.6
5TH TERM	4	41.1	82.8	85.6
UNSUCCESSFUL	6	40.5	50.1	51.4
Total	84	41.4	76.3	81.4

The ballot data for many of the BIDs, particularly those in their fourth and fifth terms give a very positive picture of success – approval ratings of 98% and 99% by both number and rateable value are very positive.

### New BIDs ballot data 2022–23

Eight new BIDs came into being during the past 12 months; and although the turnout figures were four percentage points below the 12-month norm, the votes in favour and by RV were both above the 12-month norm, 4.2 and 5.8 percentage points respectively.

Table 9: New BIDs Ballot data 2022–23

Terms and outcomes	BALLOT RESULT	TURNOUT	IN FAVOUR BY NUMBER	IN FAVOUR BY RV
Accommodation	2	49.4	80.2	75.1
Area Bid	2	34.7	82.7	87.7
Town Centre	4	33.8	79.5	90.0
Total	8	36.5	80.5	87.2

### Failed BIDs last twelve months 2022–23

6 BIDs failed at ballot in the last twelve months. Of the 6, all but 1 failed by number of votes, and 3 also failed by the rateable value, suggesting an increased involvement of the national levy payers, for whom BIDs are now a serious investment decision for their head offices.

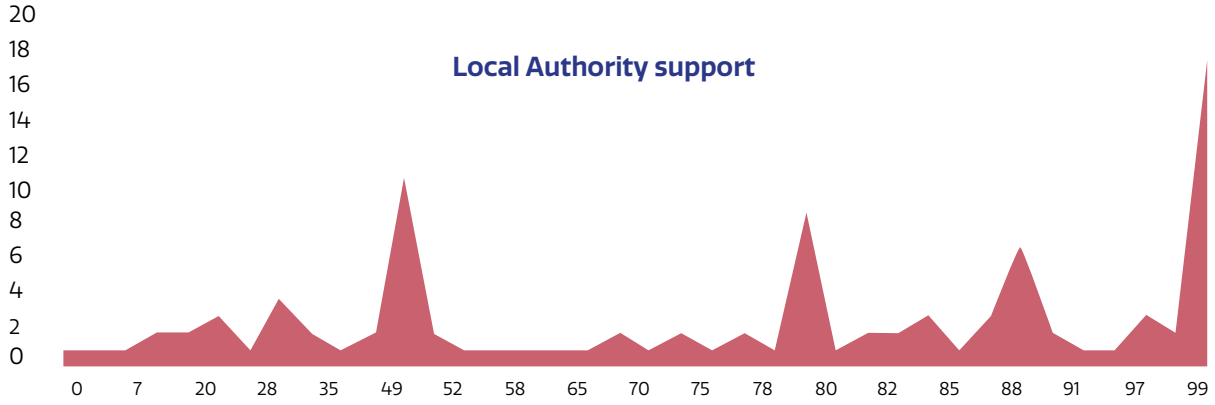
Table 10: Failed ballots 2022–2023

Terms and outcomes	BALLOT RESULT	TURNOUT	IN FAVOUR BY NUMBER	IN FAVOUR BY RV
Accommodation	1	59.0	44.6	75.8
Area Bid	4	35.8	52.9	45.5
Town Centre	1		44.1	50.3
Total	6	40.5	50.1	51.4

## Local Authority support in ballots

BIDs were asked in the survey to rank 0-100 how they perceived the level of support from their local authorities in their ballots. Most local authorities were very supportive at ballot, with most BIDs ranking their local authorities with ranking scores of between 50-100, and many were ranked at 100. The median feeling of levels of support was 80/100; a very positive feeling.

Figure 3 Perceived local authority support in the last year



## Ballot papers

BIDs were asked if they had had problems with ballot papers in their ballot. 50% had had problems, and from the 70 BID ballots in the survey, the median was some 15% of ballot papers lost, with an upper quartile losing 25%

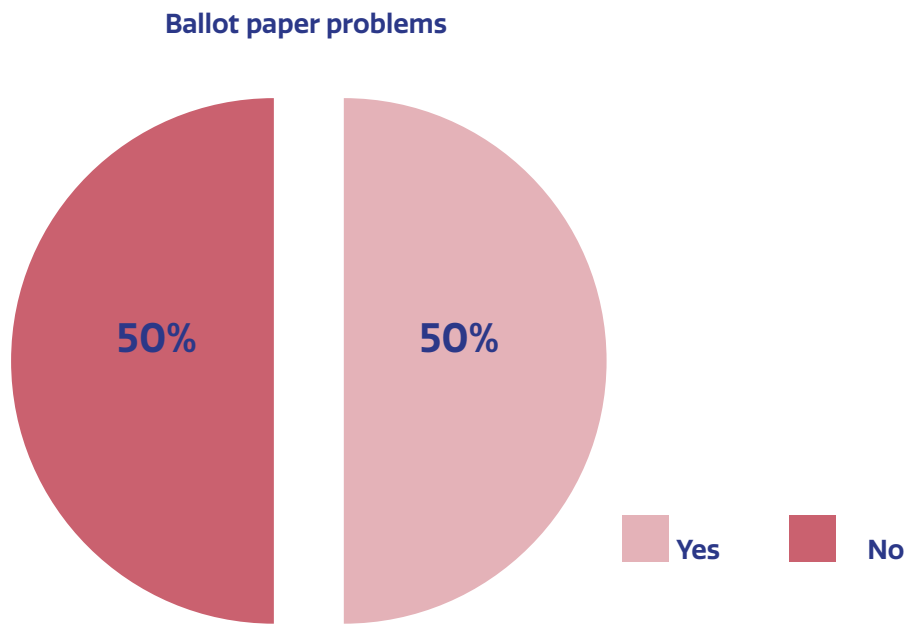


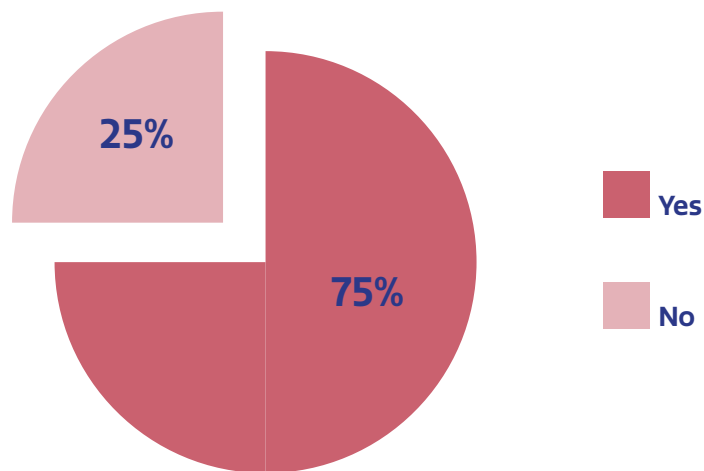
Figure 5 Estimated lost ballot papers

BALLOT PAPERS LOST	%
Best	0
Lower quartile	10
Median	15
Upper quartile	22

## Obtaining voter data

Most BIDs seem to be confident that they were easily able to produce a list of voters from their list of levy payers?

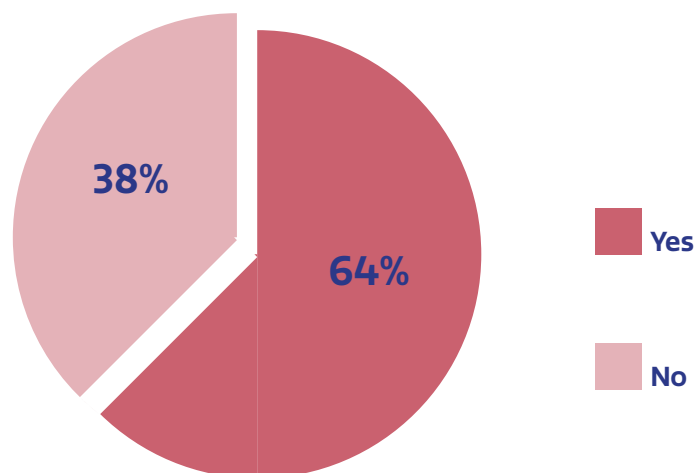
Figure 6 Producing voter lists



## Engaging with National levy payers

And similarly, most BIDs felt that they were able to engage with national levy payers for the ballot.

Figure 7 Engaging with national levy payers.



## Ballot turnout for all current BIDs

A key performance measure for BIDs at ballot is the % turnout, with local and national levy payers keen to ensure transparency and accountability. Whilst the average turnout % for all the ballots is 45.1%, analysis of the turnouts for the current 335 live BIDs allows a more granular picture to emerge.

Data over the past 18 years suggests that the turnout performance is reasonable, with half of all the current BIDs obtaining a turnout of at least 41.73%, and 25% obtaining a turnout of at least 51.95%. The highest turnout was 83%.

As a national comparison, the turnout for the English Mayoral elections in 2021 was 26%, similar to the turnout of the other metro-mayor elections held in 2021. The average turnout in local elections in England in 2022 was 33.6%<sup>9</sup>. The average turnout for BIDs is thus some 10 percentage points better than English local authority elections.

One key factor in this is the number of hereditaments in a BID, along with the decisions on thresholds that each BID can make.

Table 11: Turnout measures % for all 335 current BIDs

MEASURE	%
Bottom quartile	34
Median	41
Top Quartile	50
Highest	83

## Most successful ballots 2004–2023

Some outcomes are truly excellent, with some very high figures for all three performance indicators. This table shows the averaged best result for the three key performance measures over the past 19 years. Interestingly, as ballot performance improves over terms, turnout reduces, possibly the result of increased confidence and an assumption of a positive outcome.

Table 12: The 'best' ballot data for any BID

TERMS	COUNT	MAX TURNOUT	MAX IN FAVOUR BY NUMBER	MAX IN FAVOUR BY RV
1ST TERM	380	88.0	98.0	99.4
2ND TERM	282	83.0	98.6	99.8
3RD TERM	140	80.0	100.0	100.0
4TH TERM	55	79.0	96.9	99.3
5TH TERM	6	51.0	99.5	99.7
Total	863	88.0	100.0	100.0

## Failed or ceasing BIDs 2004–2023

102 BIDs have failed in their ballots over nineteen years, 10.3% of all ballots held. Clearly, those which failed did not gather enough votes either by number and/or by RV.

Table 13: Failed BIDs at ballot 2004–2022

OUTCOME	BALLOTS	AVERAGE TURNOUT	AVERAGE IN FAVOUR BY NUMBER	AVERAGE OF IN FAVOUR BY RV
Challenge Upheld	1	31.0	68.0	90.0
Unsuccessful	10	39.7	46.1	49.9
Unsuccessful at ballot for fourth term	1			
Unsuccessful at second term ballot	17	48.4	48.0	54.8
Unsuccessful at first term ballot	64	47.2	46.6	47.6
Unsuccessful for new term	1	33.4	47.0	43.0
Unsuccessful Re-ballot for second term	1		36.0	
Unsuccessful at ballot for third term	1	31.0	67.0	46.6
Unsuccessful at second first term ballot	2	46.5	44.0	46.6
Unsuccessful at re-run ballot for a first term	2	56.0	64.0	42.0
Unsuccessful at ballot for third term	1		59.0	30.0
Unsuccessful Re-Run Ballot for a third term	1		47.8	40.6
Total	102	46.3	47.4	48.7

19 BIDs ceased during their term, or decided not to go to ballot, often a result of a loss of business or board enthusiasm or even a sense that their job was done.

Table 14 BIDs that ceased 2004–2023

	COUNT	AVERAGE TURNOUT	AVERAGE IN FAVOUR BY NUMBER	AVERAGE OF IN FAVOUR BY RV
Ceased end of 1st term	9	41.9	71.3	73.1
Ceased end of 2nd term	1	46.0	76.0	63.0
Ceased in 1st Term	8	34.0	64.6	72.6
Ceased In 2nd Term	1	55.0	80.0	86.0
Total	19	40.0	69.1	73.1



## Financial Matters

There are a range of financial matters that are vital to BIDs. This section presents data on all of them in turn.

### Levy Rate % for BIDs in 2023

The BID levy rate is, most usually, the multiplier of the non-domestic rateable value by which the levy amount is worked out and is therefore an important issue for BIDs and their members. This does not apply in Scotland or Ireland, where the legislation is different and more flexible. The Industry Criteria ask that up to 1.5% is the expected norm, with some allowances made for up to 2% in exceptional circumstances or smaller locations where rateable values are lower and therefore require a higher multiplier to achieve a viable budget.

For the current data, of 335 BIDs, 299 [89%] were using a % levy rate, with a median at 1.5%. The averages, maxima and minima of levy % across BIDs are narrow and suggests that the issue has become standardised across the industry with most exceptions being small industrial BIDs.

**Table 15: % Levy rates of 335 current BIDs by Term**

TERMS	AVERAGE BID LEVY
1ST TERM	1.5
2ND TERM	1.4
3RD TERM	1.5
4TH TERM	1.5
5TH TERM	1.7
Total	1.5

Again, the spread and deviation of levy rates shows a median of 1.5%, with the largest at 6%, and 7 BIDs with levy rate of greater than 2%. The larger RVs in London have allowed BIDs there to use lower % levy rates.

**Table 16: Range of levy % across 335 current BIDs**

MEASURE	LEVY %
Lowest	0.28
Bottom Quartile	1.2
Median	1.5
Upper Quartile	1.6
Highest	6

## Hereditaments

Hereditaments are those properties or assets owned by business levy payers or voters within the BID area and listed on the non-domestic rating list.

The distribution of hereditaments suggests that half of all BIDs have fewer than 385 hereditaments, the largest number is 2500 and currently nine BIDs have more than 1000 hereditaments.

**Table 17: The varying numbers of Hereditaments in current BIDs**

MEASURE	DATA
SMALLEST	35
Bottom Quartile	278
Median	385
Upper Quartile	544
Highest	2,500

## Different types of BIDs by hereditament, spend and %

**Table 18: Distribution of hereditaments across different types of BIDs**

ROW LABELS	NUMBER OF BIDs	NO OF HEREDITAMENTS	LEVY SPEND	% SPEND
Accommodation	2	78	£954,000	0.6%
Area Bid	11	4,091	£13,272,559	8.8%
Business Park	12	2,444	£3,016,140	2.0%
City Centre	32	21,753	£27,575,779	18.3%
Commercial	4	1,624	£6,667,521	4.4%
Culture & Commerce	1	450	£1,302,441	0.9%
Destination	4	3,727	£2,261,602	1.5%
Digital BID	1	386	£70,000	0.0%
Food & Drink	1	35	£14,639	0.0%
Industrial	16	2,971	£2,428,436	1.6%
Industrial Park	3	516	£245,000	0.2%
Leisure	2	1,200	£2,477,811	1.6%
Mixed Area	16	5,272	£14,287,834	9.5%
Property Owner	4	268	£6,979,779	4.6%
Retail	1	418	£745,623	0.5%
Retail & Leisure	3	1,601	£5,197,454	3.5%
Tourism	7	3,505	£2,185,450	1.5%
Town Centre	213	82,203	£60,028,886	39.9%
Town Centre/Tourism	2	420	£605,152	0.4%
Total	335	132,962	£150,316,106	100.0%

## Regional distribution of BIDs by hereditament, spend and %

The regional distribution of BIDs and hereditaments is becoming strategically important, as governments and administrations try to address the issues of high street decline and see BIDs as very much part of the answer.

Table 19: Distribution of BIDs, hereditaments, £ spent by region and %

Region	Count	No of HEREDITAMENTS	LEVY INCOME	% of National Levy spend
East Midlands	10	5,657	£4,650,752	3.1%
East of England	29	10,922	£9,706,441	6.5%
Greater London	75	23,792	£60,056,636	40.0%
Ireland	5	7,013	£4,991,213	3.3%
North East England	6	2,870	£2,939,617	2.0%
North West England	34	11,256	£11,110,569	7.4%
Northern Ireland	8	3,088	£2,993,228	2.0%
Scotland	34	10,846	£6,333,121	4.2%
South East England	40	16,731	£14,135,545	9.4%
South West England	32	13,812	£10,147,836	6.8%
Wales	14	4,246	£3,127,024	2.1%
West Midlands	31	12,951	£11,528,461	7.7%
Yorkshire and the Humber	17	9,778	£8,595,663	5.7%
Total	335	132,962	£150,316,106	100.0%

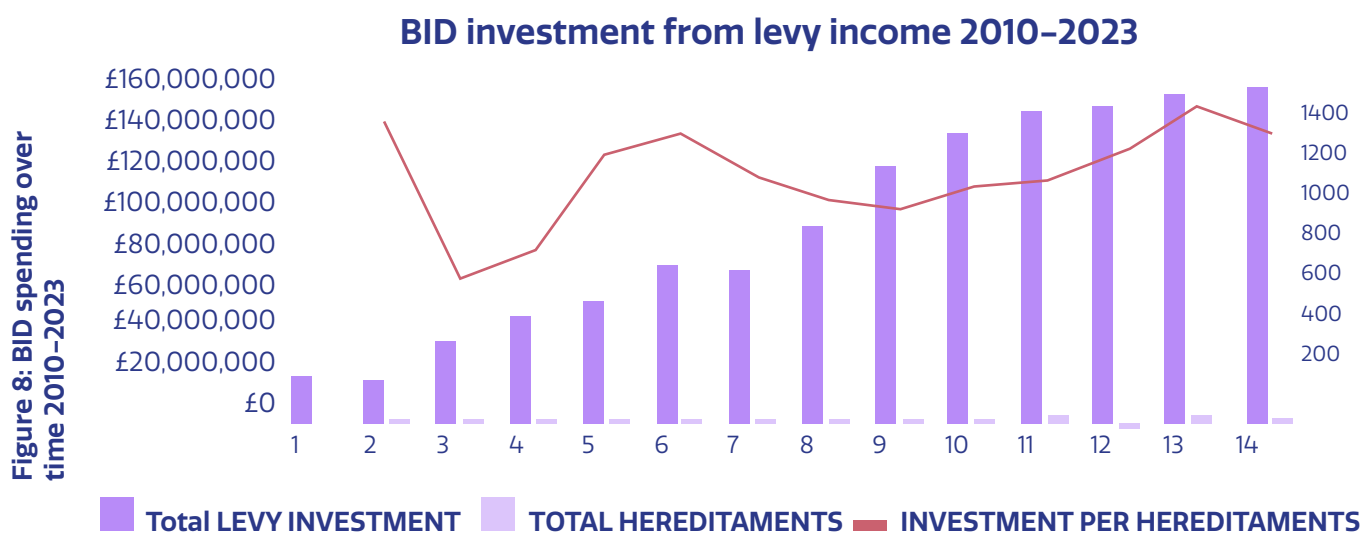
The total number of hereditaments across all BIDs in the survey this year is 132,962 [121,485], an increase of 11,477 from 2022.

Table 20: Annual growth of hereditaments over past 13 years

SURVEY YEAR	NUMBER OF BIDS	GROWTH IN BIDS	TOTAL LEVY INCOME	TOTAL HEREDITAMENTS	INVESTMENT PER HEREDITAMENT
2010	102		£23,483,888		
2011	112	10	£22,085,567	19,353	£1,141
2012	129	17	£39,883,454	54,110	£737
2013	150	21	£51,847,486	64,150	£808
2014	179	29	£63,000,000	59,771	£1,054
2015	203	28	£80,124,969	71,703	£1,117
2016	227	37	£78,659,124	78,549	£1,001
2017	283	26	£99,971,741	106,262	£941
2018	305	29	£110,575,380	120,735	£916
2019	321	18	£125,205,608	128,785	£972
2020	329	6	£132,493,286	133,163	£995
2021	324	-5	£134,979,983	125,023	£1,080
2022	332	8	£144,735,669	121,485	£1,191
2023	335	3	£150,316,106	132,962	£1,131

## Economic impact of BIDs

BIDs are about economic impact; improving their business districts so that businesses can perform better. Thus, the amount of money they invest is an important signifier and that amount, which is now considerable, has grown over time and by business. The data show a steady growth in the total BID investment from levy income over the past 14 years, but with some variation in the average amount per hereditament over the same period. It is possible that this variation per hereditament relates to a mixture of BID boundary changes, BIDs lifting their payment thresholds as they increasingly use the small business rates relief figure, growth in the size of BIDs, and improved data collection.



## Levy income and expenditure

The BID levy income – which is then spent back in the local business community – is the income collected directly via the mandatory BID levy and does not include any additional income.

From the population of 335 active BIDs, the total BID levy income raised and spent across the British Isles is £150,316,106, an increase over last year; some of this increase is due to RV changes and some is the growth in BID size and number.

Interestingly, the income per hereditament over time has fluctuated. There may be a number of reasons for this. Firstly, the RV changes and revaluations over the past few years have resulted in both regional and typological levy income changes; secondly, as BIDs have become more tactical in their ballot and governance planning, by way of higher thresholds and capped levy income, the income per hereditament may change at the global level.

### Levy income and expenditure by term

Levy income and expenditure varies widely across the BIDs, with the smallest collecting and spending £14,639 and the largest £4,100,000 per annum.

Apart from the 2020 Covid year<sup>10</sup>, there was a clear and steady growth in the number of BIDs over the past ten years, with a concomitant increase in hereditaments and thus the total levy income and expenditure,

**Table 21: Measures of levy income and expenditure by term**

CURRENT TERM	COUNT	NO OF HEREDITAMENTS	TOTAL LEVY SPEND	AVERAGE LEVY SPEND	MAX LEVY SPEND	MIN LEVY SPEND
1ST TERM	62	20,285	£26,986,436	£442,401	£4,092,320	£18,690
2ND TERM	137	54,448	£54,639,234	£398,827	£4,100,000	£14,639
3RD TERM	82	33,623	£36,454,643	£450,057	£2,450,000	£37,500
4TH TERM	48	21,706	£24,447,728	£543,283	£3,387,025	£66,840
5TH TERM	6	2,900	£7,788,065	£1,298,011	£4,100,000	£391,000
Total	335	132,962	£150,316,106	£455,503	£4,100,000	£14,639

The measures of the levy income of current BIDs continue to show a wide range, with the median figure – that is half of all the BIDs – having a levy income of £294,278 [285,691] or less; and 75% of all BIDs having a levy income of £522,034 [£486,556] or less.

**Table 22: Measures of BID annual levy spend £ across 335 active BIDs.**

MEASURE	AMOUNT £
Lowest	£14,639
Bottom Quartile	£148,000
Median	£294,278
Upper Quartile	£522,034
Highest	£4,100,000
Numbers of BIDs over £1,000,000	31

On the other hand, there are now 31 BIDs with levy incomes of £1million or over; all are in the major cities, where rateable values and thus income is higher; and the highest levy amount is £4,100,000.

### Mean levy per hereditament

Although it is a slightly hypothetical figure, from the data it is possible to identify the average levy per hereditament for BIDs in the British Isles; with 132,962 [121,485] hereditaments raising and spending £150,316,106 [£144,735,669], the average income and spend is £1,131 [£1,191] per hereditament, slightly more than the £1,080 per hereditament two years ago.

### Additional income

BIDs were asked to identify any additional income, that is a contribution made to the BID over and above the levy income. There is a variety of sources for such income and the report tries to identify some of them. Both last year and this year, during the Covid epidemic, and recently by way of Levelling up funding money was available from both central and local government by way of a range of grants; these have been counted.

### Voluntary contributions

Many BIDs [46%] received extra money from voluntary contributions, including local charities, local businesses outside the BID area, or businesses below the threshold. This is substantially less than previous surveys; in 2021, 61% of BIDs received voluntary contributions

**Do you Receive Voluntary Contributions %**

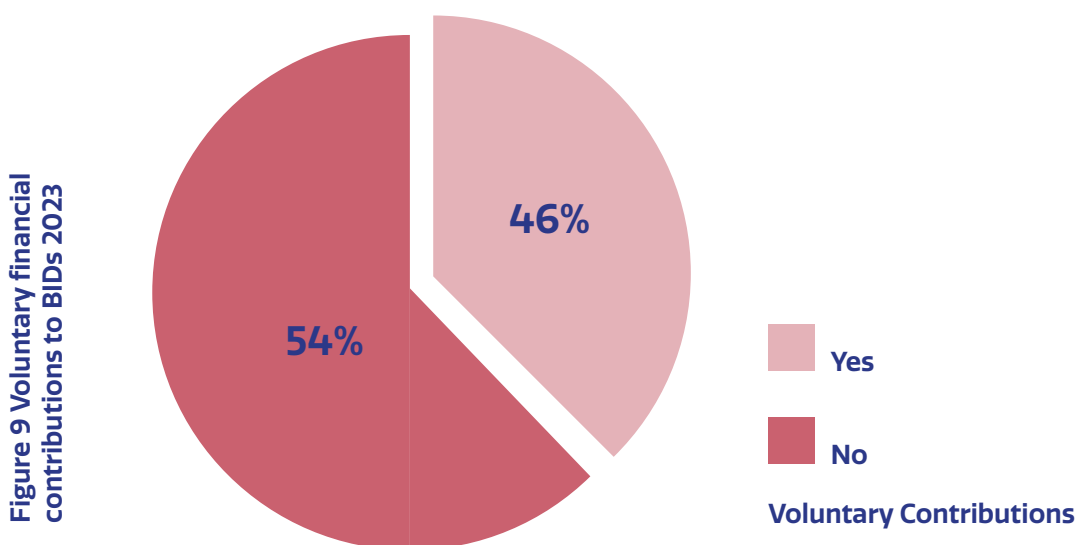
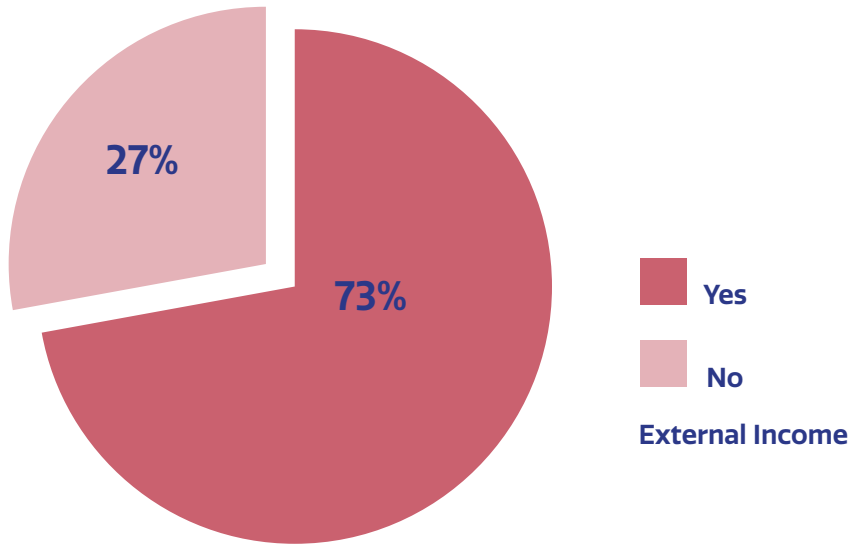


Figure 9 Voluntary financial contributions to BIDs 2023

## External non-levy income

Most BIDs [73%] also generate non-levy income from more formal sources, such as entrepreneurial activities, grant income, government funding, or local authority grants.

Figure 10 The % of BIDs generating external income.



The median figure for additional external income is £46,061 [ £60,000] and the highest amount is £4,848,485 [£930,000]; the total estimated additional income is £21,758,676 [£27,111,662], amounting to an increase of 15% of BID income across the country.

Table 23: Measures of additional income for BIDs

EXTERNAL INCOME	£
Lower Quartile	£17,424
Median	£46,061
Upper Quartile	£106,061
Maximum	£4,848,485
Total	£21,758,676

The projects funded by this external income are enormously varied, but this word cloud gives some sense of the sort of projects.

Figure 4 Externally funded BID projects



### Total BID spending 2023

Bringing together the two data sets – BID levy income and external income – allows a picture of the total actual investment by BIDs across the British Isles to emerge.

Table 24: Total BID funding 2023

MEASURE	LEVY EXPENDITURE	BID EXTERNAL MONIES	TOTAL INVESTMENT
Lower Quartile	£148,000	£18,182	£166,182
Median	£294,278	£46,061	£340,339
Upper Quartile	£522,034	£106,061	£628,095
Highest	£4,100,000	£4,848,485	£8,948,485
Total	£150,316,10	£21,723,423	£172,039,529

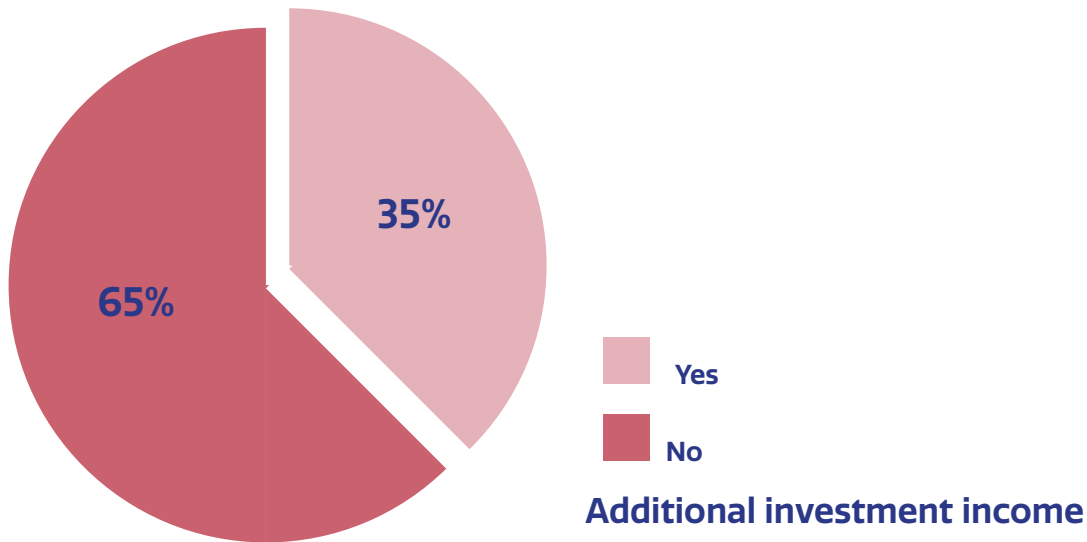
Summing this totality of BID levy funding, and additional funding, gives a figure of £172,039,529 [2022, £171,847,331, 2021, £152,713,787] as the total direct contribution from all BIDs into their business communities. This does give a reasonably prudent view of the total impact of BIDs as change agents across the British Isles.



## Inward investment income

Finally, beyond the direct additional income, BIDs were also invited to report on any inward investment income, which is financial investment as a direct result of the catalytic activity of the BID.

Figure 11 Inward investment 2023



Some 35% [2022, 48%; 2021, 51.9%] of the BID industry reported investment income by way of projects and government funding as a direct result of their BID activity, although others recognised investment has been achieved but it is very difficult to quantify. It is now very much part of the role of BIDs to work with Town Fund and levelling up applications, but the amounts of money and the time scales are not easy to track. From the Town Funding alone some £3.6 billion is being spent over a five-year period, affecting some 50% BIDs.

The data suggest that some £316,006,806 [2022, £353,846,754] is going into business communities each year from outside investment.

Table 25: Inward investment 2023

Additional investment income	
Lower Quartile	£85,076
Median	£257,576
Upper Quartile	£1,496,970
Total	£316,006,806

## Types of investment projects

BIDs worked on projects that leveraged some £316m last year; again the projects varies and the cloud map shows some of the outcomes.



## Total BID funding and investment 2018–2023

Whilst comparisons over time may not always be useful, because of variations in definitions and individual BIDs data definition, the five-year data for all BID income and thus investment expenditure is a positive story, a current projection of £488,081,588 showing growth in levy income but reduced additional entrepreneurial income and leveraged inward investment. This is a response to a post-covid and financially problematic world.

These data come from an amalgam of all BIDs data, married with the estimated additional and external income projected from the qualitative surveys of the past five years. 2020 data was not collected; at the height of the Covid-19 epidemic the data was just not available.

Table 26: Estimated total BID spending and investment 2018–2023

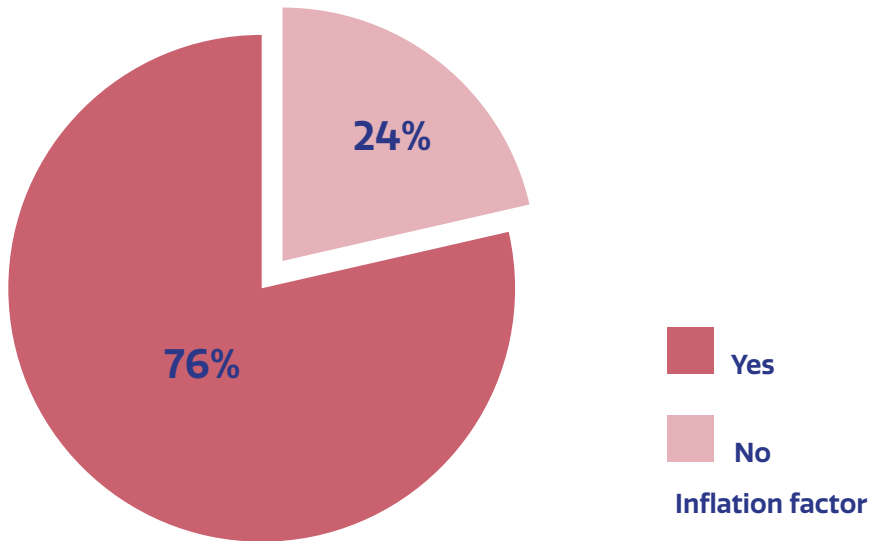
	2018	2019	2021	2023	2023
Levy income	£110,575,380	£125,205,608	£134,979,983	£144,735,669	£150,316,106
Additional income	£12,619,714	£14,511,719	£17,733,804	£27,111,662	£21,758,676
Inward investment	£51,941,026	£89,456,390	£360,000,000	£353,846,754	£316,006,806
Total BID figures	£175,136,120	£229,173,717	£512,713,787	£525,694,085	£488,081,588

## Inflation, terms, thresholds, and caps

### Annual inflation factor Annual inflation factor

Some BIDs apply an annual inflation factor to the levy multiplier to ensure their income grows each year as their costs grow. Over the past four surveys the data for this question have shifted slightly; in 2021 37% of BIDs did so and in 2022 28% are so doing; a reduction of 9 percentage points. This year 2023 24% are applying an annual inflation factor, a further reduction of 4 percentage points. Now that inflation is becoming more evident, we might expect to see an increase in this factor.

Table 27: Use of an annual inflation factor 2023



An inflation rate of 2.75% is the median for those 24% of BIDs that use an inflation factor, but most stressed that this was at the Board's discretion, linked to either the CPI or the RPI.

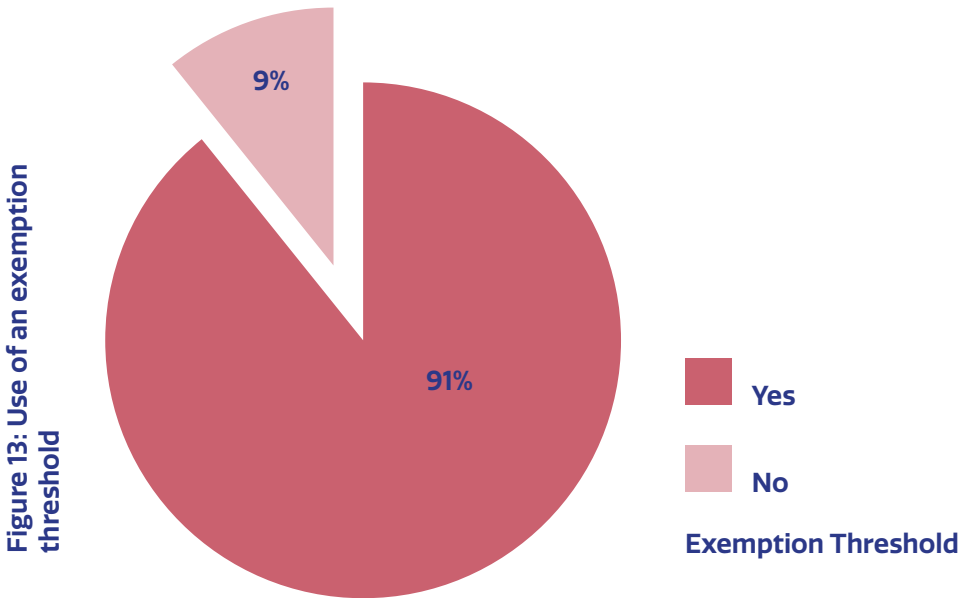
Table 31: Annual % inflation rate used.

MEASURE	%
Lowest	0.80%
Median	2.75%
Highest	5.00%

## BID exemption thresholds in 2023

A threshold is a rateable value level below which hereditaments are not charged a levy. The two main purposes of a threshold are to ensure that small businesses are not required to pay a levy and at the same time making sure that any business levy collection costs are never greater than the levy itself; this therefore exempts them from the levy whilst still ensuring they benefit from the services.

91% of BIDs make use of an exemption threshold:



**Table 29: Thresholds levels used by BIDs in 2023**

THRESHOLDS	
Lowest	£30
Lower quartile	£5,00
Median	£10,000
Upper Quartile	£15,000
Highest	£180,000

Most BIDs aim to ensure that no levy payment is less than the cost of collection, others keep their threshold at or below the level of the current government Small Business Rate Relief threshold of either £12,000 [59%] or the tapered figure of £15,000 [75%].

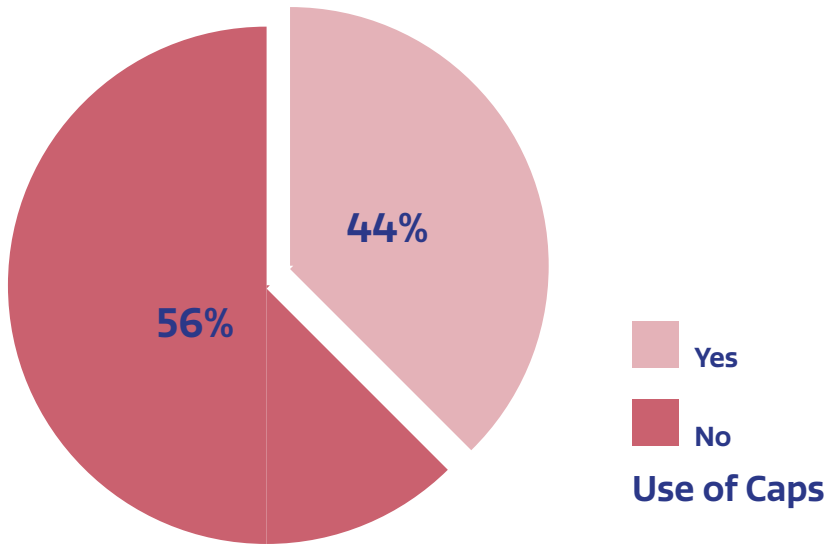
The distributions suggest that the Small Business Rates Relief is a key driver in many of the discussions on levels of any threshold, whilst at the same time some of the large city BIDs have higher thresholds.

This is an area of importance for many BIDs as they come to ballot. Clearly it is tactically valuable to keep the BID population small and with high levels of levy income so that the process of campaigning is simple and cost effective and turnout is high. At the same time, BIDs are about a business community where all are involved, equally represented and form a 'community of practice.'

## Caps on BID levy payments

As part of this strategic process, some BIDs also apply a cap to levy payments, protecting some levy payers from larger than normal levy payments, for example, where their properties are disproportionately large compared to others in the BID area. From the survey population 44% do so [2022, 50%;2021, 42%] The proportion now using them has gone down slightly. These caps can be of two sorts: firstly, to help business with several different properties within the boundary to stop them paying too large an amount; or secondly, to protect particularly large hereditaments in a BID area from paying a disproportionate amount. They can of course be seen as unfair by some median levy payers who don't have such support.

Figure 14: Percentage of BIDs using Caps.



This use of caps can be an important strategy for protecting larger businesses from unusually large levy payments, and it is clear that many of the national levy payers expect to see this. The spread of minimum payments suggest that they have an important role in some BIDs.

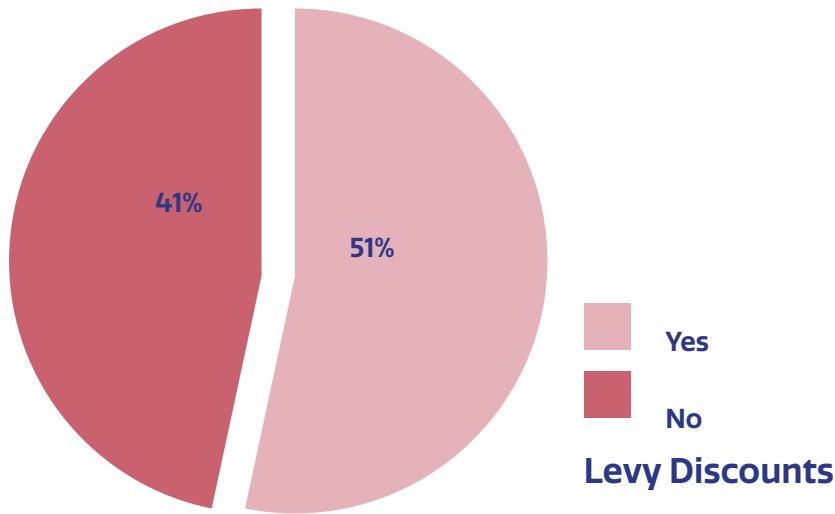
Table 30: The level of the caps used by BIDs

MEASURE	£
Lowest	£8500
Lower quartile	£10,000
Median	£15,000
Upper Quartile	£26,176
Highest	£100,000

## BID levy discounts

Most BIDs opt to give charities and other key players a discount on their levy, although this is becoming less prevalent over time, particularly in relation to discounts on commercially trading charity shops.

Figure 15: Levy discounts



From the survey, 51% provide some discounts [2022, 88%]; 4% of the BIDs specify that charity shops – that is those acting as retail outlets – are excluded from their discount rule. Of those who offer discounts, the greatest majority are for charities and shopping BIDs at 41.3% and 54.3% respectively.

Figure 16: Levy discounts by type



The level of discount was little changed over the years, with most offering 100% to non-trading charities, and shopping centres and shopping mall discounts ranging from 10-50%; but this year there has clearly been a slight hardening of the discount offering.

## Levy collection

### Levy collection costs

The levy collection charge is the sum of money charged by the local authority to the BID for the service of collecting the BID levy. The BID Regulations allow for a reasonable charge to be made for this service and the details of this service should be set out in an operating agreement between the two parties.

Table 31: Levy collection costs

LEVY COLLECTION COSTS	£
Lowest	£0
Lower quartile	£5,000
Median	£10,070
Upper Quartile	£17,000
Highest	£33,000

From the responses, 10% of BIDs have no collection charge made to them by their local authority. This is a reduction from last year, where some 30% of BIDs were not paying for collection. The median collection costs figure – that which 50% of BIDs are below – is £10,000.

### Levy collection rates

Levy collection rates have been a key issue for many BIDs during and after the Covid-19 lockdown as local authority teams have engaged with both government grants and support for businesses.

Nonetheless, the data collected show a better picture than anecdotal evidence would suggest, with a median figure of 92% Levy collection rates although the lowest was 55% collected.

Table 32 Levy collection rates 2023 – averages from BIDs

LEVY COLLECTION COSTS	%
Lowest	55.0
Lower quartile	87.3
Median	92.0
Upper Quartile	96.0
Maximum	100.0

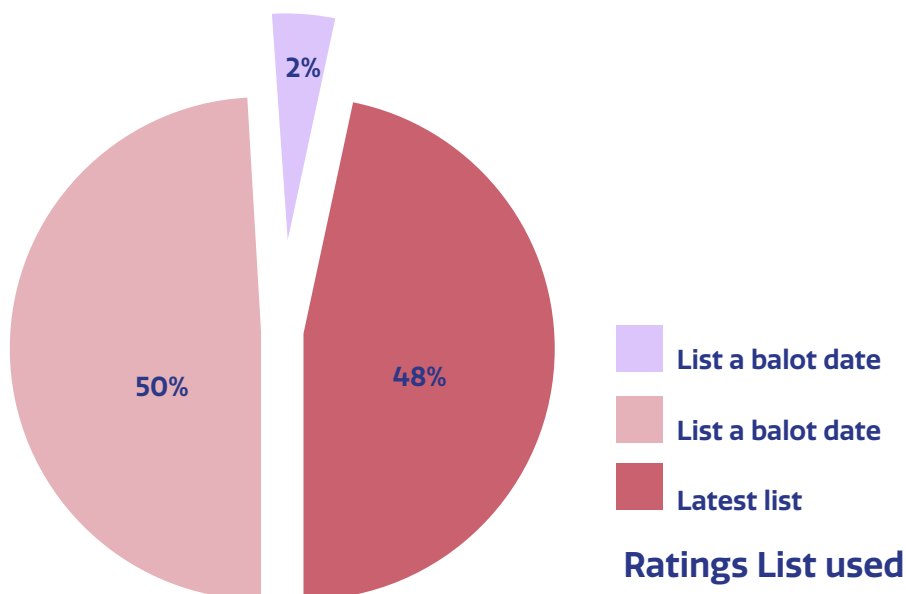
### Business rates lists

Most BIDs use the current Non-Domestic Ratings list for their levy collection, with some using the list extant at their ballot date. The latter of course allows a constant picture of income for the BID and levy payment for the businesses and is thus often preferred by many.

Table 36 Ratings list used for levy collection.

LEVY COLLECTION COSTS	%
Latest list	43.75%
List at ballot date	45.54%
Median	92.0
Upper Quartile	96.0
Some other list	1.79%

Figure 17 Ratings list used for levy collection.



### Business rates revaluation 2023

All non-domestic properties are generally revalued every five years by the Valuation Office Agency. The next revaluation has taken place and will be effective as from 1 April 2023<sup>11</sup>, and this will clearly affect many BID's levy income as ballots move BID's onto the latest list. There is also a plan to review business rates more regularly, probably every three years<sup>12</sup>, and this was one of the British BID's requests in our submission to the Treasury on business rates back in<sup>13</sup> 2019.

The rateable value is assessed by the Valuation Office Agency, which is an agency of HM Revenue and Customs. A property's rateable value is an assessment of the annual rent the property would rent for if it were available to let on the open market at a fixed valuation date.

From April 2023, the rateable values will be based on the valuation date of 1 April 2022, and this will clearly affect over 60% of BID's. BID's are split pretty equally between using the current list and the new list; reflecting that for many the two will be the same.

### The central rating lists.

In addition to local rating lists, the Secretary of State also holds a central list which contains hereditaments which, by their nature, are unsuitable for including in local lists (e.g., utility networks). The central rating lists contain the rating assessments of the network property of major transport, utility and telecommunications undertakings and cross-country pipelines. The central rating list can be viewed on the Valuation Office Agency's website.

Hereditaments appearing on the central rating list do not appear on local rating lists. The business rates bill for central list hereditaments is paid to the Secretary of State and then passed to the Treasury and therefore there is no contribution toward any local BID. The government is proposing to move all telecom networks, railways and mobile networks onto the central list.



## BID management and governance

### BID management teams

#### Staffing

The staffing levels of BIDs vary widely, as one would expect from organisations so varied in income and service provision.

From the data it is possible to extrapolate total numbers, and this suggests that across the five administrations and countries, BIDs employed some 944 [2022, 993.58; 2021 1,040] full time equivalent staff, a decrease of 48 on 2022.

Whilst the median staffing level for a BID is now 2, the range is wide, with 13 staff in one BID. A number of BIDs – 8% – are managed by board members, so have no staffing numbers, and 12% are managed by part-time staff only.

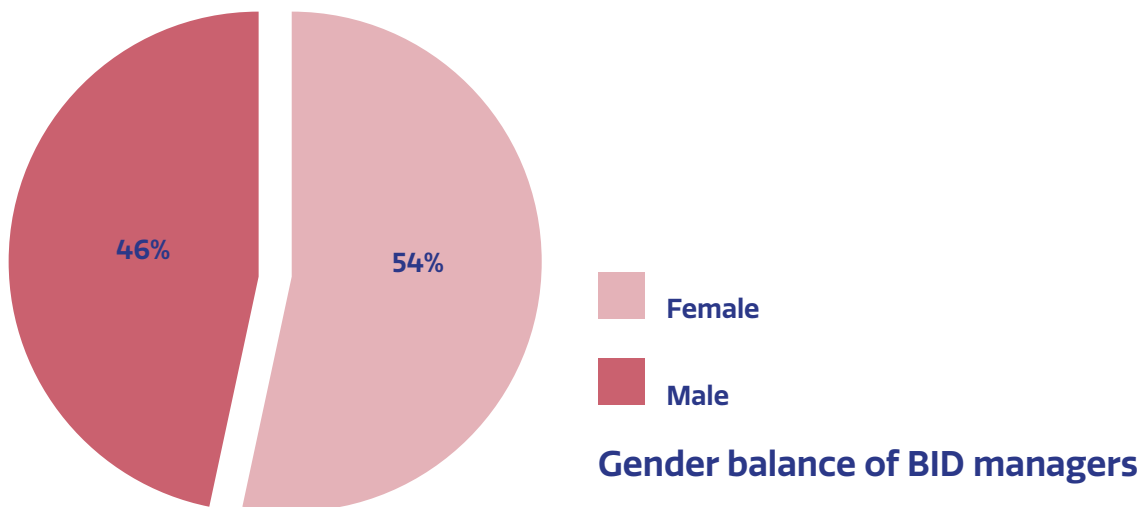
Table 34: Staffing levels in BIDs

STAFFING LEVELS	NUMBERS
Minimum	0.00
Lower quartile	1.00
Median	2.00
Upper quartile	5.00
Maximum	13.00

#### Gender balance in BID managers

Following interest last year, we have looked at the gender balance amongst BID managers, using a simple forename analysis.

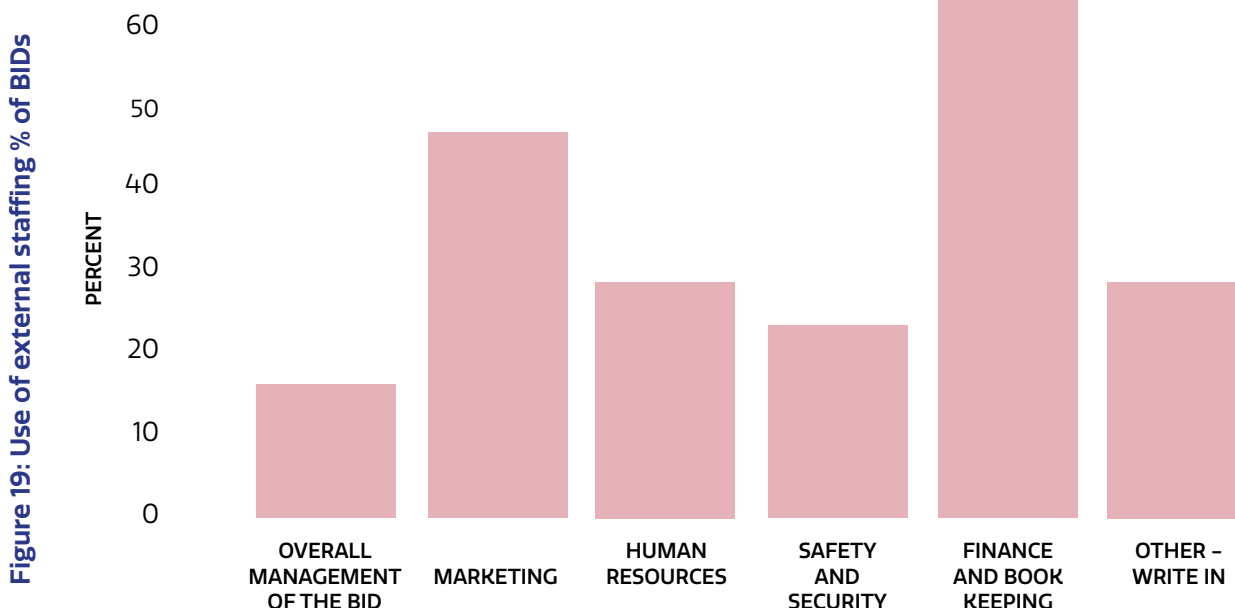
Figure 18 Gender balance in BID managers



The gender balance amongst BID chief executives and managers, based on simple forename analysis, has moved very strongly, from almost exactly 50:50 male:female in 2019 to 46:54 male:female in 2021, and in 2022 44:55, and in 2023 it is 46:54 male:female.

## External staffing providers

From the survey response, external staff, that is staff working for the BID but not on payroll, are used by 78% of BIDs, [2022,73%; 2021,60%]; this includes staff working in security, marketing, and general operational activities including rangers and other staff.



The majority of the support staff brought in are finance and bookkeeping for over 58.1% of BIDs; with marketing also important at 44%. Many of the 'other' category included Rangers, web designers and event management staff.

## Overall BID management by consultants

One trend is for BIDs to be fully managed by external consultants, thus saving direct staffing costs and ensuring a wide range of expertise that can be called upon. Some 18.6% [2022,15% ; 2021, 20%] of the sample described themselves as being managed in this fashion and it will be interesting to see if BID Boards continue this trend in the future.

## Shared staff

Another emerging trend is for BIDs to share staff, either by having one shared manager working for more than one BID, or for a member of one BID team to also work for another in a different role.

## BID boards

BID boards are a vital part of the BID community as issues of governance and transparency rightly come to the fore, and governance matters are key parts of the British BIDs Industry Guidelines 14. The data suggest that there are 2988 members of BID boards across the British Isles [2022, 2,807; 2021,2,754], whose task is to ensure that each BID is governed according to the normal rules of good corporate governance.

Table 35: BID Boards by size and distribution

BOARD SIZES	NUMBERS ON BOARDS
Smallest board size	3
Lower quartile of Board size	7
Median Board size	10
Upper quartile of Board size	13
Largest Board	25
Totals	2988

From the data there is a range of BID board size and composition, although most range from 7-13, with the largest at 25 and a median size of 10.

## Property owners

86% [2022, 84% ;2021 78%] of BIDs reported having property owners involved in their boards, with a median number of 1 and a maximum of 13; and there are 494 [2022, 522] property owner board members across the British Isles. This is a flat trend, although there is an increased interest in property owner as a key stakeholder in BIDs.

Table 36: Property owners on boards

PROPERTY OWNERS ON BOARDS	NUMBERS
Lower Quartile	0
Median number of Property owners on BID boards	1
Upper Quartile	3
Largest	13
Total number of Property owners on BID Boards	494
Percentage of BID boards with Property owners	87%

The figure is possibly higher than the data show; some BIDs have included their shopping centre BID board members as owners, but others don't, and some board members own their business properties. Similarly, local authority representatives are not often recognised as property owners. However, many more BIDs are becoming aware of these differences and are articulating them in their responses.

## Local authority involvement on boards

Most BIDs have Local Authority representation on their boards, reflecting the important relationship between a BID and its local authority, with 88% of BIDs having such Local Authority representation, and 252 Local Authority board members across the industry.

Table 37: Local Authority board members

LOCAL AUTHORITY ON BOARDS	
Lower Quartile	0
Median	1
Upper Quartile	1
Largest	4
Total numbers	4
Total Numbers	252
Total % of BID Boards	88.39

## Observers on BID boards

The balance between directors and observers also varies across BIDs, with most having 10 Directors and 1 Observer, whilst some have up to 20 members on their board, and up to 6 observers.

Table 38: Observers on BID boards

OBSERVERS ON BOARDS	NUMBERS
Lower Quartile	0
Median number of Observers on BID boards	1
Upper Quartile	2
Largest	6
Total observers in sector	412
Total % of Boards with observers	88

## Gender balance of boards

We remain interested in both the gender and ethnic diversity of boards.

It seems that boards are starting to address the issue of gender in their makeup, with the median number of women on boards being 3, and an estimated 1018 [2022, 970 2021, 882] women board members across the industry. This still only amounts to 34% of all BID board members.

Table 39: Gender balance on BID boards

WOMEN ON BOARDS	NUMBERS ON BOARDS
Smallest	0
Lower Quartile	2
Median	3
Upper Quartile	5
Greatest	10
Total women on Boards	1018
Total % of Boards with Women on them	89.29

## Diversity balance of Boards

On the matter of ethnic diversity, the responses identified 288 [2022, 213; 2021 177] black, Asian and minority ethnic directors across the British Isles, with the highest number on a board being 6

Table 40: Black, Asian and minority ethnic members of boards

BAME DIRECTORS	
Smallest	0
Lower Quartile	0
Median	1
Upper Quartile	1
Largest	6
Total	288
Total % of Boards with BAME Directors on them	80.36

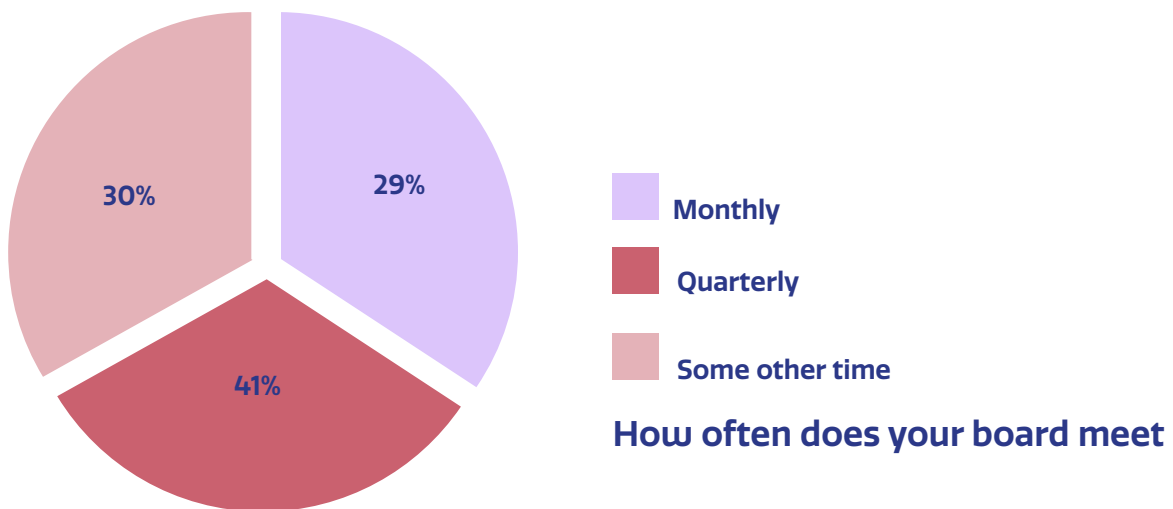
## Shared Boards

There are some BIDs with shared or overarching boards. It may be the local DMO that has gestated a number of BIDs in their area, or a BID that is then approached to set up another BID in a nearby or local community. They are clearly emerging possibilities for new developments.

## Board meetings

Many BIDs are interested in how often boards meet; the data suggests that there is a very shared split between monthly, quarterly and various other periods; clearly it is for boards to decide which suits them best.

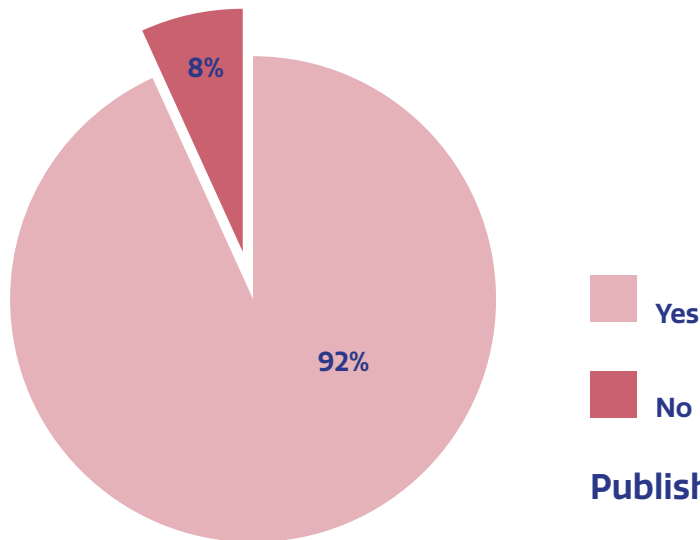
Figure 20: Board meeting timings



## Annual accounts

The public provision of annual accounts is an important part of good corporate governance. These can range from detailed accounts posted on websites, to more basic ones, linked to the regulatory requirement 15 for every billing authority to supply to each person receiving a demand notice the revenue due to be received the previous year, the amount spent, the matters on which it was spent and the proposed spend for the coming year. From the returns, 92% of BIDs make their accounts publicly available to their levy payers. Of course, Companies House requires that all registered companies lodge accounts with them.

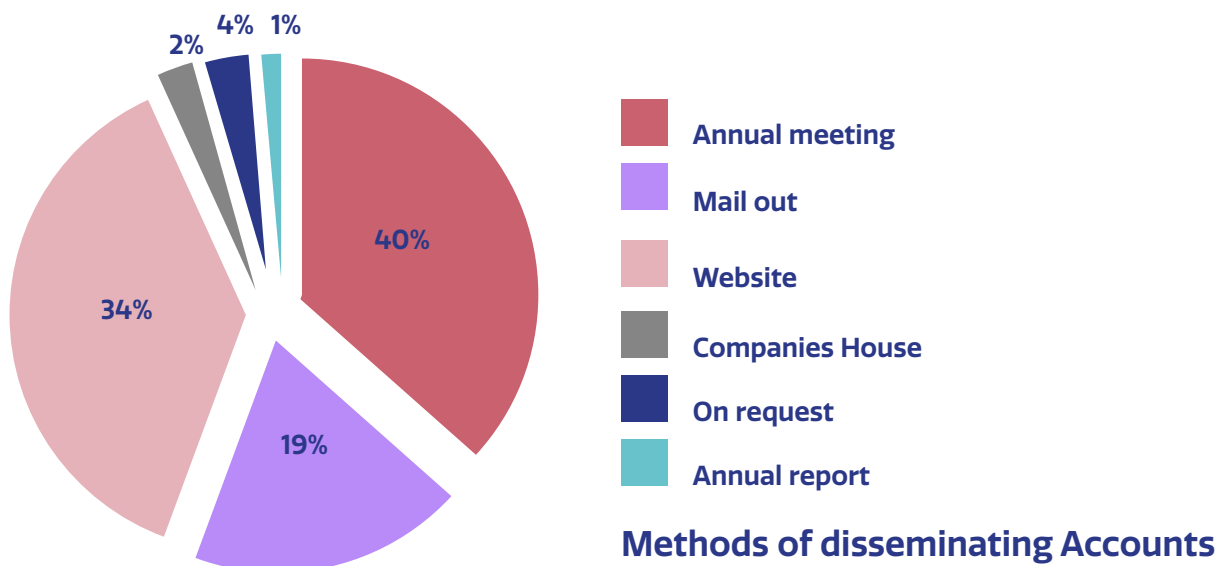
Figure 21: Publicly available accounts



## Published annual accounts

And BIDs use a variety of dissemination tools, with an annual meeting being the most popular.

Figure 22: Dissemination of accounts



## BID policy matters

There is a number of policy matters with BIDs involvement and the survey focused on ten of them: operating agreements, baseline statements, community involvement, neighbourhood plans, Local Economic Partnership, DMOs, services to professional levy payers, permitted development rights, and Business Crime Reduction Partnerships.

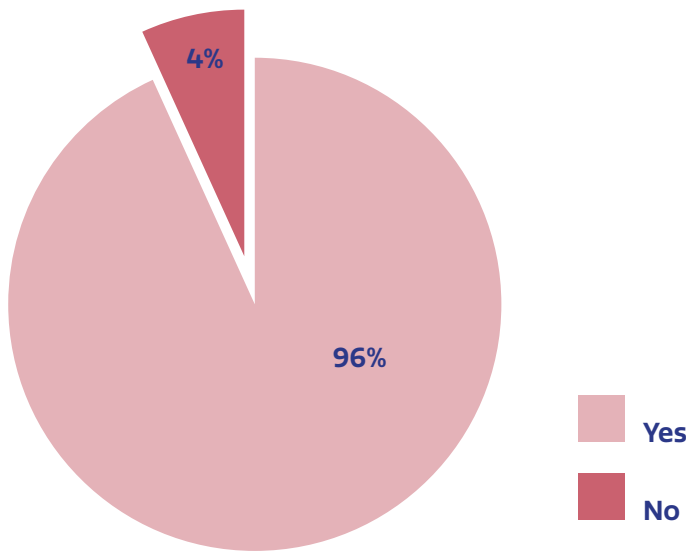
### Local Authority Policy issues

#### Operating agreements

Each BID needs an operating agreement with its local authority; 96% have, but some still don't have them.

#### Does your BID have an operating agreement with your Local Authority

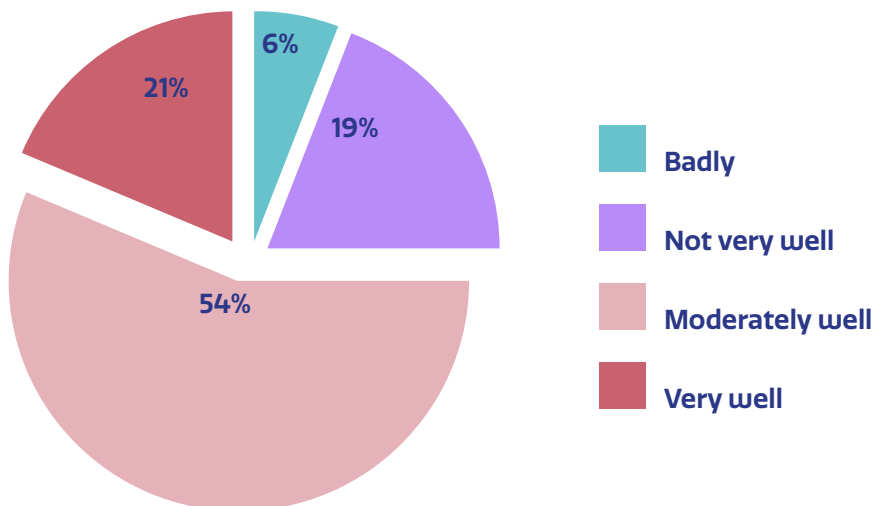
Figure 23: BIDs and operating agreements



Some 76% of BIDs feel that their agreements work well or moderately well; but some 20% feel that they don't, and this clearly is a matter of concern for them and indeed the industry.

#### How well are your operating agreements working

Figure 24: Working success of operating agreements.



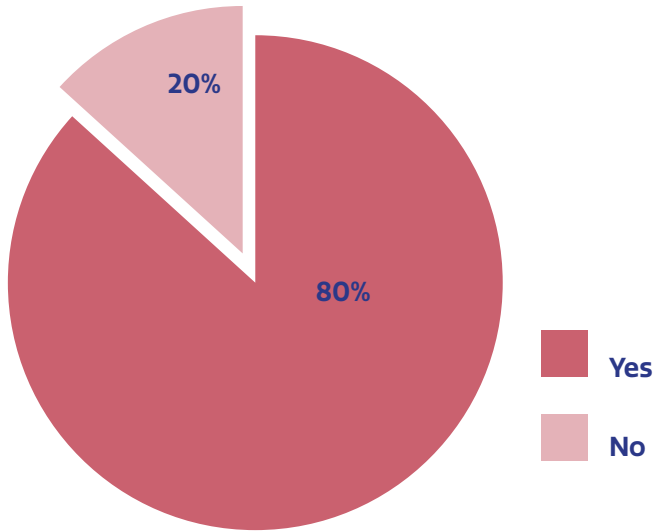


## Baseline Services and Statements

BIDs need to develop agreements with their local authorities and other public services, such as the police, in order to ensure levels of service, which the BID will then augment rather than replace.

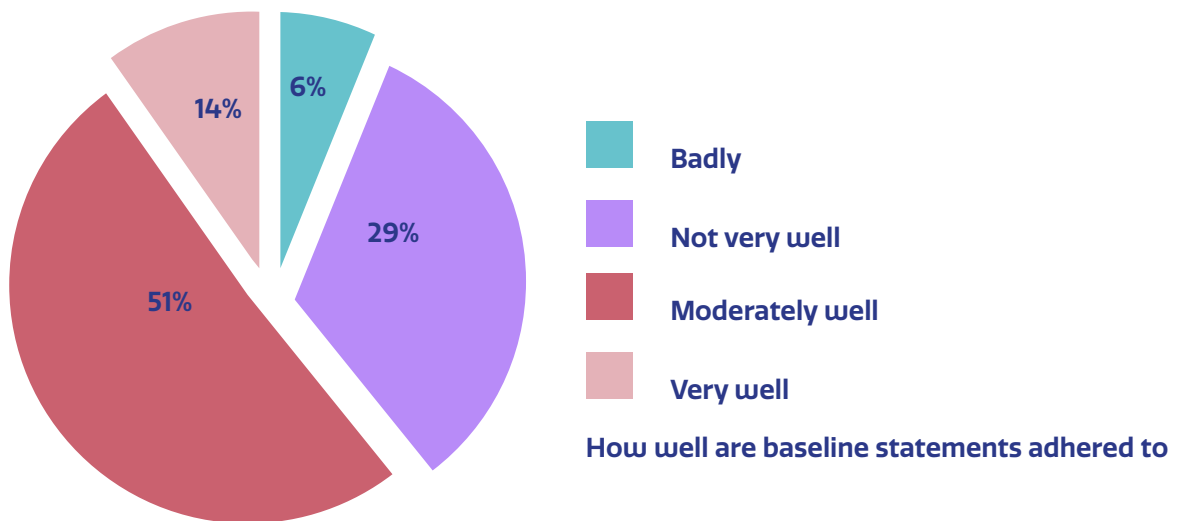
These baseline statements are useful elements in the BID proposal process, and **a statement of the existing baseline services (if any) provided by the relevant billing authority or other public authority** is required under the regulations<sup>16</sup>. Although the definition is not precise, it is evident from the survey, that 80% of BIDs had baseline statements, but surprisingly 20% did not.

Figure 25: Baseline statements



On the matter of adherence, although there was a sense of 'slippage' with 20% of BIDs feeling that baseline statements were being followed badly or not very well, 65% felt that they were still being adhered to well or moderately well in difficult circumstances for many local authorities. Nonetheless, this is a slow reduction from the data collected last year and clearly reflects the declining funding base for many local authorities. Of course, baseline statements have no legal binding force but are useful statements of intent.

Figure 26: Baseline statement effectiveness



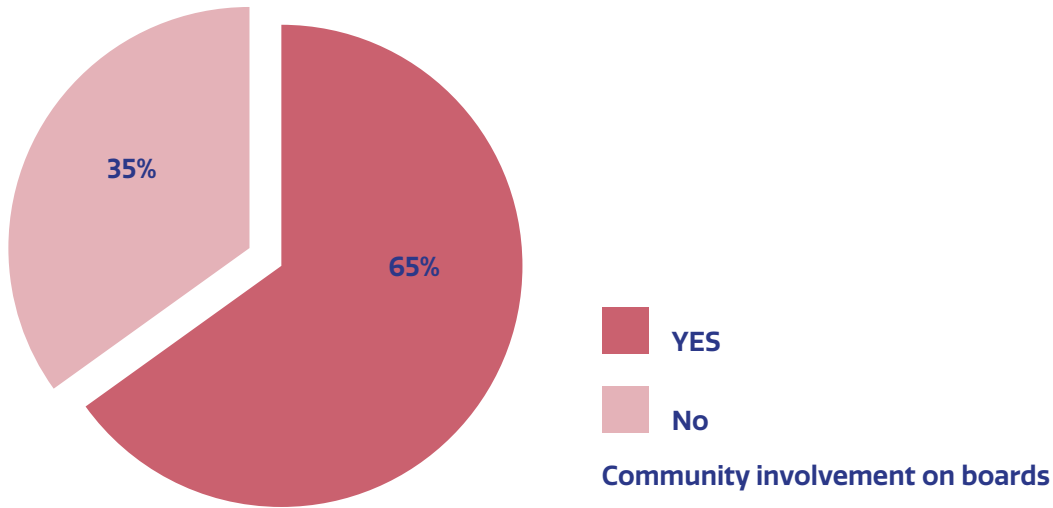
## Community matters

### Community involvement and Community Improvement Districts

There is a suggestion that BIDs should have more community involvement on their boards, as part of a move toward Community Improvement Districts [CIDs]. BIDs were asked if they had such community membership, for example, Civic Trusts, Residents Groups, elected Councillors, etc.

Interestingly, 65% already had some local community involvement and 60% of those were using their local Councillors to fulfil this role at the moment.

On the other hand, some 20% of BIDs were very committed to the philosophy of businesses paying the levy should be allowed to run the BID as they needed and expected to.



## Environmental, Social and Governance issues

There is a growing interest in the Environmental, Social and Governance issues involved in modern business practice and thinking<sup>17</sup>. Environmental, social, and governance (ESG) investing refers to a set of standards for a company's behaviour used by socially conscious investors.

Environmental criteria consider how a company safeguards the environment, including corporate policies addressing climate change, for example. Social criteria examine how it manages relationships with employees, suppliers, customers, and the communities where it operates. Governance deals with a company's leadership, executive pay, audits, and internal controls. For BIDs these allow both a need to review their own ESG issues, as well as those of their levy payers and some BIDs have already done much work on this<sup>18</sup>. 44% of BIDs were engaging with ESG issues for either themselves or their levy payers

Figure 27 Interest in ESG issues

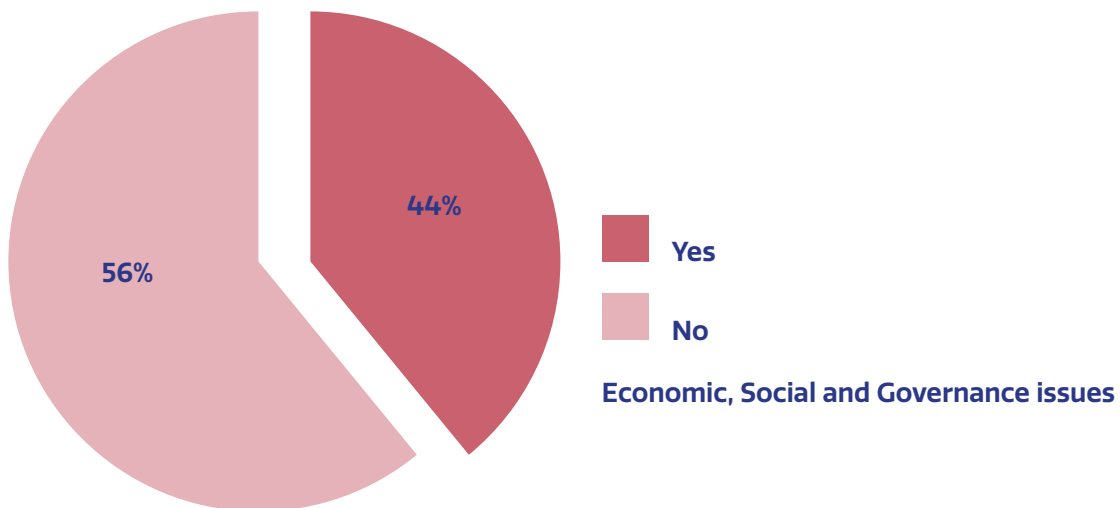


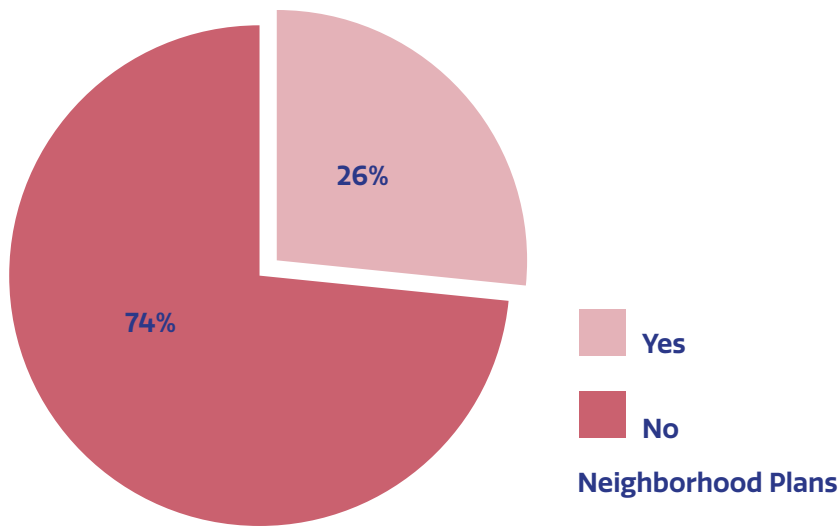
Figure 28 Word cloud of ESG work by BIDs



### Neighborhood planning forums

Neighborhood Planning Forums were seen as a key tool under the Localism Act of 2011/19, and many local authorities make use of them. BIDs were seen as major players in this agenda; that seems to no longer be the case with only 26% being involved.

Figure 29: BID involvement in a neighborhood planning forums

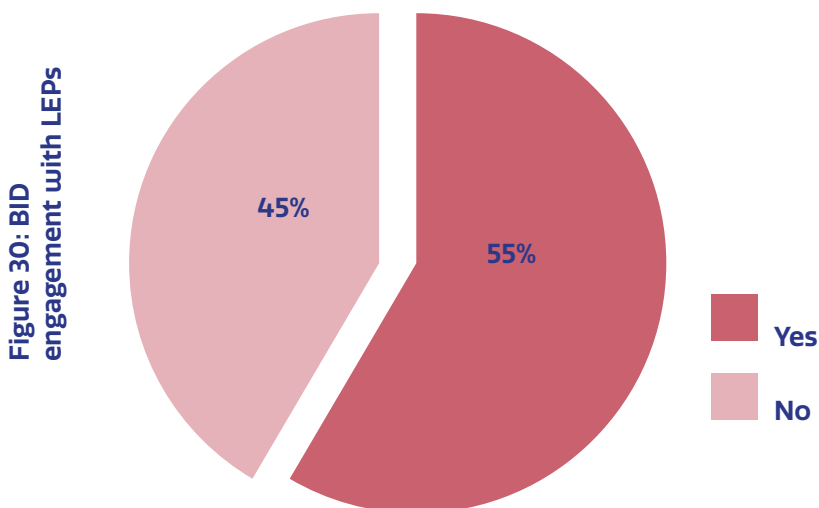


## Local Economic Partnerships

Local Economic Partnerships [LEPs] have changed, possibly dramatically. There were 38 Local Enterprise Partnerships<sup>20</sup> across England. Despite an attempt to continue their work 'A Unique Partnership for Economic Growth'<sup>21</sup>, the Government's sponsorship and core funding of LEPs will now cease<sup>22</sup>. As private enterprises, LEPs may choose to continue operating, but government will now support local authorities to take on LEPs' functions as set out in the March 2022 LEP integration guidance and previously supported by annual core funding – namely, business representation, strategic economic planning, and responsibility for the delivery of government programmes where directed. Government expects these functions to be exercised by upper tier local authorities (working in collaboration with other upper tier local authorities as appropriate), where they are not already delivered by a combined authority, or in areas where a devolution deal is not yet agreed.

Some 45% of BIDs were involved in their LEP and were making use of LEP and the growth hub network either for themselves or their levy payers; they will be affected by any changes to LEPs.

### LEP involvement



## Destination Management Organisations

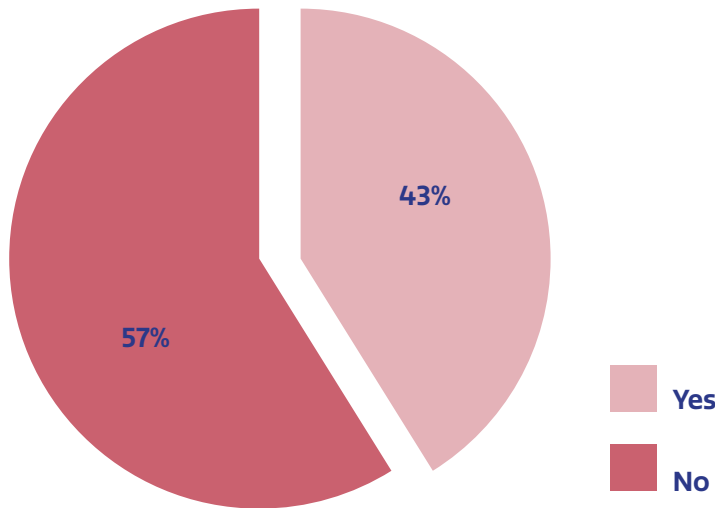
Destination Management Organisations (DMOs)<sup>23</sup> play a key role in developing tourism locally; destinations are the places that people want to visit and experience; they are the heart and soul of the visitor economy and because they are diverse, they don't always fit neatly into county (or national) borders or within public sector administrative boundaries. They may cover a single destination, e.g. Oxford, or a number of smaller destinations with a strong identity caused by its natural geography or landscape, well-known in its own right, e.g. the Cotswolds.

Many BIDs are closely involved with their Destination Management Organisation, others less so; some actually manage or are managed by the local DMO. This year 43% of BIDs were involved with their local DMO in one form or another and expect to see growth in this activity, although the percentage involved has reduced [2022, 46.15% ] since last year. Others were surprised that a DMO had not yet evolved in their area and would be looking to stimulate interest. Others found them less than helpful.

The de Bois review of Destination Management Organisations in England, commissioned by DCMS has been published<sup>24</sup>. The review examined and assessed how Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) across England are funded and structured, and how they perform their roles, in order to establish whether there may be a more efficient and effective model for supporting English tourism at the regional level, and if so what that model may be.

## BID involvement with Destination Management Organisation

Figure 31 Destination Management Organisations



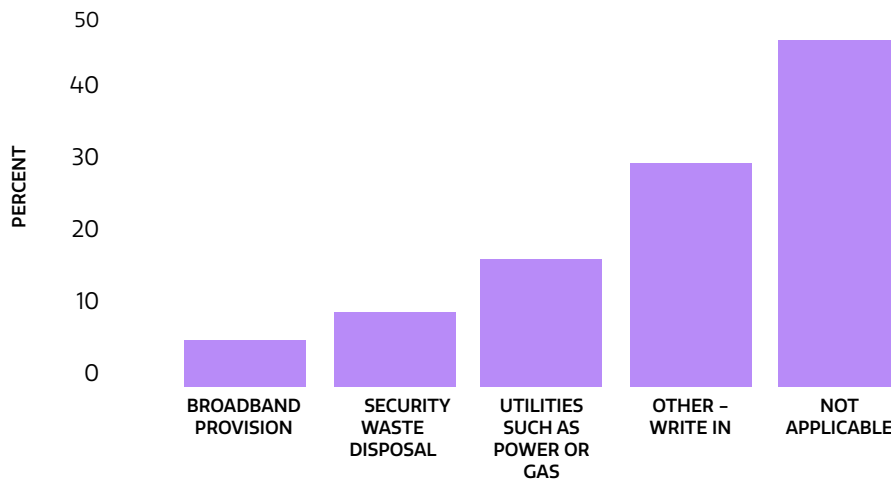
## Service and professional sector support from BIDs

A new question that was suggested by a number of BIDs for previous surveys, and has continued this year, was the level of specific support by BIDs for non-retail activity. It is evident that many BIDs are starting to focus on their service industries as it becomes clearer how vital they are to the health of the high street.

Work from the BID for Cities has shown how ***“the fortunes of the High Street are dependent on the fortunes of the wider BID in which they are based. The debate must be about jobs and city BIDs, not just about shops and High Streets”***. They suggest that more than one third of jobs are in knowledge-intensive service activities, such as finance, law and marketing and many of the highest skilled and best paid industries – which have been critical sources of jobs growth in recent years – prefer to locate in city BIDs 25.

The responses to the survey suggest that BIDs are still evolving in their thinking on support for professional services, with 51% [2022, 55%; 2021, 58% in] of the respondents feeling it was relevant. There were examples of BIDs providing support for their service and professional sector levy-paying members, in the areas of utilities cost reduction – waste, power, recycling – and in the areas of free wireless, Wi-Fi support and broadband provision. There has also been a growth in office and administration area BIDs in the last year or so.

Figure 32: Professional Services support



## Permitted Development Rights

The changes in 2020 to the planning system to allow change of use from offices (B1(a)) to residential use (C3), and the new Class E 26, which more broadly covers uses previously defined in the revoked Classes A1/2/3, B1, D1(a-b) and 'indoor sport' from D2(e), has not been helpful in some instances, effectively reducing the ability of the local planning authority and stakeholders to curate the town BID they need and want. In other instances, it has allowed residents to move back into town and city BIDs.

41% [2022, 24%] of BIDs are very concerned over the impact of these increasingly relaxed development rights and the word cloud shows some of these concerns



## Business Crime Reduction Partnerships

Most BIDs (68.4%) are involved in their Business Crime Reduction Partnerships, Pub and Shop Watch and other local policing projects.

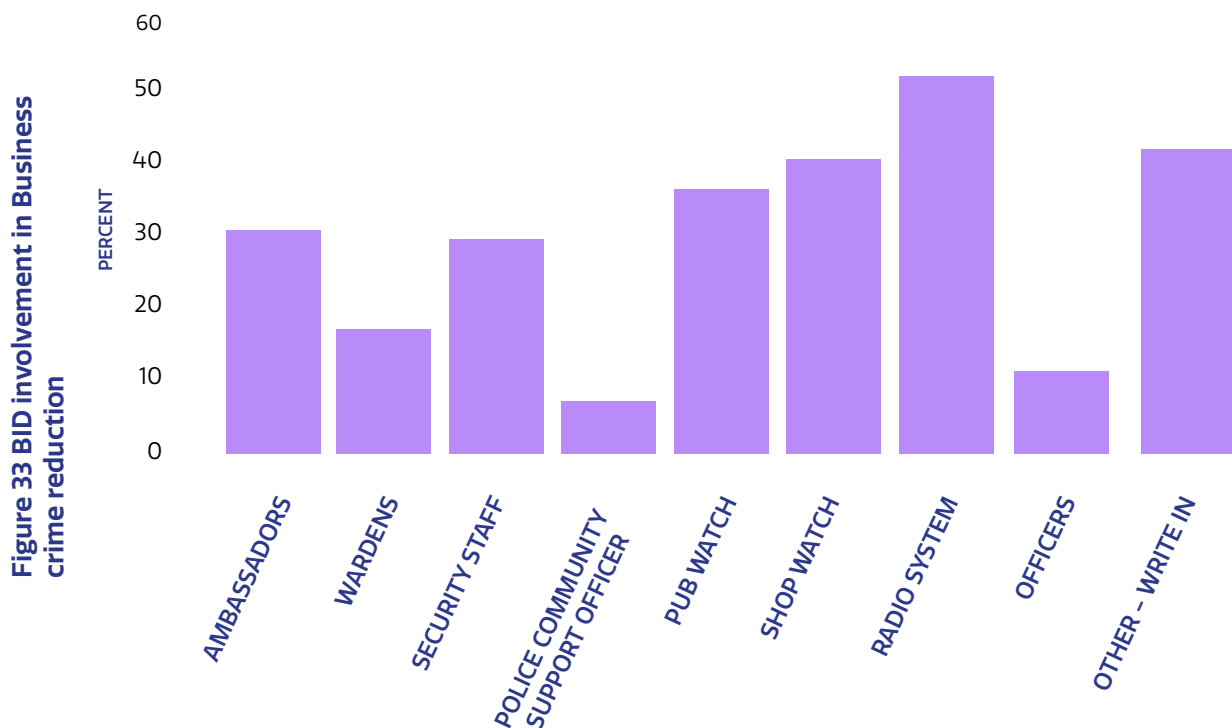


Figure 33 BID involvement in Business crime reduction

The types of involvement vary but the majority of support is around Pub and Shop watch, rangers and wardens, street pastors, policing and PCSOs, radios, cameras and software packages etc.

Many BIDs are also involved in wider projects around taxi marshals, Betfair support, Best Bar None awards etc.

## **Government funding and support for the high street**

The story of the English government funding for developing towns, BIDs and the high street remains complex and contested<sup>27 28</sup>, with originally three separate funding streams: Towns Fund<sup>29</sup>, Future High Streets Fund<sup>30</sup> and then the Heritage Action Zone<sup>31</sup>; these were worth in total some £3.6 billion, and some overlap in terminology and money<sup>32</sup>. This was then augmented by another £50m of EU funding to respond to Covid-19. Very recently, a new Long-Term Plan for Towns was announced for 55 towns that will benefit from a £1.1 billion levelling up investment, as part of a plan for towns that have been 'overlooked and taken for granted'<sup>33</sup>. The third round of the Levelling Up Fund will be launched in mid-November 2023<sup>34</sup>.

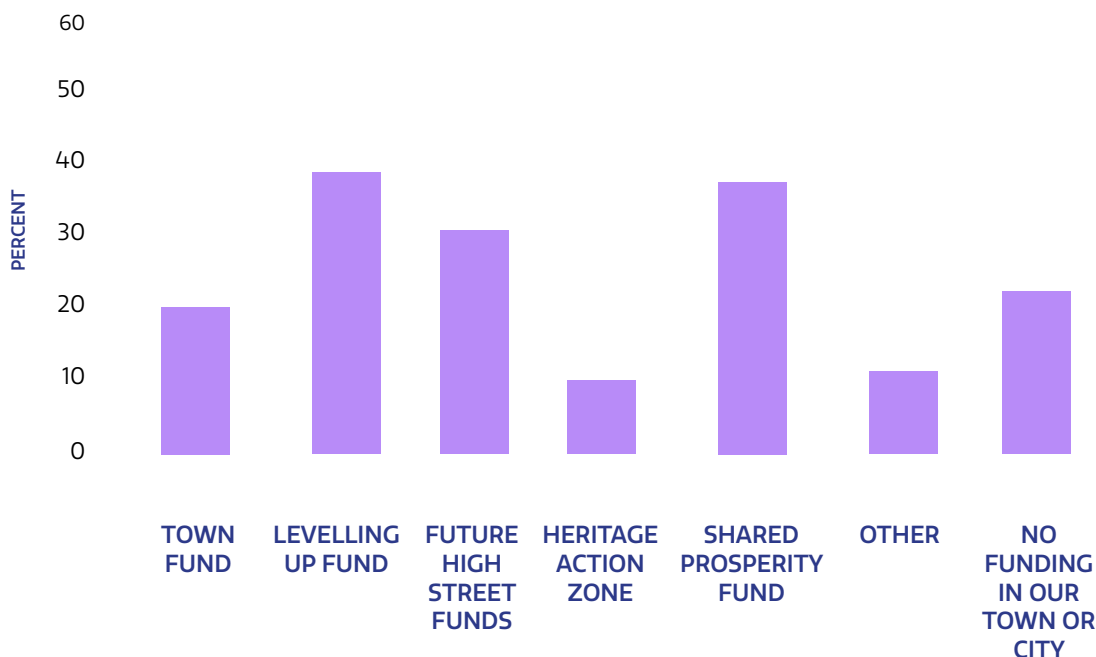
Thus, overall, some £13 Billion<sup>35</sup> is being invest in a very wide range of projects, with very different project titles. This is a vital new and very large source of innovation and growth in our high streets and following the latest government announcement<sup>36</sup>.

The Scottish, Irish and Welsh administrations are dealing with these matters differently, and for Scotland particularly the Scotland Improvement Districts<sup>37</sup> is providing data.

The database that British BIDs is developing for these projects suggests that there are potentially around 283 projects, with 221 high streets, town, or city BIDs involved in one or other of the funding streams, and thus far 102 of the projects have some BID involvement. We will continue to monitor as best we can the outcomes of these projects, as they clearly will be the key drivers of many of our town and city BIDs in the future.

The survey data suggest that some 30% of all BIDs are engaged in one or other of the government levelling up project lines, with some involved in several, although 20% are not expecting to receive any funding.

Figure 34: Central government Funding



### Other issues raised

BIDs were asked for any other issues they wanted to raise and the word cloud gives a sense of the major issues.



### Some protocols

This National survey is both an audit or census, which involves analysing as far as possible the totality of existing data, and at the same time a service evaluation, undertaken to benefit those who use and manage BIDs. It is designed and conducted solely to define or measure current BID services across the British Isles. Our participants are entirely BID staff, the data are aggregated and anonymous, it is not possible to identify individuals from any resulting report and use of the data will not cause substantial damage and distress. All data are either provided by each BID through the on-line questionnaire, or through a phone call to the BID, or by way of publicly available validated sources from each BID by way of their business plans or websites. The final report is anonymised as to individuals, although individual BID companies may be identifiable.

### Acknowledgements

I thank all my British BIDs colleagues, particularly Maria Chapman-Beer and Mel Richardson for their time on the data collection for this annual review, and of course I thank the 111 BIDs that responded to the survey and those BIDs that kindly responded to the phone calls checking data.



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