

REVITALISING HIGH STREETS INQUIRY

**Evidence submitted to the
Housing, Communities and Local
Government Committee**

British BIDs

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. British BIDs submits that Business Improvement Districts are a proven, locally accountable mechanism for revitalising high streets. Their impact would be substantially strengthened by five national actions: increasing the number of BIDs in England; completing BID governance reform, including simplified voting, stronger transparency and property owner participation; pursuing structural business rates reform; simplifying local powers to tackle long-term vacancies, supported by a national landlord register; and reviving and expanding the BID Loan Fund. This evidence draws on international research, national BID data and case studies from across England to show how BIDs support safer streets, stronger business confidence, increased investment and more responsive place management.

CORE RECOMMENDATIONS:

2. British BIDs makes five core recommendations to support successful high street regeneration across England and enable proven approaches to be replicated in other areas.
 - a. Increase the number of Business Improvement Districts in England
 - b. Continue governance reform: simplified voting, transparency/accountability, and property-owner BIDs, following the June 2026 commitments, noting this hasn't appeared in the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill.
 - c. Pursue structural business rates reform (referencing HOLBA's "hybrid business rate" proposal blending a reduced property levy with a digital sales levy), ahead of further rate rises from April 2026.
 - d. Simplify local powers (High Street Rental Auctions, CPOs, Community Right to Buy) and create a national landlord register to overcome landowner-identification barriers.
 - e. Revive and expand the BID Loan Fund (original 2013–19 fund: £500k, 33 loans, 21 successful ballots) to help unlock the 48 BIDs currently being developed.

INTRODUCTION

3. This evidence paper is a response from British BIDs, the professional and trade body for Business Improvement Districts across the British Isles, to the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, which is looking at the action needed to revitalise England's high streets.
4. This evidence paper addresses particularly:

- What factors and approaches have led to successful high street regeneration in different parts of England?
 - What conditions might allow for such approaches to be replicated in other areas?
 - How effective are the government's plans to address current challenges on high streets across England?
5. This paper provides underpinning data on the key issues of crime, footfall, vacancy rates and business confidence, and suggests that Business Improvement Districts are a vital tool in revitalising high streets that should be expanded in number through a new loan fund and broadened in type through property owner BIDs.
 6. British BIDs leads the BID industry by supporting the interests and values of BIDs and the work that they do. We are a membership body and work with BIDs and a range of strategic partners across the UK and Ireland.
 7. British BIDs enables its members and others to learn, network, share experiences, and develop best practice. We provide a range of services to BIDs, including research, advice and guidance, training, professional development, and by providing insight on a range of policy issues that relate to BIDs and their work. We have gathered the evidence for this paper from our members across the country.
 8. The evidence paper is completed by seven Case Studies from BIDs in Sunderland, Winchester, Colchester, Hammersmith, Station to Station, Leicester and Wimbledon.

THE KEY FACTORS AND CONDITIONS THAT MIGHT LEAD TO SUCCESSFUL HIGH STREET REVITALISATION

9. Business Improvement Districts are a vital tool for revitalising high streets, and need to be expanded both in number through a new loan fund and in type through property owner BIDs.
10. British BIDs believes that many business communities would benefit from a BID. England's current 295 BIDs should be increased, particularly in areas where business communities are underperforming and would benefit from locally accountable investment and place management.
11. The BID Loan Fund was a £500,000 recyclable loan fund, established in 2013 in response to the December 2011 Portas Review of the High Street. It was designed to solve a specific chicken-and-egg problem: setting up a new BID requires significant upfront spending (staff to write the business plan, publicity, business engagement) before any levy income exists to pay for it. Thus, we ask that government revives, extends and promote the BID loan

fund and the local-authority BID loan toolkit to allow the number of BIDs to increase

12. Communities Secretary Steve Reed included BID governance reform in the wider High Streets Strategy, with three headline commitments: simplified voting, strengthened transparency and accountability, and including property owners in the BID process for the first time. We ask that this governance reform continues at some speed to allow new types of BID to emerge.
13. We and others have echoed the call for the government to widen its business rates consultation beyond short-term tinkering toward genuine structural reform, given the further rate rises on physical premises from 1 April 2026.
14. British BIDs has submitted various papers to the Treasury and other select committees over the last few years arguing for a fundamental reform of business rates and we look forward to at some stage this fundamental reform taking place.
15. Existing local powers, including High Street Rental Auctions, Compulsory Purchase Orders and the Community Right to Buy, are a welcome start, but the legislation underpinning them is complex, and more agile processes are needed in practice. A significant practical barrier is identifying and reaching landowners, many of whom hold large, diverse property portfolios and have little commercial interest in filling a single small high street unit, despite the harm that a vacant unit does to the surrounding area on a hyper-local scale.
16. British BIDs would support the creation of a national register of landlords to make ownership easier to identify and landowners easier to contact, which would materially improve councils' and BIDs' ability to use these powers effectively.

CURRENT GOVERNMENT STRATEGY

17. British BIDs was pleased to note that the Pride in Place Strategy committed to raising BID standards by making them more transparent and accountable, consulting on the ballot process, and legislating to expand property owner BIDs outside London, although we do note that this reform has not been included into the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill, and further detail is still pending.
18. We were also pleased to note that in June 2026, Communities Secretary Steve Reed reinforced this with three headline commitments:
 - simplified voting,
 - strengthened transparency and accountability, and
 - including property owners in the BID process for the first time

19. This evidence paper from British BIDs aims to reinforce and support those commitments and adds some further ambitions.

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS

20. A Business Improvement District (BID) is a business-led and business-funded body formed to improve a defined commercial area. The benefits of BIDs are wide-ranging and include:

- Businesses decide and direct what they want in their area
- Businesses are represented and have a voice in issues affecting their trading area
- BID levy money is ring-fenced for use only in the BID area
- Increased footfall and spend
- Improved staff retention
- Reduced business costs
- Enhanced marketing and promotion
- Support with sustainability initiatives
- Guidance in place shaping vision activities
- Facilitated networking opportunities with neighbouring businesses
- Assistance in dealing with the Council, Police and other public bodies

EVIDENCE OF BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS SUCCESS

21. The original work¹ on BIDs in England, at their inception, led by Professor Tony Travers, examined the operation and impact of BIDs and suggested that BIDs would, if introduced, allow traditional high streets to compete on even terms with malls and other privatised spaces. There are now 355 BIDs in the British Isles and 295 in England and British BIDs believes that they make a huge difference in their both revitalising and keeping their towns and cities energised and successful.

¹ <https://www.lse.ac.uk/research/research-impact-case-studies/reviving-british-town-centres-high-streets>

Crime

22. The data from around the world and in England, evidences the reductions in Crime,^{2,3,4,5} and the narrative is very clear; BIDs do reduce crime in their communities. The pattern across the literature is fairly consistent: there is strong evidence for reductions in property crime, shoplifting, ASB, and disorder; whilst there is mixed evidence for violent crime. The mechanism most consistently cited is partnership-based crime prevention investment rather than BID status alone.
23. Over 80% of BIDs are involved in their Business Crime Reduction Partnerships, Pub and Shop Watch and other local policing projects. The types of funded 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.

Footfall

24. On footfall, the data is more anecdotal, with a strong practitioner consensus, and some data driven research ⁶ suggesting well-run BIDs report footfall growth of 5–10% above comparable areas, attributed to events, improved street maintenance, and coordinated marketing.

Labour productivity

25. On business improvement more generally, the data ⁷ suggests that they increase labour productivity within the BID by about 7%.
26. Surveys ⁸ routinely show 70–80% of levy-payers feel their BID offers good value, citing better communication channels and more responsive local services.

Vacancies, occupancy and business rates

27. Whilst there are no specific data on the BID effect on vacancy or occupancy specifically, there is a strong causal evidence on what *does* affect it.

² <https://openaccess.city.ac.uk/id/eprint/28958/>

³ <https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/22870>

⁴ <https://pure.psu.edu/en/publications/the-effects-of-business-improvement-districts-in-reducing-nuisanc/>

⁵ <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s41300-024-00214-7>

⁶ <https://www.easternpowerhouse.uk/post/how-are-business-improvement-districts-working-in-the-east-of-england>

⁷ <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00343404.2023.2228353>

⁸ <https://www.easternpowerhouse.uk/post/how-are-business-improvement-districts-working-in-the-east-of-england>

28. Research ⁹ on business rate reliefs found a one percentage point reduction in the tax rate due to Small Business Rate Relief reduces the vacancy rate by 1.1%, implying SBRR reduces the vacancy rate of properties that qualified for full relief by 54% compared with if there is no relief.
29. Data suggests that Small Business Rates Relief is more effective in both boosting small business occupancy rates and reducing vacancy rates on high streets, possibly due to positive spillovers from occupancy for smaller businesses in a cluster, such as greater footfall [University of Warwick](#).

Place making

30. BIDs are thus a vital tool ¹⁰ for enhancing the physical appearance, bringing in more foot traffic and increasing the property value in their districts.
31. They can also be a driver for complete transformation of a district by raising the property values ¹¹.

BIDs IN ENGLAND

32. There are now 295 Business Improvement Districts in England and 355 across the British Isles. There are clear regional variations in the spread of Business Improvement Districts and there are BIDs in each region in England.

BID Levy investment

33. BIDs invest £167,691,879 per year by way of their levies into their improvement districts in England and represent 115,477 business premises. This is a substantial amount.

⁹ <https://oxfordtax.sbs.ox.ac.uk/files/wp20-18pdf>

¹⁰ <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23311975.2018.1502241#abstract>

¹¹ <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23311975.2018.1502241#abstract>

Table 1 The numbers of Business Improvement Districts in England by region

Regions	Numbers of BIDs	Numbers of business premises	BID Spend each year
East Midlands	11	6,062	£5,271,628
East of England	30	11,913	£9,689,764
Greater London	83	26,292	£74,368,940
North East England	7	2,897	£3,483,226
North West England	38	13,940	£22,232,921
South East England	44	17,803	£16,168,097
South West England	32	15,876	£13,635,488
West Midlands	33	13,397	£12,439,715
Yorkshire and the Humber	17	7,297	£10,402,100
Grand Total	295	115,477	£167,691,879

Inward Investment

34. As well as this direct levy investment some 43.8% of BIDs reported other leveraged investment income by way of projects and government funding as a direct result of their BID activity. In 2025 BIDs worked on projects that leveraged some £159,368,992, across the countries.

WHAT CAN GOVERNMENT DO – THE CORE RECOMMENDATIONS

Increase the number of BIDs

35. British BIDs believes that there a large number of business communities that would benefit from a BID. The current 295 in England should be increased in number, particularly in those business communities that currently do not perform as well as they might.

36. We fully accept that BIDs are not the answer in every place, but the evidence shows that they work where there is a clear business mandate. They put real funding into the hands of local business communities that understand their area and can target investment at practical improvements.

37. There are currently 48 BIDs under development in England; many are awaiting funding streams for this development, and many are on hold whilst support funding is sought from a variety of sources. A clear level of support from the loan fund would make a major difference.

Table 1 Developing Business Improvement Districts in England

Regions	Developing BIDs
East Midlands	4

East of England	4
Greater London	9
North West England	3
South East England	11
South West England	8
West Midlands	6
Yorkshire and the Humber	3
Grand Total	48

BID Loan fund

38. The BID Loan Fund was a £500,000 recyclable loan fund, established in 2013 in response to the December 2011 Portas Review of the High Street and it ceased in 2019. It addressed a clear barrier to BID creation: new BIDs need upfront funding for staffing, business engagement, publicity and business-plan development before levy income exists. We believe that the Government should revive, extend and promote the BID Loan Fund, alongside the local-authority BID loan toolkit, to help more business communities establish BIDs.
39. The fund granted 33 loans totalling £1,086,135 over its life (2013–2019) — considerably outperforming the original 2013 business case, which had estimated it would support a minimum of 14 BIDs.
40. Of those 33, 21 went on to succeed at ballot. Regionally, it skewed heavily toward the Northern Powerhouse (~35% of recipients) and Midlands Engine (~25%), and about two-thirds of recipients were towns rather than cities.
41. The last confirmed tranche was announced in July 2018 (£100,000, split across Armley/Leeds, Beverley, Christchurch, and Digbeth/Birmingham) and the fund ceased operating in 2019 and has not been reinstated.
42. Thus, we ask that government revives, extends and promote the BID loan fund and the local-authority BID loan toolkit to allow the number of BIDs to increase.

Continue to review regulations

43. On 2 June 2026, Communities Secretary Steve Reed ¹² included BID governance reform in the wider High Streets Strategy, with a commitment “to let BIDs get on and make their area thrive” and included measures to modernise the BID rule book. with three headline commitments for BIDs:
- simplified voting,

¹² <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/business-in-the-community-speech-2-june-2026>

- strengthened transparency and accountability, and
- including property owners in the BID process for the first time.

44. We ask that this governance reform continues at some speed to allow new types of BID to emerge

Business rates

45. British BIDs clearly welcomed the commitment by the Prime Minister to review business rates.

46. We also note that there is a major proposal from HOLBA (Heart of London Business Alliance) for a "hybrid business rate" — combining a reduced property levy with a modest digital sales levy through the existing VAT system, on the argument that retail and hospitality represent about 9% of the economy but pay an estimated 34% of business rates, while the digital economy contributes about 20% of output but pays only 7–9%.

47. We and others have echoed the call for the government to widen its rates consultation beyond short-term tinkering toward genuine structural reform, given the further rate rises on physical premises from 1 April 2026.

48. British BIDs has submitted various papers to the Treasury and other select committees over the last few years arguing for fundamental reform of business rates, and we look forward to this fundamental reform taking place.

Local powers: High Street Rental Auctions, CPOs and Community Right to Buy

49. Existing local powers, including High Street Rental Auctions, Compulsory Purchase Orders and the Community Right to Buy, are a welcome start, but the legislation underpinning them is complex. Councils and BIDs need more agile processes in practice if these powers are to help bring persistently vacant units back into productive use.

50. A significant practical barrier is identifying and reaching landowners, many of whom hold large, diverse property portfolios and have little commercial interest in filling a single small high street unit, despite the harm that a vacant unit does to the surrounding area on a hyper-local scale.

51. British BIDs would support the creation of a national register of landlords to make ownership easier to identify and landowners easier to contact, which would materially improve councils' and BIDs' ability to use these powers effectively.

CASE STUDIES

52. These seven case studies identify different specific projects that BIDs are delivering across the country to revitalise their local high streets.

Hammersmith Business Improvement District

<https://hammersmithbid.co.uk/>

53. Hammersmith BID has been operating since 2006 and is currently in its fifth term, working to support and revitalise Hammersmith's high street through communications, place management and direct intervention projects. Currently the BID's focus is on Place, Safety and Community.

Retail diversity and "unwanted" retail

54. Hammersmith's high street has become increasingly dominated by convenience food, ranging from fast food operators such as Popeyes to more upmarket options like Farmer J and Pret. This shift has coincided with the loss of specialist retailers – including the gift shop Oliver Bonas – reducing the diversity of the offer and the reasons for people to visit. There is also an issue with units staying empty for longer periods of time.

55. In response, the BID brought its Made in H&F shop, a meanwhile-use retail concept championing local artists and makers, to the Broadway Centre in Hammersmith to fill a long-term vacant unit. The project generated strong local interest, with the shop receiving frequent enquiries from local artists wanting to trade, and has produced successful offshoots. It demonstrates real impact on community pride and a sense of local belonging, alongside the positive effects of empowering and upskilling local entrepreneurs.

56. This experience shows how well BIDs are placed to lead this kind of intervention. Unlike private/corporate landlords, which have a commercial interest in occupancy, or national meanwhile-space charities and not-for-profits, which can bring a standardised, "cookie-cutter" model, BIDs combine on-the-ground local knowledge and established local relationships with no vested commercial interest of their own. We would encourage the Committee to recognise this distinct role when considering how vacant units are best brought back into use.

57. Hammersmith & Fulham's Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) commits the borough to carefully controlling further licences for betting and gambling premises, and this has had a positive impact on the high street. This is an example of a local planning tool that has worked well, and the Committee may wish to consider how similar Local Plan / SPD-based commitments could be encouraged or supported more widely as a means of managing the proliferation of "unwanted" retail.

58. Vacant units are visually unsightly and damage both consumer footfall and business confidence in the wider high street. Bringing the Made in H&F unit back into active use demonstrated a tangible improvement in the look, footfall and perception of that part of the high street.

Sunderland Business Improvement District

<https://sunderlandbid.co.uk/>

Nissan Apprentices – Skills, Placemaking and Partnership Working

59. Sunderland BID developed an innovative partnership project bringing together Nissan apprentices, Sunderland City Council and local creative expertise to explore how skills development could also contribute to the improvement of the city's public realm.
60. The project challenged Nissan apprentices to work alongside a professional local artist to develop concepts for interactive public art for Sunderland's seafront. Rather than a traditional classroom-based development programme, apprentices were given a real place-based brief and asked to consider how creative ideas could be transformed into practical, durable and accessible installations.
61. Over the course of the project, participants moved through the full creative process, from initial research and ideation through to concept development, prototyping, material selection and final presentation. Importantly, the challenge reflected many of the considerations apprentices encounter within industry, including design for manufacture, durability, corrosion resistance, safety, accessibility and stakeholder requirements.
62. The project provided an opportunity to develop technical skills alongside broader employability skills including creative problem solving, teamwork, communication, presentation and stakeholder management. It also gave participants a greater connection with Sunderland and an opportunity to consider how their skills could make a visible contribution to the place in which they live and work.
63. A key strength of the project was the role of Sunderland BID as a facilitator. By bringing together one of the city's largest employers, Sunderland City Council and local creative talent, the BID was able to create a project that delivered benefits across skills, business engagement, culture and placemaking.
64. The project has also opened the door to a wider relationship with Nissan, which is now interested in exploring further opportunities to work with Sunderland BID. This has prompted the BID to consider how the approach could be developed into a repeatable commercial model for other employers and organisations.
65. Under such a model, businesses could commission Sunderland BID to develop and coordinate meaningful, place-based development experiences for their employees, apprentices or graduates. Income generated through the

programme could then be reinvested into the BID area, creating a virtuous circle where private sector investment supports workforce development while also contributing to improvements in the wider place.

66. The project demonstrates the unique convening role that BIDs can play. With strong relationships across businesses, local government, communities and local suppliers, BIDs can bring partners together around projects that may not otherwise happen, creating outcomes that benefit both individual organisations and the wider destination.
67. For Sunderland BID, the Nissan project has therefore become more than a one-off engagement programme. It provides an example of how BIDs can innovate beyond traditional funding models, build deeper relationships with major employers and create new partnerships and income streams that can ultimately deliver additional investment back into their places.
68. Video: <https://we.tl/t-8hhFijvwpuCakBJq>

Winchester Business Improvement District

<https://winchesterbid.co.uk/>

Business Barometer

69. The quarterly Business Barometer provides vital intelligence on current and future trading outlooks and helps us to better understand trends, comparing our progress with similar destinations and understanding how particular events impact city centre businesses.
70. We have conducted this survey since 2011, which allows us to analyse how patterns and trends have changed over time. Click here to view the [Business Barometer Reports](#).
71. The sample size is 9% - 10% of the total number of BID Businesses and other Organisations.
72. There are two business sectors:
- a. Retail and hospitality outlets (RH), 51 businesses and 76% of the total sample. RH businesses include: • Clothes, Fashion and Shoe outlets, [CFS, 16% of the sample] • 'Consumer Discretionary' outlets [CD, 48% of the sample] - bookshops, furniture shops, gift outlets, DIY and homeware stores, jewellers, mobile phone providers, personal care outlets and pharmacies. • Entertainment and Hospitality concerns [H, 12% of the sample] - bars, cafes, coffee shops, hotels, pubs, restaurants and tea rooms.

- b. Professional services businesses (PS), 16 businesses and 24% of the sample. PS businesses include accountants, architects, beauticians, dry cleaners, estate agents, financial advisers, hairdressers, health care providers, insurance brokers, kitchen designers, secretarial practices, solicitors and travel agents.

73. The RH and PS sectors consist of:

- a. 'Independents' [51% of the sample] and
- b. 'Nationals' [49% of the sample].

 'Independents' are businesses with relatively few outlets possibly with a single office or store and no HQ or centralised management. They are completely responsible for their own trading activities.
- c. 'Nationals', by contrast, have numerous offices and outlets with an operational HQ and centralised management. 54% of the total sample trades from the High Street [HS] and 46% off the High Street [OHS] in less central but accessible locations.

Station to Station Business Improvement District

<https://stationtostation.london/>

Use of WhatsApp to create connected business communities

74. This is arguably the most powerful tool we have to engage effectively and accessibly with our local business community. Creating a WhatsApp group creates an instant community, whereby people know one another, look out for each other and also when necessary, 'police' one another. It works for diverse communities who do not all speak English as a first language (or even script) and who do not tend to read emails, and for busy people who don't necessarily know how to tackle certain issues as they arise and who need help or reassurance there and then.
75. Having BID staff, BID board members and local councillors on high street WhatsApp groups helps everyone to understand one another's day to day issues (fly tipping, shoplifters, ASB, waste collections) and enables timely intervention when necessary. It also functions as an information sharing platform where businesses can ask for advice or recommendations from one another, and the BID team can let them know about issues (e.g. upcoming road works) or opportunities (e.g. funding, webinars, helpful organisations) as they come in. The group needs rules which are explained at the outset i.e. no promoting your own business, nothing offensive etc and when there are infractions, a friendly private message is usually all that is required.

76. The BID team needs to be disciplined in not responding out of hours (unless absolutely necessary), and the BID manager should lead by example in this respect. As is common in other BIDs, crime prevention is also aided by WhatsApp in groups specifically set up with BID resourced security firms, whereby national store managers and staff use the group to report offenses, warn other stores when a certain offender is on the street and to look out for one another. Intel from the group is then passed on by the BID team to local police. We have also found the establishment of a friendly Whatsapp group with those at the council responsible for street cleaning, waste collections, fly tipping, graffiti removal etc to be much more effective than reporting single issues via complex, time consuming forms on the council website. A business or BID member sends a photo of an issue with an address and it is usually dealt with on the day or within days. Businesses can see how well this works; it makes both the BID and the council look good!

Crime Prevention (via forensic marking of commonly stolen goods)

77. Station to Station BID, like many other BIDs, uses a private security company to provide undercover operatives and support with reporting and monitoring known prolific shoplifters. This, however, is expensive and, although welcome on the days they are present, has a limited effect during the rest of the month.

78. As a result of our close working relationships with the national chains on the high street, we learned of our local "eco system" whereby goods are stolen to order and sold on into local off-licences, pubs, restaurants, laundrettes and garages. This intel was gathered by observation (staff following offenders, staff seeing "their" goods for sale in local shops, staff seeing known offenders dropping off bags of stolen goods in mini markets, etc.), but proving it was a problem.

79. After reading about Op Zoridon in the press, the BID manager, working with the local police, implemented the BID's own version of the forensic marking of commonly stolen goods. Police are allowed to search an off-licence without a warrant as part of UK licensing laws, and PCSOs with UV torches regularly visit stores that we have intel on. Simply having your shelves regularly inspected acts as a deterrent to these shopkeepers, who risk a licence review if caught in possession of stolen items. This is worse than a custodial sentence for many, as it means their whole business, which relies on alcohol sales, can no longer function profitably. The project, only in operation a few months, already appears to be disrupting the "eco system", as we see shoplifters being displaced onto other nearby shopping areas.

80. An added positive is that the project works to make the area safer despite the current lack of prison spaces for convicted shoplifters. We are all aware that

even when an individual is actually caught and prosecuted, due to the state of the CPS, sentences are often negligible or foregone entirely in lieu of a small fine. This is dispiriting for all involved, as an offender caught, processed and put before a magistrate (all of which is costly in time and money) can appear on the high street a day later to continue their offending. But if they do not have a place to sell what they steal locally, this should displace both the criminal and the crime to other areas. The scheme would work even better if it were implemented over an entire borough — something we are currently working on.

Our Colchester Business Improvement District

<https://www.ourcolchester.co.uk/>

Street Stories – turning vacant shops into an asset

81. *Street Stories Colchester* was developed to address the problem of empty retail units while also bringing art into the city centre. The BID worked with local artists to install large-scale artwork in vacant shops, with an augmented-reality element allowing visitors to interact with the installations through a smartphone app. This is an interesting case study because it tackles several issues simultaneously including improved visual environment, supporting local artists, visitor engagement, innovative technology. It demonstrates the BID's role in placemaking, rather than simply business promotion.

InColchester – destination marketing and digital engagement

82. The BID created InColchester as its consumer-facing brand and website, bringing together local businesses, events, offers and city-centre information. Following the site's launch: website traffic grew by 200% in six months; over 50% of users in the best-performing months viewed a business-directory page, compared with an industry average of 18%; more than 20% of users viewed events content each month; 82% of users accessed the site via mobile; average session duration exceeded two minutes. This is a strong case study of a BID moving beyond traditional town-centre promo.

'Colchester Chronicles'

83. The 'Colchester Chronicles' Video Series is a 6-part mini documentary highlighting Independent Businesses which caused spikes in interaction on Social Media that converted to visits and are available here [Deli.mp4](#) and [Baccus.mp4](#)

BID Leicester

<https://bidleicester.co.uk/>

Art projects

84. We have partnered with Graffwerk – a local street art collective – to deliver a series of ambitious street art projects. This has included the development of the Bring the Paint festival and Europe's tallest painted artwork on St George's Tower in the city centre. The 82m mural was entirely designed, planned and painted by local people and features motifs including a tiger, a fox and an astronaut that hold local significance. The project attracted media coverage from across the world including the Guardian, the BBC and media outlets from France, Italy and Russia. With a minimum 10-year lifespan, the mural provides real legacy and has generated significant footfall and economic impact.
85. The addition of world class street art across the city has helped to tell stories about Leicester's heritage and shape the identity of the place. Local communities have spoken about their pride in these projects, and the larger murals have unexpectedly become meeting places and signposts as people navigate the city.

Vacant Units

86. Working with local agency, Arch Creative, BID Leicester has improved the appearance of vacant units with a 'Street Stories' art trail. Each artwork was produced on vinyl and included images of the suffragette Alice Hawkins, playwright Joe Orton and David Attenborough. Artworks feature augmented reality technology meaning that an animation can be viewed telling the story of each piece. As well as creating a free trail for the public to enjoy, the project has improved the appearance of unsightly vacant units. Notably, 63% of the units used in the project have now been let and making these units more attractive has clearly played a part. The project has been 'exported' to several other cities including Colchester, Wolverhampton and Stirling. Crucially, this is not a generic 'cut and paste' approach but helps to tell the unique story of each place.

Homelessness

87. Using contactless technology, BID Leicester has established 20 city centre giving points where the public can donate to support people experiencing homelessness. More than £60,000 has been raised so far, with 11 people directly securing housing via the project. Tapping a giving point is a safe and secure method of helping to address homelessness, in contrast to begging which can reinforce cycles of addiction, vulnerability and street lifestyles. By

hosting a giving point, businesses can demonstrate that they care about this issue and are committed to helping to solve it. Support is delivered via selected charities, and information is distributed to businesses and the public highlighting the range of homelessness support service that operate in the city.

Love Wimbledon Business Improvement District

<https://lovewimbledon.org/the-bid/>

How Love Wimbledon BID Brought the Wimbledon Championships to Wimbledon Town Centre

88. While Wimbledon is of course world-famous for hosting the All-England Lawn Tennis Championships, it has not always been the case that away from the Club itself, the rest of Wimbledon has been part of the tournament experience. Historically, Wimbledon has had clear differentiation between specific areas – Wimbledon Town, Wimbledon Village, Wimbledon Common, the All-England Club – with Wimbledon Village being the primary location for tennis celebrations, given its closer proximity to the tournament, and Wimbledon Town less part of the tennis experience, being 3km away from the Championships. This is despite the majority of visitors arriving via train into Wimbledon or Southfields stations.
89. When Love Wimbledon was established in 2012, the BID moved quickly to start the process of celebrating the Wimbledon Championships within the town centre too. Over 150 lamp post banners and hanging baskets were displayed in the tournament's iconic purple and green colours, additional cleansing took place on the main egress points from the station towards the Championships, and most importantly, a giant screen was introduced into the Town Centre, where businesses, visitors and residents could pull up a deck chair and catch the latest action from the All England Club for the duration of the tournament for free.
90. The Screen became popular almost immediately, attracting valuable sponsor revenue to ensure it could be retained by the BID, and supporting high-profile brand partners for commercial activations. Famous tennis players began to visit the space for signings, and local businesses were encouraged to provide food and drink showcases from their summer menus.
91. Fifteen years on, Love Wimbledon now leads work in Wimbledon Town Centre regarding wayfinding, security, cleaning and information support for visitors on their first arrival at the train station. This year, for the first time ever, we have been able to introduce an official AELTC tennis windows competition, with over 35 of our retail and hospitality businesses dressing their windows

imaginatively to celebrate tennis, in the hope of winning tickets to the Championships.

92. The impact has been dramatic. The Wimbledon Championships now bring over £200m per annum to London, with £74m coming to Merton and Wandsworth alone. Within the town centre, footfall during the Championship fortnight has risen from 545,000 in 2012 when cameras were first installed, to this year's figure of 640,000 – that's an increase in usage of over 17%. Crucially, many of those visitors who had previously only gone to the Wimbledon Championships, are now staying on and enjoying local hospitality too, with many of our bars and restaurants reporting 30% uplifts in sales during the fortnight and their busiest time in the entire calendar year. During the next 2 years, we will see a further 350 hotel rooms becoming available in Wimbledon too, bringing more people to stay and experience this world-famous sporting event and the town that calls it home.
93. It's hard to believe now that 15 years ago the All-England Championships were something which happened in proximity to Wimbledon Town Centre, but were never celebrated within the Central Business District. Thanks to Love Wimbledon BID, there has been a complete turnaround into what has become one of the most important and profitable times in the whole of Wimbledon's calendar.