



# Business Plan



"The BID is a great way for businesses both large and small to work together to shape the future of Hastings Town Centre."

**Pat Horwill**, Owner, Gifts & Giggles



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# The Vision

From its newly re-opened pier to splendid views of the castle, Hastings has a town centre to be proud of. It has retained its place as the community's 'market place' offering a wide range of shops and services which in many other towns have been exiled to out of town business parks.

Celebration of the 950th Anniversary of the Battle of Hastings this year will confirm its major historic and cultural connections which also includes the fascinating history of the America Ground and the part that the Queen's Arcade played in the invention of TV.

There's also a nod to the future with the new BMX skate park on White Rock – the largest subterranean facility of its kind in the world.



## The vision for the Hastings BID:

To make Hastings town centre a better place during the five year term of the BID. It will take the lead in delivering a thriving, safe, clean and vibrant town centre that is attractive to investors, residents and visitors and which continues to provide the widest possible range of shops, services and facilities for the local community.





# What is the BID area?

For a detailed ordnance survey map of the boundary please see [www.hastingsbid.co.uk](http://www.hastingsbid.co.uk)

“The BID provides a fantastic opportunity to raise the profile and awareness of Hastings town centre from the very businesses within the area. These businesses are able to influence the BID and contribute towards the decisions made to improve the town and attract higher visitor levels.”

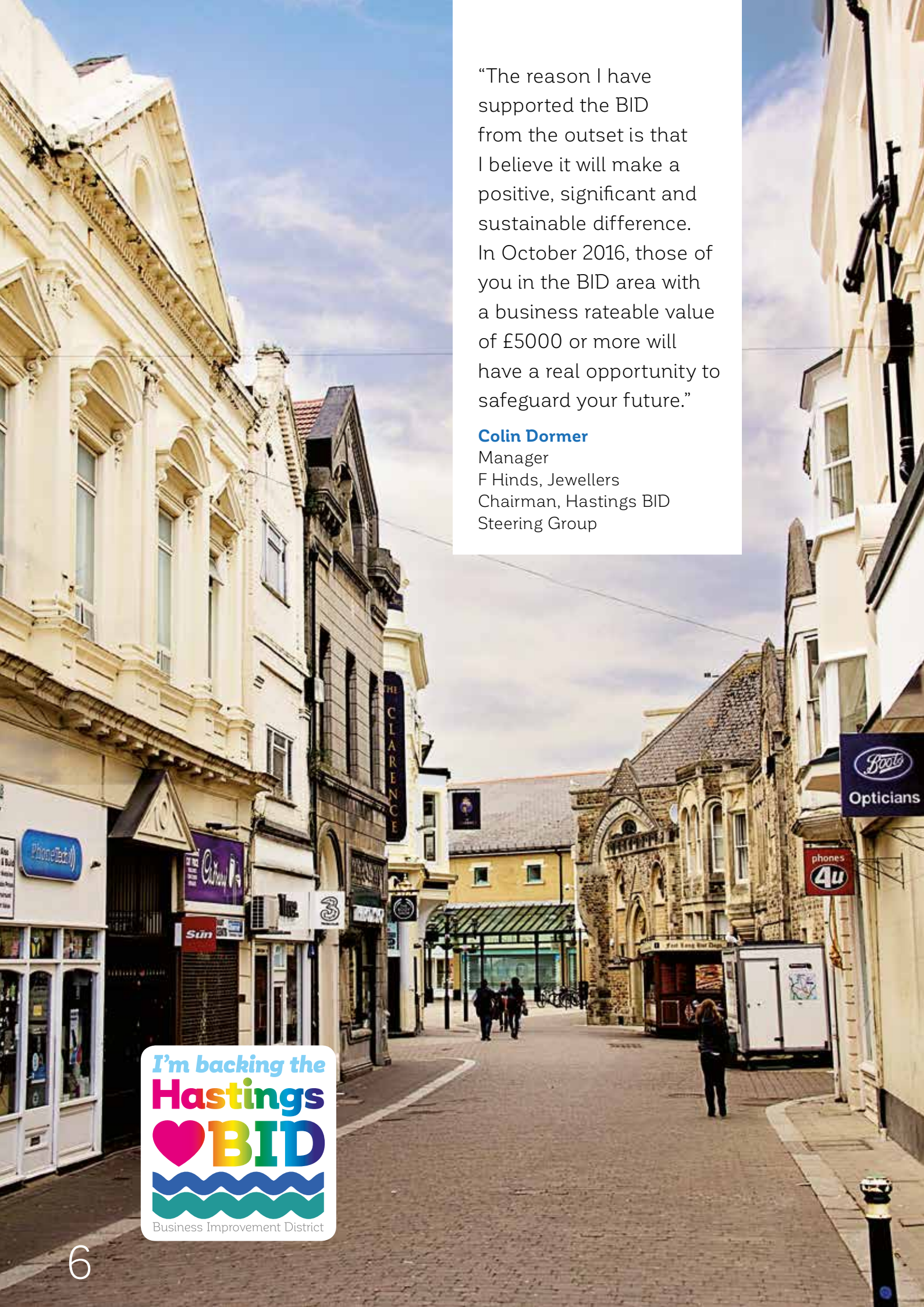
**Lorna Strawson**, Director,  
White Rock Theatre

“I have seen, first hand, the difference a well-run BID can make to a town centre and for that reason alone, I’m only too pleased to back the Hastings BID. The town already has a strong sense of community and this bodes well for town centre businesses to pull together to make Hastings a more attractive place to visit.”

**Ian Noble**, Owner,  
thebestof Hastings







“The reason I have supported the BID from the outset is that I believe it will make a positive, significant and sustainable difference. In October 2016, those of you in the BID area with a business rateable value of £5000 or more will have a real opportunity to safeguard your future.”

**Colin Dormer**  
Manager  
F Hinds, Jewellers  
Chairman, Hastings BID  
Steering Group



## Message from the Steering Group

For the first time, the business community in Hastings town centre could have a realistic budget which can be used to bring about change and increase business.

Economic growth is difficult and businesses increasingly need to work together to reduce costs, increase promotion and improve turnover and profitability.

The development of out of town retail parks and on-line trading activity has challenged traditional models of retail and commerce. New ways of delivering what the customer and client want need to be developed.

The increasing expectations of consumers mean that towns, especially coastal towns like Hastings, and businesses have to improve standards continuously to thrive. Against this background, Hastings has an opportunity to improve in a number of areas.

By voting YES in the Hastings BID ballot, which takes place between 13 October 2016 and 10 November 2016, you will be investing in a new force for economic development in the town centre and for many small businesses that investment will be as little as £2.30 per week.

“Voting YES for Hastings BID will deliver real benefits to businesses that are not currently covered by other services and resource. This is the opportunity to embrace and deliver change and improvements that we actually want and need... that’s why I’m backing Hastings BID and encourage others to do so!”

**Matthew Bates**, Manager, Lets2Share

If you vote to go ahead with the BID, a new Hastings Town Centre BID company will be created to drive forward the projects described in this plan. Also, all levy payers will have the opportunity to stand for election to the Board of that company so that they can use their expertise to benefit the town.

We have been working hard, as a group, during the past nine months to ensure businesses in Hastings have had an opportunity to have their say on whether a BID is the right step forward for our town. We are excited to present you with this business plan, which sets out the projects that you’ve said were priorities for Hastings, to be delivered over the next five years.

We would urge all businesses to recognise the significant opportunity that the BID presents and vote YES for this proposal which describes the projects businesses have said they most want to see. Your voice and vote are vital for the future of Hastings – together we can make a difference.





# Executive Summary

There are already more than 230 BIDs throughout the UK cumulatively investing over £200 million in projects decided upon by their respective local business communities.

The inaugural BID in the UK was established in Kingston-upon-Thames in 2005. That BID has gone from strength to strength and is now in its third five-year term. Many others are in their second term and looking towards a third.

Over the last few months businesses have been invited to a series of Open Meetings and have offered comments about the town centre and suggestions for projects they believe will enhance it. Concurrently, the BID Steering group has benefitted from talking to other towns like Worthing, Brighton and Lowestoft – all of whom have BIDs in place and has assessed the performance trends of the town centre.

The results which emerged are complementary and reassuring. This gives us confidence we can deliver projects that businesses want, which will improve the town centre's performance AND allow it to compete well against other towns like Eastbourne, Tunbridge Wells and Ashford.

#### The four key themes were:

- 1 A Better Feel for the Town Centre
- 2 Better Connections and Communications
- 3 A Stronger Business Voice
- 4 A Safer Place

All the projects proposed in this plan benefit one or more of these four themes. As a result of the consultations, the Hastings BID Steering Group has agreed its aims and objectives for the initial five-year term.

## Hastings BID Aims

- 1 To improve the Hastings experience for visitors, residents and businesses
- 2 To market the town as a great place to work, to live, to shop and to visit
- 3 To provide a voice and support for the town centre's businesses
- 4 To reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity of the town
- 5 To work with and mirror the sense of ambition of other groups in the town centre
- 6 To lever in more money from other sources to supplement the budget

## Objectives

Hastings BID will:

- Make your money go further by leveraging £1 for every £1 of business levy by March 2022.
- Invest its resources evenly such that all areas of the town centre will benefit proportionately from the added investment.
- Promote Hastings town centre as a great place to shop and visit such that more people are influenced to return and business investors have a positive view of it.
- Support and promote the evening economy such that Hastings is acknowledged for its standards of excellence in managing the evening and night time economy.
- Give more businesses a voice with which to lobby the local authority and Police and play a full part in deciding how the town centre is managed.
- Help businesses make savings on their overheads by using the buying power of 460 businesses to reduce costs.
- Enhance the safety and security of Hastings town centre such that actual and perceived levels of crime and anti-social behaviour are reduced.



# Challenges we are facing

## Nationally

Without a doubt the main challenge to our town centre is that posed by changes in consumer spending habits. Town centres are still a main destination for shoppers but the growth of internet sales and huge retail parks are testing them.

We estimate ongoing reductions in Council and Police funding. Whilst town centres remain a high service priority, businesses see BIDs as a way of enhancing the current services to give them advantages over other areas.

## Locally

We have competition for visitors. Eastbourne is currently seeking BID status, Tunbridge Wells and Maidstone are contemplating this too following Canterbury's recent success.

## Three ways that Hastings has been affected

### Inconsistent footfall

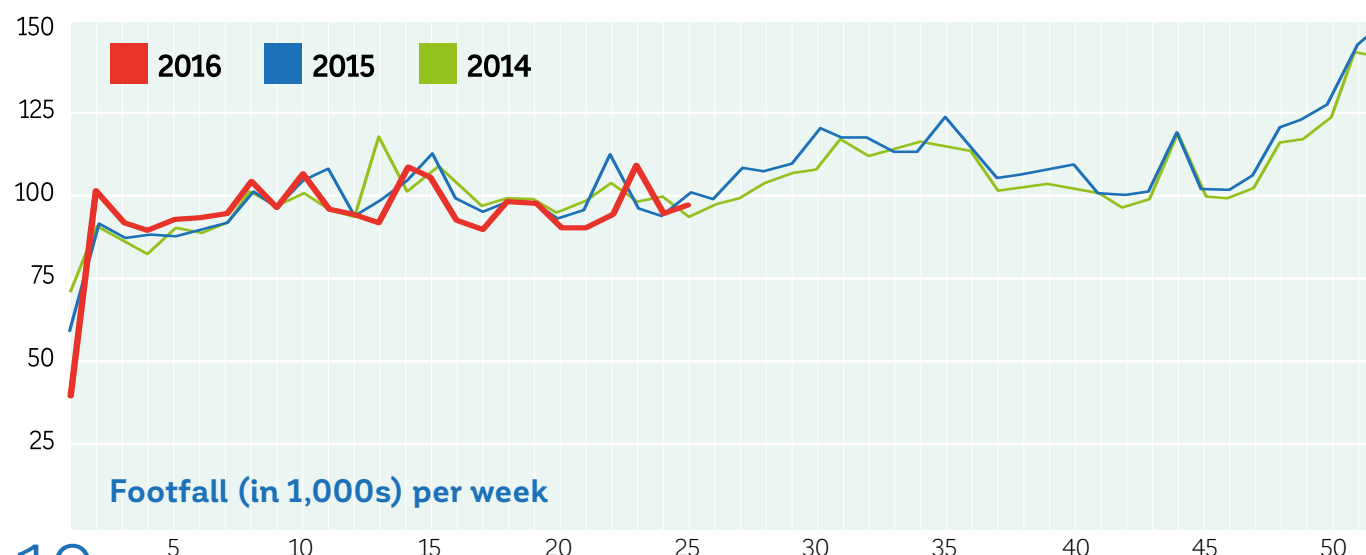
Since 2008 town centre footfall is best described as 'predictably inconsistent'. This graph (Jan –Dec) demonstrates how we experience peaks and troughs throughout the year. The latest trend also shows footfall reductions in each of March, April and May 2016 (over 2015 figures).

### Our empty premises rate has remained stubbornly static

The Town Centre currently has a vacancy rate of 7.4% – a figure which has stubbornly existed for the last 12 months. The upper part of Queens Road, Trinity Triangle and White Rock are the areas most affected by empty premises.

### Anti-social behaviours are limiting access to businesses and public space

A recent survey indicated that a huge proportion of town centre businesses felt that anti-social behaviour has increased. 90% of respondees consider their business and the town centre is adversely affected by inappropriate behaviour.



# How will the BID be financed?

## How will the BID be financed?

The BID will primarily be financed through a BID levy applied to approximately 460 qualifying businesses that fall within the boundary of the Hastings BID area. This will generate around £1 million over its first five-year term.

The levy is based on the commercial value of your property and is calculated as a percentage of its rateable value<sup>1</sup>.

To achieve a realistic income that can deliver on business needs for the Hastings BID, a levy of 1.5% of rateable value is proposed, or an annual contribution of £120, whichever is higher<sup>2</sup>.

Many businesses within the BID area will be in receipt of some form of relief on their business rates. Small Business rate relief, discretionary awards from the billing authority and any other reliefs have no impact on the levy, which all qualifying businesses will be expected to pay.

The levy cannot be varied for the five-year term of the BID without a further ballot of qualifying businesses.

For empty properties, if at the time of the ballot there is no occupational lease, the liability for the levy will fall to the property owner until a new lease is confirmed. The owner will be entitled to vote in the BID ballot.

<sup>1</sup> No adjustments to BID levy will be made during the billing year to reflect changes in individual rateable values due to appeals. Changes in values will be reflected in a corresponding change to the levy collected from the appropriate properties in the following year. Where a property is taken out of the ratings list, the BID levy will apply up to the day before the effective date of removal and the annual BID levy will be apportioned accordingly. Where a new assessment is brought into the rating list, the BID levy will apply from the effective date as shown in the rating list. The annual levy will be apportioned on a daily basis.

<sup>2</sup> The BID levy will be applied to all qualifying hereditaments (premises) with the exception of public conveniences, ATMs, telecommunications masts, advertising hoardings and schools as assessed in the 2015 Local Non-domestic Rating List as at 1 April 2017.

The BID levy will be collected by Hastings Borough Council, but unlike business rates, 100% will be passed back to the BID Company to spend locally on its approved projects.

## Exemptions and exceptions

- All businesses with a rateable value of up to £4999 will be exempt from the levy, although may offer a voluntary contribution to support the plan.
- Business premises with a rateable value between £5000–£7999 will pay an equivalent of £10 per month.
- Serviced tenancies will receive a 0.25% levy discount.
- Registered charities will receive a discount of 80%.
- The maximum levy payment will be £15,000.

## Supplementing the business levy

- The BID levy will be supplemented initially by income from the current Town Centre Management (TCM) organisation.
- The BID will seek voluntary contributions from businesses who want to be part of the project and who either have a lower rateable value than the entry level or whose business is outside of the BID boundary area.
- There may also be opportunities to work in partnership with Hastings Borough Council or other organisations to explore funding from external sources such as Heritage Lottery Fund.



What will it cost me? (Illustrative annual / weekly costs exc. VAT)

Example:

Business Rateable Value	Annual	Weekly	Charities per annum	Serviced Tenants per annum
£4,500	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
£7,500	£120.00	£2.31	£24.00	£100.00
£10,500	£157.50	£3.03	£31.50	£131.25
£15,500	£232.50	£4.47	£46.50	£193.75
£30,500	£457.50	£8.80	£91.50	£381.25
£100,000	£1,500.00	£28.85	£300.00	£1,250.00
£300,000	£4,500.00	£86.55	£900.00	£3,750.00
£750,000	£11,250.00	£216.34	£2,250.00	£9,375.00

What if I currently pay Town Centre Management and / or BCRP membership fees?

Businesses in the BID area that currently pay TCM membership fees will only pay the BID levy in future.

Businesses in the BID area that contribute to the Hastings Area Business Crime Reduction Partnership will receive a 50% discount on their current BCRP membership fees.

Voluntary Contributions

Although many smaller businesses will be exempt from the mandatory levy, they are invited to make a voluntary contribution. Exempt businesses cannot vote in meetings but those in and adjoining the BID area, will receive most, if not all, the BID services in any case. In other BID areas, many have been happy to contribute because they see a successful town centre is in their interest.



# How will the BID be managed?

**The Company** – The BID will be managed by a new, independent and business-led company limited by guarantee, the Hastings BID Company Ltd. The BID will operate as a not-for-profit company and will reinvest all income into Hastings. It will be managed by an elected board of directors.

**The Board of Directors** – The Board will have overall responsibility and accountability to all the BID levy payers for the delivery of the BID and will direct the BID Manager. It will comprise of voluntary directors drawn from the local business community.

The priority for the BID Board will be to recruit and maintain a team of directors who are committed to driving the BID forward and who have the skills to help with the effective running of the BID Company. Nevertheless, it is equally important that the BID Board is representative of the whole business community, so wherever possible, directors will be drawn from a cross-section of business sectors from within the BID area.

The Board of Directors will be led by a private sector chairman. The BID will elect a chair and vice-chair annually and a minimum of three directors will be elected annually by rotation.

**Interim Arrangements** – To ensure continuity and an efficient set-up process, members of the current Hastings BID Steering Group will be invited to form an interim Board which will partner the current Town Centre and Hastings Business Crime Reduction Partnerships and share their resources where possible.

Their immediate tasks will be to set up the BID Company, recruit a BID Manager and begin to implement projects identified within the BID Proposal. The interim Board will step down when the permanent BID Board is established.



**Membership of the BID Company** – All BID levy payers are eligible to be members of the BID Company and to vote at general meetings, as will any local organisations, as agreed by the Board that make an annual contribution no less than the minimum annual levy. However, the Board will have overall responsibility and will be accountable to all BID levy payers for the delivery of the BID projects. Representatives from outside agencies including community organisations will be actively invited to become members of the company and to sit-on, or become advisors to, the Board.

**The BID Manager** – The BID Company will seek to recruit a professional BID Manager who will be accountable to the BID Board and whose role will be to design and implement BID projects and services, monitor feedback, explore ways to secure additional income, be a first point of contact for the BID and act as a champion for the town centre business community of Hastings.

**Minimising overhead costs** – National guidance dictates that a BID should only budget for a maximum 20% overhead. The Hastings BID Steering Group will need to ensure that levy payers' funds are mainly allocated to projects and not to administrative overheads. It can achieve this by sharing the largest overhead costs – staffing and premises, with its partner organisations.



# How will the BID be implemented?

## The Ballot

All occupiers of eligible premises within the proposed BID area will be entitled to vote if they were listed as a non-domestic (business) rate payer on the date the 'Notice of Ballot' was issued.

In the case of an empty, partly refurbished or demolished property where no occupational lease exists, the property owner will be entitled to vote.

Each business rate payer in the BID area will have one vote for each hereditament (property) for which they are liable for business rates. Some businesses, for example where the business has expanded into an adjacent property, will have more than one vote.

The ballot is a postal ballot, with ballot papers being issued by 13 October 2016. They must be completed and returned by 5pm on 10 November 2016.

There will also be a ballot box located on the ground floor of Hastings Borough Council, Aquila House, 2, Breeds Place TN34 3AA where you can post your vote.

Your vote is confidential and should be returned in a sealed envelope which will be included with your ballot pack.

The BID proposer is the Hastings BID Steering Group and the ballot holder is Hastings Borough Council.

For the BID to proceed, the ballot must secure a majority (51%) of those who vote

- a** by number of votes in favour of the BID and
- b** by aggregate rateable value in favour of the BID.

If there is a majority YES vote, both by number and aggregate rateable value, the BID will commence on 1 April 2017.

**Levy Collection** – The BID levy invoice will be issued annually, invoiced on 1st April each year, with the final bill covering the period April 2021 – March 2022. The levy will be collected by Hastings Borough Council and passed to the BID Company.

**Commencement Date and Term** – The BID's first five-year term will commence on 1st April 2017 and end on 31st March 2022. Before this date, the BID Company may elect to seek a renewal of the BID for a further five-year term and will seek a new mandate via a BID renewal ballot.

**Alteration of BID Arrangements** – The BID area and BID levy may only be altered via an alteration ballot or when a renewal ballot is held. BID projects, costs and timescales can be altered subject to approval by the BID Company Board providing they fall within the resources available to the BID.

**BID Performance and Measurement** – Ensuring that our BID delivers purposeful outcomes and that these are positively reflected in customer perceptions is critical to our vision for the BID and to our asking of you to share our vision.

The BID will monitor and measure its progress by setting clear KPIs against each project it seeks to deliver, by working with partners to measure wider impacts such as footfall and spend and by constantly talking to and communicating with businesses in the BID area.

In addition, we will seek feedback from businesses on a project-by-project basis, through business networks and through the successful delivery of BID initiatives.

Management accounts will be reviewed quarterly and annual accounts will be subject to independent audit.



## Baseline Services

The Hastings BID will only deliver additional or enhanced services to complement those currently provided by East Sussex County Council, Hastings Borough Council, the Police and Hastings Town Centre Management.

The services below are those which are currently provided by the public sector at a baseline level that the Hastings BID will, wherever possible, seek to improve.

“The BID is a great initiative for Hastings going forward as it will bring additional funds through BID levy to spend on additional services shaped by businesses, which will help with the sustainability of the town.”

**Andre Brincat**, Manager,  
Marks & Spencer

These services will be included in agreements where appropriate between the Hastings BID and relevant partners:

- Commercial waste
- Floral displays / Parks
- Cleansing
- Litter bin emptying
- Removal of street litter
- Streetscape
- Street washing and graffiti removal
- Highways management / maintenance
- Street lighting
- Parking
- Enforcement, regulation and licensing
- Environmental health
- Community safety
- Tourism, heritage, leisure and events
- Business support
- Christmas lighting

There are further services delivered by the County and Borough Councils that operate on a county and borough-wide basis including planning, transport and development. The BID will seek the commitment of the Councils to engage with and support the BID via these services in addition to geographically specific activity.

Full statements of baseline services can be found on the Hastings BID website:  
[www.hastingsbid.co.uk](http://www.hastingsbid.co.uk)



# The Proposals

## Theme 1:

### A better feel for the town centre

- **The phased extension of Christmas lights** to Queens Road, Havelock Road, South Terrace, Trinity Triangle and White Rock.
- **A warm welcome:** we will link with Sussex Coast College, Hastings to engage travel and tourism students as town centre ambassadors. They will welcome visitors, hand out guides and even provide guided walks.
- **Expansion of the events and street vitality programme:** we will purchase a Group Insurance cover, bunting and flags, offer advice on event management & establish a grants fund for groups to hold events.
- **Improving the physical environment:** A phased introduction of floral planters with priority given to areas that don't currently benefit from floral displays. With landlords' approval, the dressing of empty shop windows and other eyesores.
- **Achieve the Purple Flag Award** to encourage a family-friendly evening and night time economy. Purple Flag is an accreditation process similar to the Blue Flag for beaches. It leads to Purple Flag status for town centres that meet or surpass the standards of excellence in managing the evening and night time economy. The BID sees this as an excellent marketing tool for the town's evening economy and start of a longer process of encouraging a more diverse evening offer.
- The BID could also work with traders to **link up parking, restaurants and entertainments** such as the Theatre, Pier and the cinema to encourage visitors to stay longer.

## Theme 2:

### Better connections and communications

- **A "Digital High Street":** a new, web-based initiative "Love Hastings" and links to a new social media facility. This website will support the current Hastings Card, local businesses & business owners by promoting all of the best news stories, offers & events you can find in Hastings town centre.
- To add value to the new **'Love Hastings'** website
  - a Hastings will be advertised at nearby locations such as Ashford International Station to highlight that it is "Only 20 minutes away."
  - b A Visitor Guide / Heritage map will be produced – A pocket-sized map / guide to Hastings town centre available in all shops, Tourist Information Centre, College and other key sites. Specifically promoting key historic / leisure destinations such as the America Ground, Queens Arcade, Alexandra Park and the Pier.
- **'Welcome to Hastings' signage at key entry points to the town centre:** an exploration of how digital way-finding can add value to traditional signage including the new static way finders introduced to the town centre in 2016.
- **Explore the possibility of extending public wi-fi** along the sea front into the town centre.



## Theme 3:

### A stronger business voice

- **Being business-led:** the Hastings BID will be business led, ensuring that all businesses can have an input into decisions that affect the town. It will be proactive – a team that 'makes things happen' in Hastings. Above all, the BID will act as a single, coordinated voice for the business community of Hastings town centre, influencing, lobbying and engaging with public, private and voluntary sectors to ensure the best deal for the town. Influencing bus provision or the priorities of the Council's acclaimed Planning Enforcement ('Grotbuster') team for example.
- **Saving businesses money:** the BID will offer opportunities for reducing costs, through collective purchasing of services such as waste collection and energy. (See Theme 4 below to see how BID area businesses can immediately benefit).
- **Ensuring businesses receive the right levels of advice and support:** the BID will partner with a range of organisations to provide businesses with for example financial advice, business loans, visual merchandising and training in subjects like health and safety, food hygiene and first aid – all at competitive rates as well as creating mutually beneficial opportunities to take apprentices and work experience students.
- **Employee incentives:** the BID will lobby for reduced parking charges for workers in the town centre and will also work on other transport initiatives, for example a car sharing scheme and increased cycle provision.
- **A place to stay:** Hastings has only 1000 overnight stay beds compared to around 7000 in Eastbourne. The BID will explore ways to promote investment in enhancing and promoting the town's visitor accommodation offer.

## Theme 4:

### A safer place

- **An additional security presence** will be funded by the BID. Effectively the new 'Ears and Eyes' for the town centre's businesses, the new staff will support the Neighbourhood Policing team, Priory Meadow Security, the CCTV team and the Business Crime Reduction Coordinator.
- **The BID strongly supports the Business Crime Reduction Partnership (BCRP)** and will incentivise businesses in the BID area to join by subsidising the current fees. Members will receive all the current benefits – images of excluded individuals, the services of the current Coordinator, window decals, the freedom to share sensitive data legally, an opportunity to link to the Watch scheme radio network and exclusion orders automatically applying to their premises.
- **Purchase of the security industry leader DISC** information sharing and communication software. DISC is used by over 120 business crime reduction partnerships nationwide. It enables them to more accurately target interventions whilst its automated eNewsletter plays an essential part in increasing Members' engagement.

"A BID can help to create a cleaner, safer environment as well as improve and enhance the area in various ways making it a place where visitors and residents alike want to keep coming back to. As a small business owner I fully support Hastings BID"

**Pat Horwill**, Owner, Gifts & Giggles



# Indicative Budget

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	TOTAL
Total Income	199318	199318	199318	199318	199318	996590
Less provision for bad debts	9960	9960	9960	9960	9960	49800
Total	189358	189358	189358	189358	189358	946790

## Expenditure

### Direct costs

Theme 1	60620	65620	74020	71620	58000	329880
Theme 2	45650	30650	35650	30650	30650	173250
Theme 3	4000	4000	4000	4000	4000	20000
Theme 4	23650	36250	40050	40550	40800	181300
Project Cost Totals	133920	136520	153720	146820	133450	704430

Overhead	20330	22500	22800	23100	23500	112230
Collection costs	6000	6000	6000	6000	6000	30000
Ballot/Set up costs	1000	1000	1000	1000	4000	8000
Loan repayment	15700	15700				31400

Reserve	12408	7638	5838	12438	22408	60730
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This budget is indicative only, and has been drawn up using current rateable values, so may need to be altered slightly if these change.

# Your Steering Group



**Matthew Bates**  
Manager, Lets2Share



**Laurence Bell**  
Co-Owner, White Rock Hotel



**Chris Beveridge**  
Owner, Town City Cards



**Andre Brincat**  
Manager, M&S



**Gemma Dearman**  
Director, The Property Pad



**Colin Dormer** – (Chair)  
Manager, F Hinds Jewellers



**David Hinton**  
Owner, Hastings Works



**Pat Horwill**  
Owner, Gifts and Giggles



**Lord Brett McLean**  
Chair, 1066 Country FSB



**Alan Matthews**  
Owner, Xenca by Paje



**Ian Noble**  
Owner, thebestof Hastings



**Dave Padmore**  
Franchisee, McDonalds Restaurants



**David Roder**  
Director, The Rye Agency



**Lorna Strawson**  
Director, White Rock Theatre



**Daniel Swann**  
Accountant, Ashdown Hurrey



**Luca Venditto**  
Owner, The Italian Way and other town centre businesses

The Steering Group is advised by:

**Mark Barnes** and **Matt Powell**  
Revive and Thrive

and is supported by:

**Pranesh Datta** & **Jane Dodson**  
Hastings Borough Council

**Rob Woods**  
Town Centre Manager,  
Let's Do Business Group

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# Key reasons to vote YES for the BID

- **The Business Improvement District is led by business** – a collective voice to represent the best interests of over 600 businesses in the town centre.
- **It is a collective investment of around £1 million over five years** – to be spent on business priorities in the town centre.
- **There will be cost savings to businesses** – the BID projects could save your business money.
- **It will increase the vitality and mix of the town centre** – without duplicating existing efforts.
- **It will generate additional funding** – a BID can attract significant additional funding into the area.

**Vote YES to secure five years of dedicated funding for Hastings**

**[www.hastingsbid.co.uk](http://www.hastingsbid.co.uk)**

