A Proposal for a Business Improvement District (BID) for Stockport Town Centre

Vision Stockport
Working with businesses to create a vibrant, sustainable town centre for the benefit of all.

Stockport Town Centre
BID Proposal 2017 - 2022
What the BID will do

A BID will create a single identity and marketing platform for Stockport. The BID website will tell consumers everything that is going on in the town centre and become the go-to resource for local residents, workers and visitors for information on events, promotions and the many attractions that the town has to offer. The BID will promote the town centre to a wider audience to attract new visitors and businesses to come and locate here.

Events will be coordinated and connect the different parts of Stockport with each other to encourage people to roam more widely across the town centre and to increase dwell time and expenditure. We will work with the Police to improve the safety of our customers and reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. We will hold new events throughout the year, building upon our historic assets as well as more recent happenings such as ‘Foolie Friday’.

A BID will make the town more attractive to employers, helping businesses recruit and retain high quality employees. It will improve your customers’ experience when they visit by making the town centre more vibrant with new opportunities to socialise after work.

Businesses will be able to save money by passing on direct savings from bulk buying services at cheaper unit costs. We will seek to facilitate a business loan fund to encourage start-ups in empty buildings that will also improve the town’s appearance. The BID team will work with the Council to improve the car parking experience.

We believe a BID will enable Stockport to compete with its neighbours and become the key business, shopping and leisure destination of choice in the region.

Welcome

“Like countless towns and cities throughout the UK, Stockport faces many challenges to retain its identity as an attractive destination for residents, workers and visitors.

Heritage - The town is already rich in heritage.

The town centre boasts a stunning historic market place; it is home to one of the UK’s oldest independent family of brewers; it houses an attractive array of independent shops in the significant old town area and centre stage sits the beautiful art deco Plaza theatre.

Investment - A £1 billion investment plan is underway to change the face of Stockport.

A new gateway to the town from the rail station is being created at Stockport Exchange; a new leisure complex of restaurants and a cinema is taking shape at Red Rock; a new transport interchange will provide a modern concourse and greater access for all; the Town Centre Access Plan will improve access and connectivity across the town.

New housing developments will attract more residents into the town.

But we want to take Stockport from good to great!

We set up Vision Stockport in 2015 because we could see our businesses losing customers to other towns in south Manchester and we shared a joint desire to work together to improve our town centre to reverse this trend. Stockport’s biggest transformation for 50 years is starting to take shape, with new shops, offices and hotels open for business next year. We want to make sure that each and every business benefits from these changes.

It is our vision for the town centre to become the heart of a vibrant town that has something for everyone, every day.

A Business Improvement District – BID - for Stockport can make that happen.

A BID is a business-led and democratically-elected organisation. They are run by and for their business members. BIDs are formed following a formal ballot of businesses based upon a proposal of projects and services to be provided. Income is raised through a mandatory BID levy on businesses occupying properties with rateable values (RVs) above a certain level.

A majority voting in favour by both number and RV is necessary for the ballot to be successful and the BID to be established.

Over the next 5 years, you have the opportunity to raise £2 million that will deliver projects chosen by you, the business owners, that will help your businesses to thrive. Projects that will attract more visitors and offer a wider choice.

In October, you will have the chance to vote to create a safer, more attractive, prosperous town centre. A healthier Stockport with a sustainable future, for all.

There are already over 200 BIDs in the UK, including Manchester City Centre and Altrincham.

Let’s vote to make Stockport one more.”

Jean Walker
Chair of Vision Stockport – campaigning for Stockport’s Business Improvement District
**The BID Term and Levy**

The term of the Stockport Town Centre BID will be five years starting on 1 April 2017 and ending on 31 March 2022. The BID levy will be 1.25% of a business’s rateable value for all businesses whose rateable value is equal to or exceeds £10,000. This represents about 2.5% of an average business rates bill. The levy will be fixed to the current (2010) ratings list to provide certainty rather than the new ratings list due to take effect in April 2017.

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**The BID Area**

The Stockport Town Centre BID will include all of the town centre including the bus station, Merseyway, the Peel Centre, the old town and the A6 as far south as the main Council offices as shown in the map below. A full list of streets is on page 17.

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“Our company Orbit Developments have been directly funding events in the centre of Stockport for the last 3 years while many other businesses have been unable to offer support. The BID provides the opportunity for all businesses to join us and contribute a small amount to ensure that these events continue and new events are given a chance to succeed. By voting ‘yes’ for a BID in the ballot, you will help to ensure that Stockport continues to move forward and go from good to great – for everyone.”

Tony Jones
Orbit Developments
Our Proposals - What the BID will deliver

In talking to businesses throughout the BID area, three clear priorities for improving the town centre emerged and we have set out our detailed proposals under these three priorities:

1. Improving the Customer Experience
2. Marketing Stockport Town Centre
3. Doing Business

1. Customer Experience

Customers should want to come to Stockport. Once they are here, they should want to stay longer. At the moment there is little to make Stockport stand out from its neighbours. The experience must be improved from start to finish – including a visitor’s arrival in the town centre and walk to their first destination. We want to improve the appearance of the town centre, integrate new developments and make it easier to move between ‘quarters’. We want to extend the opening hours of shops and create a revitalised evening and night time economy. The town must feel safe and welcoming.

To improve everyone’s experience of the town centre the BID team will work collaboratively with partners to:

• Work with retailers to create a better shopping experience – we want to build on Stockport’s friendly nature to improve customer service, build repeat business and improve perceptions of the town.

• Improve Parking – we want to address the car parking experience, such as opening hours, pricing and lighting. By introducing new technology we can help people find empty car parking spaces near to where they want to go, generally making it easier for visitors and shoppers to park in the town centre.

• Improve pedestrian routes – we will introduce signage, maps and greenery to the main routes into the town centre from the car parks and bus and rail stations. We will work with the Council to improve the pedestrian crossings over the A6 and better connect the different quarters of the town centre.

• Tackle empty properties – our pro-active campaign will attract new and varied businesses. In the interim we will install mock shop window displays and pop-up shops.

• Explore the possibility of deploying volunteers – we will test the feasibility of training up local residents to welcome visitors to the town.

• Help create an evening and night time economy to bring more people into the town centre. Our offer will include regular late-night shopping evenings and incentives to encourage employees and visitors to stay in town after work.

“I welcome the opportunity to work in partnership with my local business community to help deliver our vision and improve the vibrancy of Stockport. It’s our responsibility to lead and make a local difference. I believe that the BID with specific, shared objectives, will make a positive impact for all businesses.”

Ruth Goss
Boots, Stockport
2. Marketing

Stockport has neither a common brand/identity or a shared communication platform to tell people of the exciting events in the town centre and promote its all-too-hidden gems.

We want to change this. With the new developments around the station and Redrock, we will ‘relaunch’ Stockport. We will increase footfall, encourage new businesses to locate here and fight hard to bring our customers back from competing destinations. We will work with existing business groups to ensure everyone is united in their objectives.

We will:

• Define what is special about our town – we may want to talk about our history and visitor attractions, our emerging status as a corporate base, our market, our shopping or our friendly welcome.

• Build a single trusted brand for Stockport that the BID can use to promote the town and that individual businesses can use through their own channels.

• Set up a single customer-facing website for the town centre. This would bring together all the events and activities going on in Stockport.

• Hold Events – we will build upon our existing events – such as Foodie Friday, Stockport Fringe and Stockport Folk Festival – to improve footfall and bring in new customers, particularly at times of the year when footfall is low. We will also promote a town centre-wide Christmas events programme. The BID could also offer a free/discounted event-organising service to help individual businesses stage events.

• Promote Stockport as a destination at entry points to the town centre such as the main roads and the railway station. We will write articles promoting Stockport to the media (e.g. in Virgin Trains’ magazines) to encourage people to ‘Stop off in Stockport’ rather than stay on the train to Manchester.

“At Robinsons we have always been big supporters of Stockport and the business community within it. We are a proud Stockport company and we thoroughly support the proposal for the Stockport Business Improvement District which will drive extra footfall to the town.”

Oliver Robinson
Robinsons Brewery
3. Doing Business

Stockport has an incredible range of businesses. We want to ensure they stay here and that new businesses are attracted to expand the town centre’s commercial base.

We will make it easier to do business in Stockport, and provide new opportunities to save money.

The BID will:

• **Work with the Police to improve safety** and improve people’s perception of Stockport as a safe and welcoming place. The BID will represent the business community in a dialogue with the Police and work with them to reduce crime and the fear of crime. We will provide them with information and help them focus their resources on tackling business crime and anti-social behaviour.

• **Reduce Business Costs**: The BID will bulk-buy services and pass on savings to businesses. This could include utilities, waste collection and recycling.

• **Facilitate funding to support new small businesses**: We want to encourage new businesses to locate in the town centre particularly where they add to the character of the town and attract new visitors. We will seed fund a business loan scheme bringing in external funding and business support services for new start-up businesses.

• **Support Business Networking events**. We will attend the current business networking events held in the town centre, promoting the idea that business should stay in Stockport rather than trade outside the town. You also told us you want to get to know your neighbours better and generate more business via direct referrals.

• **Co-ordinate a local employment/experience scheme**. Local employment generates more trade within the locality. The BID could provide a bridge to local employers and help coordinate the work of the public job agencies in finding jobs and work experience opportunities for local people.

• **Establish a Business Volunteering Scheme**. The BID will work with employers to help them get involved in local community and educational projects.

• **Source and analyse data such as footfall and crime patterns**. We will use a variety of data sources to try to gain a better understanding of why some parts of our town are prospering more than others and collect data to compare our performance against those of our competitors.

“Over the past three years, Stockport Old Town has become a real destination for family entertainment and community engagement. The Teenage Market, the Vintage Village, Foodie Friday and our Fringe & Folk Festivals have all brought many new visitors to the town. A successful BID will enable us to build on these events and create an even more vibrant town centre with something for everyone to enjoy.”

Joe Barratt
Co-founder, The Teenage Market
The BID Levy rules

These are the proposed BID levy arrangements:

1. The term of the BID will be a period of five years from 1 April 2017-31 March 2022.
2. The BID levy will be applied to hereditaments (rateable properties) with a rateable value of £10,000 and over.
3. The BID levy will be a fixed rate of 1.25% of the rateable value for all businesses using the 2010 rating list for the duration of the BID.
4. The BID levy will assume a growth rate for inflation of 2% applied on 1 April each year, with the BID Board being able to set a lower level if inflation remains low.
5. Properties that come into the rating list during the BID term will be subject to the BID levy from the effective date that the property is brought into the rating list and the rateable value effective at that time.
6. Where a ratepayer receives mandatory charitable relief from business rates, 80% relief from the BID levy will be allowed.
7. Empty properties, excluding listed buildings, will be liable for the BID levy via the property owner with no void period or any empty allowance.
8. Mobile phone equipment, ATMs (cash machines) and advertising hoardings will be excluded from the levy.
9. There will be no VAT charged on the BID levy.

There are five hundred businesses who would be liable for the BID levy and who would be able to vote in the BID ballot. The chart over the page shows the number of businesses by sector that would make up the BID. This includes properties occupied by the Council who will pay the BID levy like any other businesses.

Rateable Values

The table below shows how much business will pay for some specific rateable values to illustrate what an individual business might pay.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current rateable</th>
<th>Annual BID Charge</th>
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<tr>
<td>Below £10,000</td>
<td>Voluntary £100</td>
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<tr>
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<td>£125</td>
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<tr>
<td>£25,000</td>
<td>£312.50</td>
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<td>£50,000</td>
<td>£625</td>
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<td>£75,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>£100,000</td>
<td>£1,250</td>
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<td>£500,000</td>
<td>£6,250</td>
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<tr>
<td>£1,000,000</td>
<td>£12,500</td>
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The BID levy and Budget

To fund these activities, the Stockport Town Centre BID would raise about £500,000 each year through a mandatory levy on businesses, based on a BID multiplier of 1.25% of rateable value (based on the 2010 ratings list currently in use). This will be supplemented by voluntary property owner contributions and income from the BID’s activities. This will take the annual budget to an average of £550,000 a year. Total income and expenditure in the town centre of £2.75 million is predicted over the proposed five-year BID lifespan which will be spent to achieve the BID’s ambitions set out previously. The table below shows the anticipated budget for the whole of the BID term. This includes the re-payment of £21,000 funding from Stockport Council alongside other grant funding it has generously provided to get us here.

Our Five Year BID budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>£s</th>
<th>2017/18</th>
<th>2018/19</th>
<th>2019/20</th>
<th>2020/21</th>
<th>2021/22</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
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<tr>
<td>Levy Budget</td>
<td>480,000</td>
<td>490,000</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>510,000</td>
<td>520,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>at 1.25% of rateable value (95%)</td>
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<td>External funding target*</td>
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<td>50,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>250,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>550,000</td>
<td>560,000</td>
<td>570,000</td>
<td>2,750,000</td>
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<td>Expenditure</td>
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<td>Customer Experience</td>
<td>160,000</td>
<td>161,690</td>
<td>177,396</td>
<td>173,118</td>
<td>143,856</td>
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<td>Marketing</td>
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<td>215,177</td>
<td>224,285</td>
<td>1,006,591</td>
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<td>Doing Business</td>
<td>115,000</td>
<td>80,690</td>
<td>104,396</td>
<td>92,118</td>
<td>72,857</td>
<td>465,061</td>
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<td>Core costs</td>
<td>62,500</td>
<td>58,500</td>
<td>49,000</td>
<td>51,000</td>
<td>111,288</td>
<td>332,288</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contingency</td>
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<td>25,000</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>130,000</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>522,500</td>
<td>538,915</td>
<td>549,886</td>
<td>556,413</td>
<td>582,286</td>
<td>2,750,000</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surplus/deficit</td>
<td>7,500</td>
<td>1,085</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>3,587</td>
<td>-12,286</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* We will actively seek external funding sources to support our activities and make the BID levy go further. The figure shown is an indicative amount.
BID Governance and Transparency

The BID will be business led, providing the opportunity for local businesses to invest, and have a direct say, in the management of the area. This investment is therefore controlled by those businesses through a BID Company formed specifically for this purpose, run by and for local businesses, representing all sectors and all parts of the BID area. Levy paying businesses will make up the BID Board, comprising a diverse group of experienced business people across all sectors, which will oversee all of its activities. The BID Company will be not for profit and limited by guarantee.

The BID will also embrace key stakeholders and partners in our operations, including public sector agencies involved in delivering services with the BID area such as Stockport Council, Greater Manchester Police and Transport for Greater Manchester.

To increase local business involvement, there will be committees or sub groups with representation drawn from members of the BID Company to drive forward key aspects of the BID Proposal. Each will review progress and expenditure and have delegated authority to allocate expenditure. Each group will feed into meetings of the BID Company’s Board. This will harness the energy and commitment of local businesses to work collaboratively for the benefit of all Stockport town centre businesses.

BID Company accounts will be prepared on an annual basis and presented at the BID Company AGM, to which all BID members will be invited. The BID accounts will be published on the BID’s website to ensure openness and transparency.

Business liable or the BID levy by sector

Businesses in the BID area with a rateable value below £10,000 will not be liable for the levy but we hope that the many small businesses in the town centre that contribute to our character and overall offer will wish to participate and benefit from the BID’s services. They will be welcome and will be able to do so for a subscription fee of £100 per year.

The BID Company’s members may include:
- All those businesses paying the BID levy
- Voluntary contributors to the BID

The chart below shows the BID levy contribution by sector with retail premises making nearly 75% of the total levy contributions.

Business BID levy contributions by sector

The chart below shows the BID levy contribution by sector with retail premises making nearly 75% of the total levy contributions.

- Cafes, Pubs & Restaurants
- Offices
- Retail
- Leisure
- Car Parks
- Other

74.8% Retail
Measuring the BID’s performance

Services provided by Stockport Council will be benchmarked before the BID starts and will form part of a baseline agreement to ensure that the BID levy is spent only on additional services.

In order to measure the success of the BID a suite of performance indicators will be drawn up to define and measure progress towards our ambitions. These will be reported on an annual basis.

The BID ballot

The ballot will be carried out by UK-Engage on behalf of Stockport Council. A formal Notice of Ballot will be issued by them on 14 September and sent to all levy payers and to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

Ballot papers will be issued by post to the named voter at the nominated address on Wednesday 28 September. Businesses will have until 5pm on Thursday 27 October to return completed ballot papers.

The result of the ballot will be declared by Stockport Council’s Returning Officer on Friday 28 October. If a majority of businesses vote in the ballot to support the BID Proposal then the BID will formally start on 1 April 2017.

The following streets or part of streets are included in the BID area:

- Adlington Walk
- Ardern Walk
- Apsley Street
- Astley Street
- Avenue Street
- Brewery Street
- Bridge Street
- Bridge Street Brow
- Bridgefield Street
- Brown Street
- Castle Yard
- Chestergate
- Churchgate
- Coopers Brow
- Daw Bank
- Deanery Way
- Edward Street
- Exchange Street
- Garfield Street
- Grand Central Square
- Great Portwood Street
- Great Underbank
- Harvey Street
- Heaton Lane
- High Bank Side
- High Street
- Hooper Street
- Howard Street
- John Street
- King Street East
- Knightsbridge
- Lawrence Street
- Little Underbank
- Loonies Court
- Lord Street
- Lower Hillgate
- Market Place
- Marsland Street
- Mealhouse Brow
- Mersey Square
- Merseyway
- Millgate
- Norbury Street
- North Place
- Park Street
- Piccadilly
- Princes Street
- Railway Road
- Richard Street
- Royal Oak Yard
- St Marys Way
- St Peters Square
- St Petersgate
- Station Road
- Tiviot Dale
- Vernon Street
- Vernon Walk
- Warren Street
- Wellington Road
- Wellington Road North
- Wellington Road South
- Wellington Street
- Woodman Street
Get in touch

For any information about the proposed BID or the ballot, please visit www.visionstockport.org or contact us by email at bid@visionstockport.org or email our colleague Mike Fairmaner on Mike.Fairmaner@themeans.co.uk

“There’s a real need to collectively invest in the future of our town centre. The BID offers a great opportunity to help animate the town and inject some energy into it. Creating a more enjoyable experience for customers means that they will keep coming back to our businesses.”

Kevin Nurse
CEX Stockport Franchisee

“The BID provides a fantastic opportunity to help shape the future of Stockport. This is our chance to make our collective voices heard and ensure the town is the first destination to shop, relax and work. Vote yes and let’s make a difference to our town.”

Stuart Broadbelt
McDonald’s Franchisee, Mersey Way

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Our First Year Objectives

Promote Stockport as a destination to residents, shoppers, visitors, employees and businesses by:

- Agreeing Stockport’s unique selling points and developing the town’s brand.
- Developing a single customer-facing website to market the town centre and promote its exciting events.
- Creating a calendar of events that will attract visitors to all areas of the town centre. We will run a programme of events throughout the year across the town centre.

Improve the Stockport experience by:

- Improving safety by working in partnership with the Police to reduce crime by targeting persistent offenders and collecting intelligence to help focus resources.
- Working with Stockport Council to improve the cleanliness of the town centre and promoting the town centre at its key gateways.
- Working with Stockport Council to improve signage in and around the town centre, making it easier for people to visit Stockport.
- Supporting the establishment of an evening economy by attracting more cafes, bars and restaurants, improving parking provision and encouraging employees and visitors to stay in town later.

Measure our successes by:

- Capturing and recording footfall and other measures to benchmark our progress.
- Meeting with individual businesses and holding business forums to record how businesses have benefitted from our activities.
- Comparing key performance indicators with our competitor centres.