



enjoy

wolverhampton
Business Improvement District

**Working Together
For A Brighter Future**

**ANNUAL REPORT
2020 - 2021**



Introduction

Within this report we look back at Wolverhampton BID's activities during the year from the 1st of April 2020 to the 31st of March 2021. It is true for all of us, 2020 was not the year any of us were expecting with ongoing lockdowns and restrictions, with all our city centre business community affected.

The 1st of April 2020 formed the start of our second BID term with a full five years ahead of the BID team and BID Board of Directors to deliver the projects, activities, marketing, and events that were shaped and informed by close consultation with city centre businesses.

The BID continued to operate throughout the year, continually reviewing its services to respond to government restrictions and to support each stage of our city centre reopening.

The year proved to be constrained with trading restrictions remaining in place across hospitality, entertainment, leisure, retail and changing working arrangements for the office and commercial sector.

The BID worked to ensure that the city centre remained at the forefront of all local government forums, that businesses across all sectors received the best possible support and maintained a regular dialogue with businesses as the year evolved. Wherever and whenever possible, the BID has acted quickly to aid swift recovery and adapt to new challenges our city has faced as set out throughout this Annual Report.

Welcome from the BID Chairman



As we emerge from the confines of the pandemic, it is evident that our city centre's resilience is strong. We have witnessed businesses across all sectors embracing the trials of the pandemic head on, meeting new requirements, adapting products, services, and

business models, navigating through government support, and keeping ahead of challenges faced.

The BID has remained focussed on delivering its Business Plan 2020 to 2025 objectives which hold the success of the city at their core. Under the direction of our representative Board of Directors the team have taken a cautious but responsive

approach to ensuring the diverse range of services are delivered where possible and adapted where not, but always remaining sympathetic to the position that levy payers across all sectors have faced.

We see a brighter future ahead following the government's steps towards recovery with the BID being central to bringing back much needed footfall.

The BID will continue its positive engagement with Wolverhampton's city centre audience, building back consumer confidence, and as well as responding to strategic opportunities we will also provide practical opportunities to levy payers to accelerate progress towards a full recovery.

Iain Watkins

Wolverhampton BID Chairman

BID Team Welcome



Cherry Shine – BID Director

As a priority for the first quarter of the year Cherry focused on ensuring businesses were fully aware of financial support and latest government guidance with regular information being shared directly with city centre businesses. Understanding the impact of continued restrictions especially within the hospitality sector she campaigned for increased business support. As the year headed towards the summer reopening for general retail, the BID adapted its social media marketing to boost customer confidence, encouraging the safe return of footfall to our streets and delivering a considered events programme to bring families back to the city centre whilst restrictions were low. With the return of lockdowns restrictions towards the latter half of the year the task to support trade via an online platform became more important and even more so maintaining representation of city centre interests through the Towns Board and supporting the City Council's successful BID for Future High Street funding with the aim of bringing long term vitality.



Shaun Boyce - Office, Projects & Social Media Manager

Shaun's focus has been maintaining a relevant and up to date Enjoy Wolverhampton social media channel reflecting the ever-changing messaging throughout the year. His efforts ensured customers had a responsive point of engagement via social media and our Enjoy Wolverhampton website, whilst also enabling businesses to share their latest information to a wide audience. Shaun supported businesses to embrace 'online' whilst in lockdown, using his expertise to maximise consumer engagement amongst businesses who needed to adapt during restrictions. Responding to the needs of the city centre when emerging from lockdowns Shaun ensured that the BID's City Ambassador team continued to provide their warm and friendly welcome to returning shoppers and visitors and supported business in reopening.



Lucy Armstrong - Project Co-Ordinator

Through our Pubwatch forum Lucy has ensured that our city centre licensed venues have access to the best and most up to date information throughout all stages of the pandemic. Being mindful of the importance of supporting vulnerable people out of homelessness, Lucy continues to support the strong partnership work in providing long term accommodation for those in need. During the year she installed our city's first Tap to Donate point which raises funds for our Alternative Giving charity. Working tirelessly to reduce business crime Lucy maintained strong communications via the radio link scheme, ensuring that essential retailers who were able to trade during lockdowns had continued communications. Lucy coordinated intelligence gathered from our ambassador patrols, business community and CCTV surveillance using it effectively to maintain and secure a safe city.

A Clean, Safe and Welcoming City Centre



CCTV Surveillance

Our surveillance operator, Merrill, remained operational throughout the year continually liaising with our essential retailers trading during lockdowns, giving regular updates to our city centre Police teams. Providing communications between all businesses on the radio link he also ensured that timely information was uploaded onto the DISC crime reporting app, directly reducing opportunities for shop theft and anti-social behaviour.

'I was proud to continue surveillance of our city throughout such a difficult year, to support the police by providing crucial footage and helping them resolve serious incidents quickly. It really brought it home to me how essential the CCTV surveillance service that we provide is to protect businesses and people's livelihoods.'

Merrill Charnock - BID CCTV Operator

City Ambassador Team – Reopening the High Street

Throughout all stages of reopening, our City Ambassador team have effectively coordinated efforts alongside the City Council to introduce safe queuing layouts and interventions to bring the safe reopening of our main shopping streets. Our team have maintained their strong business relationships and provided businesses with a direct point of contact.

Giving a warm welcome to people returning to the city centre is in their DNA and forms a huge part of their city centre patrols, with this in mind they were the face of the city in building customer confidence and messaging via social media videos.

The team have been furloughed during stages of national lockdowns, however, to encourage businesses to trade online whilst in periods of lockdown Heidi had taken to

contacting individual businesses to talk them through setting up online via our Shop Appy platform, launched to assist city centre traders during rolling restrictions.

Vibrant City Streets

In partnership with the City of Wolverhampton Council we have, coordinated, designed, and installed vacant unit dressings across 5 units at Victoria Street and Queen Square to enhance the appearance of these main streets, injecting colour and vibrancy as the streets became more of a focus for 'outdoor hospitality'. The dressing of these units enables us to showcase their investment potential ahead of the regeneration activities secured through the Future High Street fund.



*New vinyls installed
Top: Ex KFC Unit, Queen Square
Bottom: Ex Castle Galleries, Victoria St*

Supporting Those in Need



Our Alternative Giving Campaign has enabled us to raise funds via public and business donations and to direct this support to those most in need throughout the pandemic. A highlight of the year was issuing St Georges Hub with funding for safety screens and panels to ensure they could continue to support marginalised men in a covid safe environment.

Calling out to other sources of goodwill through the 'Business in The Community' (BITC) organisation we were able to secure significant donations of home starter packs for people setting up in new and emergency accommodation.

We also supported the temporary emergency accommodation response in the city centre by providing funding from the Alternative Giving campaign for personal care products and bedding for our most vulnerable people during stages of lockdowns.

Lucy was pleased to install our first 'Tap to Donate' point close to the Bus Station which we hope will attract more donations as levels of footfall return to our city.



Tap to Donate point at Victoria Square



Donations from IKEA via BITC



Screens installed via Alternative Giving Charity



Donations kindly gifted by IKEA

Marketing, Promotions and Events

Our seasonal events including Enjoy Wolverhampton Live!, Seaside in the City and our Christmas Grotto were unfortunately cancelled, however, when restrictions were reduced we held 3 seasonal family trails with the Monster Hero Safari, Halloween Trail and Christmas Spirit Trail encouraging footfall to return in a safe manner to our city centre.



#ChristmasSpiritTrail

CHRISTMAS SPIRIT TRAIL



Spend Local

We understood that people would not be able to spend the values on their City Centre Gift Cards due to extended periods of business closures. To make sure that spend returns directly to our city centre businesses we have extended the expiry date on all Enjoy Wolverhampton City Centre Gift Cards enabling customers to shop when businesses reopen.



Shop Local

As a continual theme in our marketing 'Shop Local' remains a key message throughout all our campaigns. Joining forces with City of Wolverhampton Council and Bilston BID we promoted the 'Shop Local' message further via a coordinated and city-wide marketing campaign to draw interest to our city centre businesses and their online trading platforms in times of lockdown.

Being sure to positively engage with shoppers and visitors to the city we also undertook our marketing campaign that responded to leaving lockdowns with 'Be Proud, Be Vocal, Do More Shop Local' directing attention to the stages of reopening of non-essential retail via social media.

Students Welcome

Whilst many students have been working remotely a number of students remained in halls of residence and during periods of restrictions were not able to return home. Where we would normally welcome new Students via freshers' fayres we instead adapted our warm welcome to providing over 300 'Goody Bags' to introduce our city centre shops, services, eateries and takeaways to our resident students.



Maintaining Communications

Our Enjoy Wolverhampton website was updated regularly through the year to respond to changing national restrictions and to build on customer confidence by sharing up to date information about city centre businesses. It also served as a portal in the early stage of the pandemic for city centre businesses to access the most up to date guidance and information from government.





Accessibility And Parking

With the festive period being an opportunity for many businesses to trade we worked in partnership once again with the Mander Centre and Wulfrun Shopping Centre to bring free Sunday parking throughout December 2020. This was key to attracting much needed footfall back to our city centre businesses, especially when social distancing on public transport was not always first choice for many shoppers and visitors.

When appropriate we have marketed parking offers and incentives including the City Council's discounted festive parking to as wide an audience as possible, making sure that Wolverhampton remains in the forefront of people's minds as a destination for shopping and visiting.

Supporting our businesses

Shop Appy

Responding to the extended periods of lockdown we wanted to support businesses by helping them to continue to trade through lockdowns and purchased one year's subscription to the online retail platform 'Shop Appy'. The platform offered the opportunity for businesses across all sectors to showcase their products and services, through to enabling appointment booking, online events all the way through to click and collect. Shop Appy was embraced by 33 of our city centre businesses across a broad range of sectors.

Representing the interests of the City Centre businesses has been at the forefront of the BID's work throughout the pandemic, ensuring businesses have correct and up to date information about business grants and support, changes in regulations and covid safe measures.

City Centre Representation

We have maintained our strong city centre representation across many forums including 'Re-lighting the City' to respond to the challenges facing our high streets and business community and City IMT - Incident Management Team - to maintain a voice and a joined-up approach for business alongside pandemic response activities.

We have maintained our strong voice to support the City Council in progressing the Future High Street Fund bids and at the Towns Board to secure government funding for significant city centre investment and to date both funding streams together have secured over £40 million for key regeneration activities.

Where the Council has been in a position to issue discretionary funds to support businesses to incorporate workplace testing we have helped the City Council shape a grants programme that ensures all businesses at all scales are eligible.

Throughout the pandemic communication has been key, we have joined forces with the City Council on other forums including the Homelessness Response, remained focused on key opportunities through Economic Growth Board and will remain vocal for the best interests of our city centre.





Vibrant & inviting NEW Lupo Lounge on Dudley Street

The First Year of our Second 5-Year Term

Wolverhampton BID Company's total levy income expected for 2020-2021 was £511,047. At present, due to the pandemic, national restrictions and planned delays to our billing, the amount collected is £312,814.75 representing close to 66% of the total levy, which has been paid by over half of our levy paying businesses including the majority of our smaller independent businesses. Timescales for the recovery of the remaining levy amounts are ongoing in response to business closures and national restrictions.

In addition to the levy income additional income of £38,200 was received through the radio link scheme and promotional activities. Due to the restrictions during the year this additional income was just under half of that received in the previous year.



Lichfield Street Opticians joining us on our Shop Local campaign

EXPENDITURE ACROSS OUR 4 PRIORITIES IS SET OUT BELOW:



CORE COSTS:



The Year Ahead 2021 – 2022

The second year of our second term starts on the 1st of April 2021, in acknowledgement of the national Covid restrictions and reduced services of the BID during 2020/21 we have issued 15% reduction in levy to all levy payers. With the 15% reduction applied, the Levy due in 2021-22 is estimated at £436,436.75 (based on the National Non-Domestic Rates correct as at 31.3.2021) £77,018.25 underspend in 2020/21 will bridge the gap of the 15% reduction to meet the full budget of £513,455.

Any surplus realised from further levy recovery and additional underspend will be utilised in bringing forward projects and initiatives to aid the city centre's recovery from the pandemic. The total amount of expenditure is forecast to be £548,455 with the balance being met from additional income sources including promotional activities and sponsorship to the anticipated value of £35,000.



Night Guardians on their patrol - May 2021

The Year Ahead – 2021-2022

The following projects and activities are key to driving forward on the city centre’s road to recovery.



Supporting the Re-opening of Evening & Night-time Hospitality

With the hospitality sector being one of the most affected by the pandemic restrictions we are keen to support a warm welcome back to people returning to our pubs, bars, restaurants, entertainment, and music venues and hopefully in the not-too-distant future our nightclubs too.

We are working in partnership with City of Wolverhampton Council and West Midlands Police with support from Wolverhampton University to reintroduce the Late-Night Safe Haven, our Night First Aid service, and our Night Guardian team to welcome people back to our city centre, make sure they get home safely after a night out and to relieve pressure from an already stretched A&E department from the impact of the late-night economy.



Bringing Footfall Back

Enjoy Wolverhampton Live! is the largest outdoor live music and entertainment held in the city centre. Our annual event has been running for 5 years and we cannot wait to bring back live music and family entertainment to the heart of our city centre. Attracting a range of people from young families to watch the entertainment from CBBC stars to listening to an amazing line up of *Free Live Music* the crowds have always been drawn to the Queen Square event. We have been carefully considering the timing of the event in recognition of the Covid restrictions and safety requirements. Not only does the event attract footfall, increase dwell times of people visiting our city it has always shown that we are a city that celebrates in style which is now more important than ever.



Seaside in the City - A big highlight on the event calendar



Seaside in the City

Always a draw for younger families we have added a further day to this family friendly event planned for the Summer 2021. We will be adapting the event to meet all Covid restrictions and safe practices and look forward to delivering our city centre beach and seaside fun over 4 days.



Seeking Funding for Events

With several Government funding opportunities that focus on enlivening our High Streets and providing a vibrant welcome to people returning to support our city centre businesses, the BID will be actively seeking funds for a fuller events programme. Funding will be sought for events that complement existing, planned events including the British Art Show 9 and to secure further funding for more regular events and high street enhancements through the governments ‘Welcome Back Fund’.



The Year Ahead *Continued*



Our Strong City Voice

We will continue to represent the city centre with a focus early in the year in supporting the prioritisation of the Towns Deal Funding of £25million. We will also be working alongside the Council to ensure the interests of our existing businesses are fully considered through the delivery of the Future High Street regeneration programme. We want to make sure that our business levy payers have the most up to date details of the regeneration schemes and that those details are communicated effectively and in a timely manner to businesses who are directly affected by the enhancement works.



Alternative Giving

Having secured approval for the installation of a Second Tap to Donate point within our large city centre Sainsbury's store, Lucy will be working hard to have the second device installed to attract increased donations in this busy store.



Supporting the Recovery

We know that businesses have 'enough on their plates' with reopening and meeting new covid requirements within each of their settings. To make it as easy as possible for businesses to include regular testing amongst their employees we are working in partnership with the City Council's Public Health Team to directly distribute test kits to city centre employees.



Station Adoption

With the principal of the BID's Station Adoption now agreed we will be developing our project list and priority activities. We will work to enhance the internal and external areas of the train station to ensure an exceptionally warm welcome to all visitors and passers through our new Station building.





The BID Board of Directors

Representing a cross sector of businesses, the BID Board of Directors have remained responsive to the year's challenges, reflecting on how each of the sectors are affected by the pandemic and making sure the balance of BID activities and responses have been appropriate and tailored to meet the needs of the city centre.

We would like to extend our upmost gratitude to Sarah Thomas-West, West Midlands' Police, who has held a central role on the BID Board as Crime & Safety Director for over 3 years and a crucial part of incredible partnership working between the BID and the City Centre Police Teams for the duration of the BID ensuring our city is safe and welcoming.



Iain Watkins:
BID Chairman



Sarah Thomas West:
BID Crime & Safety Director



Alison Westwood:
BID Legal Director



Chris Bourne:
BID Finance Director



James Thomas Horton:
BID Marketing Director



Richard Scharenguivel:
BID General Retail Director



Sham Sharma:
BID Night-time Economy
Director



John Henn:
BID Independent Retail
Director



Steve Morton:
BID Access and Parking
Director

BID Directors – Final Remarks

As the country forges ahead on the path to recovery with a strong vaccination programme, hopefully it means the days of full lockdowns and restrictions will not return. Our business community have worked incredibly hard to meet ever changing guidance and have demonstrated true resilience in their approach.

We are actively developing our recovery plans to make sure customers are welcomed back to our city centre, that we give them the confidence to return, spend and support our city centre business community. Never has

the message to 'Shop Local / Spend Local' been more important and as we head towards a full recovery we hope to support a rebalance of the footfall lost through a fuller events programme.

As we get closer to full reopening of all business sectors, I know, that by continuing to work together with the city centre prosperity at the heart of everything we do, we will have a bright future.

Cherry Shine Wolverhampton BID Director

British
BIDs™ 10



enjoy
wolverhampton
Business Improvement District



Wolverhampton Business Improvement District (BID)
Suite 1, 176 – 178 Stafford Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1NA
Tel: 01902 710903 • Email: info@wolverhamptonbid.co.uk

www.enjoywolverhampton.com