

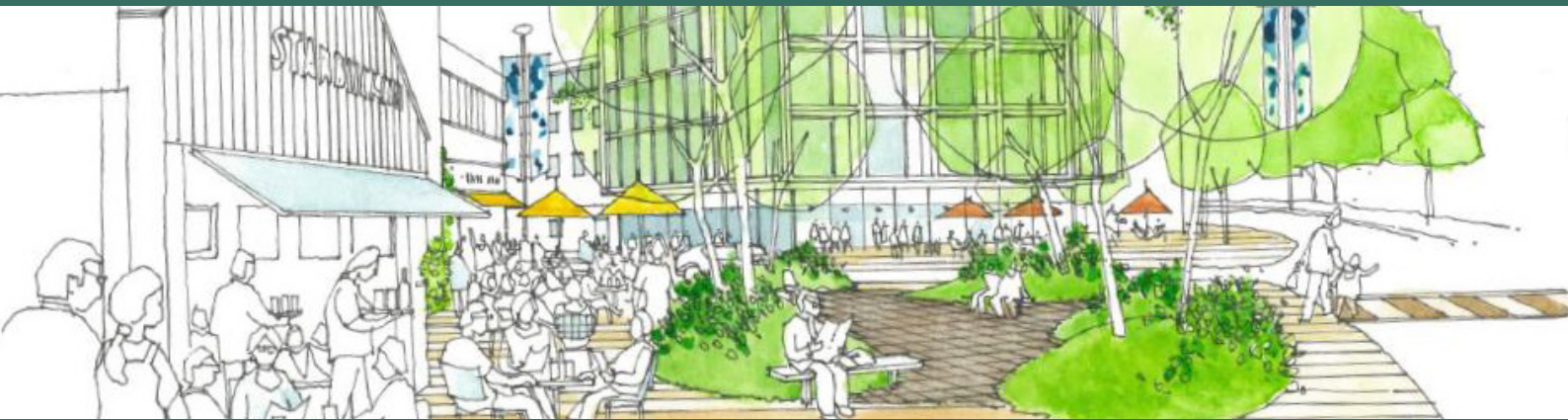


WILMSLOW'S BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Way Better Marketing and Promotion

Way Better Experience

Way Better Business



£1 MILLION ADDED VALUE INVESTMENT IN WILMSLOW TOWN CENTRE

This draft plan for a Business Improvement District in Wilmslow town centre is open for consultation until the 4th April 2022.

Businesses can feedback their views on this draft plan by:

- Completing the online consultation at www.wilmslowbid.co.uk
- Attending one of the consultation workshops during March



Welcome to our plan for a BID in Wilmslow Town Centre

This draft plan for a Business Improvement District in Wilmslow town centre provides a unique opportunity for businesses and stakeholders to make a step change in the management of our town centre.

This plan has been produced by the Wilmslow Town Centre Management Group. The group was formed in July 2021 in response to the impact of the covid pandemic, with the purpose of supporting the revival of the town centre post covid, and then to deliver on the ambitions of local businesses to create a sustainable and thriving town centre community.

Speak to any local business owner or consumer and their pride and passion for Wilmslow quickly becomes evident, but our town centre needs to improve and make the leap from good to great if it is to remain relevant to our consumers and the local community. This plan will deliver a significant improvement in not only the quality of our town's offer but the perception of our town.

What is a Business Improvement District (BID)?

The BID is a unique opportunity for businesses across the town centre to take a lead in the management and improvement of our town centre.

A new, additional investment led by the private sector

- The BID will generate around £1million of new investment into our town centre between 2022 and 2027.
- This investment will be managed and delivered by a new business led partnership, who will be answerable to the wider business community who fund the BID.

Where does the investment come from?

- The investment will principally come from a small additional levy on each premises (hereditament) within the town centre with a rateable value above £15,000.
- The cost for the average premises will be £2/day, with the smallest premises paying less than 60p/day.
- Together this will raise an investment of over £1million over 5 years, which we expect will lever additional funding from a range of sources.

Who decides if the BID is to be introduced?

- All eligible premises will be able to take part in a 28-day postal ballot vote to approve or reject the proposal for a BID in June / July 2022.

- If a majority vote in favour of the proposal from the number of votes cast, and this represents a majority in level of rateable value from votes cast in favour of approving the proposal, the BID will come into operation from September 2022, when all premises with a rateable value above £15,000 will pay the small annual levy towards the BID.

How is this different to business rates?

- The BID levy is separate from your business rates. Business rates are a statutory local tax levied to fund expenditure by local and national government. Businesses have no direct control over how these funds are spent.
- The BID levies will only be invested in specific projects and services, additional to base line services provided by the public sector. The BID funds are all invested under the direction and control of the businesses and organisations in Wilmslow town centre that operate a business who pay a BID levy to support the BID.

Where do Business Improvement Districts already operate?

- Businesses and organisations in Altrincham, Manchester City Centre, Warrington, Chester and Northwich have all approved and re-approved BIDs in recent years.
- BIDs have been embraced by towns and cities across the UK since 2004 when they were first introduced.
- More than 300 BIDs have been approved since 2004.
- Businesses in these towns and cities have seen the benefits and return on investment from agreeing to work together and implement new progressive private sector led investment partnerships.
- These towns have seen increased footfall through new events and festivals, and have created safer, cleaner and greener town centres. This has resulted in an increase in the vibrancy and economic success of the businesses and towns they belong to.

Wilmslow Town Centre Challenges and Opportunities

During 2021 all businesses across the town centre had the opportunity to share their views through a challenges and opportunities consultation. More than 100 companies contributed their views about Wilmslow town centre, which highlighted a need for additional investment and improvements in the marketing and promotion, management and delivery of events, safety and business support.

Some of our key findings from this consultation include:

- **A need to improve the marketing and promotion of Wilmslow** - It is essential to better promote and market Wilmslow town centre as a retail, leisure and community destination to change perceptions and engage new consumers. 90% of companies have reported that the marketing of Wilmslow was important or moderately important to the success of their business, however 60% of businesses in July 2021 (before the Wilmslow's Way Better brand was created) state the marketing of Wilmslow as a destination is poor.
- **Creation of a programme of festivals and events that are focused on growing consumer numbers on low footfall days** - We need to build a carefully crafted programme of events that support the growth of footfall on Sundays and create a Wilmslow town centre that is 'open for business' seven days a week.
- **A variable and sometimes poor experience for consumers** - The quality of the visitor experience can be improved through investment in the town centre's assets and visitor experience services. Businesses have said they want us to tackle areas of poorly maintained street scene and issues relating to crime and anti-social behaviour.
- **Poor or acceptable signage and branding across the town centre** - The quality of signage into and around the town centre is considered either poor or average by a majority of companies we have consulted with.
- **Poor communications in particular around events** - We need to get better at the sharing of intelligence, information and news across the business community. Businesses want to work together, and our work through Wilmslow's Way Better has successfully trialled some exciting opportunities for companies to collaborate and enrich the consumer experience.



Our draft plan outlined within this document sets out specific added value projects and services that we believe are needed to begin tackling the challenges you have told us exist. All of these services and projects are added value, and will not be delivered without a BID for Wilmslow town centre.

The plan also shows some of the benefits and opportunities that will exist through businesses supporting our plans for a Business Improvement District:

- A business led agenda and a stronger voice for businesses.
- A secure, vibrant and engaging destination.
- An inspiring and creative location for community and business.
- An added value investment in Wilmslow town centre.
- Reconnecting our town centre with residents and visitors.

What could a BID for Wilmslow town centre deliver?

This draft plan has been broken down into three themes. Under each theme are a list of indicative projects and services that we believe are important in enabling the town centre to compete in an increasingly competitive and uncertain trading environment.

To enable the Wilmslow Town Centre Management Group to prioritise the essential projects your input will be essential in supporting us to plan and decide which of these services will be funded.

The BID will also seek to attract additional investment from funders to further increase the level of investment in our town centre.



Theme One -

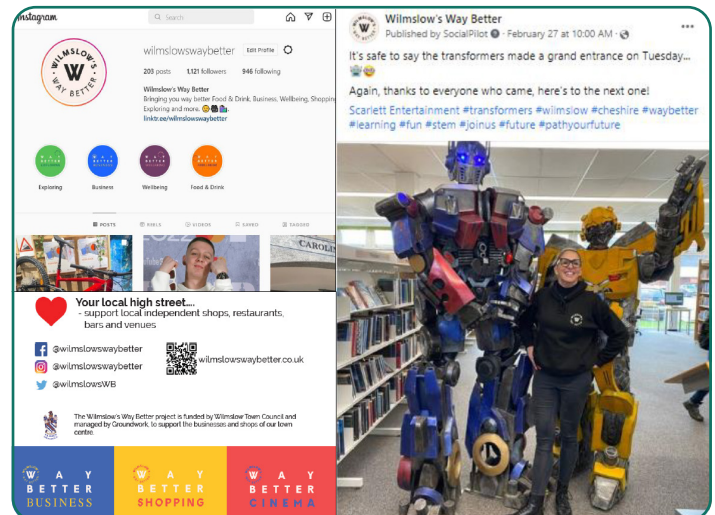
Way Better Marketing and Town Centre Promotion



£300,000+ Investment

We want to accelerate the transformation of the town centre experience, ensuring that Wilmslow remains relevant to a broad range of consumers in and around Wilmslow.

Our ambition is to reconnect the town centre with 500,000 consumers and visitors across the North West, increasing consumer visits, creating a sustainable and vibrant seven day a week experience in Wilmslow town centre.



To achieve these objectives the BID could invest in:

- An enhanced and dedicated year round programme of marketing and promotional campaigns to raise the profile of Wilmslow town centre. This would build on the early days success of the Wilmslow's Way Better campaign created in November 2021 which has already reached 120,000 consumers.
- Maintenance and growth of the WWB consumer website to create a modern and positive narrative about Wilmslow town centre.
- Sustained and enhanced investment in social media to grow the on-line reach of businesses across Wilmslow town centre across key social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok and Twitter).
- Investment into professional video and still image production for promoting the town centre and its resident companies.
- Introduction of consumer online and hardcopy bulletins to promote relevant information including offers, events, business promotion and good news stories
- An enhanced programme of PR and hard copy literature driven features in local and regional magazines and newspaper.
- Development of the 'Wilmslow Story' promoting all of Wilmslow town centre's assets, heritage and modern day relevance to consumers in order to convey the message to consumers that there is much more to Wilmslow than consumers expect.
- Creation of a modern, relevant on-line narrative to support town centre office based businesses attract world-class talent and investment.
- Targeted marketing campaigns to reach different and new audiences of consumers across Cheshire, Greater Manchester and Merseyside.

"The BID will enable a positive and impactful narrative to be created on-line and in the press about all that is great about Wilmslow. This narrative will draw from the town's heritage, whilst focusing on an exciting future embracing technology, sustainability and the importance of the town centre in creating the Wilmslow's Way Better experience"

Theme Two - Way Better Experience

Our research and consultation with businesses has identified a range of opportunities to create an improved experience for consumers and visitors. We believe the BID can achieve this through:

Getting the Basics Right - We want to ensure that Wilmslow town centre is 'open for business', providing a consistently high quality experience for consumers from arrival to departure and subsequent future visits. This approach builds loyalty, creates stronger consumer habits around visiting Wilmslow town centre and will instill a stronger sense of pride and identity for consumers about Wilmslow town centre.

Innovate or die – High streets across the country are having to innovate and create new experiences to remain relevant for consumers. In Wilmslow town centre, high street businesses have adapted well with many embracing a blend of digital and bricks and mortar service delivery, however we believe innovation needs to extend into the public realm throughout Wilmslow town centre. That is why the BID will have a focus on supporting new investment into the town centre's public realm that delivers fresh, innovative approaches to meeting the needs of consumers and businesses.

Key issues the BID will tackle include:

- Poor quality of street cleansing and litter / refuse collection
- Old and low-quality street furniture
- Limitations around event space
- Lack of investment gateways and art features across the town centre
- Anti-social behaviour, crime and safety risks at certain times of the day and night
- Improving the radio network and sharing of offender information.
- Unauthorised use of Grove-Streets pedestrianised area for cars and service vehicles
- Legacy of limited consultation and involvement of businesses in the development of our town centre, events and improvements

To tackle the issues identified in Theme Two the BID could:

- Deliver an enhanced programme of environmental and image enhancements
 - Enhanced levels of cleansing and litter picking
 - New sustainable planting and maintenance schemes
 - Investment into hanging baskets and planters during spring and summer periods
 - Investment in gateway and art features
 - Introduction of shop wraps to enhance vacant units
 - Town dressing e.g. innovative dressing of the town centre streets and public realm
- Work with Cheshire East Council and Wilmslow Town Council to ensure the minimum baselines for street cleansing, litter collection and highway / pavement maintenance are delivered.
- Creation of a business led programme of events and festivals to animate the town centre and attract new consumers to Wilmslow town centre.
 - Annual Film, Food and Fashion Festival
 - Tech events
 - New investment into Christmas and key seasonal activities (Christmas, Summer and Easter)
- The BID could establish a new business crime reduction partnership open to all town centre businesses with a focus on tackling the crime and security issues reported during the consultation. A business crime reduction partnership would enable:
 - Development of an expanded and more effective radio network
 - Implementation of systems to securely and safely share images of repeat offenders
 - Resourcing additional security presence or Wilmslow Way Better Ambassadors
 - Investment in projects to tackle anti-social behaviour at key times of the day / week

“The BID can lead on creating an enhanced experience for consumers, visitors, residents and employees. This will involve tackling challenges linked to image, quality of environment, safety and security and creating an exciting and animated town centre experience”

Theme Three -

Way Better Business

We want to support the Wilmslow Business Community and ensure that all businesses have the opportunity for their voices to be heard.

We will achieve this through the establishment of an Executive Board of business representatives to champion the Wilmslow business community. This new board will work in partnership with key stakeholders including Cheshire East Council, Wilmslow town council and Cheshire Police to create a new public / private partnership to support the on-going evolution of Wilmslow town centre.

The BID will also provide an opportunity for enhancing the support and communication local businesses receive, with options to deliver additional investment into enterprise development projects to support new entrepreneurs into the town centre, deliver additional training opportunities for our employees and create creative a positive narrative that attracts new talent and employees to work in Wilmslow town centre.

Finally, the BID will provide an opportunity for the business community to access new intelligence and insight into how our consumers use Wilmslow town centre, understanding where our consumers come from, what their spend patterns are and track and report on footfall movements into and around Wilmslow town centre.



To achieve these objectives, we could invest in:

- Establishment of a new business led Wilmslow BID Team to provide businesses with a stronger voice and create new opportunities and tackle barriers to growth for businesses in the town centre. The Wilmslow BID Team will provide a one-stop shop for businesses to refer problems and opportunities to about Wilmslow town centre.
- Investment into footfall and consumer data to better understand our consumers, where they come from and what demographics they represent
- A dedicated package of support to grow independent businesses in the town centre. This could include additional support, coaching and training for companies and new start-ups.
- Build stronger links to business support agencies led by Cheshire East Council, the Local Enterprise Partnership and private providers.
- Promote Wilmslow to attract world class talent across all business sectors.

“Leading the agenda and being part of the conversation with stakeholders, the BID will shift the current position where things happen to businesses with little or no notice to businesses shaping and influencing what happens in the town centre”



Income and Expenditure Budget Options

The plans for a BID are based upon a levy of 1.5% of rateable value. For the smallest contributors this will cost less than 65p/day, whilst the daily cost for the average sized premises within the town centre will be less than £2/day equivalent.

The value of added value investment that will be generated from the BID over the five years will be more than £1million, with aspirations to leverage additional investment from other sources including the public sector, grant awarding bodies and commercial opportunities.

An exclusion is planned for any premises / hereditaments with a rateable value lower than £15,000. Management costs for delivery of the BID will be no more than 20% of the overall budget, to ensure that the significant majority of investment is targeted towards delivery of tangible added value services and projects.

Governance and Management of the the Business Improvement District funds will be governed and directed by a Board of representative businesses and premises occupiers from across the Business Improvement District area.

Any eligible business will be able to put a representative forward for appointment onto the Board, which will be elected through an annual meeting of members of the Business Improvement District.

Baselines and Added Value

A benefit of a BID being approved for businesses is the introduction of statutory baseline agreements from Cheshire East Council and other statutory bodies.

These are required to ensure that funds from the BID do not fund council or other statutory services.

All funds raised by the BID will support added value investments into Wilmslow town centre that without the BID would otherwise not be realised.

The Business Improvement District (BID) Area



The Wilmslow Town Centre Management Group (WTCMG)

The WTCMG was established in 2021 to bring businesses together and deliver a partnership approach to supporting the recovery of the town centre post covid. The group is open to all businesses in the town centre interested in working together to create a more vibrant and prosperous town centre.

The core members of the Group include representation from all part of the town, including independents and national retailers.

Members of the group include:

Black and White Denim	Boots
Rex Cinema	Nationwide Building Society
Sainsbury's	The Grove
Emmerson Group	Therapy Organics
Mail Boxes	Wilmslow Town Council
To join the WTCMG contact Lisa.Russett@groundwork.org.uk	

More information and your thoughts on this plan for a BID?

We want your feedback on this plan for a BID. You can feedback online at www.wilmslowbid.co.uk and click on the draft business plan consultation link.

The Wilmslow BID Steering Group are also holding short briefing sessions about the project during March/April 2022 where you can learn more.

Full details of these are available on the website.

Finally, to receive regular updates about the project, subscribe to the Wilmslow BID Team e-bulletin by emailing: lisa.russett@groundwork.org.uk



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