



**WELWYN  
GARDEN CITY**



**BID**

A plan for

Welwyn Garden City

[www.wgcbid.co.uk](http://www.wgcbid.co.uk)

## Chairman's intro

I'm delighted to introduce the Welwyn Garden City town centre Business Improvement District (BID) Business Plan.

Having been the Chairman of the Welwyn Garden City Town Centre Partnership for the last few years, I have seen the potential of our town centre. We have together worked hard with little resource to support the town centre and help 'put WGC on the map' through events such as the World Food Festival and Christmas Lights Switch-on and raising the standards of our customer service via the Welwyn Garden Awards but there is so much more we can do. I believe a BID will help us fulfil that potential.

We have a very pleasant town centre but we cannot be complacent, not when our businesses are under the threat of internet shopping, decline in footfall and the rise of neighbouring towns such as Watford, Hitchin and St Albans, most of which already have BIDs in place, some even on a second term.

We believe Welwyn Garden City can be positioned as a sub regional destination and continue to thrive to be a great place to do business, and if we want to be able to market our town centre as a destination for shoppers and visitors from a wider catchment area, we need to work together.

A BID is a business led initiative, which means that your ideas will shape the initiative for the next five years.

A BID would enable the town centre to become a high quality, thriving destination for all those working, visiting and living here. It would allow businesses to work together with partners and authorities to implement more comprehensive, larger-scale improvements and services for the area, building on the initial projects embarked upon by the WGC Town Centre Partnership. All of these would be directed by the businesses being served and represented by the BID. A BID would also provide strong business representation and a powerful collective voice for the town centre.

We have been very encouraged by the positive response we have received from the many businesses we have consulted about the BID. This proposal has been drafted in response to the feedback gathered.

I am confident that a BID will help us achieve our ambitions, bring local businesses together to work collectively and improve our town centre. Businesses have a chance to decide on the priorities for projects – it is your town centre, therefore it is your choice!

Please vote YES, let's shape the future of our town together.

**Chris Hooper**

*Head of Branch, John Lewis  
Chairman of the WGC Town Centre Partnership*



**WELWYN  
GARDEN CITY**  **BID**

**Development Board**

The BID Development Board has been supported by the Town Centre BID Development Team: Mariana Bitonte / Nicola Wolff – Town Centre BID Development Manager (job share) and Clare Day – BID Development Officer

**Jonathan Carr**  
*Solicitor, Crane and Staples*

**Chris Hooper (CHAIR)**  
*Head of Branch, John Lewis Partnership*

**Colin Haigh**  
*Head of Planning, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council*

**Daniel Langhorne**  
*Area Manager, The Two Willows*

**Emma Ramsdale**  
*Owner, Kinetic Cycles*

**Jeff Cornish**  
*Owner, KallKwik*

**Jeff Scott**  
*Inspector, Hertfordshire Constabulary*

**John Beech**  
*Landlord representative*

**John Hughes**  
*Resident representative*

**Mike Paraliki**  
*Owner, Stonehills Hair*

**Nick Brown**  
*Chairman, Welwyn Hatfield Chamber of Commerce*

**Nicky Kendrick**  
*User representative*

**OJ Daya**  
*Manager, Waitrose*

**Paul Haynes**  
*Manager, Howard Centre*

**Sean Scully**  
*Director of Student Experience, Oaklands College*

**Sian Chambers**  
*Head of Housing and Communities, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council*

**Terry Mitchinson**  
*Editor, Welwyn Hatfield Times*

**Greg Spicer**  
*Store Manager, Sainsbury's*

**Bernard Sarson**  
*Councillor – Portfolio holder for Business, Partnerships and Public Health, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council*

## A vision for Welwyn Garden City town centre created by you, the businesses

To create a town centre which is innovative and modern, which builds on the unique Garden City principles and characteristics to make it a great place to visit, work and live.



### What is a BID?

- A Business Improvement District (BID) is a not-for profit company set up by businesses to improve an area.
- It empowers local businesses to raise and spend funds within an area with the aim of improving their trading environment.
- It is an investment scheme where local businesses agree how their money should be invested to benefit themselves, their employees, visitors and their town.
- A BID is a legal body which can only come into being following a successful ballot in which all eligible businesses have a vote on whether proposals, such as those contained in this document, should go ahead.

### There's already over 230 BIDs operating across the country

Locally, towns such as Luton, Watford and Royston have already got successful BIDs and Bedford and Hitchin are already on their second and third term respectively.

BIDs are about additionality. They do not replace local authority or police services but provide additional resource and activities to benefit the area.

“Town and country must be married, and out of this joyous union will spring a new hope, a new life, a new civilization.”

*Ebenezer Howard*

“ 75% of businesses surveyed said they would vote YES to the BID subject to the business plan reflecting their issues. ”

## Your feedback – what you said

**This proposal has been determined by you, the Welwyn Garden City business community.**

Extensive research and consultation was undertaken by the BID development team between February and July 2016 to understand and highlight key issues for businesses and stakeholders and to explore potential future projects for the WGC BID. This plan reflects the views and aspirations of the businesses in the area.

Research consisted of one-to-one discussions, surveys and workshops with over 160 businesses in the identified BID area.



**BID DEVELOPMENT  
TEAM ENGAGED  
WITH ALMOST  
200 BUSINESSES  
DIRECTLY**



**3 300 BUSINESSES  
RECEIVED 3 BID  
NEWSLETTERS**



**7 BID COFFEE  
MORNINGS**



**3 VISIONING  
WORKSHOPS**



**3 BUDGET SETTING  
WORKSHOPS**



**TWITTER FEED &  
BID WEBSITE**

# 117

**BUSINESSES IN  
WELWYN GARDEN  
CITY TOWN CENTRE  
COMPLETED THE BID  
DEVELOPMENT SURVEY**

## Your priorities

Businesses identified key priority areas for a new BID which fall into four categories:

### ■ **Animated and attractive**

To create a place which has a strong sense of identity for residents, visitors and people working in the town centre to enjoy.

### ■ **Promoted and celebrated**

To promote and celebrate the great 'Garden City' and build the reputation of Welwyn Garden City as a great place to work, shop, relax and be entertained.

### ■ **Welcoming and accessible**

To provide a welcoming and easily accessible place for visitors, workers and residents to explore.

### ■ **A great business and leisure offer**

To encourage growth, development and investment of businesses which complement and build on the strengths of the Welwyn Garden City town centre promoting it as a great place to do business.

“ Practical ideas which were voiced included making the green spaces more accessible for pedestrians by removing metal barriers and creating gaps and footpaths through hedges and creating an infra-structure within the green spaces such as power points and water and drainage so events could be set up more easily. It was frequently suggested that if the green spaces were animated then this would help link different parts of the town centre together and encourage more people to explore different parts of the town centre, including the theatre and cinema at Campus West. ”



## Objective 1: ANIMATED AND ATTRACTIVE

To create a place which has a strong sense of identity for residents, visitors and people working in the town centre to enjoy.



### AMOUNT THE BID WILL SPEND:

Initial budget per year: **£70,000**

Increased, by year 5, to: **£72,500**

Total over 5 years: **£365,500**



### ‘Great assets but we don’t make the most of them’

The overwhelming feeling that came out of the surveys, interviews and workshops was that Welwyn Garden City is a beautiful town with its green spaces but it is too quiet and the green spaces separate some parts of the town centre from others. In fact when businesses were asked the open question as to what would make the biggest contribution to their business, suggestions relating to improving the ‘experience’ of the town centre came at the top of the list.

When ranking various aspects of the town centre, ‘Things to do in the evening and night time’ was ranked third in terms of it being considered ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ by businesses and ‘Things to do in WGC for visitors and local people’ was ranked sixth, just ahead of ‘Availability of Parking for Customers’ in seventh place.

Many suggestions related to making more of the open spaces and having more events and things going on generally in the town centre to make the place more interesting and attractive to visitors, encouraging them to stay longer and return more frequently.

**95%**

of businesses rate the cleanliness of the streets and public places a very important factor for their business

**92%**

of businesses rate being part of the town and its activities a very important factor for their business

**74%**

of businesses surveyed would like to see more events and animation in the streets

**69%**

of businesses surveyed would like to see more specialist markets

## What we can deliver if you vote YES



Organise regular events and markets to create an animated feel to the town as a whole and build the reputation of Welwyn Garden City as a great place to enjoy.



Support the development of an infra-structure to enable the streets and open spaces to be used effectively for markets and events.



Support floral displays, public art and festive and creative lighting to improve the appearance and vibrancy of the streets and open spaces.



Provide cleaning services where appropriate and additional to services provided by the local authority, with a focus on targeted street cleaning and deep cleaning.



Support the development and implementation of initiatives to improve and protect the public realm and buildings in the town centre.



Work with landlords, agents and others to ensure that vacant or derelict premises are maintained and presented in a smart and tidy appearance.



Work to create Wi-Fi access and footfall counters in the town centre.

## How are we going to measure success?

- Footfall to the town centre which is stronger than national high street trends.
- Increased number of locations across Welwyn Garden City town centre where markets, events and street entertainment can occur.
- Increased number of markets, events and street entertainment and a greater perception of things happening measured through surveys of visitors.
- Increased numbers of people visiting Welwyn Garden City from the catchment area and beyond.

“ We have a fantastic environment but we need to be making the most of it.

Events such as the Welwyn Garden Petit Tour help us put WGC on the map and showcase our wonderful town centre to visitors that come from far and wide.

This year we saw our sales rocket after the event and our shop is still benefiting from the effects.

Events help raise the profile of the town which straight away results in more footfall which in turn translates into sales. ”



*Emma Ramsdale  
Kinetic Cycles  
Organiser of the Welwyn Garden Petit Tour*



## Objective 2: PROMOTED AND CELEBRATED

To promote and celebrate the great 'Garden City' and build the reputation of Welwyn Garden City as a great place to work, shop, relax and be entertained.



### AMOUNT THE BID WILL SPEND:

Initial budget per year: **£61,000**

Increased, by year 5, to: **£63,000**

Total over 5 years: **£310,700**

Businesses considered that Welwyn Garden City has something special but it needs to make more of its assets and make itself relevant to the needs of its residents and its visitors of today. This feeling was clearly expressed in terms of the most important initiative, identified by 81% of businesses as 'Developing town's identity and branding to attract more visitors'. In terms of developing an experience which is clearly identifiable and unique to 'Welwyn Garden City' this desire to develop the town's identity was possibly summed up by one of the comments made by a business in a workshop who said, "Welwyn Garden City is a lovely town but we need to 'fill it' and 'feel it'".

Businesses considered that a crucial aspect to development of the town's identity was the offer to the visitor. Businesses were clear that this is limited. In terms of ranking the worst issues in Welwyn Garden City, five of the top 14 issues ranked 'poor' or 'very poor' by businesses all related to the business offer: 'Range of shops', 'Night-time perception of your area', 'Leisure and cultural facilities', 'Offer for the family' and 'Hotels and accommodation for visitors'. When it came to ranking different initiatives needed to address the town's challenges, 'Marketing to target and attract new businesses/ investors', was considered the third most important initiative of all.



**81%**

of businesses surveyed feel that developing the town's identity and branding to attract more visitors should be the BID's main priority.

**73%**

of businesses surveyed would like to see a dedicated website and social media to attract new customers

Welwyn Garden City has lots to shout about as it is and there is a clear desire to build upon its assets, with businesses identifying that four out of the top eight initiatives related directly to marketing the town and all it has to offer, including professional services.

“ The Welwyn Garden Awards have proven really popular with local businesses and the public alike in the last few years. We know that good customer service leads to customer loyalty and these awards encourage businesses and customers to celebrate this. A BID will allow us to take the Awards to the next level, improving the overall customer service experience by working with professionals, running workshops, researching our businesses by mystery shopping reports and promoting healthy competition! ”



OJ Daya  
Manager, Waitrose

## What we can deliver if you vote **YES**



A clear and distinctive Welwyn Garden City identity and brand used for promotion which reflects the strengths, characteristics and heritage of the town centre and creates a sense of pride in the town centre by its businesses, residents and visitors.



Develop the use of digital and social media channels, traditional marketing and PR which informs and increases awareness of Welwyn Garden City as a town, its business sectors, its events and all it has to offer, in a way which is consistent with its identity, to visitors and businesses alike.



Develop promotional campaigns and schemes which encourage regular use of the town centre's businesses and which capture, market intelligence, develops marketing capability for the businesses and the BID and attracts even more shoppers and clients.



Promote and develop customer service excellence through award schemes which profile businesses and individuals and celebrates, recognises and promotes a great shopping and leisure experience in Welwyn Garden City town centre.



Raise the profile and awareness of the quality and diversity of the culture and leisure economy in Welwyn Garden City town centre, increasing the number of visitors enjoying this aspect of the town centre at all times of day and night.



Develop specific campaigns to enable the various business sectors in Welwyn Garden City to raise their profile locally and regionally and benefit from the association with the Welwyn Garden City town centre identity.



Work closely with Oaklands College to raise its profile as a college at the centre of its community and work with the College to promote a greater sense of association between the town and its students.

## How are we going to measure success?

- Footfall to the town centre which is stronger than national high street trends.
- Increased number of active users of digital media promoting the Welwyn Garden City and its businesses.
- Increased levels of sales activity across the whole of the town centre.
- Positive media exposure locally, regionally and nationally measured through numbers of articles, publications, click-throughs on digital media and value through using advertising value equivalent. (a.v.e)
- Numbers of businesses actively engaged in BID activities and the use of and their association with Welwyn Garden City in their own marketing and promotion.
- Numbers of businesses and public regularly engaged and involved in promotional schemes.
- Increased awareness of the town centre what it has to offer measured through surveys of visitors and those who work in the town centre.



## Objective 3: WELCOMING AND ACCESSIBLE

To provide a welcoming and easily accessible place for visitors, workers and residents to explore.



### AMOUNT THE BID WILL SPEND:

Initial budget per year: **£76,097**

Increased, by year 5, to: **£78,778**

Total over 5 years: **£387,000**

Access issues and in particular the availability and cost of business parking, along with delivery access, loading and unloading and signage were the most discussed topics in the workshops and surveys, generating considerable debate with businesses.

The next most important group of suggestions related to access and in particular the challenges of parking both for business people themselves and their customers. This was followed by a feeling that the business mix needs developing, particularly in relation to retail and businesses geared to creating an interesting evening economy which is inclusive and attractive to all.

In terms of improving the overall experience for visitors and supporting businesses on a day to day basis discussion in workshops favoured initiatives such as 'Ambassadors' or 'Hosts', uniformed people, who could support the running of events, welcome visitors, provide information to help make the most of their visit and who had communications through radio and telephone to police and businesses.



**98%**

of businesses rate the cost of parking a very important factor for their business

**98%**

of businesses rate the personal safety during the daytime and nighttime a very important factor for their business

**97%**

of businesses rate the availability of customer parking a very important factor for their business

**90%**

of businesses rate pedestrian signage and information a very important factor for their business

**75%**

of businesses surveyed would like to see an improvement on the parking experience

**71%**

of businesses rate the availability of business parking as poor or very poor

**59%**

of businesses rate the cost of parking as poor or very poor

**50%**

of businesses would like to see an extension of current CCTV monitoring and coverage

**48%**

of businesses would like to see improvements to the condition of roads and footpaths

## What we can deliver if you vote **YES**



A way-finding signage scheme to make full use of the town, its businesses and its facilities.



Uniformed 'WGC Ambassadors' to welcome visitors and provide support for events and businesses in tackling and communicating issues which affect their business and work closely with the Police, WHBC Street Wardens and other agencies in tackling antisocial behaviour and crime issues which impact upon the visitor experience.



Improve the overall 'parking experience' by working closely with the council and car park operators to influence tariffs, availability, signage and access to car parks across Welwyn Garden City town centre for both visitors and those who work in the area, in a way which is commercially sustainable, increases patronage and meets the needs of the town centre's businesses.



Improve pedestrian flow between different parts of the town centre through information and improved signage which highlights the characteristics of each part of the town centre and encourages people to explore and make more use of the whole town centre and all it has to offer.



Tackle anti-social behaviour and crime issues which impact upon the visitor experience and affect businesses in certain areas by developing the existing business crime prevention schemes, such as the Welwyn Garden City Watch, and working with partners and organisations in the town centre, including voluntary organisations, the Police and the council's CCTV.



Work closely with operators and authorities to influence and optimise the integration of transport links in respect of trains, buses, taxis, car parks and cycling within the BID area.

## How are we going to measure success?

- Improved perception of attractiveness of the town centre measured through surveys of visitors and those who work in the town centre
- Increased numbers of cars using car parks and street parking in Welwyn Garden City town centre
- Improved perception of the 'parking experience' in Welwyn Garden City town centre
- Improved perceptions of safety for visitors and businesses.
- Reduction of incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour.

“ We have businesses in other towns that have already got BIDs and have seen what a difference having things such as dedicated uniformed hosts can make, not just to reducing anti-social behaviour but to the welcoming feel of the town, they act as the town centre's walking information points and help keep the business community engaged by being out and about all day and letting us know of upcoming events, activities and even helping out with small tasks around the shop. ”



*Dan Langhorne  
Area Manager, The Two Willows*

## Objective 4: A GREAT BUSINESS AND LEISURE OFFER

To encourage growth, development and investment of businesses which complement and build on the strengths of Welwyn Garden City town centre, promoting it as a great place to do business.



### AMOUNT THE BID WILL SPEND:

Initial budget per year: **£20,000**

Increased, by year 5, to: **£21,000**

Total over 5 years: **£101,100**

“ We want to encourage an evening economy that is in keeping with the Garden City, we have seen some fantastic new restaurants come into the town in the last few years, the BID will encourage us all to work together to promote our businesses and encourage new entertaining things to do in the evening whilst keeping it safe.”

*Terry Mitchinson  
Editor, Welwyn Hatfield Times*



**75%**

of businesses would like to see marketing to target and attract new businesses / investors

**57%**

of businesses would like to have a single point of contact for WGC for issues, support etc

**56%**

of surveyed businesses would like the BID to provide a strong collective voice to influence key strategic issues

**50%**

of businesses surveyed would like to see an improvement in the offer of things to do in the evening and night time

**35%**

of businesses rated the way businesses work together as poor or very poor so should be improved

# What we can deliver if you vote **YES**



Development of a distinctive evening and night time leisure offer suitable for the town centre



Raise the profile of professional service businesses locally and regionally



Influence, support and encourage plans and proposals for new buildings, signage, building refurbishments and public realm developments which build upon the town centre's strengths, serve to develop the town centre's identity and complement and develop the characteristics of the Welwyn Garden City BID area.



Work with others to develop a retail and leisure framework for the town centre and support its implementation with partners.



Work with partners, landlords and property agents to market the town centre to potential new retailers and investors in line with recommendations from an updated retail leisure framework for the town centre.



Work with businesses and other partners and in consultation with the police and local authority, to develop a diverse evening and night time leisure offer which is distinctively Welwyn Garden City, in a safe, clean and attractive environment.



Work with other organisations to monitor footfall, commercial performance, parking statistics, customer perceptions and other key measures across the Welwyn Garden City BID area and provide regular reports and performance updates for businesses.



Explore the possibility of reducing business costs by joint purchasing initiatives.

## How are we going to measure success?

- Increased range of retail, leisure and evening economy offer.
- Reduced levels of vacant properties and properties which appear neglected in Welwyn Garden City town centre.
- Numbers of business enquiries through commercial property agents.
- Monitoring of footfall and sales performances across Welwyn Garden City town centre with regular reports and feedback to businesses.
- Increased numbers of people enjoying Welwyn Garden City in the evening and at night time.





## The BID area

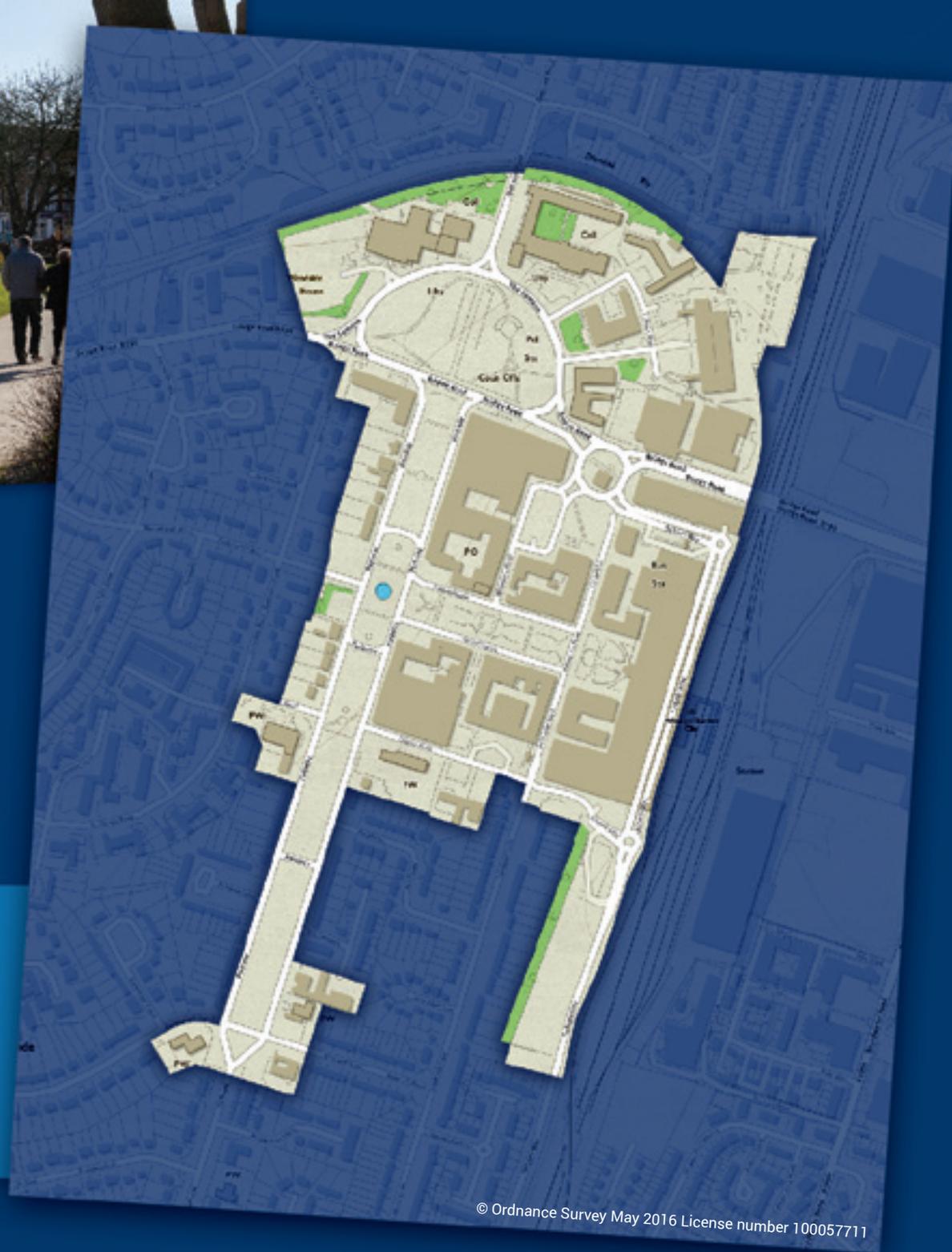
### Welwyn Garden City Town Centre

The highlighted area represents the full extent of the proposed Welwyn Garden City Business Improvement District.

The BID area includes any road or street and all small business areas and courtyards located off roads that are located within the boundary of the defined BID area as per the shaded area on the map, even if they are not listed.

### Streets in the BID area

- |                |                   |
|----------------|-------------------|
| Birdcroft Road | Osborn Way        |
| Bridge Road    | Parkway (Part Of) |
| Church Road    | Stonebank         |
| College Way    | Stonehills        |
| Digswell       | The Campus        |
| Fretherne Road | Theodore Way      |
| Howardsgate    | Wigmores North    |
| Longcroft Lane | Wigmores South    |



# Budget



TOTAL ANNUAL LEVY INCOME

**£274,001**



OBJECTIVE 1

**£70,000**



OBJECTIVE 2

**£61,000**



OBJECTIVE 3

**£76,097**



OBJECTIVE 4

**£20,000**

## Welwyn Garden City BID 5 year Budget: 2017–2022

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	TOTAL	% to total
<b>INCOME</b>							
BID levy revenue (Note 1)	£274,001	£279,481	£285,071	£290,772	£296,587	£1,425,912	91%
Other income (Note 2)	£27,000	£27,540	£28,091	£28,653	£29,226	£140,509	9%
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£301,001</b>	<b>£307,021</b>	<b>£313,161</b>	<b>£319,425</b>	<b>£325,813</b>	<b>£1,566,421</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>							
Objective 1 – Animated and attractive	£70,090	£70,689	£71,300	£71,924	£72,559	£356,562	23%
Objective 2 – Promoted and celebrated	£61,084	£61,606	£62,139	£62,682	£63,236	£310,747	20%
Objective 3 – Welcoming and accessible	£76,097	£76,747	£77,411	£78,088	£78,778	£387,121	25%
Objective 4 – Great business and leisure offer	£20,030	£20,201	£20,376	£20,554	£20,736	£101,897	7%
Central management costs, administration, office (Note 3)	£51,500	£52,530	£53,581	£54,652	£55,745	£268,008	17%
Levy collection costs	£8,500	£8,670	£8,843	£9,020	£9,201	£44,234	3%
Contingency (Note 4)	£13,700	£13,974	£14,254	£14,539	£14,829	£71,296	5%
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>£301,001</b>	<b>£304,418</b>	<b>£307,904</b>	<b>£311,458</b>	<b>£315,085</b>	<b>£1,539,866</b>	<b>100%</b>
Accrual for renewal (Note 5)	£0	£2,603	£5,258	£7,966	£10,729	<b>£26,556</b>	

### NOTES

1. Assumes a 95% collection rate and 2% per annum inflation.
2. Including income from landlords, associate members of the BID and other sources (including in-kind).
3. Central admin, office and fixed overheads.
4. Calculated as 5% of total levy billed.
5. Accrual retained from levy revenue to provide for costs of renewal of the BID for any further term, otherwise they will be spent on additional projects in the final year.

# What it will cost you

## How much will you pay?

Following a successful ballot the payment of the levy by each business in the Welwyn Garden City BID is compulsory and is set in legislation. The BID levy payment is made regardless of whether the business chooses to vote or if it votes against the BID. The levy is regulated in a similar way to business rates.

The investment being sought from businesses in the BID area is still modest in relation to what can be achieved. For the smallest business in the Business Improvement District, the daily cost is less than the cost of a postage stamp and even for a larger business; the daily cost is less than the price of a sandwich.

With a 1.75% levy, the indicative weekly costs to a business are:

### SMALL INDEPENDENT / PROFESSIONAL SERVICES



### INDEPENDENT



### NATIONAL



### LARGE NATIONAL



This equates to **£274,000** per year, or **£1,425,912** over five years.

## Finance and budget

There will be an annual inflationary increase of all levy charges year on year for the duration of the Business Improvement District. This will be a minimum of 2% increase year on year or the inflation percentage as determined by the Consumer Price Index as at the 1st December of the year before the next billing process, whichever is the greater. Inflation will not apply for the first billing cycle in 2017.

## Sources of additional funding

The BID Company is committed to seeking additional funding where possible to increase the benefits that can be delivered by the BID to businesses.

Other possible income sources will include grants where the criteria matches the aims of the business plan, voluntary contributions from property owners, companies and organisations outside the BID area and those not liable for the levy. It is estimated that this could be around £140,000 over the five year period.

Through discussion, developers, property owners and other stakeholders in the area will be invited to participate in the Business Improvement District and improve delivery against the business plan objectives even further.





SEPT 2016	20 Sept: <b>Launch of Business Plan</b>
	29 Sept: <b>Ballot papers issued</b>
OCT 2016	27 Oct: <b>Ballot closes at 5pm</b>
	28 Oct: <b>Ballot results announced</b>
APR 2017	1 Apr. <b>BID company formally launched</b>

## Ballot Timetable

### Ballot and voting

Businesses in Welwyn Garden City town centre will be asked to vote on whether or not they wish the WGC BID to implement the business plan over the next five years 2016 to 2021.

Ballot papers will be sent out on 29th September 2016 to the person identified in the specially prepared register of potential voters held by Welwyn Hatfield Council.

Each rateable property has one vote. A proxy vote will be available. Completed ballot papers are to be returned no later than 5pm Thursday 27th October 2016. The result will be announced on the following day.

### The ballot has to meet two tests to succeed:



A simple majority of those who vote must register a **YES**

**AND**



The aggregate rateable value of those that vote **YES** must be greater than that of those that vote **NO**

### Mandatory Levy

Following a successful ballot the levy becomes mandatory on all defined ratepayers. Any necessary enforcement of payment is undertaken in the same way as it is for business rates.

You will receive your Ballot Paper on 29 September and will have time until 5pm on 27 October to cast your vote.

**Vote YES**

“ I have followed the WGC BID campaign from the start and have been very encouraged by the passion and commitment the development team have put in and I am excited about the wide scope of the projects we will be able to deliver. I will be voting YES to the WGC BID in October. ”



*Mike Paraliki  
Proprietor, Stonehills Hairdressing*



## Monitoring Success

### Working with key partners

In order to deliver exceptional value for money, the BID will work closely with other key stakeholders such as property owners, developers, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council and the police. It will seek, wherever possible to influence and shape larger projects to the benefit of its own aims while supporting others to achieve their own objectives. In working with others, the over-riding principle of the BID should not be compromised i.e. that the BID is providing services and benefits additional to those which would have happened if the BID had not been in existence.

### Monitoring of basic service provision

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council is committed to sustaining core or basic services to the area for the duration of the BID so that the activities of the BID will be totally additional and complementary. Provision of Baseline Statements will allow the BID Company to regularly appraise the delivery of core services and compare them with the services identified in the statements. From experience

elsewhere we know this has an impact on that delivery and helps to guarantee that money provided to the authorities via the business rates mechanism is well spent and that standards are maintained.

So, local businesses have some direct control of Business Rates investment in their area and the quality of local authority service provision.

### Monitoring BID delivery

WGC BID will be fully transparent and accountable to the businesses paying the BID levy.

Monitoring and measuring the performance and effectiveness of the BID activities is an integral and essential part of the plan.

Businesses need to be confident that their levy money is being invested as productively as possible to maximise results.

The effectiveness of the measures undertaken will be gauged for each project area. They will include business surveys, photographic evidence, vacancy levels, new investment into the area and parking, sales and footfall data.

## Governance



**A new and separate company will be set up to act as the BID Company. It will be a not for profit BID company, limited by guarantee which will be legally and operationally responsible to the businesses in the BID area, for the delivery of the BID business plan and its associated activities and will act on their behalf.**

There will be a Board responsible for the governance of the BID Company and for creating a management structure which will aim to encourage continuous business involvement in determining priorities and shaping and evolving activities within the terms of this BID Proposal and Business Plan. All businesses will be encouraged to be actively involved in the BID and associated working groups to represent the levy payers.

The Board will be elected by the members of the BID Company, drawn predominantly from those paying a levy in the area and made up of a representative cross-section of the businesses and stakeholders of the area and key agencies associated with the successful delivery of the BID project. It will be driven by the private sector and will include one Councillor from Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council as a Director and one council Officer who will act as a key operational link, but not as a Director.

The main role of the Board is to safeguard the interests of levy payers by ensuring that the business operates in line with the BID plan, is professional and offers consistent value for money in line with its targets. The Board will ensure that the implementation of the BID will be monitored and delivered cost-effectively, through keeping overheads to a minimum and using methods which will optimise the use of the revenue budget and add real value to the delivery of the plan.

The Board will provide a consistent, collective and effective voice for the businesses in Welwyn Garden City.

All roles on the Board and specific working groups are voluntary and are undertaken with a commitment to represent the interests of all businesses in the area.

Collaborative working will be actively encouraged to build upon the sense of the business community in the area and ensure that the skills and resources available for delivery of the BID are enhanced and deliver best value.

There will also be hands-on project and contract management to support the initiatives from the working groups. This support will provide administrative support to the BID Company, coordinate activity with partner organisations and ensure cost-effective delivery of projects through tendering and careful project and contract management.

The Welwyn Garden City BID financial accounts and governance arrangements will be audited annually and the effectiveness of the measures undertaken will be gauged by key performance indicators for each project area, including footfall, customer surveys, business surveys, photographic evidence and retail turnover movement full measures are identified in this plan with each objective.

Besides regular newsletters and other forms of bulletins, there will be an annual report providing details on activities and performance of the company against the objectives of the delivery plan for the previous year.

All levy payers shall be entitled to be members of the BID Company. There will be an annual general meeting at which all members are invited to attend and vote and at which Directors will be retired by rotation and new Directors elected in accordance with the articles of the company.

The Board and Management Group will provide a consistent, collective and effective voice for the businesses in Welwyn Garden City.





Vote **YES!**

## HOW DO BIDS WORK?

- Businesses identify the area and the issues
- A BID Proposal is drawn up
- The proposed programme of services should clearly be additional to those set out in a Baseline Services Agreement
- Non-domestic ratepayers vote on the BID Proposal in a postal ballot conducted by the local authority. The vote must meet two tests – the 'dual key majority'
- After a yes ballot the levy is mandatory on all defined ratepayers
- After five years a BID holds a renewal ballot based on a further proposal

Let's shape the future  
of our town together

This prospectus should be read in conjunction with the full **Business Improvement District Business Plan** accessible on [www.wgcbid.co.uk](http://www.wgcbid.co.uk) or by phoning the BID Development Team on **01707 357565** or emailing [bid@welwyngarden.co.uk](mailto:bid@welwyngarden.co.uk)