

1 JANUARY - 31 DECEMBER 2021

2021

# EXPLANATORY NOTES



# INTRODUCTION

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## WHAT IS KINGSTON FIRST?

**Kingston First is a business improvement district (BID) which operates within Kingston town centre. Set up in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003, it is a not-for-profit company, limited by guarantee and principally funded by a levy. This levy is used to provide additional projects and services to those provided by Kingston Council and other public agencies.**

The company is governed by a voluntary board of directors who represent a cross-sector of the town's business community. They are responsible for overseeing the delivery of the agreed business plan. A dedicated team is delegated responsibility for its delivery and the management of the company.

Kingston First was the first BID set up in the country and following a successful renewal ballot in June 2019, the company started its fourth five-year term on 1 January 2020.

**As set out in the Renewal Proposal 2020-24, our work will focus on four key themes;**

- Attractive Streets & Spaces
- Supporting & Informing
- Marketing the Town
- Influencing & Representing

To view the Renewal Proposal and details about our projects and services in more detail, please visit our website.

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## HOW IS KINGSTON FIRST FUNDED?

Kingston First is principally funded through a levy on non-domestic premises operating within the BID area. The BID area can be viewed on our website. For 2021, the levy is set at 1% of the rateable value of properties on the 2017 Non-Domestic Ratepayers rating list in accordance with the Renewal Proposal. Our Renewal Proposal and business plan allows for an annual inflation increase on

the levy however, please note this will not be applied in 2021.

The projected levy income for 2021 is approximately £899,379. In addition to the levy, Kingston First generates additional funding to contribute towards the delivery of the Renewal Proposal; this includes running the Ancient Market Place and applying for grants, project and service contributions.

## FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The below forecast and budget are indicative and based on our Financial Year (April to March). Full year-end 2020/21 accounts will be provided in Spring 2021, alongside 2020/21's Annual Report.

Business priorities reflect our Renewal Proposal themes. Additional funding includes running and managing the Ancient Market Place and project contributions.

2020/21 FORECAST	
Levy income	£837,089
Additional funding	£407,940
Total	£1,245,029
<b>Spend against business priorities is forecast as follows:</b>	
Attractive streets & spaces	£287,754
Marketing the town	£268,098
Supporting & informing	£136,924
Influencing & representing	£137,655
Overheads	£164,928
Markets	£242,033
Contingency	£35,000
Total	£1,272,392
2021/22 BUDGET	
Levy income	£899,379
Additional funding	£369,255
Total	£1,268,634
<b>Spend against business priorities is budgeted as follows:</b>	
Attractive streets & spaces	£244,215
Marketing the town	£263,768
Supporting & informing	£144,235
Influencing & representing	£158,746
Overheads	£166,447
Markets	£227,023
Contingency	£45,000
Total	£1,249,434

## HOW DO I PAY?

Payment instructions are found on your bill. Kingston Council issues the BID levy bills, collects the levy and transfers the funds to Kingston First. For all billing queries, contact the Council team shown on your bill.

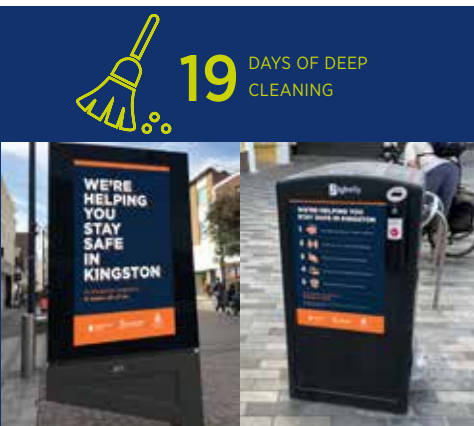
# OUR WORK AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2020

2020 has been an unprecedented year with COVID-19 affecting our lives, businesses and local communities. We have adjusted our ways of working to ensure we continue to engage and support members throughout these challenging times. Some of the key projects and initiatives we've delivered throughout the year include:

## COVID-19 RESPONSE

### RE-OPENING OF KINGSTON TOWN CENTRE

- We co-ordinated a town wide reopening campaign which included providing guidance on how to operate safely and working closely with the Council, Police, industry experts and our MP, we ensured members had the most up to date information in a timely way. We created in-store and social media assets to support members re-opening safely and delivered these to hundreds of businesses. We canvassed member views and listened to feedback which led us to locally sourcing PPE equipment such as face shields and hand sanitisers which we provided to members.
- To ensure the town centre was a pleasant and welcoming experience for returning staff and customers, we dressed the town with colourful bunting along with hanging baskets. We carried out 19 days of deep cleaning, including removing graffiti and full cleaning of pavements within the town.



### SUPPORT FOR MEMBERS

- We moved our communication and training online in response to COVID-19 and delivered ten webinars and training sessions. We sent out almost 50 e-newsletters and policy updates to members. Webinars and training this year covered topics such as footfall, social media, business surgeries with our local MP and Leader of the Council and the development proposal for the new Unilever site.
- We continued to provide savings for Kingston First Members through a free recycling service 7 days a week and reduced-rate trade waste scheme.

### REPRESENTING TOWN CENTRE BUSINESSES AND ORGANISATIONS

- We have lobbied for much-needed financial support during COVID-19 to help our independent businesses and successfully helped secure a Council grant of £25k to retail, leisure and hospitality businesses with a £51k+ rateable value.
- We represented members on traffic issues in the town centre, particularly as the town re-opened, and gained support from Kingston Council on bringing forward the Christmas roadworks moratorium.

<b>50</b> E-NEWSLETTERS AND POLICY UPDATES TO MEMBERS.	<b>£25k</b> COUNCIL GRANT TO RETAIL, LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY BUSINESSES*
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\*Businesses with £51K+ rateable value



## OTHER KEY PROJECTS WE HAVE DELIVERED INCLUDE:

### RAISING KINGSTON'S PROFILE AND SUPPORTING BUSINESSES

- In collaboration with Kingston School of Art we worked with students to install vibrant and colourful artwork in the town centre's vacant retail units. The artwork, in high profile locations, aims to bring enjoyment to Kingston's local residents, businesses and visitors and showcases our talented local student community.
- We launched the 'We are Kingston' campaign, which many businesses were involved in, to help bring back that sense of community spirit to Kingston and to encourage people to shop local, spend time in Kingston and re-discover what the town has to offer, and to share their experiences with others. The campaign has had overwhelming success with stakeholders, members, the Council and local communities responding positively to the campaign.
- We were featured on BBC London, alongside businesses, highlighting the COVID-secure measures businesses and the town have taken to encourage a safe experience for people visiting and shopping in the town centre.
- We responded quickly to the second lockdown, collating details and information on local businesses and services still open and promoting these on our social channels and websites encouraging people to keep it local.
- We launched a survey for members to better understand the impact of the second lockdown and to give us insight and evidence to campaign and lobby for members' interests at a local and national level.
- We adapted our Christmas plans in light of the second lockdown. We installed new Christmas lights, tree and decorations and family friendly installations.
- We launched the Keep it in Kingston app that both rewards workers for spending in the town whilst offering a platform for businesses to promote their services, products and offers. We have almost 5,000 workers signed up to the scheme and over 7,000 offers were redeemed this year.



Photos: Collaboration with Kingston School of Art. 'We are Kingston' campaign, exhibition.

# PLANS FOR 2021

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As we continue to adapt and respond to the new normal, our priorities will continue to focus on supporting members whilst delivering against key services and projects outlined in our business plan. Our focus will be:-

## **CONTINUING TO RESPOND TO COVID-19**

- We will continue to support members through these challenging times and ensure Kingston First is an agile and responsive organisation able to adapt to their needs. We will continue to provide members with updates on the latest guidance and restrictions, support available and insight on COVID-19 to help them adapt and survive this difficult period. We will continue to engage and harness members' views so we can represent and lobby at a local and national level.

## **CHRISTMAS**

- We will deliver a COVID-secure and enjoyable Christmas experience in Kingston in 2021, encouraging people to spend locally and enjoy the town centre safely.

## **DATA AND INSIGHT**

- We will invest in research and insight to help our members better understand consumer sentiment and behaviour and town centre data by sector.
- We will carry out research to better understand how best to communicate and engage with members to ensure our channels of communication are effective.

## **IMPROVING OUR STREETS AND SPACES**

- We will improve navigation and wayfinding around the town centre, looking at new initiatives and concepts to improve Eagle Brewery Wharf and Memorial Gardens.
- We will help position Kingston town centre as a destination for arts and culture by developing our strategy for action in collaboration with members and the Council.
- We will continue with our collaboration with Kingston School of Art to improve the visual impact of vacant retail units in the town centre.



**FURTHER DETAILS ABOUT OUR PROJECTS, SERVICES AND PLANS FOR THE NEW TERM CAN BE FOUND ON OUR WEBSITE AT [KINGSTONFIRST.CO.UK](http://KINGSTONFIRST.CO.UK)**

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