



Explanatory Notes

**1 January—
31 December
2022**

Who are 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, started its fourth five-year term on 1 January 2020.

As set out in the Renewal Proposal 2020-2024, our work will focus on our key themes;

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

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

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 2022, the levy is set at 1.03% of the rateable value of properties on the 2017 Non-Domestic Ratepayers rating list in accordance with the Renewal Proposal.

The projected levy income for 2022 is approximately £827,091. In addition to the levy, Kingston First is able to generate additional funding to contribute towards the delivery of the Renewal Proposal; this includes running commissioned services 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 2021/22 accounts will be provided in Spring 2022, alongside 2021/22's Annual Report.

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

2021/22 Forecast

Levy income	£812,809
Additional funding	£628,662
Total	£1,441,471

Spend against business priorities is budgeted as follows:

Attractive streets & spaces	£390,500
Marketing the town	£249,500
Supporting & informing	£201,000
Influencing & representing	£125,000
Overheads	£161,000
Markets	£288,500
Contingency	£20,000
Public Realm Transformation	£125,000
Total	£1,560,500

2022/23 Budget

Levy income	£827,091
Additional funding	£398,363
Total	£1,225,454

Spend against business priorities is forecast as follows:

Attractive streets & spaces	£240,000
Marketing the town	£245,000
Supporting & informing	£170,000
Influencing & representing	£152,000
Overheads	£166,500
Markets	£288,500
Contingency	£20,000
Public Realm Transformation	£125,000
Total	£1,407,000

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 2021

Continuing to respond to COVID-19

We continued to work closely with businesses and organisations to respond to the impact of COVID-19. We adjusted our Christmas plans in light of restrictions and provided new Christmas lighting and installations for people to enjoy during a difficult period. Over 60% of respondents in our consumer survey said it encouraged them to visit Kingston. We also supported members by promoting opening hours, offers and encouraged people to shop local where possible on our website and social channels.

We co-ordinated the town wide reopening in April 2021, working closely with members and partners and made sure members felt supported with the most up to date information and guidance.

We adapted our training programme to provide webinars and training online during COVID-19, covering topics to help our businesses through the challenges of the year, including improving their social media presence and marketing, access to funding, improving mental health, and support with reopening. We hosted webinars with the local MP Ed Davey, former Leader of the Council, Caroline Kerr and Kate Nicholls, CEO of UK Hospitality.

Representing town centre businesses and organisations

We supported the national campaign 'Bounce Back Better' which called for specific support for the retail, leisure and hospitality sectors including an extension of the business rates holiday, extending the VAT reduction scheme and furlough scheme to support employers in 2021.

We secured additional funding from the government which we are investing back into the town centre experience, including better public spaces to encourage well-being and revitalising our vacant units.

Support for members

One of our most popular services, the free recycling service operated through First Mile, continues to be valuable for many of our members with over 200 businesses taking advantage of the scheme.

We installed 122 seasonal hanging baskets and sustainable planting. We replanted and continue to maintain two raised brick flower beds with a mixture of pollinator friendly evergreen and perennial plants. We delivered 37 days of pavement washing, including the removal of graffiti and weeding.

We recently launched a new training programme to support members and help their employees enhance their knowledge base and build on essential skills. There is something for everyone, across all sectors, touching on three key themes which have been identified through our research with members; Sales & Marketing; Health & Safety; and The Sustainability Agenda.

We set up weekly footfall reports during the pandemic which we continue to send, along with a monthly roundup of footfall, vacancies and other data - benchmarked against London and the UK - so you know how Kingston compares to its competitors.

We have continued to listen and respond to concerns and issues that members have raised; from proposed road closures, street cleaning to improving the town



centre experience and lobbying for funding. We carried out extensive research with our member community giving you the opportunity to share your feedback, which is key to ensuring we are giving you the best service possible, and to enable us to share your feedback with the Council and other partners.

We carried out extensive research with consumers, locals and non-visitors to Kingston to better understand their motivations for coming to the town centre and understand what they would like more of. We shared this invaluable insight with members to help them understand the opportunities to improve their product, service or experience offered to consumers.

Promoting Kingston town centre

We delivered marketing campaigns to drive footfall and spend in our town centre. We delivered a campaign for Christmas, adapted due to restrictions, to promote offers from local businesses, which garnered awareness of over 70% from those who responded to our consumer research.

We continued with campaigns for the series of Thumbs Up It's Thursday events which over 60% of those raising a family in our consumer research said had encouraged them to visit the town centre, and delivered our first well-being campaign which was hugely successful and popular with the local community.





Kingston based landscape architects Davies White Ltd and The Edible Bus Stop design studio were appointed to lead on the engagement and design to transform Eagle Brewery Wharf, on Kingston's riverside, and Memorial Gardens, in the centre of the town, into green spaces that improve the pedestrian flow around the town, encourage wellbeing, social and cultural activities, and acknowledge their historical significance.

We have carried out extensive engagement online and in-person with businesses, residents and local community groups to hear what people think of the spaces, and now have design ideas and principles that we can take forward to make this project a reality.

Businesses have highlighted to us the importance of creating a vibrant and welcoming town centre. One of the ways we are addressing this is through our 'Social Spaces' project in partnership with the Council. Following engagement with businesses, residents and access groups we delivered temporary planters and seating to Thames Street, Fife Road and the Station Plaza.



For re-opening in April 2021, we delivered 'Colour Your Senses', a vibrant campaign encouraging locals and visitors to rediscover what's on offer in Kingston, with over 50% awareness amongst those that responded to our consumer research. Our social campaign alone reached over 96,000 people, generating 14,500 engagements with the posts. Our consumer newsletter highlighting events in Kingston, raising the profile of our members and advertising their offers, continues to be very popular with 75% of consumers in our research rating it good or very good.

We secured PR coverage in the Surrey Comet, Time and Leisure, Radio Jackie and SW Londoner helping to raise the profile of Kingston town centre.

We have promoted our KIK app, with nearly 100% awareness, over 100 offers advertised, 5000 users and nearly 300 redemptions per month.

Investment in the public realm and town centre experience

In partnership with Kingston Council we have been leading on a public realm initiative to create inclusive 'Happy Spaces' within the town centre for local residents, visitors and business community to unwind, enjoy and connect with nature.

Plans for 2022

Christmas 2021

We have planned and will deliver an exciting and varied offer for Kingston this Christmas to help drive footfall and spend in the town centre.

New consumer brand for Kingston

We are currently embarking on a project to refresh our consumer brand 'In Kingston'. Over the last few months we have been researching competitors and analysing our recent member research which highlighted a lack of awareness of the 'In Kingston' brand and a need for consumer marketing to drive footfall and support the town's economic recovery.

We've also carried out extensive research with consumers and visitors to better understand their needs and what they love about Kingston. With this insight, we want to create a consumer brand that positions Kingston as a vibrant destination bringing it to life and giving it a personality that represents its unique offer and experiences. We will be launching the new consumer brand in early 2022.

Vacant units

We've been working on a project to transform the vacant units in Kingston town centre to support economic growth, encourage innovation and diversity and create a vibrant place to live, work and play.

We've been reaching out to landlords, agents and the local community to explore new opportunities through the use of vacant units, creating a buzz and vibrancy in our town centre, and look forward to sharing our progress over the next few months.

Keep It Kingston

We are building on the success of KIK, which is well known and regarded by businesses as a fantastic perk for their employees, by investing in better reporting and marketing, to boost member participation, especially in under-represented sectors, sign ups, and redemptions. In consultation with businesses we will look at whether we can expand the app to visitors and further maximise the benefit of the service.

Further details about our projects, services and plans for the new term can be found on our website at kingstonfirst.co.uk

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