



ASHBY DE LA ZOUCHE

ASHBY BID BUSINESS PLAN

Your BID. Your Town. Your Vote.

A five-year plan to invest almost
£1.5 million in Ashby de la Zouch –
proposed by businesses, delivered
by businesses, for businesses.

2027-2032

Foreword

Five years ago, Ashby’s businesses were asked to back the Business Improvement District (BID). We had come through a pandemic that had changed our high street, our habits and our confidence. The proposition was simple: that we would achieve more for our town by acting together, with our own money, our own plan and our own voice, than we ever would by acting alone.

You voted **YES**. Since 1 April 2022, Ashby BID has invested over £800,000 back into this town — and levered in a further £60,000 of grant funding and external income on top of it. We have delivered a Christmas Market that draws 9,000 people over a weekend, the Ashby Soapbox that fills Market Street, free retail radios in more than 40 businesses, a BID Ranger on our streets, floral displays across seven roads, a town mascot, a Tourist Information Centre reopened, and a brand that businesses across Ashby now use as their own.

We have also done the quieter work. We campaigned successfully against changes to town car parking. We argued Ashby’s corner on the Leicestershire Markets Charter.

“Over Ashby BID’s first five-year term, I am immensely proud to say that we will have invested over £800,000 back into our town, delivering projects that directly support local businesses, improve the trading environment, and make Ashby a more vibrant place to live, work, and visit.

— Sharon Jones, Chair of the Ashby BID, Director of Kangaroo UK

properly constituted, properly funded, hyperlocal body whose only job is to represent this place.

That last point matters more in 2027 than it did in 2022. On 16 July 2026 the Government confirmed that North West Leicestershire District Council and Leicestershire County Council will both be abolished, replaced from April 2028 by two unitary councils covering Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. Ashby — a town of around 16,500 people — will sit inside a new authority serving hundreds of thousands. Every town in the county will be competing for the same attention and the same funds. The places with a plan, a partnership and a professional team will be heard. The places without one will not.

This business plan sets out what we propose to do with your investment between 2027 and 2032. It builds on what has worked, responds directly to what you told us in our consultation, and adds something new: a clear role in shaping the physical future of the town centre, working from the independent Opportunities and Constraints study commissioned for Ashby in 2026.

We are asking you to vote **YES** so that Ashby keeps its voice, keeps its momentum, and keeps investing in itself.

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Introduction & Summary

Ashby de la Zouch is a historic market town in North West Leicestershire, set in the heart of the National Forest, with a population of around 16,500. Its heart is Market Street — a picturesque main street lined with independent shops, cafés, pubs and restaurants that blend historic architecture with everyday life. The town centre also features a covered market hall and regular outdoor markets, including food, crafts and farmers' markets. Beyond the core shopping streets sits a broader business community across commercial and industrial areas, supporting local employment and services. All of it is complemented by major heritage and visitor attractions including Ashby Castle and the National Forest.

Ashby BID is a business and community-driven, not-for-profit initiative working to improve Ashby's economic and social vitality. It is funded by local businesses and managed by a volunteer board of local representatives. Our first term runs to 31 March 2027. This business plan asks you to renew it for a second term, from 1 April 2027 to 31 March 2032.



What the second term will deliver

If businesses vote **YES**, Ashby BID will:

- Invest almost £1.5 million in Ashby over five years, including additional income
- Keep the events, marketing and Christmas offer that businesses have told us they value most — Christmas Market, Late Night Shopping, Ashby Soapbox, Easter, Ashby FABulous, and supporting Ashby Pride and Ashby Arts Festival
- Maintain and extend the safety and cleanliness measures that protect trade — Street Rangers, free retail radio, DISC, body-worn cameras, enhanced street cleaning
- Cut costs for businesses through collective trade waste management and recycling, and continue the matched grant scheme for shopfront and signage improvements
- Take a leading role in delivering a Town Masterplan, with the Town Council, turning it into funded, deliverable improvements to Market Street, Brook Street, The Green, Bath Street and the alleyways
- Provide Ashby with a single, credible, business-backed voice through the largest reorganisation of local government in a generation

What you told us

Comprehensive engagement with businesses has been running throughout 2026 — a full survey, one-to-one meetings with the BID team, a newsletter to every levy payer, and continuous contact through the BID's day-to-day operations. The clear message is strong support for the continuation of almost all of the activities the BID currently undertakes. This plan is built on that evidence.

The investment

The BID levy will be 2.5% of rateable value for hereditaments with a rateable value of £12,000 and above, and a flat rate of £150 for those between £5,000 and £11,999. Businesses with a rateable value below £5,000 pay nothing. For a business with a rateable value of £20,000, that is £500 a year — £1.37 a day.

There are now over 350 BID's across the UK, all investing in their local priorities. Nearby, these include Hinckley, Loughborough, Melton and Leicester, all of which have renewed their BID's and continue investing.



“

I've personally seen how the Ashby BID has made a real difference in the town. From the additional Christmas decorations, flowers, and hanging baskets that bring colour and warmth, to the events that draw visitors and encourage them to return, it's clear that the BID supports local businesses and creates a welcoming, vibrant town. I also benefited from a BID grant when I moved premises, which helped with new shop signage at a crucial time. — Emma, Owner, The Fabric Boutique

Business Improvement Districts Explained

What are BIDs?

BIDs are an arrangement whereby businesses get together, decide what improvements they want to make in their town, how they will manage these and what it will cost them. This all goes into a business plan which is voted on by all those who would have to pay. A BID lasts for a maximum of five years and must be able to demonstrate how it benefits the businesses that have funded it. BIDs deliver additional projects and services over and above those already provided by public bodies.

Why do businesses support BIDs?

A BID is a mechanism which allows businesses to raise a sum of money to manage and deliver projects that they have identified and believe will improve their trading environment, ultimately increasing trade for those businesses who are paying for the improvements.

Who pays for a BID?

Once projects and services have been agreed by businesses, along with how they are going to be delivered and managed, they are costed and set out in a business plan. The cost to each business is worked out on a pro rata basis. This is called the BID levy. An independent and formal vote then

takes place and if the majority vote is **YES** then all eligible businesses within the BID area have to pay. The BID levy is normally paid by the occupier of a property. In addition, BIDs can draw in other voluntary funding, grants and in-kind contributions to supplement the levy — Ashby BID secured over £60,000 of such income in its first term.

How does an area renew a BID?

A BID has a mandate for a maximum of five years, after which it must seek a re-ballot. The BID company prepares a new business plan, based on detailed consultation with businesses, setting out the projects it aims to deliver, their cost, delivery guarantees, performance indicators and the management structure. A confidential postal vote is held in which all businesses that would pay the levy get a vote. To renew, a majority of those that vote must be in favour both by number and by rateable value.

How is a BID monitored?

Like any good business plan, specific key performance indicators (KPIs) are set and performance is monitored against them by the BID board. The BID company is answerable to the businesses that pay the levy and is required to monitor and inform its members on progress towards the agreed KPIs.

Does this mean the local authority will stop delivering services?

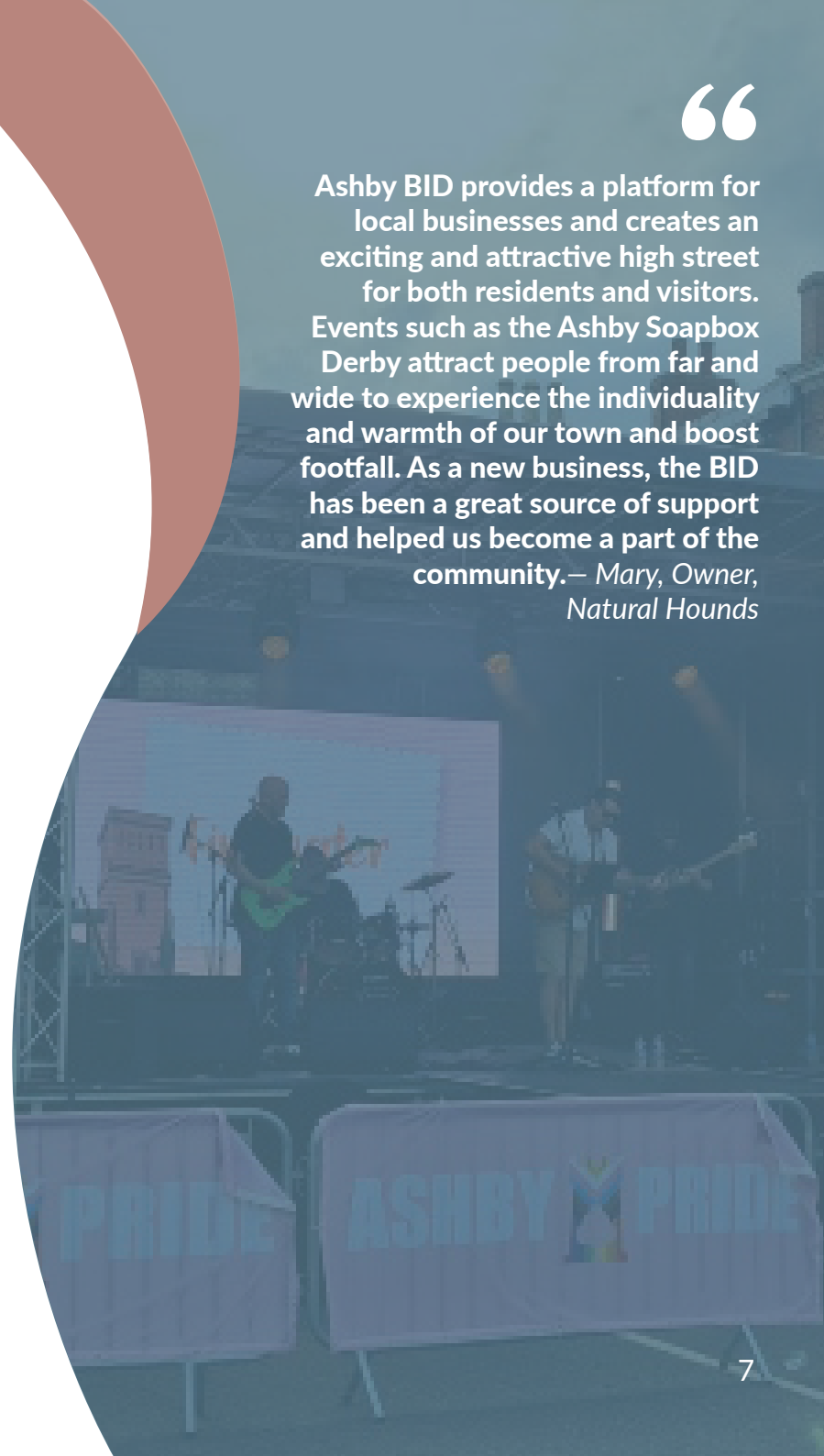
No. BID money can only be used to carry out projects and services additional to those that public bodies have to provide. Before a BID business plan is produced, the services currently being delivered by all public agencies — including the local authority and the police — are set out in Baseline Statements. Baseline Statements agreed with Leicestershire County Council, North West Leicestershire District Council and Ashby de la Zouch Town Council are available on request and cover:

- Cleansing & maintenance
- Landscaping & planting
- Festivals & events
- Tourism
- Leisure
- CCTV
- Car parking
- Police
- Public conveniences

All of the services which the BID provides will be over and above these baselines, and BID funding will not be used to replace any existing local authority service. Where the successor unitary authority takes on these functions from April 2028, the BID will seek to re-establish and re-confirm Baseline Statements with the new council.

“

Ashby BID provides a platform for local businesses and creates an exciting and attractive high street for both residents and visitors. Events such as the Ashby Soapbox Derby attract people from far and wide to experience the individuality and warmth of our town and boost footfall. As a new business, the BID has been a great source of support and helped us become a part of the community.— Mary, Owner, Natural Hounds



Our First Term in Numbers

What your levy has delivered since April 2022.

£800,000+	invested back into Ashby during the first term
£60,000+	additional grant funding and external income levered in
9,000+	visitors to the Ashby Christmas Market over one weekend
5,000+	visitors on the day of Ashby Soapbox, with 40+ entrants
4,000+	people attending Ashby Pride
3,000+	visitors per day at the Sealed Knot Civil War re-enactment
1,200+	people per day at the Ashby Big Weekend
1,000+	people a month visiting the Paddington Bear bench - one of only 20 places in the country
10,000+	followers across Love Ashby social media platforms
80+	promotional videos produced free of charge for local businesses
3,000	visits a month to the Ashby BID website
50+	retailers accepting the Ashby Gift Card
40+	free retail radios provided to businesses, connected to CCTV
25hrs	per week of BID Ranger presence on Ashby's streets
5 years	of Purple Flag accreditation for Ashby's evening and night-time economy

Our Achievements 2022 – 2027

We are a small BID, but with a big idea and a commitment to deliver high-profile, quality projects and services. Below is what has been delivered so far with your levy investment, set out under our key themes.

Marketing, Promotions & Events

Events

- **Ashby Soapbox** — a popular town and community event attracting 40-plus entrants and over 5,000 visitors on the day
- **Ashby Christmas Market** — over 80 stalls, attracting more than 9,000 visitors across the weekend
- **Late Night Shopping** — 2025 marked the first coordinated Christmas light switch-on event in Ashby. Turnout exceeded expectations, with excellent footfall and increased takings reported by businesses that opened late. The BID organised entertainment including appearances from Buddy the Elf and Zouchie, alongside promotional flyers and large event banners
- **Ashby Pride** — supported, with over 4,000 people attending
- **Ashby's FABulous** — supported this unique event, encouraging businesses to take part with live models in their windows; the BID added entertainment and marketing, attracting up to 1,000 people into town on the day
- **Easter Event** — working with local primary schools to produce Easter-themed drawings placed in shop windows across the town centre to boost footfall during the school holiday
- **Ashby Big Weekend 2022** — a full weekend of entertainment with over 1,200 people attending each day. The BID was headline sponsor, stalls were offered free to levy payers, and the Ashby tourism video was shown repeatedly on the big screens.

“

Ashby BID has helped make our special town even more lovable. Sir Zouchie, the mascot, is simply gorgeous and adds a fun, welcoming touch to all events. Events such as the Ashby Soapbox Derby, the Ashby BID awards, and the Christmas weekender were fabulous — full of excitement and community spirit! We were also so grateful for the advertising video created for our café; it was wonderful and perfectly captured the essence of what we do. — Rebecca, Owner, The Courtyard



“

We at La Zouch in Kilwardby Street are pleased with what the BID has brought to the town. As a business in both hospitality and retail we have benefited from increased footfall from some of the events organised bringing more people into the town. Must thank the team for their hard work in supporting Ashby businesses. — Geoff Utting, Owner, La Zouch



- **Sealed Knot** — in partnership with Ashby Town Council and with costs shared equally, two highly successful days of Civil War re-enactment including a dramatic march through Market Street and a battle on the Bath Grounds, attracting an estimated 3,000 visitors per day
- **Ashby Arts Festival** — in 2025 the BID created a digital trail on the Visit Ashby App for all the giant outdoor art boards; in 2026 the festival has been supported by a grant to expand the event. 60 people completed the trail
- **Halloween Trail** — in 2025 a bespoke digital town trail was created using the Visit Ashby App, with a hunt for children and a more mature trail for adults. 120 people accessed the trails
- **Santa Fun Run** — supported by providing Ashby Gift Cards as prizes, which were in turn spent in businesses that accept the card
- **Ashby BID Business Awards** — in September 2025 the BID proudly hosted the first Ashby BID Business Awards at The Lyric Rooms, with 80 people in attendance. Nominees and winners were selected by an independent judging panel comprising representatives from the Civic Society, Venture Theatre, Rotary and Holy Trinity Church.

Marketing and promotion

- **The Ashby Brand** — developed and now used by businesses and other organisations across the town
- **Ashby BID website** — developed and maintained, attracting nearly 3,000 visits a month

- **Love Ashby social media** — over 10,000 followers, with more than 80 promotional videos produced for businesses free of charge
- **Tourism video** — creation of the Ashby tourism video
- **Seasonal campaigns** — a range of campaigns including Christmas and Easter across social media and press advertising
- **Ashby Life** — two businesses featured each month in Ashby Life Magazine
- **Ashby Gift Card** — with over 50 retailers accepting it, designed to keep spend local
- **Zouchie** — an official town mascot with his own backstory, unveiled at the 2025 Ashby Soapbox. Sir Zouch, affectionately known as Zouchie, has appeared at events throughout the year and has quickly become a favourite
- **Paddington Bear** — Ashby was one of only just 20 places in the country to be part of this promotion. An estimated 1,000 people a month come into town to take photographs
- **Umbrella Art** — during summer 2025, an umbrella art installation in Mill Lane Mews added colour and character and proved a popular backdrop for photographs
- **Tourist Information Centre** — reopened by Ashby BID, providing information, literature and merchandise.

“

As a local business, I think the BID has played a really important role in supporting Ashby, especially as the high street has changed so much in recent years. That extra help is vital in keeping Ashby vibrant and drawing people into town. It benefits the whole town and helps businesses work together to create a stronger sense of community.

— Helen, Owner, Goose

Welcoming & Safe

- **Retail Radios** — over 40 free retail radios, connected to CCTV, provided to businesses to help reduce business crime and anti-social behaviour
- **BID Ranger** — introduction of a BID Ranger for 25 hours per week to help deter crime and anti-social behaviour
- **DISC App** — introduction of a new DISC crime reporting app
- **Body-worn Cameras** — £9,000 attracted to purchase 20 body-worn cameras to help reduce crime, deter anti-social behaviour and gather evidence
- **Purple Flag** — achieving and maintaining Purple Flag status, aimed at promoting and managing the night-time economy better
- **Christmas Lights** — adding to the display with 50 Christmas trees, three cross-street decorations, net lighting in Mill Lane Mews and an extra 15ft Christmas tree in North Street
- **Floral Decorations** — additional barrier baskets installed on Derby Road, Nottingham Road, Ivanhoe Business Park, North Street and South Street; hanging baskets in Rushtons Yard; and 13 pathway planters across Mill Lane Mews, Market Street, Bath Street, Coxons Mews, Derby Road and Brook Street
- **Partnership Working** — continued work with key partners to reduce crime, including the councils, the Police and CCTV.

Getting Around

- **Free Car Parking** — free car parking at Christmas
- **Hopper Bus** — a three-month Hopper Bus trial providing two routes connecting outer residential estates with the town centre, operating every Friday and Saturday and free to use, supporting accessibility and encouraging town centre visits.

Business Support

- **Grant Funding** — a matched grant funding scheme set up for small businesses to assist with signage and shop improvements
- **Car Parks** — successfully and actively campaigned, with partners, against changes and charging arrangements for the town car parks
- **Markets Charter** — advocated against changes which would have negatively affected Ashby. The BID is a member of the Leicestershire Market Towns Group, helping gather useful data and intelligence
- **Visit Ashby App** — £10,000 of UKSPF funding secured to create a digital town app
- **Town Centre Investment** — £50,000 of UKSPF funding attracted to improve the town centre.



”

The BID has brought real value to the town, helping to drive footfall and trade throughout the year rather than just in peak seasons. The events, promotions, and ongoing investment support local businesses, especially hospitality, by encouraging people to visit, stay longer, and keep coming back. It's positive to see a joined-up approach that benefits the whole town and helps create a busier, more vibrant local economy. — Sam and Selina Wallis, Landlords, The Bulls Head

The BID Area

The BID area is unchanged from the first term. It covers the town centre and the principal commercial and industrial areas of Ashby de la Zouch, recognising that the town's economy extends beyond the core shopping streets. A map of the BID boundary along with the streets is shown below and left:

- Bakery Court

Bath Street

Brook Street

Brookside

Burton Road (part)

Charter Point Way

Coalfield Way

Coxons Mews

Dents Road

Derby Road

Elford Street

Excelsior Road

Ivanhoe Park Way

Kilwardby Street

Leicester Road

Lountside
- Lower Church Street

Market Street

Mill Lane Mews

Norman Court

North Street

Nottingham Road

Resolution Road

Rushton's Yard

Smisby Road (part)

Smithy Road

South Street

Station Road

The Callis

The Green

Wood Street

The BID Area Map



What Happens if the Vote is NO?

If the vote is **No**, Ashby BID will end on 31 March 2027. All current services, projects, marketing, events, business support and funding enhancements will come to an immediate stop. This includes:

Service or project	Status if the BID ends
Christmas Market (BID support)	Ends
Late Night Shopping Event	Ends
Christmas Lights (BID-funded additions)	Ends
Floral decorations and planters	Ends
Ashby Soapbox	Ends
Ashby's FABulous (BID support)	Ends
The Sealed Knot	Ends
Umbrella artwork and public art	Ends
Easter event	Ends
Free parking for events	Ends
Tourist Information Centre	Ends
BID Awards	Ends
Ranger Service	Ends
Free retail radio	Ends - businesses would pay individually and usually more than their BID Levy
Hopper Bus	Ends
DISC crime reporting app	Ends
Visit Ashby App	Ends
Business grants scheme	Ends
Ability to bid for and match external funding	Ends
A dedicated voice for Ashby businesses in local government reorganisation	Ends
Submitted a Town of Culture application	No future support submitting similar applications

There is no Plan B. No other organisation will step in and fund all these activities.



Listening to You

This business plan is not a document written for you. It is a document written from what you told us. Engagement has run continuously through 2026 and continues up to the ballot.

When	What Happened / Will Happen
February 2026	Achievements Newsletter issued to all levy payers, with an open survey inviting views on what has worked, what could be improved and what new ideas should be explored
Spring 2026	Full business survey of levy payers
Spring-Summer 2026	One-to-one meetings between the BID team and businesses across the BID area
Ongoing 2026	Continuous contact with businesses through the regular operations of the BID — Ranger visits, retail radio, events sign-up and grant applications
Spring 2026	Consultation with major stakeholders: Ashby Town Council, North West Leicestershire District Council, Leicestershire County Council, and local community and interest organisations — all of whom resolved to support the BID's renewal
July 2026	Draft business plan produced and issued for consultation
September 2026	Final business plan published and distributed to all eligible businesses
September 2026	Ballot papers issued
1-30 October 2026	Postal ballot open
October 2026	Result declared
1 April 2027	Second BID term begins if successful

What the engagement told us

Initial business engagement shows strong support for the continuation of almost all of the activities that the BID is currently undertaking. Businesses were clear that:

- The events programme — particularly Ashby Christmas Market and Ashby Soapbox — are the most valued area of activity and would be protected and grown
- Safety and the trading environment matter: the Ranger, retail radio and DISC should continue and be strengthened
- Cost savings are wanted: businesses want the BID to use its collective buying power on trade waste and recycling
- Parking and access remain a live concern and the BID should keep campaigning on them
- The physical quality of the town centre — pavements, planting, crossings, the alleyways — needs a plan, and the BID should lead on securing it
- Businesses want the BID to be a stronger advocate as local government changes around us

Business engagement continues, and updated results will be published alongside the final business plan.



Shaping the Future of Ashby Town Centre

This is a new area of work for the second term, and it is the most significant addition to the plan.

In April 2026, landscape and urban design practice Gillespies was appointed by Ashby de la Zouch Town Council to prepare a review of the town centre. Ashby BID contributed to that work, providing the Ashby Brand Guidelines, the Place Quality Audit and other evidence, and participating in the stakeholder walking survey. The resulting Opportunities and Constraints Baseline Report gives Ashby something it has never had before: an independent, professional, evidence-based assessment of what is holding the town centre back and a set of costed-out project concepts for putting it right.

A study is not delivery. Turning these concepts into funded schemes requires sustained advocacy, match funding, business support and a body able to hold the ring between the Town Council, the new unitary authority, highways, landowners and businesses over several years. That is precisely what a BID is for. Ashby BID proposes to be the delivery partner and funding vehicle that carries this work forward across the 2027–2032 term.

What the evidence says

The Town's Strengths

- Ashby has grown organically from the first recorded Norman settlement in 1086 and retains a vibrant, bustling character with a thriving independent spirit

- There are over 40 Grade II listed properties within the town centre, with Tudor and Georgian architecture abutting one another on Market Street
- Frequent ancient alleyways run north–south linking North Street, Market Street and South Street, encouraging high pedestrian movement and boosting social interaction and dwell time
- Ashby has a growing reputation as the ‘foodie’ centre of Leicestershire, with many independent cafés, restaurants and producers, enhanced by the Ashby Food Festival held in May
- The town has held the prestigious Purple Flag accreditation for five years for its outstanding, dynamic and safe after-dark economy
- Ashby is well served by local green space and has strong links to the National Forest landscape, with the Bath Grounds at its centre
- Special events take place almost monthly, with Market Street closed to traffic at least twice a year for the regionally renowned Soapbox Races and Ashby Statutes.

The Constraints Identified

- Vehicle-dominated space. Market Street has a generous 20m building-to-building width, but most of it is given over to vehicle movement — two traffic lanes plus two almost-continuous lanes of parking. On the day of survey there were approximately 24 vehicles parked on the north side and 23 on the south. Parking bays are undefined, so oversized gaps are left between vehicles, reducing the street's productivity

- Narrow or non-existent pavements. Because of the historic nature of the town, some footways are very narrow. This limits wheeled users — wheelchair users and people with prams — to the main areas of town, reducing permeability and revenue for shops elsewhere. Narrow pavements also prevent businesses spilling out into the public realm with signage or pavement cafés
- Lack of wayfinding. The alleyways are often missed even by locals, making it difficult for visitors and residents to find businesses situated along them
- Gaps in crossings. Several areas of the town are not served by marked or lit crossings, including the eastern and western ends of Market Street
- Active travel is severely lacking, with only a few places offering cycle parking and almost no cycle use of Market Street
- Ashby is not currently served by a regular passenger train service; both district and county councils have been looking to promote links to Leicester and Burton on Trent, but this has been a delayed long-term project for several years
- Bus services within the town are provided by several operators, but do not link to the wider network of surrounding villages and can be unreliable
- Specific pinch points identified include the oversized roundabout where Brook Street meets The Green, parking immediately adjacent to key historic assets, no pedestrian footway at the entrance to the Bath Grounds, and an inconsistent approach to alleyway paving.



The projects Ashby BID will pursue

The study identified a series of quick wins and key projects. Ashby BID will use its levy, its convening power and its funding-raising capability to move this forward. Our role will be to co-fund feasibility and design work, to lead the funding bids, to keep businesses informed and consulted at every stage, and to deliver the smaller public-realm elements directly.



Project	What is Proposed
1. Eastern Gateway	Enhancing the two pocket parks either side of Market Street where it meets Wood Street, to create a genuine sense of arrival. A raised table to link the two spaces physically and slow traffic; a much-needed crossing at the top end of Market Street; murals on the gable ends of buildings; lowering and expanding the planting; and artistic elements signalling entry to Ashby town centre. This junction marks the start and end of the road closure during town events.
2a. Brook Street	Brook Street already hosts numerous events including the regular farmers' market. Proposals include expanding the extremely narrow eastern footway by reducing traffic, opening up and enhancing the War Memorial area so it is more welcoming, a mural on the side of Costa (already in hand through the BID), improved road and car park surfacing to create a better events space, an east-west crossing, and increased planting around the chapel entrance.
2b. The Green	The historic town green is currently dominated by an oversized roundabout. Proposals include replacing the roundabout with a T-junction to reduce the space given to vehicles, expanding the eastern footway, reducing Brook Street to one-way north-west bound, reintroducing greenery, creating space for retail and restaurant spill-out, and adding historic interpretation about the Town Green.
3a. Bath Street Memorial	The Loudon Memorial sits on a small pedestrian island surrounded by traffic. Proposals include closing the side spur street to through and parking traffic, removing parking on the eastern side of the memorial, increasing heritage interpretation, providing pedestrian crossings across Bath and South Streets, and removing redundant traffic signage and control boxes.
3b. Bath Grounds Entrance	The main town centre entrance to the Bath Grounds is confusing and uninviting, dominated by vehicle hatching and a turning circle, with no natural wayfinding or formal signage. Proposals include resurfacing to cobbled block to indicate slow vehicle speeds, integrating signage into the stone wall, creating an entrance statement, and introducing a pedestrian crossing over South Street.
4. Market Street	Formalising on-street parking with defined bays to recover lost capacity; creating build-outs for public seating, cycle parking and mature trees; and linking the town visually to the wider National Forest landscape. This is the project with the greatest potential to increase dwell time and spend.
5. Alleyways	Classifying Ashby's alleyways according to use and width, producing a small design guide and design codes to align the design language across all of them, and introducing in-ground signage along Market Street directing people into them. This directly addresses the difficulty visitors have in finding businesses located off the main street.

How the BID will fund and deliver this

The Town Masterplan line in the Authenticity budget is the BID's contribution to this work. It is deliberately structured as seed and match funding rather than full capital funding — the capital cost of these schemes runs well beyond what any BID levy could carry alone. What the BID brings is:

- **Match funding.** Almost every public realm and regeneration fund requires local match funding. A standing BID contribution makes Ashby BID-ready in a way that towns without a BID are not
- **Feasibility and design.** Funders want developed schemes, not ideas. The BID can pay for the design work that turns a concept into a fundable project
- **Direct delivery of quick wins.** Murals, alleyway signage and interpretation, planting, seating and wayfinding are within the BID's direct reach and can be delivered early in the term
- **Business consent and evidence.** Changes to parking and traffic on Market Street will only succeed with business backing. The BID is the only body able to consult businesses properly and represent a settled business position
- **Continuity.** Officers and councillors will change through reorganisation. A five-year BID mandate provides the institutional memory to see multi-year schemes through.

The BID will report annually to levy payers on progress against these projects, and no scheme affecting parking or trading conditions on Market Street will be supported by the BID without prior consultation with the businesses directly affected.



Local Government Reorganisation: Why Ashby Needs Its Own Voice

Between the ballot in October 2026 and the end of the proposed BID term in March 2032, the local government structures that Ashby has known for fifty years will be dismantled and rebuilt. This is the single biggest change in the operating environment facing Ashby's businesses, and it is the clearest argument for renewing the BID.

What has been decided

On 16 July 2026, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government announced the Government's decisions on local government reorganisation across sixteen remaining areas, including Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

For our area, the Government has decided to implement the two-unitary proposal submitted by Leicester City Council. The practical consequences for Ashby are these:

- North West Leicestershire District Council will be abolished
- Leicestershire County Council will be abolished
- From April 2028, two unitary councils will deliver all services across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland
- Elections to the new unitary councils are scheduled for May 2027 — during the first month of the proposed BID term
- The new councils begin delivering services in April 2028

What this means for Ashby's businesses

1. Ashby becomes a much smaller voice in a much larger authority

Today, Ashby is one of the principal towns in a district of around 100,000 people, with a district council based in Coalville and a county council at County Hall. From April 2028, Ashby will sit within a unitary authority covering a large part of Leicestershire and Rutland, serving several hundred thousand residents, with a single set of officers and a single cabinet setting priorities across dozens of towns and villages. Coalville, Loughborough, Melton, Market Harborough, Hinckley, Oakham and Ashby will all be making their case to the same small group of decision-makers.

In that environment, the towns that get heard are the towns that arrive with an organised, funded, evidenced position — not the towns that arrive with a list of complaints.

2. Relationships the BID holds will need to be rebuilt

The BID's Baseline Statements, which covers services provided by public agencies such as Street Cleaning, Car Parking, Highway Maintenance are agreed with Leicestershire County Council, North West Leicestershire District Council and Ashby de la Zouch Town Council.

Two of those three parties will cease to exist and therefore these will need to be monitored and renegotiated if necessary.

We need a powerful business voice. Without a BID, no such body exists. Ashby de la Zouch Town Council will remain — parish and town councils are unaffected by reorganisation — and the BID will work closely with it, as it does now. But the Town Council is not a business organisation, does not hold a business mandate, and cannot commit business money to match funding. The BID and the Town Council do different jobs, and both are needed.

3. Reorganisation moves money, and moved money can be won or lost

Reorganisation comes with funding. The Government has announced £63 million in capacity funding nationally, £900,000 of transition support for each new unitary, and further sums for service leadership — more than £1 million per new unitary created. Beyond transition, the whole purpose of reorganisation, as set out by the Secretary of State, is to make areas "ready for devolution" and to devolve power out of Whitehall. Devolution deals bring investment funds, transport funding, skills funding and regeneration money into the area.

That money will be allocated to places. Places with shovel-ready schemes, local match funding and a business-backed plan will secure it. Ashby BID has already demonstrated it can do this — £50,000 of UKSPF for the town centre, £10,000 for the Visit Ashby App, £9,000 for body-worn cameras, and over £60,000 in total additional income in the first term. The 2026 Opportunities and Constraints study gives us, for the first time, a pipeline of defined projects to attach that funding to.

4. There will be a moment, and it will not wait

The window in which the new authority's priorities, service standards and investment programmes are set, runs from the shadow authority elections in May 2027 through vesting day in April 2028 and into the first full year of operation. That window falls almost entirely within the first year of the proposed BID term. If Ashby BID ends on 31 March 2027, Ashby will enter the most consequential period in a generation of local government with no funded business organisation, no professional staff, no seat at the table and no capacity to bid.

What Ashby BID will do

- Represent Ashby businesses formally in the transition, seeking engagement with the shadow authority from the point of the May 2027 elections
- Re-negotiate and re-confirm baseline statements with the successor authority, so that businesses can see exactly what they are entitled to and exactly what the BID is adding on top
- Transfer and re-establish the operating agreement for levy collection with the successor billing authority
- Protect Ashby's position on car parking, street cleaning, markets, licensing and events as policies are harmonised across a much larger area — harmonisation is where smaller towns typically lose provision
- Maintain and deepen partnership with Ashby de la Zouch Town Council, which will become an increasingly important tier of local representation as the district disappears

- Position Ashby for devolved and reorganisation-related funding, using the Town Masterplan project pipeline and the BID's ability to provide local match
- Continue active membership of the Leicestershire Market Towns Group and work with neighbouring BIDs in Hinckley, Loughborough, Melton and Leicester to make a common case for market towns
- Keep businesses informed, through regular briefings on what reorganisation means in practice for their trading conditions, rates and services

The BID levy is the only money in Ashby that businesses control, that is ring-fenced for Ashby, and that cannot be reallocated to another town by a council under financial pressure. In a period when everything else about local government here is being redrawn, that is not a small thing.



The Projects 2027 – 2032

The second-term programme is organised under four themes – Atmosphere, Access, Authenticity and Attractions. Every project below is drawn from what businesses told us during consultation, and all of it is additional to services provided by public bodies.

Theme	Proposed Activity
Atmosphere	Street Rangers • DISC • Retail Radio • Body Cameras • Enhanced Street Cleaning • Trade Waste Management & Recycling
Access	Car Parking • Footfall
Authenticity	Floral Displays • Christmas Lights • Business Grants • Town Masterplan
Attractions	Ashby Soapbox • Christmas Market & Events • Late Night Shopping • Easter • Love Local • Ashby’s FABulous • Ashby Arts Festival • Ashby Pride • Visit Ashby App • Ashby Life Promotions • Monthly Marketing Campaigns • BID Awards

Atmosphere – £555,000 over five years

Making Ashby a safe, clean and welcoming place to trade and to visit. This is the largest single area of investment, reflecting the priority businesses placed on it.

- **Street Rangers** – retaining and extending the Ranger service that deters crime and anti-social behaviour, supports businesses on the ground, and provides a visible, friendly presence for visitors

- **DISC** – continuing the crime reporting and business intelligence app that connects Ashby’s businesses to each other and to the police
- **Retail Radio** – keeping retail radio free at the point of use for participating businesses, connected to CCTV. For most businesses the value of this alone offsets a significant part of the levy
- **Body Cameras** – maintaining and expanding the body-worn camera provision funded in the first term, supporting staff safety and evidence-gathering
- **Enhanced Street Cleaning** – additional cleaning above the local authority baseline, targeted at the areas and times that matter most to trade, including after events and during the Christmas period
- **Trade Waste Management & Recycling** – using the BID’s collective buying power to negotiate a joint trade waste and recycling contract. Independent businesses in comparable BID towns have saved between £200 and £1,600 a year through schemes of this type, and over 200 independent Hinckley BID businesses use their free weekly recycling scheme, with the savings alone covering the cost of the levy for most of them.

Authenticity – £150,000 over five years

Investing in what makes Ashby look and feel like Ashby, and in the businesses that give it character.

- **Floral Displays** – maintaining and extending the barrier baskets, hanging baskets and pathway planters installed in the first term across Derby Road, Nottingham Road,

- Ivanhoe Business Park, North Street, South Street, Rushtons Yard, Mill Lane Mews, Market Street, Bath Street, Coxons Mews and Brook Street
- **Christmas Lights** – continuing the BID’s additions to the town’s Christmas display, including Christmas trees, cross-street decorations and net lighting, and reviewing the scheme over the term to keep it fresh
- **Business Grants** – continuing and expanding the matched grant scheme for shopfront, signage and premises improvements, which has directly helped businesses invest at critical moments
- **Town Masterplan** – the BID’s contribution to taking forward the projects identified in the 2026 Opportunities and Constraints study: feasibility and design work, match funding for external bids, direct delivery of quick wins, and business consultation. Set out in full in the section on shaping the future of Ashby town centre.

Attractions – £340,000 over five years

The events and marketing programme that brings people into Ashby and gives them a reason to come back. This is the area businesses rated most highly, and the programme is retained in full.

Events

- **Ashby Soapbox** – the flagship community event, attracting over 5,000 visitors

- **Christmas Market & Events** — 80-plus stalls and 9,000-plus visitors across the weekend, and the associated Christmas programme
- **Late Night Shopping** — building on the first coordinated light switch-on in 2025, which exceeded expectations on footfall and takings
- **Easter** — the schools window-trail programme that boosts footfall through the school holiday
- **Ashby FABulous** — continued support and additional entertainment and marketing for this unique Ashby event
- **Ashby Arts Festival** — continued grant support and digital trail development
- **Ashby Pride** — continued support for an event attracting over 4,000 people.

Marketing and promotion

- **Love Local** — a year-round campaign encouraging residents and visitors to shop, eat and spend in Ashby
- **Visit Ashby App** — continued development of the digital town app, including trails, offers and event content
- **Ashby Life Promotions** — continued monthly business features in Ashby Life Magazine
- **Monthly Marketing Campaigns** — a rolling programme of seasonal and thematic campaigns across the Love Ashby social channels, the BID website and press, including free promotional video production for levy-paying businesses
- **BID Awards** — continuing the Ashby BID Business Awards, independently judged, celebrating the businesses that make the town.



The BID Levy: What Will You Pay?

BIDs are funded by the eligible businesses within the BID area. If businesses vote YES, the levy will raise approximately £272,000 per annum for five years — £1,360,000 in total. With additional income, the plan invests almost £1.5 million in Ashby over the term.

How the levy is calculated

- Rateable value of £12,000 and above: 2.5% of rateable value
- Rateable value of £5,000 to £11,999: a flat rate of £150
- Rateable value below £5,000: exempt — no levy is payable

There is a minimum levy payment of £150 and a maximum levy payment of £25,000 per hereditament. Small private sector businesses with a rateable value of less than £20,000 that occupy multiple hereditaments under the same company or individual name receive a 50% discount on their total levy liability.

The levy rate and inflation

The Board aims to maintain a fixed BID levy rate throughout the full term of the BID, as was successfully implemented during the 2022–27 term.. The BID Board retains the ability, provided for in the levy rules, to raise the levy by the rate of inflation on an annual basis, with any such increase limited to the increase in

the Consumer Price Index of the preceding year. The Board will only exercise this where it is necessary to maintain the value of the programme set out in this plan.

Additional income

BIDs across the UK generate, on average, around 15% in additional income through their lifetime. Ashby BID exceeded expectations in its first term, securing over £60,000 in grant funding and external income. For the second term the BID has budgeted a target of £25,000 per annum — £125,000 across the term — through sponsorship, grant funding and other income-generating activity. Every pound of that is a pound of value delivered to Ashby at no additional cost to levy payers.

Voluntary and investor membership

A voluntary or investor contribution can be made by businesses that are exempt — such as those with a rateable value under £5,000 — and by businesses located outside the BID area. This entitles them to benefit from the agreed projects and services outlined in this business plan as well as full rights as members in the management and governance of the BID company.

Details and eligibility are set by the Board.

Rateable Value	Annual Levy	Daily Equivalent
Below £5,000	Exempt	£0.00
£5,000	£150	£0.41
£8,000	£150	£0.41
£11,999	£150	£0.41
£12,000	£300	£0.82
£15,000	£375	£1.03
£20,000	£500	£1.37
£25,000	£625	£1.71
£50,000	£1,250	£3.42
£100,000	£2,500	£6.85
£200,000	£5,000	£13.70
£1,000,000 and above	£25,000 (maximum)	£68.49

Daily equivalents are shown for illustration and are the annual levy divided by 365. Businesses pay an annual amount, collected once a year. This income is then used year by year over the five-year lifetime of the BID to carry out the projects defined in this business plan.

Income & Expenditure Forecast 2027 – 2032

Income	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
BID Levy	£272,000	£272,000	£272,000	£272,000	£272,000	£1,360,000
Additional Income	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000	£125,000
Total Income	£297,000	£297,000	£297,000	£297,000	£297,000	£1,485,000
Expenditure - Projects						
Atmosphere	£111,000	£111,000	£111,000	£111,000	£111,000	£555,000
Access	£8,000	£8,000	£8,000	£8,000	£8,000	£40,000
Authenticity	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£150,000
Attractions	£68,000	£68,000	£68,000	£68,000	£68,000	£340,000
Projects Sub-total	£217,000	£217,000	£217,000	£217,000	£217,000	£1,085,000
Expenditure - Overheads						
Management Overheads (including staffing)	£70,000	£70,000	£70,000	£70,000	£70,000	£350,000
Levy Collection Costs	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000	£25,000
Contingency	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000	£25,000
Overheads Sub-total	£80,000	£80,000	£80,000	£80,000	£80,000	£400,000
Grand Total	£297,000	£297,000	£297,000	£297,000	£297,000	£1,485,000

Notes:	• Levy collection costs are those charged by the billing authority. The BID will work to minimise these further under the new operating agreement.	out in this plan. The levy rate and the BID area cannot be altered without a further ballot.
	• BID projects, costs and timescales may be altered by the BID board of directors provided they remain in line with the overall BID objectives set	• None of the costs of developing this BID proposal or of conducting the ballot will be recovered through the BID levy.

BID Governance & Management

Ashby BID Ltd will continue to operate with the same governance arrangements. It is the body responsible for the delivery of the BID services, and it will employ staff as appropriate to implement the BID Board’s programme on a day-to-day basis.

Ashby BID Ltd is a private company limited by guarantee. It has a Board of Directors comprising BID levy payers, District Council members, a County Council member and co-opted members. It is governed by a Memorandum and Articles of Association, it publishes annual accounts, and it holds an Annual General Meeting. As reorganisation takes effect, the public sector positions on the Board will transfer to nominated representatives of the successor unitary authority and, as now, Ashby de la Zouch Town Council.

The Board serves voluntarily and without remuneration and is composed to reflect the make-up of the BID area in business sectoral terms. The Board of Directors is directly accountable to BID levy payers for:

- Effective delivery of the projects and services as set out in this business plan
- Upholding and promoting the BID’s vision and objectives
- Proper stewardship of levy payers’ money

Board elections will be held, and any levy-paying business or equivalent financial contributor is eligible to stand as a BID board director. Every levy-paying business and equivalent

financial contributor is eligible to be a member of the BID company, and company members can vote at annual meetings. The BID company cannot make a profit; any surplus must be spent on projects and services agreed by levy payers and the Board.

The Board of Directors will meet at least six times a year and will be provided with regular management accounts.

Financial management arrangements

- The BID will be managed by a company limited by guarantee and will follow all Companies House requirements, including the filing of annual accounts, which will consequently be available to BID levy payers
- An annual report will also be made publicly available
- The BID Regulations require summary information on income and expenditure to be sent with BID levy invoices each year, and this will be carried out
- An Operating Agreement will be agreed with the billing authority setting out the collection and enforcement arrangements. This is currently held with North West Leicestershire District Council and will transfer to the successor unitary authority
- At least two monitoring meetings will take place each year between relevant personnel from the BID and the billing authority, to monitor the Operating Agreement and day-to-day collection and enforcement arrangements
- BID funding will be kept in a separate BID revenue account by the billing authority and transferred to the BID company

BID Levy Rules

1. The BID Regulations of 2004, approved by the Government, set out a regulatory framework within which BIDs must operate, including the way in which the levy is charged and collected, and how the ballot is conducted.
2. The BID levy rate will continue to be fixed for the full term of the BID (five years) and will not be subject to inflation or alterations, save as provided at rule 4 below.
3. The BID levy will be applied to all businesses within the defined area with a rateable value of or exceeding £5,000, provided they are listed on the Non-Domestic Rates list as provided by the billing authority for the 'Chargeable Date', set annually. The levy will be 2.5% of rateable value for hereditaments with a rateable value of £12,000 and above, and a flat rate of £150 for hereditaments with a rateable value between £5,000 and £11,999.
4. The BID Board may exercise the ability to raise the BID levy rates by the rate of inflation on an annual basis for the duration of the BID, with such increases limited to the increase in the Consumer Price Index of the preceding year.
5. There will be a minimum levy payment of £150 and a maximum levy payment of £25,000 per hereditament.
6. Small private sector businesses (those with a rateable value of less than £20,000) with multiple hereditaments, under the same company name or individual name, will be able to get a 50% discount on their total levy liability.
7. The following will be exempt from paying the levy:
 - i. Organisations with a rateable value below £5,000.
 - ii. Non-retail charities with no paid staff, no trading income, arm or facilities, and which are predominantly volunteer based.
 - iii. Entirely not-for-profit organisations with a subscription and volunteer-based set-up.
 - iv. Businesses that fall in the following sectors — industrial, manufacturing, storage and workshop.
8. New businesses will be charged from the point of occupation based upon the rateable value at the time they enter the rating list.
9. If a business ratepayer occupies the premises for less than one year, the levy paid will be on a daily basis.
10. BID levy payment will revert to the property owner or the registered business ratepayer of vacant properties.
11. Empty properties, and those undergoing refurbishment or being demolished, will be liable for the BID levy via the registered business ratepayer, with no void period.
12. The BID levy will not be affected by the small business rate relief scheme, exemptions, reliefs or discount periods in the non-domestic rate regulations prevailing at the time.
13. VAT will not be charged on the BID levy.
14. The levy rate or boundary area cannot be increased without a full alteration ballot. However, if the BID company wishes to decrease the levy rate during the period, it will do so through a consultation, which will, as a minimum, require it to write to all existing BID levy payers. If more than 25% object in writing, then this course of action will not proceed.
15. The billing body is authorised to collect the BID levy on behalf of the BID company.
16. Collection and enforcement regulations will be in line with those applied to non-domestic business rates, with the BID company board of directors responsible for any debt write-off.
17. Where the rateable value changes, including ratings list revaluation, and results in a change to the BID levy amount, this will only come into effect from the next chargeable year, and no refunds of the BID levy will be made for previous years.
18. The BID funding will be kept in a separate BID revenue account by the billing authority and transferred to the BID company.
19. BID projects, costs and timescales may be altered by the BID board of directors, provided they remain in line with the overall BID objectives.
20. The BID board of directors will meet at least six times a year. Every levy paying business and equivalent financial contributor will be eligible to be a member of the BID company. Company members can vote at annual meetings.
21. The BID company will produce a set of annual accounts made available to all company members.
22. The BID commences on 1 April 2027 and will last for five years, ending on 31 March 2032. At the end of the five years, a ballot must be held if businesses wish the BID to continue.

Measuring Results

Ashby BID and its Board will keep levy payers up to date on all the projects the BID implements over the five-year term, and will demonstrate that it is delivering against its objectives. The Board sets the key performance indicators and the criteria against which the BID’s performance is measured. Criteria will include:

Measure	What it tells us
Footfall figures	Whether the events and marketing programme is bringing people into the town, and when
Spend levels	Whether increased footfall is converting into trade for levy-paying businesses
Vacancy and rental levels	The underlying health of the town centre property market
New business activity	Whether Ashby is attracting investment and new occupiers
Car parking usage	The impact of access campaigning and parking promotions
Public transport usage	The impact of Hopper Bus and access initiatives
Crime statistics and DISC reports	The impact of the Ranger, retail radio, DISC and body-worn cameras
Annual surveys and business feedback	Whether levy payers believe they are getting value
Consumer feedback	Whether visitors and residents notice the difference
Media coverage	The reach and profile achieved for Ashby
Website and social media interactions	The effectiveness of the Love Ashby digital platforms
External funding secured	The BID’s success in leveraging additional investment into Ashby
Masterplan projects progressed	Whether the 2026 study is being turned into delivery on the ground

Performance measurement will be carried out at regular intervals and the results reported back to levy payers through:

- The Annual General Meeting
- An annual report, published publicly
- Group liaison forums and briefings
- Direct communications — e-bulletins, newsletters and face-to-face meetings

Remember: Ashby BID is developed, managed and controlled by you, the businesses.

Why Vote YES?

Renewing the Ashby BID is a decision about whether this town keeps the capacity to act.

1. It works, and it is proven

Over £800,000 invested, over £60,000 of external funding levered in, a Christmas Market drawing 9,000 people, a Soapbox drawing 5,000, free retail radio in 40-plus businesses, a Ranger on the street, and Purple Flag held for five years. This is not a proposal for something untested. It is a proposal to continue something that businesses can see working around them.

2. The alternative is nothing

There is no reserve fund, no other body and no council budget waiting to take over these services. A **No** vote does not mean the money is spent differently — it means the activity stops on 31 March 2027.

3. It pays for itself for most businesses

For a business with a rateable value of £20,000, the levy is £1.37 a day. Free retail radio alone, plus collective trade waste and recycling, offsets much or all of that for many businesses — before a single visitor is brought into town by the events programme.

4. Local government is being redrawn around us

North West Leicestershire District Council and Leicestershire County Council will be gone by April 2028. Ashby will be one

town among many in a much larger authority. The BID is the only funded, mandated business organisation that can speak for Ashby through that change and compete for the funding that will follow it.

5. We finally have a plan for the town centre itself

The 2026 Opportunities and Constraints study gives Ashby a defined pipeline of projects — the Eastern Gateway, Brook Street, The Green, Bath Street Memorial, the Bath Grounds entrance, Market Street and the alleyways. The BID can provide the match funding, the design work and the business consent to make them happen. Without a BID, that study sits on a shelf.

6. It is your money, ring-fenced for your town

The BID levy cannot be reallocated to another town, absorbed into a general fund or cut in a budget round. It is controlled by a board of local businesses, accountable to you, and spent in Ashby.

Together we can embrace the opportunity for greater input, influence, control and self-determination, by providing a sustainable funding stream and a strong local voice to make it happen.

Vote YES.

The Ballot

The New Term Ballot will be held and conducted in accordance with The Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004 as amended. The ballot will be a postal ballot of all businesses in the BID area liable to pay the BID levy, conducted by the Ballot Holder and/or their agent on behalf of North West Leicestershire District Council, which is the responsible body as determined by the Regulations.

Date	Stage
1 October 2026	Ballot opens
30 October 2026	Ballot closes - ballot papers must be returned by 5pm
31 October 2026	Result declared
1 April 2027*	Second BID term commences

Each eligible business ratepayer will have one vote in respect of each hereditament within the BID area, provided they are listed on the National Non-Domestic Rates list for the defined area. A proxy vote is available and details will be sent out with the ballot papers.

***For the BID to be renewed, two conditions must be met**

- More than 50% of businesses that vote must vote in favour
- The businesses that vote **YES** must represent more than 50% of the total rateable value of all votes cast

Under the BID Regulations 2004, if the BID is approved at Ballot, all those eligible — regardless of how or whether they voted — will be legally obliged to pay the annual levy amount.

The costs of the ballot and of the preparation of the BID proposal are not funded or recovered out of the BID levy.



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