



Esher Business Improvement District

Five Year Business Plan

2026 - 2031

ESHER
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Introduction

The Esher Chamber of Commerce approached Elmbridge Borough Council to explore the potential of establishing a Business Improvement District (BID) for the town. The initiative presents a timely opportunity to create a more structured and sustainable approach to town centre management - bringing consistency, investment, and a stronger voice for local businesses.

Other nearby towns such as Cobham and Walton-on-Thames have already seen the benefits of operating as BIDs and Weybridge voted yes to a BID in June this year. Esher is now looking to follow suit, with many local business owners inspired by Cobham’s success in enhancing its high street, boosting marketing efforts, and fostering a more united business community.

Our town centre faces growing challenges. Competition from neighbouring towns and online retail continues to intensify, while reorganisation in local government makes it more important than ever for businesses to have a strong, collective voice. Despite its attractive mix of independents, cafes and restaurants the town centre lacks cohesion and risks being perceived more as a busy thoroughfare than a destination in its own right.

Led by businesses, for businesses, the BID would give Esher businesses the ability to take control of their shared environment and create meaningful improvements. For those operating within the proposed BID area, this represents a unique chance to influence the town’s future and directly benefit from collective investment.

By supporting the BID you will be investing in the future of Esher ensuring the community continues to thrive and grow.

A BID would empower local businesses to shape Esher’s future - transforming the town centre into a vibrant, welcoming place where people choose to visit, shop, and spend time.



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A Message from the Chair

Having proudly served the Esher community for over 25 years from our branch on Esher High Street, we fully support the Business Improvement District (BID) initiative. The BID represents a unique opportunity for businesses by giving them the mechanism to influence positive change and improvements in our town.

The Chamber of Commerce has already done a fantastic job in fostering community engagement through its volunteers but a BID with its 5-year investment programme and dedicated resource can build on these foundations facilitating greater collaboration and innovation.

By investing in key areas such as marketing, public realm improvements, safety, and events, we can collectively enhance Esher’s appeal, boost footfall, and support long-term commercial success in these tough economic conditions. The BID will also give local retail and office-based businesses a stronger voice and representation, particularly necessary as Esher becomes part of one of Surrey’s new unitary authorities.

We believe that the Esher BID is about more than just economic development—it’s about creating a vibrant, welcoming environment that benefits everyone who lives, works, shops, and visits here.

Lucy Roshier, Killik & Co, Chair, Esher BID Task Group



Meet the Task Group



Jordan Addison
Owner, Giro Cycles & Cafe



Steven Barrett
Branch Manager, Waitrose



Max Berry
Owner, The Fit Partnership



Sarah Drabwell
General Manager, Sandown Park



Tracy Horlock
General Manager, The Bear



Ramon Mullan
Owner, Hummings Bar & Restaurant



Lucy Roshier
Marketing & Community Partnerships, Killik & Co



Kay Stewart
Partner & Business Owner, Audley Chaucer Solicitors



Ramon Mullan, Hummings Bar

“As a business owner operating three distinct establishments—a café, a bar, and a restaurant—seven days a week, as well as a local resident, I have a deep understanding of both the commercial and community dynamics of the area. From firsthand experience, I know the challenges and opportunities that exist on our high street.

I firmly believe that a BID is the most effective way for driving meaningful, long-term improvements to our local environment. A BID unites businesses and stakeholders under a shared vision, creating a stronger, more cohesive voice to influence and lead positive change. There is clear evidence that BIDs drive growth when managed by a dedicated group of like-minded individuals who understand the area’s unique needs. I am confident that with strong leadership and collaboration, a BID will bring tangible benefits, enhance the high street, and support sustainable success for all local businesses”.

BID STATS & FACTS

The BID boundary encompasses

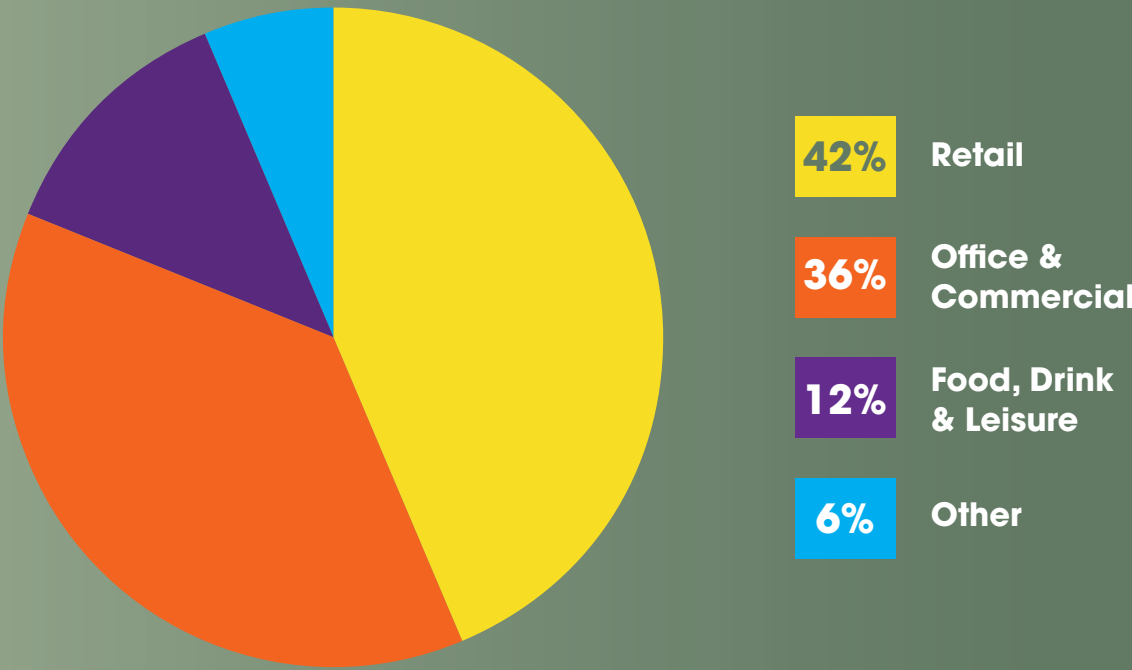
180+
Units

Rateable
value total of
£9M

Total Potential
Investment of
£700,000+
OVER 5 YEARS

Circa
£135,000
PA Levy Raised

THE BID AREA - SECTOR BREAKDOWN



FAQs

BIDs are an arrangement whereby businesses come together and decide which improvements they feel could be made in their village, town or city centre, how they will implement these improvements and what it will cost them. BIDs are financed and controlled by the businesses within the selected area. 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.

HOW IS THE BID FUNDED?

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 detailed business plan. The cost to each business is worked out on a pro rata basis. 'This is called the 'BID LEVY'. This investment is ring-fenced and can only be spent within the BID area on the projects detailed in the business plan. It is important to note that the levy has nothing to do with normal business rates which passes straight to the government.

HOW DOES AN AREA BECOME A BID?

Normally a 'BID Task Group' is set up which is responsible for putting together a business plan setting out the projects it aims to deliver on behalf of the businesses in the BID area. This is based on a consultation process with businesses. The business plan will include the projects, cost, delivery guarantees, performance indicators and the management structure. A confidential postal vote is held with all the businesses that would pay the BID levy getting a vote. To become a BID a majority of those that vote must be in favour by number and rateable value. A successful BID then has a mandate for a maximum of 5 years after which the BID would need to seek a re-ballot.

HOW IS A BID MONITORED?

Like any good business plan, specific key performance indicators (KPIs) are set out and performance is monitored against the KPIs by the BID board. The BID Company is answerable to the businesses that pay the BID levy and will be required to monitor and inform its members on its 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/services which are ADDITIONAL to those that the public agencies are required to provide. Prior to the BID Business Plan being produced, the current services being delivered by all public agencies including the Local Authority and Police are set out in Baseline Statements. Baseline Statements for the following areas are available:

Car Parking, CCTV, Cleansing, Green Spaces, Police, Surrey Highways (including street lighting).

Listening To You

Since 2024 when we started this project, we have undertaken an extensive consultation process with businesses located in the proposed Esher BID area and this has informed this business plan.

This has included:

- The creation of a BID Task Group comprised of local businesses to develop the BID
- Newsletters to all eligible businesses
- Survey sent to all eligible businesses
- Workshops for businesses to provide more detail and answer any questions
- The provision of a dedicated BID website with information and news
- Contact with national businesses and their head offices
- Face to Face meetings with stakeholders

If you vote **YES** for the Esher BID you will be saying **YES** to investing over £700,000 in Esher town centre over the next 5 years.

For a BID to be introduced, the vote must meet two conditions:

- 1. Over 50% of businesses that vote must vote in favour of the BID.**
- 2. The businesses that vote yes must represent a greater total rateable to those that vote no.**

There are currently over 340 BIDs across the UK with local BIDs including Guildford, Cobham, Camberley, Dorking, Epsom, Walton-on-Thames, Caterham and Oxted. Weybridge businesses voted **YES** in June for the Weybridge BID which will commence in October 2025.



The BID Levy

Every eligible BID business in the area shown on the map on Page 12 will pay the BID levy which is calculated as 1.5% of the rateable value of its premises. The levy rate will not change throughout the duration of the BID term.

The levy will be collected by the relevant Billing Authority on behalf of the BID Company and transferred to the BID Company’s bank account. This income is then ring-fenced and used only to fund the projects included in this business plan.

The table below shows examples of what you will pay:

Rateable Value of Premises	Annual Levy Payable
Below £5,000	Exempt
£5,000	£75
£10,000	£150
£20,000	£300
£40,000	£600
£60,000	£900
£100,000	£1,500
£250,000	£3,750
£500,000	£7,500
£750,000	£11,250
£1,000,000	£15,000

Over 75% of businesses will pay less than a £2.50 per day, less than a cup of coffee!

The Esher BID will raise approximately £135,000 per annum from levy – raising £675,000 in 5 years. This income will be used to leverage additional funds from grants and other opportunities as they arise.

BID Membership

Any BID levy payer can become a member of the BID Company. This enables them to take part in the decision-making process, as well as stand for and vote during Board of Director elections.

Voluntary Contributions

A voluntary investment can be made by any businesses that are exempt such as those that have a rateable value of £5,000 or less and businesses located outside the BID area. This will entitle them to all the 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 will be set by the Board.



Projects We Will Deliver

DESTINATION MARKETING £125,000 over 5 years

We will invest £150,000 over the next five years to improve the marketing of Esher High Street. Creating an **identity and brand** for the high street is crucial to help unify, promote, and elevate the area in the minds of visitors and businesses. A consistent visual identity will be at the core of a coordinated marketing strategy and will reflect the town’s character and heritage.

It will be used across all platforms and activities including a new website, focused on promoting levy paying businesses and driving visitor numbers to Esher, helping boost the day and night economy.

The website will work in conjunction with **social media** and other promotional tools to build a sense of place and raise the town’s profile as a destination for shopping, dining, professional services and entertainment. A comprehensive business directory on our website linked with social media promotional activity will give businesses the coverage they deserve and make it easier for residents to uncover all the amazing independent businesses we have in the High Street.

SEASONAL EVENTS AND CHRISTMAS LIGHTS £200,000 over 5 years

The BID will deliver **events and activations** in the town centre to foster community spirit, civic pride and a sense of place, driving footfall & new visitors to the town. The BID will introduce at least 2 **seasonal events** in collaboration with local businesses covering summer and winter.

The BID will either purchase or lease **Christmas lights** to enhance the limited lighting provided by EBC giving the High Street a truly festive feel and this could ideally be tied in with a Christmas Festival and Lights Switch On, bringing families and shoppers into town.

In addition, the BID will run other targeted events and some suggestions to date have included farmer or artisan markets as well as **sector specific promotions**, supporting food & drink, health & wellness, sustainability and the interior design quarter.

WELCOMING & ATTRACTIVE £150,000 over 5 years

Esher High St offers an engaging mix of architecture and history giving it an inviting feel. However, the fast flow traffic and awkward crossing points make it feel less than welcoming for visitors navigating their way around the town. The BID will look at a range of **placemaking improvements** to rejuvenate the town making it a cleaner, safer place to live work & invest in.

Currently it is hard for visitors to find parking or understand what businesses and services are available in the town. The BID will work with Elmbridge BC on providing clear and up to date **signage and maps** enabling visitors to easily find their parking & help them explore what is on offer.

The BID will look at options to ensure the town looks the best it can working with existing volunteer groups. This could include supporting Esher in Bloom with the provision of more planters and bedding, looking at other affordable **landscaping schemes** to separate pedestrians from traffic, offering more seating or applying for grants to beautify certain areas.

The BID Task Group has already been approached by Surrey Police to represent businesses’ concerns and discuss solutions to low level crime such as shoplifting and anti-social behaviour. We have already discussed ways we can **collaborate with the police** to increase their visibility in the High Street, forge closer relationships and be represented on the Joint Action Group sitting alongside local Councillors and other interest groups.

BACKING BUSINESS £75,000 over 5 years

The BID offers an exciting opportunity to drive the improvements that the local businesses of Esher want to see and which aim to enhance the town, support the business community and deliver initiatives which will help us all.

By offering **practical support, strategic advocacy, and shared resources**, BIDs play a critical role in strengthening local businesses

A key role of the BID will be working with businesses to support them in helping them to **reduce operating costs** via central procurement initiatives, saving them money on, for example, merchant services, waste collection and utilities.

The BID will keep businesses connected and informed through regular newsletters and networking events highlighting opportunities such as free **training & skills development** or how to access business improvement grants.

Lobbying and representation of Esher businesses will be even more important after Local Government Reorganisation with a new Unitary Authority replacing Surrey County Council and Elmbridge Borough Council in April 2027. The BID will advocate for business interests in discussions with local authorities, transport bodies and police, as well as ensuring the area is prioritised in local development plans and infrastructure investments.

The BID will work hard to **attract additional funding** and support for the High Street from economic development funds and other government grants.

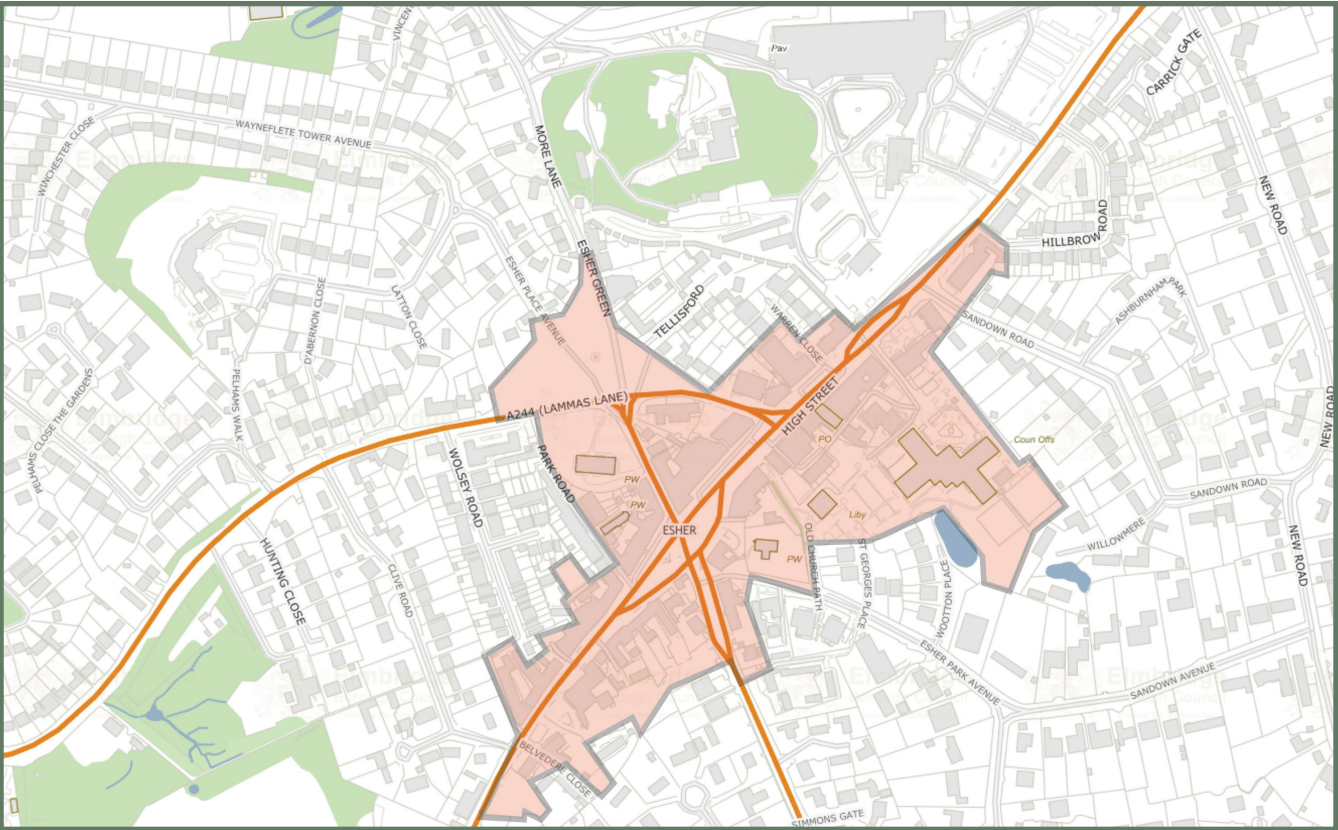
HOW WILL THE PROJECTS BE DELIVERED?

A dedicated BID Manager, reporting to the Board will be appointed to ensure a structured and consistent approach to delivering the business plan as well as monitoring and on-going evaluation.

The BID Area

The BID area is shown below and highlighted below, set out in the form of streets.

The list of streets below covers the BID area (in part or full):	Church Street (Full)	High Street (Part)
	Claremont Lane (Part)	King Georges Walk (Full)
	Community Walk (Full)	Old Church Path (Full)
	Esher Green (Part)	Park Road (Full)
	Esher Park Avenue (Part)	Portsmouth Road (Part)
	Heather Place (Full)	



Sarah Drabwell, The Jockey Club

“The absolute core of any business’s success is a good shop window and a coherent vision. That is why the BID is so important for Esher, so we as businesses, can improve people’s first impressions, how they interact with us in terms of parking and wayfinding, and ultimately to drive Esher as a destination. Having a group where we can voice and change the things that are important to us, and drive the things which will make us more successful, is the reason why I am completely in favour of the Esher BID”.

Budget Forecast

The proposed budget is set out below:

BID Income	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	TOTAL
BID Levy	£135,000	£135,000	£135,000	£135,000	£135,000	£675,000
Assume 10% Add. Income	£13,500	£13,500	£13,500	£13,500	£13,500	£67,500
Total Income	£148,500	£148,500	£148,500	£148,500	£148,500	£742,500

BID Expenditure*						
Destination Marketing	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000	£125,000
Seasonal Events & Christmas Lights	£40,000	£40,000	£40,000	£40,000	£40,000	£200,000
Welcoming & Attractive	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£150,000
Backing Business	£15,000	£15,000	£15,000	£15,000	£15,000	£75,000
Project Management	£28,000	£28,000	£28,000	£28,000	£28,000	£140,000
Delivery & Running Costs	£2,900	£2,900	£2,900	£2,900	£2,900	£14,500
EBC Collection Costs	£4,000	£4,000	£4,000	£4,000	£4,000	£20,000
EBC Loan Repayment	£3,600	£3,600	£3,600	£3,600	£3,600	£18,000
Sub Total	£148,500	£148,500	£148,500	£148,500	£148,500	£742,500

Additional Income Generation:

The Esher BID will endeavour to do this through grant funding and other income generating opportunities. It is expected that this will generate circa. £13,500 additional funding per annum to be invested back into the projects outlined in this plan.



Kay Stewart, Audley Chaucer

“As a longstanding member of the Esher business community, we at Audley Chaucer Solicitors can see firsthand the positive impact of the Esher BID scheme. In other towns such as Cobham, where the BID has been successful, it has been instrumental in enhancing the local environment, promoting safety, and increasing footfall in the area—all of which directly support the success and sustainability of local businesses, including ours.

The BID’s initiatives, from town centre events and marketing campaigns to improvements in public spaces, will not only elevate Esher’s profile, but also foster a stronger sense of community among businesses. We fully support the Esher BID and look forward to continuing our partnership in creating a vibrant, thriving high street for all”.

**AUDLEY
CHAUCER**
SOLICITORS

BEWLEY HOUSE

AUDLEY
CHAUCER

BID Governance & Management

If the BID Ballot is successful, an independent, non-for-profit company, limited by guarantee, will govern the BID. The Board will have up to 15 Directors made up of representatives from levy paying businesses or voluntary contributors. Additional, non-levy paying members may be co-opted, as required.

Board Director positions are unpaid and voluntary and include a mix of all sectors of business that operate within the BID area as well as having the necessary skills and experience required to deliver the Esher BID business plan.

Board elections will be held and any levy paying business or equivalent financial contributor will be eligible to stand as a BID Board Director. Nominated representatives from Elmbridge Borough Council will also be present at board meetings.

By becoming a member of the BID company, you can have your say in controlling how the funds are spent and also holding the BID company accountable throughout the 5 year term. The BID company will not be able to make a profit and any surplus must be spent on the projects and services agreed by the levy payers and Board of Directors.

In the first year, the BID Task Group who have been involved with the development of the BID will form an interim Board to allow for continuity. Elections to the Board will then take place in the second year. One of the Directors will then be voted in as Chairperson by the Directors.

The annual reports and accounts will be produced at the end of each year and available to members.

MEASURING PERFORMANCE

Esher BID will keep businesses up to date with all BID activity on a regular basis through newsletters, the website, social media, face-to-face meetings, annual meetings and surveys.

Going forward, you will be kept up to date on all the projects that the BID will implement to demonstrate to you that it is delivering against its objectives. The Board will set the key performance indicators (KPIs) and criteria upon which to measure the BID’s performance.

Examples of criteria the BID will use include:

- **Footfall Figures**
- **Visitor numbers**
- **Vacancy Levels**
- **Car Park Usage**
- **New Business Activity**
- **Annual Surveys**
- **Business Feedback**
- **Consumer Feedback**
- **Media Coverage**
- **Website/Social Media Interactions**

BID Levy Rules

1. The BID Regulations of 2004 (as amended), approved by the Government, sets out the legal framework within which BIDs will have to operate, including the way in which the levy is charged and collected, and how the ballot is conducted.
2. The BID levy rate will be fixed for the full term and will not be subject to variation. The only exception to this will be the addition of inflation, which will be at the discretion of the Board of Directors. This will be set on the 1st of April (Chargeable Date) each year using the most current Non-Domestic Ratings list.
3. The BID Levy will be applied to all eligible business ratepayers within the defined area with a rateable value of £5,000 and over.
4. The following exemptions to the BID Levy apply:
 - Those with a rateable value of less than £5,000
 - Non-retail charities with no paid staff, trading arm, income or facilities
 - Not-for-profit subscription and entirely volunteer- based organisations
 - Business that fall in the following sectors – industrial, manufacturing, storage and workshops
5. There will be an upper cap of £20,000 in BID Levy for any single organisation irrespective of the number of hereditaments.
6. The BID levy will be paid by any new ratepayer occupying any existing hereditaments (business rated unit) within the BID area.
7. New hereditaments will be charged from the point of occupation based on the rateable value at the time it enters the rating list, even though they did not vote on the initial proposal.
8. If a business ratepayer occupies premises for less than one year, the amount of BID levy payable will be calculated daily.
9. Empty properties, those undergoing refurbishment or being demolished will be liable for the BID levy via the registered business ratepayer with no void period.
10. The BID levy will not be affected by the small business rate relief scheme, exemptions, relief, or discounts prescribed in the Non-Domestic Rating (Collection and Enforcement) (Local Lists) Regulations 1989 made under the Local Government Finance Act 1988.



Jordan Addison, Giro Cycles & Café

“As a long standing, independent business in Esher, being a part of our local BID will be a huge boost for my business, and all others on the high street. The opportunity to have a real say into how the high street is improved, have agreed local spending plans, as well as cut costs through shared services is win win. I believe Esher businesses and residents will see great benefit from having a BID”.

11. Where the rateable value changes, including rating 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.
12. VAT will not be charged on the BID levy.
13. The billing body is authorised to collect the BID levy on behalf of the BID Company.
14. The levy income will be kept in a separate ring-fenced account.
15. Collection and enforcement arrangements will be like those for the collection and enforcement of non-domestic business rates with the BID Company responsible for any debt write off. The BID area and the levy rate cannot be altered without a further ballot.
16. The BID projects, costs and timescales can be altered subject to Board approval providing the changes fall within the income and overall objectives of the BID.
17. 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 or change those BID Levy rules that they can, during this term, 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 the proposed course of action or changes will not proceed.
18. The BID Board will meet at least six times a year. Every levy paying business or equivalent financial contributor will be eligible to be a member of the BID Company.
19. The BID Company will produce a set of annual accounts available to all company members.
20. The BID will commence on 01 April 2026 and will last for five years. At the end of five years a ballot must be held if businesses wish the BID to continue.



Steven Barrett, Waitrose

“I support the Esher BID as I have seen first-hand and heard via my colleagues involved in other BIDs that it can offer numerous benefits to a local area by fostering collaboration among local businesses to fund and manage improvements that enhance an area’s overall appeal. These improvements can range from increased safety and cleanliness to enhanced marketing and infrastructure projects. By pooling resources, we as local businesses can collectively address common challenges, attract more customers, and create a more vibrant and economically robust environment. BIDs can lead to increased property values, reduced vacancy rates, and a stronger sense of community, which is why I am excited to be part of this initiative”.

BID Ballot

All eligible businesses have the opportunity to vote.

The ballot will be conducted through an independent, confidential postal vote conducted by the Returning Officer at Elmbridge Borough Council which is the responsible body as determined by the BID legislation.

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 as provided by Elmbridge Borough Council. Organisations occupying more than one hereditament will have more than one vote.

A proxy vote is available, and details will be sent out by Returning Officer at Elmbridge Borough Council.

Ballot papers will be sent out to the appropriate organisation from 15 October 2025 to be returned no later than 5pm on 12 November 2025.

For the BID to go ahead, two conditions must be met:

- More than 50% of businesses that vote must vote in favour.
- Of the businesses that vote, the 'yes' votes must represent more than 50% of the total rateable value of all votes cast.



Tracy Horlock, The Bear

“As General Manager of the Bear, being at the heart of the community and bringing people together is what I love to do. I know from previous experience what a difference a BID can make and I support its aims to celebrate and promote Esher’s heritage and many unique businesses whilst making it a more welcoming and vibrant town and a great place to live, work and play”.



Max Berry, The Fit Partnership

*“**Esher needs real change.** The businesses are the people who can truly make that happen. But we’re all too busy running our own businesses to do it alone. However, as a collective, we have the power to create meaningful change—change that will help our high street not just survive, but thrive. Let’s work together to shape the future of Esher”.*

The results of the ballot will be declared on 13 November 2025.





**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
PLEASE CONTACT:**



hello@esherbid.co.uk



www.esherbid.co.uk

**Please visit our website for
up-to-date information and more.**