



Kidderminster Town Centre Vacant Unit Reduction Project

Terms of Reference

Objective

To engage with owners/agents/landlords of vacant units within the Kidderminster Business Improvement District (BID) area in order to develop a programme of interventions that will get vacant retail units back into active use.

Background to Kidderminster BID

A successful ballot was undertaken in 2019, a BID Company has been established and a Board is in place. The first levy was collected in March 2020. BIDs are a five year term and they can be renewed if there is another successful ballot.

Having consulted with local businesses, a Business Plan has been developed. Research has consistently shown that there is a wish to improve the overall appearance of the town, encouraging investment and development opportunities to make the town more appealing to investors and encouraging business growth. Vacant units in the town centre undermine this objective and this project is aimed at addressing that.

The Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP)

The GBSLEP's Strategic Economic Plan under the 'Place' theme (and the Towns and Local Centres Framework) highlights the need to develop thriving local and town centres and to deliver major growth and regeneration opportunities. The strategic documents support the need to undertake research to inform an investment strategy to support local centres as well as supporting the regeneration of high streets.

The GBSLEP has awarded 50% funding towards this project, with the BID providing the remainder as match funding.

Vacant retail units in Kidderminster town centre (pre-COVID19)

Just over 13% of the floorspace in Kidderminster Town Centre was vacant pre-COVID19 crisis (see below). In reality, there are some parts of the town (Worcester Street) where vacancy rates are much higher. In recent years that has been a noticeable divide in the town centre with the success of Weavers Wharf and other parts of the town centre 'left behind'. Worcester Street has a vacancy rate of 46% (see below). The median duration of long-term vacant units is 9.5 years.

Prior to the present crisis, Kidderminster town centre was failing to diversify responsively, with 48% of the town centre floorspace still being intended for retail use. Lockdown and the likely permanent loss of Kidderminster town centre businesses is likely to have made the gap between supply of retail premises and demand for these units considerably larger.

In late 2019 the GBSLEP published a policy document, 'Towns and Local Centres Ecosystem: Growing our Towns'. The focus of this report was the ten market towns that have a primary economic relationship with Birmingham. One of these is Kidderminster. Each of the ten towns benefitted from its own report with recommendations. Both the main reports and the subsidiary ones can be found at <https://gbslep.co.uk/resources/reports/towns-and-local-centres-framework-growing-our-towns>

Reporting requirements and work plan

The appointed consultant(s) will need to carry out detailed research, working with the Town, District and County Councils and owners, agents and landlords of retail units on Worcester Street to:

- (a) Identify the potential scale and nature of the market for retail units of the kind offered on Worcester Street, Kidderminster.
- (b) Through desktop research and dialogue with owners, agents, landlords and retailers, create an evidence basis for how this market has been changed by the Covid-19 crisis and whether or not this change is permanent.
- (c) Identify financial, risk-related, legal and other reasons why owners of vacant units cannot be flexible with terms and conditions (including rent, length of tenancy and break clauses) when seeking new retail tenants.
- (d) Create an Action Plan clearly setting out some potential solutions for the vacant units on Worcester Street. They should demonstrate consideration of a wide range of options including, but not limited to, creative space, leisure, health and community use. The Action Plan should set out the projected costs for these interventions.

Upon satisfactory completion of (a) – (d), an invoice for 50% of the total fee should be submitted to Kidderminster BID. This should be by 31st December 2020 at the latest.

To be completed by 1st March 2021:

- (e) Produce a report highlighting best practice elsewhere in the UK and explore which solutions would be most likely to be successful in Kidderminster; especially factoring in current thinking around post Coronavirus recovery. Consider the long term effect that the retail units in Worcester Street are having on the town centre, the impact it has on perception of Worcester Street and the future prospects for them to ever serve the market for which they have been allocated.
- (f) Having explored best practice, the report should consider what could realistically be applied to Worcester Street. The report should set out clear recommendations, taking into account the local demographics and an analysis of what may benefit Kidderminster town centre. This should include reviewing what is currently accessible within the town centre and may include research into leisure experiences, art and culture, health and wellbeing, employment and skills and consider viability for a voluntary sector hub or a small business start-up hub.

Composition of floorspace in Worcester Street (Goad)

Floorspace (sq. metres)	Kidderminster Town Centre	Worcester Street
Comparison	35,630	3,740
Leisure Services	12,020	630
Vacant Retail	10,710	5,900
Public Services	7,360	-
Health & Medical Services	5,400	-
Financial & Business Services	5,140	1,870
Convenience	4,370	150
Retail Service	3,040	-
General Offices	2,620	340
Religious Services	1,130	-
Vacant Non-Retail	850	-
Unclassified Building	340	-
Grand Total	88,610	12,630
Vacancy Rate	13.05%	46.71%

Output from the Project

The output will be an Action Plan addressing (a) - (d) ensuring that at least 10 owners/agents/landlords are engaged with directly in order to gain a detailed understanding of why some of these units have been empty for so long and to find out what interventions are needed to make them viable in the future. The Action Plan needs to be produced by 31st December 2020.

For the second phase of the project, a report should be produced addressing (e) and (f).

Budget and timescale

The guide budget for this project is £20,000.

50% of the total amount will be paid after (a) – (d) are delivered by 31st December 2020. The remaining balance will be paid upon receipt of a satisfactory report addressing (e) and (f). The report must be submitted by 1st March 2021.

Tendering process

All submissions will be evaluated on the criteria listed below.

All Tenders will be evaluated on a 65/35 split in favour of quality over price.

In terms of price, the lowest tender will receive maximum points whilst the most expensive the least points and all will receive points proportionate to the cheapest.

The quality criteria and weightings are as follows:

CRITERIA	WEIGHTING
Please provide a summary of your relevant expertise & experience in undertaking similar commissions. Please include details of the insurance liability cover that you carry.	10
Please summarise your knowledge, understanding and experience of the challenges currently facing town centre retailing and of best practice examples of interventions to aid town centre recovery.	20
Please summarise your knowledge & experience of local property market conditions and values.	10
Please detail your proposed methodology and proposed reporting format to deliver this contract, setting out the process to be adopted and a summary of how you propose to resource and deliver the work within the agreed timescales set out above. Please append sample reports or templates to demonstrate your proposed reporting format.	25

Scoring:

Performance	Judgement	Score
Exceeds all expectations	Exceptional	10
Exceeds almost all expectations	Outstanding	9
Exceeds most expectations	Very good	8
Above Expectations	Good	7
Slightly exceeds expectations	Fair	6
Meets expectations	Average	5
Satisfactory but below expectations	Below average	4
Below expectations	Poor	3
Well below expectations	Weak	2
Almost Unacceptable	Very Weak	1
Unacceptable		0

The evaluation process will consider all relevant submitted evidence and written information provided by each Tenderer, in relation to the specific requirements as set out within this ITT. There will be an initial check of all Tenders for completeness and compliance with the tendering instructions (including a check that the Tender is a “compliant Tender”). Any submissions that in the opinion of the BID do not meet the requirements set out in this ITT may be rejected as non-compliant and will not be evaluated further.

Each aspect of the Tender evaluation for quality and technical merit will be undertaken by reference to the above scoring schedule. A single overall score out of 10 will be provided for each aspect of the Tender being evaluated as set out in the tables above. This score will be multiplied by the weighting for that item (as set out in the above table) to give a total score for that aspect of the Tender.

At the sole discretion of the BID, Tenderers may be invited to present their proposals at clarification meeting and demonstrate details of their submission. The meeting may be used to validate the provisional scores for the Tenderer’s written submissions in relation to quality and technical merit. The BID may therefore reduce a Tenderer’s provisional score for their written submissions in relation to quality and technical merit where the meeting indicates that a Tenderer’s provisional score on the basis of their written submission cannot be justified. Conversely, the evaluation panel may increase a Tenderer’s provisional score where it considers their written submissions in relation to quality and technical merit did not sufficiently reflect the quality and/or technical merit of their actual delivery proposals for the Contract.

Responses should be accompanied by, as a minimum, the following:

- Full responses to all of the evaluation criteria set out above
- Work Programme
- Identified tasks and stages for delivery ensuring delivery in accordance with key deadlines set out above
- Key personnel involved and their experience
- Lead person managing the contract
- Examples of previous and relevant contracts

Quality Assessment

Similar and Relevant Experience

All tenders must:

1. Provide two comparable examples of contracts, undertaken in the last 3 years where the lead member of your proposed team played a leading role.

2. Provide the value of the above contracts, the company names, contact names and current email addresses as we may make contact.
3. Provide details of other experience or expertise that you feel would be relevant or provide the potential to add extra value to the BID as a consequence of being awarded this contract.

Team

All tenders must:

1. Provide details of proposed team members and their CVs and their track record in successfully completing projects of this nature; also provide details of the lead person who will be managing the contract and their substitute in periods of absence. Provide details of the insurance liability cover that you carry.
2. Provide details of proposed team member for each element of the works and the resilience within the team to successfully deliver the contract within the agreed timescales set out above.

Knowledge and Experience

Please summarise your knowledge and experience of local property market conditions and values; as well as your experience in understanding the challenges facing town centres and the current best practice in aiding town centre recovery to establish long term sustainability.

Methodology

Set out the methodology for undertaking the commission, including sample reports or templates, and outline what you see as the key challenges in delivering the contract. Please also provide a work programme.

Timetable:

Monday 21 st September 2020	Advertise Invitation to Tender
Monday 5 th October 2020	Clarification Questions Deadline
Monday 19 th October 2020	Deadline for Submission of Tender
Monday 19 th October – Monday 26 th October 2020	Evaluation of Submissions and Clarification meetings if required
W/c 26 th October 2020	Award of Contract
Early November	Inception Meeting with BID