



# OUR COLCHESTER

*A BID to make new history*



OUR VISION FOR A  
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT  
BUSINESS PLAN 2018-2023

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# INTRODUCTION

**Colchester is a town steeped in unique history and is proud to be able to showcase this alongside a growing modern and contemporary town centre.**

There are great opportunities ahead for the business community. Colchester Presents CIC\* has dedicated itself to investigating the potential for the town centre, and this business plan highlights how a BID can help reconnect people and place, to reimagine and reinvigorate our town, maintaining its historical pride.

Over the past 12 months, we have consulted with businesses in Colchester to ensure this proposed BID encompasses their priorities for the town centre and we are grateful to those who have taken part in this research.

For a BID to be successful, businesses must vote in favour. We encourage you to read this business plan and vote yes for a BID in Colchester, funded by and led by businesses.

Yours,



**Carl Milton**  
**Our Colchester** Steering Group



There will be a 28 day postal ballot which will commence on **1st June 2018** and close at 5pm on **28th June 2018**



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\*Community Interest Company

# STEERING GROUP



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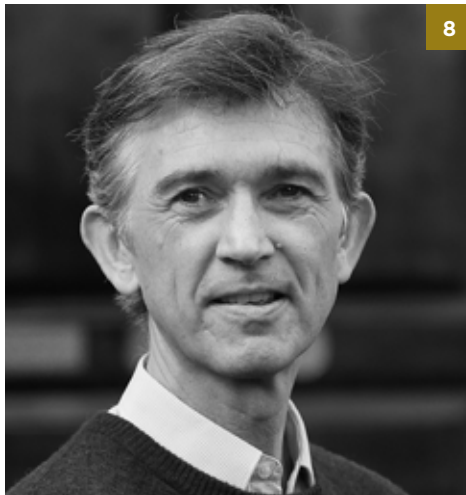


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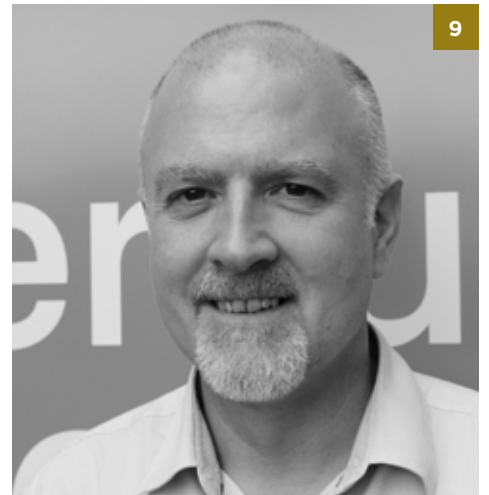
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**1 Carl Milton**  
MD, Fenwicks

**2 Michelle Reynolds**  
MD, Inprint

**3 Bryan Johnston**  
Senior Partner,  
GoodyBurrett LLP

**4 David Robertson**  
Shopping Centre Manager, Culver  
Square Shopping Centre

**5 Peter Scopes**  
Shopping Centre Manager,  
Lion Walk Shopping Centre

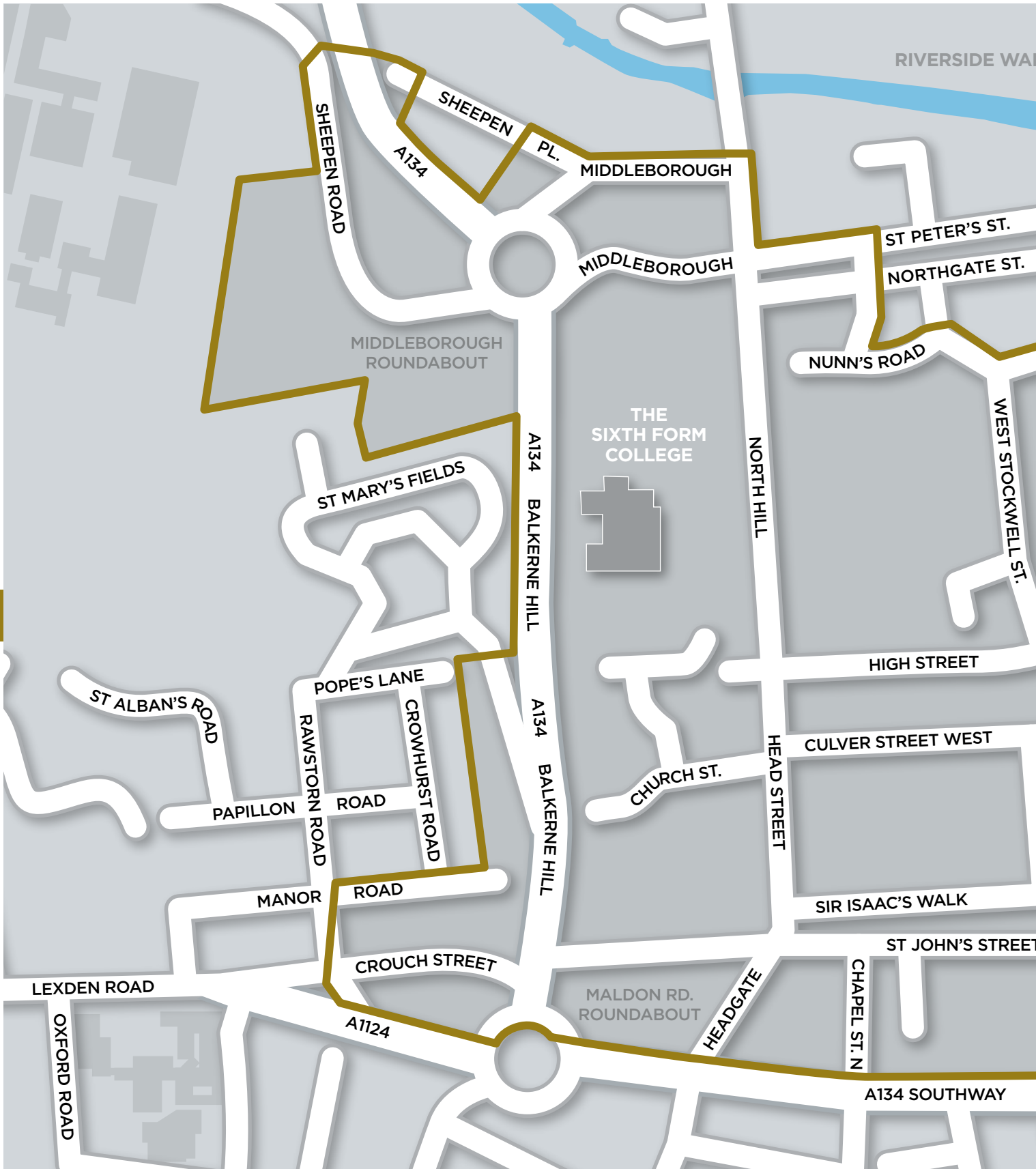
**6 Rachel Skells**  
Partner, Whittles

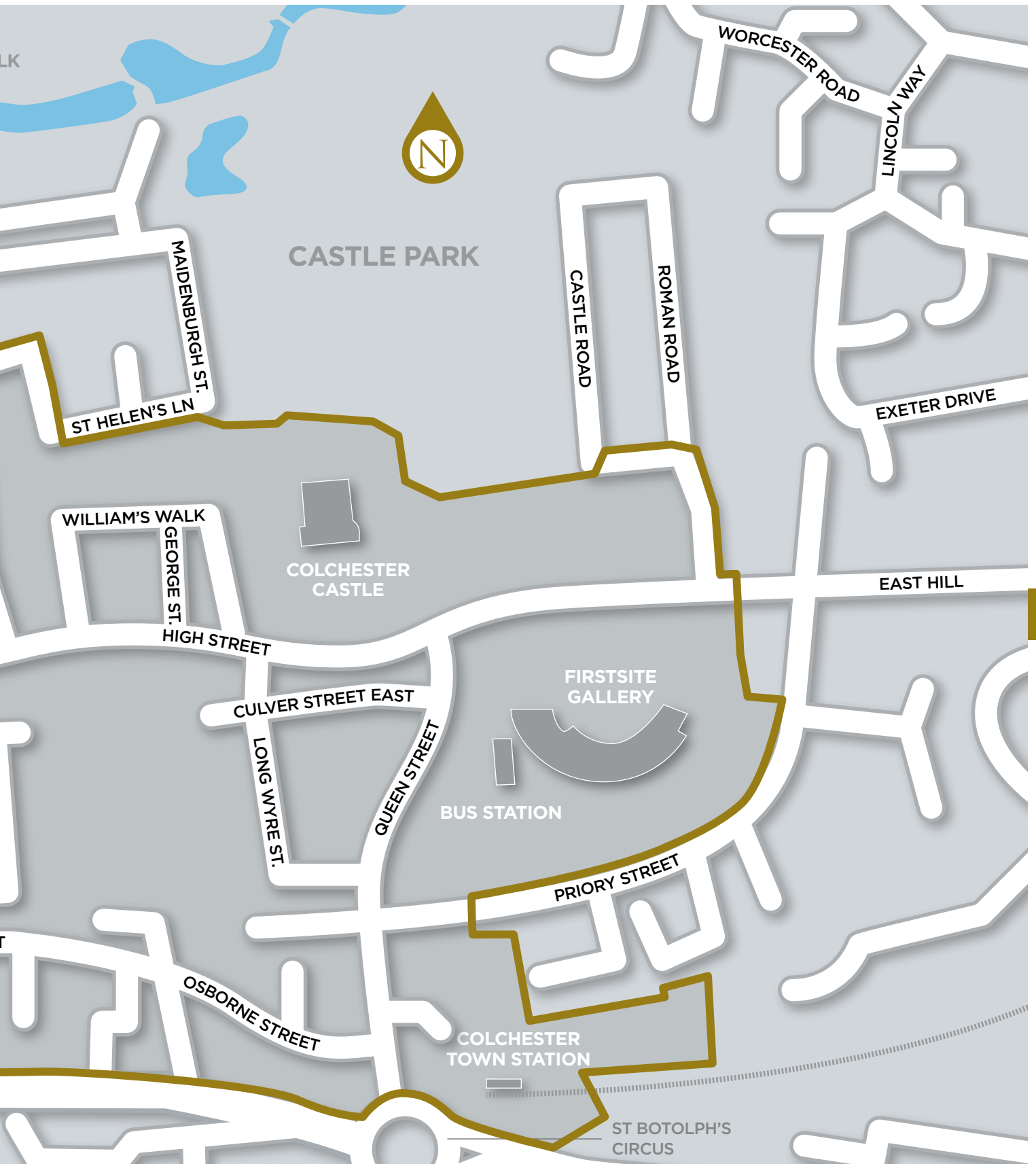
**7 Tim Young**  
Councillor

**8 Simon Blaxhill**  
MD, Kent Blaxill & Co Ltd

**9 Steve Mannix**  
Executive Director  
Mercury Theatre

# BID ZONE





Map not to scale

List of streets within BID zone available at [www.ourcolchester.co.uk](http://www.ourcolchester.co.uk)

# ABOUT BIDS

**A BID is a business-led and business-funded body formed to improve a defined commercial area. The benefits of BIDs, cited by the businesses they represent, are wide-ranging and include:**

- Businesses decide and direct what they want for the area
- Businesses are represented and have a voice in issues affecting their area
- BID levy money is ring-fenced for use only in the BID area
- Increased footfall
- Improved staff retention
- More and better publicised events around the town centre
- Enhanced marketing and promotion
- Assistance in dealing with the Council, Police and other public bodies
- BIDs were first established in Canada and now exist across the globe, including in South Africa, US, Germany, Japan, New Zealand and Australia.
- There are over 300 BIDs in the UK
- BIDs provide additional services to those already provided by the local authority



# RESEARCH AND CONSULTATION

**No one knows what could improve the trading environment of our town centre better than the owners and managers that run their businesses here every day.**

Over the past year we have undertaken a comprehensive programme of engagement and research and used the opinions of local owners and managers to build the programme of service delivery in this business plan.

We spoke to over 50% of local eligible businesses in the BID area in two rounds of face-to-face surveys.

We also held a series of workshops for local businesses and have attended a number of sector specific traders meetings and networking events.

“There is so much that Colchester has to offer. So much heritage, so much culture, so much friendliness! The more we act together the stronger our story will be.”

**Ant Roberts**  
Colchester Arts Centre

**Concerns of local businesses from the planning survey and the services Our Colchester will provide to tackle them:**

## Rough Sleepers

- Support initiatives to tackle rough sleeping, drinking and aggressive begging

## Anti-social behaviour

- Police accredited street ambassadors and security
- Professional representation to outside bodies (inc. Local Authority and Essex Police)

## Appearance of empty units

- Shop front hoardings showcasing local artists

## Customer perception of the town centre

- Cleaner and greener environment to create a more welcoming town
- A strong marketing offer to improve trading in the town centre
- Active support for tourism activities and promotions
- An Independent Business Fund
- Co-ordinating and promoting a full calendar of events for the whole year
- An improved streetscape
- Bespoke events and marketing to showcase heritage
- Increased promotion of the art and culture in Colchester

## Accessibility of the town centre

- Improved signage and accessibility

Feasibility Stage  
Survey Responses

195

Planning Stage  
Survey Responses

350

Visioning  
Workshops

3

Other

FACE-TO-FACE  
PRESS COVERAGE

BID Newsletters  
Distributed

2000+

Business Final Consultation  
Document issued

475

Networking  
Events Attended

5

WORKSHOPS

EMAIL  
SOCIAL MEDIA

The research highlights the following key priorities for Colchester set out in the following themes:  
**CONNECTING + IMAGINING + INVIGORATING = MAKING HISTORY**

# PUTTING IDEAS INTO REALITY

# CONNECTING

The research carried out indicated that town centre businesses were consistent in their need for improved marketing and communication. Letting businesses, customers, residents and workers all know what is going on in the town really matters, connecting them to activity. There was also a need for improved wayfinding on and offline, connecting people from place to place with ease and efficiency. Therefore the BID will provide:

- A strong marketing offer to highlight Colchester's hidden gems

The BID will build a town centre focused website and will work with Visit Colchester and other local organisations to create a strong and co-ordinated multi-channel marketing offer that shows off all of Colchester town centre's strengths as a destination. This will help ensure the BID can maximise visitor footfall in the future, better link our daytime and night-time economies in the eyes of local visitors and promote all the parts of the BID's local business community.

- A strong combined voice

We have a broad range of businesses in our town centre, and the BID will be the perfect conduit for one strong and combined business voice for them all.

- Improved signage and accessibility

Our town centre has many different trading centres and places of interest for visitors. The BID will help visitors and customers to get around our town by providing additional wayfinding in the form of printed maps, online tools and also enhance signage where needed.

- Loyalty/reward scheme for office sector

We have a large office sector in our town and many people come to work in offices from outside the town centre every day. The BID wants to better connect our office with our retail and leisure by offering a loyalty/reward scheme for employees in the BID zone. Money can't buy offers and treats curated just for them.

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**78%** of those surveyed view marketing and communication as a priority







# PUTTING IDEAS INTO REALITY

# IMAGINING

**Improved marketing and communication means that Colchester will need to live up to the marketing hype. Re-imagining the experience of the place with a co-ordinated calendar of events for the year, linking the day, evening and night economy and physical improvements to the place are needed to round up the offer. Equally, a key part of the Colchester experience is its strong independent sector and a desire to highlight this unique selling point shone through in the research. Therefore the BID will provide:**

- **A co-ordinated calendar of events for the year**

Good events drive footfall and create vibrancy in our town centre. We already have many events in our town throughout the year, but the BID will help businesses around the town centre keep informed as to when and where they are so everyone can take advantage of them and also plan staffing levels/opening hours for their business for busy times. The BID will also work with other event and promotion providers to co-ordinate a full and relevant calendar for the year.

- **An Independent Business Project Fund**

Helping raise awareness of the independent sector - the strength of our independent sector is part of what makes our town unique and part of what makes it attractive to visitors. The BID wants to celebrate and support our small independent sector by allocating a sum of money specifically to help fund projects devised by the independent sector to support them and their businesses.

- **Night-time economy support**

Colchester is a great place to go for an evening out and our night-time economy is a key part of our town's offer as a destination. Pro-active and targeted marketing campaigns will be created specifically for this important sector as part of the BID's marketing activities highlighting night-time economy businesses. Businesses will be given their own web listings to raise awareness of their own events and on-premises promotions.

The BID will also work alongside key charities such as the SOS bus - to assist them in the great work that they do. Our Colchester will work with the authorities and pubwatch to help make the place a safe and welcoming destination.

- **Improved streetscape**

The physical appearance of the town centre streets is very important. The BID will work with the local authority to support projects and initiatives to improve the local streetscape and make it more aesthetically pleasing for visitors.

The Council have pledged not to further consider a Late Night Levy for Colchester if a BID in the town is successful at ballot.



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A well managed and co-ordinated Colchester that engages with and highlights the amazing independent businesses in the town is a great goal to be working towards. I'm really excited that this is now a tangeable possibility.

**Alice Charrington** Tymperleys



# PUTTING IDEAS INTO REALITY

## INVIGORATING

# 75%

of businesses surveyed would want the BID to provide dedicated Street Ambassadors for the town centre

The BID's research indicated that businesses felt a great sense of pride for their town and wanted to combine this positive energy to make the place feel strong and healthy. This involves ensuring that the town is reinvigorated from the ground up - cleaner and more welcoming to residents, visitors and businesses alike. Therefore the BID will work in partnership with Colchester Business Against Crime, Pubwatch, SOS Bus and Street Pastors to focus on the following priorities:

- Support and help drive initiatives to tackle rough sleeping and begging

We know this is a big concern for local business. The BID will work with others in a multi-agency approach to tackle issues surrounding persistent rough sleepers. The BID will also work with the local police and local security teams to deter aggressive begging outside businesses and on our local streets.

- Street Ambassadors

The BID will employ a team of Street Ambassadors to provide an extra visible presence in our town centre. The BID will seek relevant accreditations for them so they can assist with local enforcement against anti-social behaviour and aggressive begging. There will also be visible representatives of the BID who will keep in constant communication with local businesses and act as a direct line of communication between business owners and the BID, helping to ensure that concerns and queries can be passed to the BID team quickly and conveniently.

- Cleaner and greener environment to attract visitors

A clean and sparkling environment helps make a place feel welcoming, therefore the BID will offer a grot spot, hot spot cleaning service targeting those areas in need of extra attention - after busy holiday weekends or just if some TLC is in order.

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We are in many BID locations and we've seen first hand the difference they can make.

**Chris Morgan** Local Director, Metro Bank



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The BID will make Colchester a more attractive location for skilled workers and has our full backing. Colchester requires investment to compete in securing and retaining a high-quality working community that will be the envy of our rival towns. To do this businesses with offices in Colchester must speak with one coherent voice to make continuous efforts to keep us at the front of the queue for outstanding candidates.

**Bryan Johnston** Senior Partner of GoodyBurrett



PUTTING IDEAS  
INTO REALITY

# MAKING HISTORY

In 2016 Colchester's tourism  
economy was worth

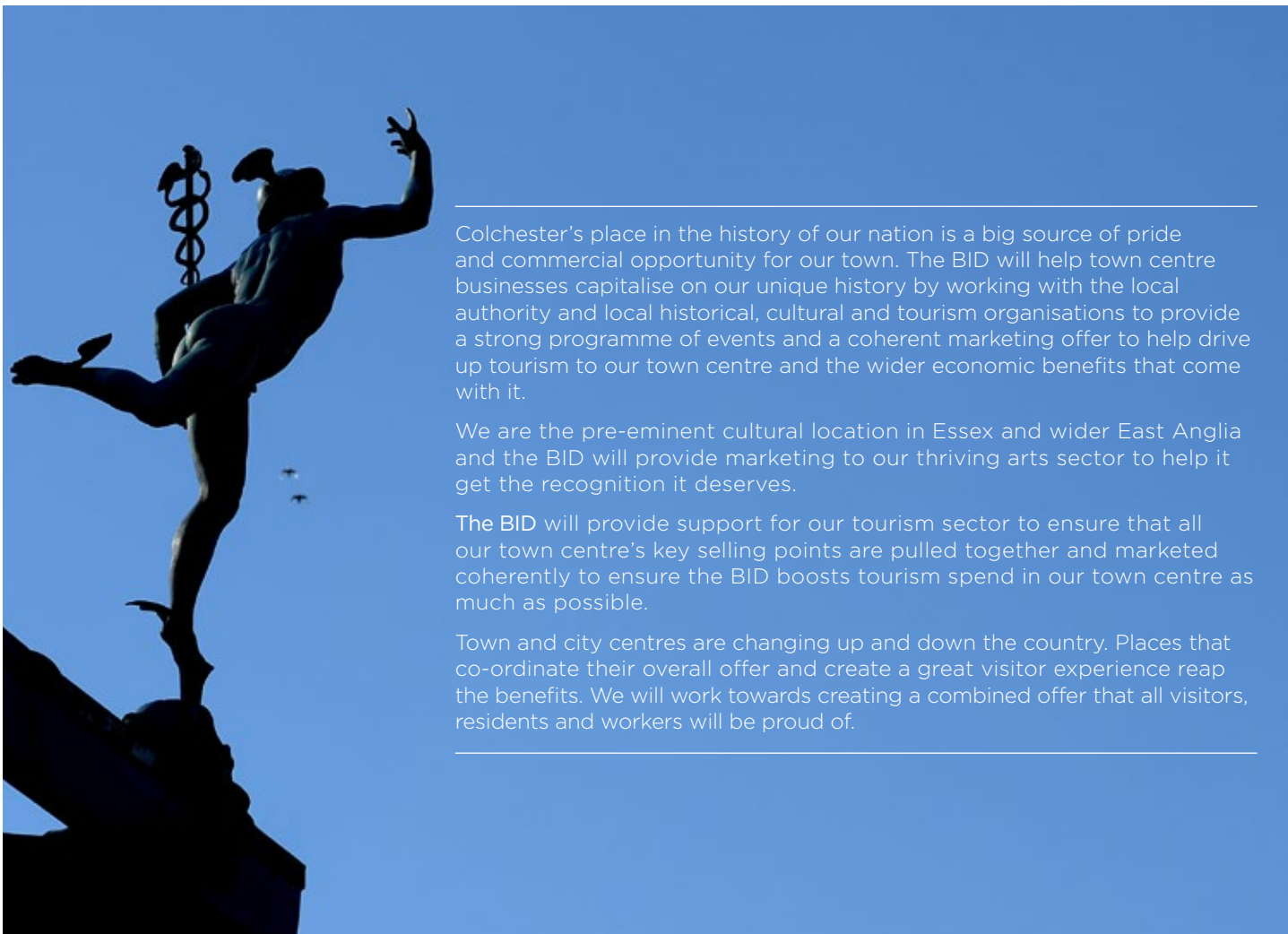
£345.3m

(Source: Colchester Borough Council)

CONNECTING + IMAGINING + INVIGORATING = MAKING HISTORY

Place is now all about experience. If voted in, the BID will play its part in joining up the dots and creating a Colchester town centre to be proud of. Marketing, communication, events, linking the day and night-time economy, wayfinding, street ambassadors, a voice for business to name but a few things the BID can and will do for you.





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Colchester's place in the history of our nation is a big source of pride and commercial opportunity for our town. The BID will help town centre businesses capitalise on our unique history by working with the local authority and local historical, cultural and tourism organisations to provide a strong programme of events and a coherent marketing offer to help drive up tourism to our town centre and the wider economic benefits that come with it.

We are the pre-eminent cultural location in Essex and wider East Anglia and the BID will provide marketing to our thriving arts sector to help it get the recognition it deserves.

The BID will provide support for our tourism sector to ensure that all our town centre's key selling points are pulled together and marketed coherently to ensure the BID boosts tourism spend in our town centre as much as possible.

Town and city centres are changing up and down the country. Places that co-ordinate their overall offer and create a great visitor experience reap the benefits. We will work towards creating a combined offer that all visitors, residents and workers will be proud of.

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# SUPPORTING THE BID



Colchester is a wonderful town, it has great heritage and a vibrant town centre with many independent shops. If Colchester is to take that next step it must have an active BID scheme running which is business-led and managed by local people who really know the area.

**Tim Mann**

Managing Director at Mann's Music



Setting up a BID would be great news for Colchester. I thoroughly support the campaign and would encourage other businesses in the area to get behind the Colchester BID.

**Jackie Norbury**

Store Manager at M&S Colchester



We've been behind the BID from the beginning as we understand just how good it can be for Colchester. The event showed how it will give us a cohesion to act as one to deal with issues around the town to improve Colchester for businesses, residents and visitors alike. We believe that supporting the BID to get off the ground is vital to secure the future of Colchester town centre.

**David Boyden**

Owner of Boydens



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We have seen the huge benefit that a successful BID can make to a local economy in other locations, and strongly believe that Colchester will prosper from the BID.

**Simon Cudmore**  
Area Business Manager at Barclays



Colchester needs to stay a great destination for its residents and visitors. The proposals set out will make a real difference to the Colchester town centre experience. Any retailer or leisure operator will tell you that customer experiences are becoming even more important as a factor in where people decide to spend their money.

**Craig Newnes**  
Franchise owner, McDonalds, Colchester



Imagining a Colchester town centre that is really well co-ordinated and managed, heightening the great independents we have is very exciting. A thriving town is good for everyone that does business from filling restaurants, to shopping, to events generating further footfall. With the Tollgate development on the horizon the BID will better ensure our town stays the beating economic heart of our community.

**Steve Sleight**  
Owner at Mailboxes Etc

# LEVY RULES, GOVERNANCE, BUDGET AND ACCOUNTS

VARIABLES TO INCOME	TOTAL
Headline BID Levy Rate	1.5%
Total Rateable Value	£33,715,650
Levy Rate for Charities	1.2%
Levy Rate for Shopping Centres	1.2%
Levy Rate Inflation	2%
Additional Income	To Be Sourced
Levy Cap	No Cap
Hereditaments	Circa 491
Threshold Above Which Levy Applies	£14,999

## THE LEVY RULES

- The levy rate to be paid by each property or hereditament is to be calculated as 1.5% of its rateable value as at the 'chargeable day' (notionally 1st October each year).
- All properties or hereditaments with a rateable value of £14,999 or more will be eligible for payment of the levy.
- The number of properties or hereditaments liable for the levy is circa 491.
- From 2019 onwards, the levy rate will be increased by the fixed rate of inflation of 2% per annum.
- The levy will be charged annually in advance for each chargeable period (October to September each year), starting in October 2018. No refunds will be made.
- The maximum amount payable for any one hereditament has no cap.
- The owners of untenanted properties or hereditaments will be liable for payment of the levy.
- Occupiers within shopping centres that are subject to a service charge will pay 1.2% of their rateable value.
- Charitable organisations that are subject to relief on their business rates liability will pay a levy of 1.2%.
- Both the Sixth Form College and Colchester Institute are exempt from paying the levy.
- The Licensing Authority currently does not have a policy to introduce a Late Night Levy during the term of the BID.
- Colchester Borough Council will be responsible for collection of the levy. The collection charge will be £15,000 in year one, followed by £15,500 per annum for the remaining four years of the BID. This equates to a collection charge of £30.54 per hereditament in year one based on 491 hereditaments and is approximately 3% of the of anticipated billed levy.



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	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	TOTAL
<b>Income</b>						
Levy Income	£461,303.39	£470,529.45	£479,940.04	£489,538.84	£499,329.62	£2,400,641.34
<b>Expenditure</b>						
Connecting	£106,099.78	£108,221.78	£110,386.21	£112,593.94	£114,845.81	£552,147.52
Imaging	£106,099.78	£108,221.78	£110,386.21	£112,593.94	£114,845.81	£552,147.52
Invigorating	£133,777.98	£136,453.54	£139,182.61	£141,966.26	£144,805.59	£696,185.98
Overhead	£92,260.67	£94,105.88	£95,988.00	£97,907.76	£99,865.92	£480,128.23
Contingency	£23,065.17	£23,526.47	£23,997.00	£24,476.94	£24,966.48	£120,032.07
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£461,303.38</b>	<b>£470,529.45</b>	<b>£479,940.03</b>	<b>489,538.84</b>	<b>£469,329.61</b>	<b>£2,400,641.32</b>

## GOVERNANCE - ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

- The BID recognises the importance of accountability and transparency within its governance arrangements. It will aim to be certified through British BIDs Accreditation, an award in respect of internal quality management systems within its first term.
- The number of Directors for the BID Company (the Board – maximum 12) will include representation from all business sectors to ensure inclusion. This may include some non-levy payers, although always in a minority. The Board will meet quarterly.
- The Board shall appoint a Chair. Their Chair will also act as Chair of the BID Advisory Group.
- The BID Advisory Group, primarily made up of and representing levy payers, will advise on operational and service delivery issues, oversee performance measurement, and more generally act as the primary consultative and advisory body on BID Services as set out in the business plan. It will meet quarterly, prior to Board meetings. Minutes from each BID Advisory Group meeting will form part of the information provided to the Board ahead of their meetings. In turn, minutes of Board meetings will be circulated to the BID Advisory Group.
- Provided that the BID is meeting its overall objectives and subject to consultation with the BID Advisory Group, it shall have the ability to vary service delivery and expenditure allocation according to the changing demands of levy payers. However, any change to the BID boundary or to the headline levy rate would require an alteration ballot.
- The BID Advisory Group will be made up of representatives of levy paying businesses and non-levy payers and will be elected periodically. Additional members may be co-opted, including representatives from partner organisations. The nominated representatives of Colchester Borough Council will be observers and will not be subject to re-election processes.
- A group representing all independents (including non-levy payers below the threshold) will be formed to recommend how the 'Independent Fund' should be spent. The group will be chaired by an appointed independent business representative who will also represent the interests of the sector on the BID Advisory Group.
- Levy paying businesses may be eligible to become Members of the BID Company.
- The BID will file annual accounts compiled by independent accountants with Companies House. The accounts will be available to all levy payers. An annual report on activities, including finances, will be published. An Annual Meeting for Members and levy payers will be held. The BID will issue a statement every year to levy payers.
- An Operating Agreement, which includes the Council's Baseline services within the BID area, has been agreed with Colchester Borough Council. A copy can be found at [www.ourcolchester.co.uk](http://www.ourcolchester.co.uk)
- Notification of the intention to hold a ballot was sent to the Secretary of State on 6th February 2018.

## FINANCES

- A cautious approach has been adopted to providing the indicative budget for the BID term.
- A levy collection rate of 97% has been assumed and this reflects national average.
- The average annual levy available to be spent by the BID for the term is approx £480,128.27 assuming 97% collection rate.
- Annual surpluses act as a contingency provision on expenditure, and together with the availability of reserves, provide for an anticipated surplus of 5% of average annual expenditure by the end of the first term.
- Operating costs of the BID Company are estimated as 20% of total expenditure.



# FOR OUR COLCHESTER

2018-2023

- 1** Businesses that are eligible to vote will be sent their ballot paper by 1st June 2018
- 2** You can return your ballot paper via a ballot box located at Rowan House or the Town Hall. Alternatively it can be posted.
- 3** Voting 'YES' will support the establishment of Our Colchester BID for five years. Ballot papers must be returned by 5pm on 28th June 2018
- 4** If successful the new BID term will commence in October

 [www.ourcolchester.co.uk](http://www.ourcolchester.co.uk)

 [uk.linkedin.com/company/colchesterbid](http://uk.linkedin.com/company/colchesterbid)

 @ColchesterBID



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