



OUR COLCHESTER

A BID to make new history

Invitation to tender

Colchester Town Centre Retail

Vision

2021

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1. Introduction

Our Colchester Business Improvement District (BID) is an organisation that represents more than 400 businesses across Colchester town centre. Its aim is to build relationships and partnerships with key stakeholders across the town, and thereby making a difference to the town centre and its streets. The BID has a five-year plan of projects, which commenced in 2018, that target making Colchester a better place to work, live and visit. It aims to add value through business support, town centre marketing and events, making Colchester a cleaner and greener place to live.

The BID zone covers most of the town centre and you can see the full parameters of where the area falls in the full business plan [here](#). A plan of the BID area is also appended to this brief. The BID area broadly includes Colchester Town station along Southway to the west end of Crouch St, this continues down Balkerne Hill including Colchester Retail Park and Middleborough. The area perimeter then cuts across the centre of Castle Park when it meets the top of East Hill, the area then encompasses Queen St & St Botolph's St returning to Colchester Town Station.

As part of the BIDs Covid-19 Recovery work, partners with an interest in Colchester town centre have been working together through the IPM's Covid-19 Recovery Framework. While we acknowledge that the Retail sector on a national scale is in the recovery phases of this framework, there is clear evidence to show that this sector faces a raft of challenges in its operational capacity, delivery model and evolution as a sector. As a result of this and under the BIDs Business Social scheme, a Colchester Retail Forum was launched in October 2021 to bring town centre retailers, that include Primark, H&M, TKMaxx, Fenwick & River Island as attendees, together. With a key focus on discussing general performance, concerns and particularly how the BID can support their businesses performance and operational delivery. As a result of this, partners identified a need for a focussed strand of activity to ensure that this important sector has the dedicated support it needs to evolve effectively and efficiently whilst being recognised as forward thinking in its proactive work. Through delivering a collaborative strategy, the sector could become a key driver of ongoing recovery and transformation for Colchester.

To support Colchester's Retail sector through this transition, a research programme will be commissioned to support in the development of a clear 10-year vision (2023-2033) and associated action plan. A key objective of this work is to enable a detailed review of the sector's current delivery levels, categories & details of where the businesses need further support or guidance, an understanding of the consumers changing wants and needs for the current period and next 10 years alongside considering how the town centre fairs alongside both regional, national, and international trends and evolution of the sector.

To enable this, we would look to work with an external consultant who would support in the formation and delivery of a research programme engaging retailers, stakeholders, consumers, and residents. As part of a singular tender, we would require this consultant to evaluate and evolve the Research Programme into the vision and action plan alongside co-delivering the activities in the section 'what sort of work will this funding achieve?'

2. Tender Background and Objectives

The BID wishes to engage a person/organisation (the "organisation") to:

- Development of a Research Programme which will include:
 - engagement with a broad range of retail businesses within Colchester town centre to understand immediate and ongoing needs and priorities, the current landscape, and aspirations for the future.
 - an evaluation into the current and future consumer for Colchester considering both local and regional demographics, growing population & their wants and needs from their town centre. We would also wish for you to consider demographics that the town centre current fails to attract and associated reason.
 - engagement with key stakeholders including the BID Retail Forum, Colchester Borough Council, Essex County Council, COLBAC & Essex Police to understand how this work links into or can evolve current processes, policies, and visions.
 - Identifying locations for Colchester to benchmark against
 - Identifying emerging retail & consumers needs

- Formation of a Colchester Town Centre Retail Vision (2023-2033) that has clear short-, medium- and long-term considerations, alongside links to current visions/strategies including the BID Indie Vision & BID Leisure Recovery Strategy.
- Formation of a Detailed Action Plan that will consider and support:
 - Preparing for transformation: modelling the town centre retail offer for the future, identifying opportunities to make Colchester 'retail investment ready', encouraging an offer that appeals to target audiences identified through consumer research.
 - Delivery of practical sector support to businesses e.g. staff training, investments in additional uniformed staff, resource packs.
 - Exploring other avenues of support e.g. national retail organisation representatives, engagement with national sector associations and government support.
 - Solution development: developing new or identifying existing innovations from other towns, cities and countries and/or technology developments to adapt and develop appropriately to support Colchester's retail economy. This could also involve clever partnerships between retail and other sectors. Grassroots community initiatives could be encouraged e.g. through an innovation seed fund.
- KPI Dashboard: development of a bespoke KPI dashboard to monitor the retail sectors evolution in Colchester.
- The potential to access external funding through funding pots such as Lottery Fund, Local Authorities etc.

As a keen supporter of Colchester's unique and strong Retail sector, we would request that as much consideration is made to develop the above points in line with the towns current and potential strengths alongside tying in with other sectors in the town centre.

The objectives and outputs of this project is:

- Identify a clear vision for the short-, medium- and long-term future Colchester Town Centre retail offer that considers future customer needs, wants and demographics.
- To deliver a vision that considers other Town Centre & Borough strategies, visions, and policies.
- To provide an action plan that has clear phases, priorities, and outline costings
- To identify gaps in the offer and opportunities to fill the gaps
- To help improve the performance of existing businesses
- Identify the role of the retail sector in Colchester Town Centre and identify how it sits alongside neighbouring sectors
- To identify how Colchester should market itself as a regional destination for retail

3. Tender Requirements

3.1 Budget

The maximum budget for the tender requirements (ref [section 2](#)) is £25,000 (excluding VAT but inclusive of expenses). Payment would be made through an agreed staged payment schedule upon completion of set tasks.

3.2 Stakeholders

The successful organisation shall engage with a wide variety of stakeholders that can offer guidance, input, and support. This must include key officers from Colchester Borough Council and Essex County Council. We also recommend engaging with neighbouring town centre sectors.

3.3 Reporting

The organisation shall work closely with the BID to ensure that agreed services are being executed and delivered to the highest standards according to critical timings and best practise. All BID reference material is available online.

The Project Manager at the BID will be Sam Good and, in his absence, this will be Sophia Beckford. You should nominate one person from your company to manage the brief through to completion and act as the primary contact. The project will be administered by email and telephone.

3.4 Tender specification

3.4.1 All tender submissions should include:

- Details of proposed approach and how you propose to comply with the project brief within the defined timescale.
- Indicative work programme, including timings for key deliverables and identified milestones.
- A fixed price quotation for undertaking the work outlined in the submission, broken down by key stages. Costings should cover all stages of [‘Section 2’](#)
- Provide a brief overview of your organisation, including current market position. You should also include examples of similar commissions.
- All additional costings such as travel and subsistence.

3.4.2 Evaluation

The appointment will be based on an evaluation of both quality and price (where relevant). The quality evaluation criteria will be based on:

- Experience of the team in this type of project
- Ability to facilitate and emphasise with stakeholders.
- Presentation skills of the team
- Enthusiasm, commitment, and creativity
- Knowledge and understanding of Colchester as a borough and as a place.
- Understanding of the brief and its context
- Approach and methodology

4. Timescales

Tender Application Stage:	Date:
Tender Response Date Open	27 th January 2022 (5pm)
Tender Response Date Closed	24 th February 2022 (5pm)
Evaluation Process & Shortlist Tenders Applicants Contacted for Further Questions	25 th February to 4 th March 2022
Notification to Successful Tender Applicant	4 th March
We would require the successful tender organisation to be able to start work on this project with immediate effect.	

All tenders must be emailed to sam@ourcolchester.co.uk

Key contacts:

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