

DUNDALK TOWN - BUSINESS PLAN 2024- 2028
(BIDS 4)

OUR VISION YOUR FUTURE



DUNDALK TOWN RE-ENERGISING AND
REGENERATING OUR FUTURE



Continuation of Dundalk BID CLG - 2024 – 2028 Proposal

Business Improvement District Scheme Dundalk CLG is the BID Company which submits the following proposal in accordance with section 129C of the Local Government (Business Improvement Districts) Act 2006 to Louth County Council, the relevant Rating Authority. The proposal is for a continuation of the Business Improvement District (BID scheme) 2024 – 2028 for Dundalk in its entirety.

Dundalk BID Company Details

Business Improvement District Scheme Dundalk CLG,
Dundalk BID Office, Market Square, Dundalk, Co. Louth.
Registered in Dundalk, Ireland.

Proposed BIDs Board

Deborah Conlon (Chairperson), David McGee (Vice Chairperson), Martin Mc Avinney (Finance), Tim Mullins, Gwen Conlon, David Minto, Cllr Marianne Butler (Elected Member) Cllr Emma Coffey (Elected Member), a nominee of the Chief Executive of Louth County Council.
Fiona Cunningham (Company Secretary).

BID Manager: Martin Mc Elligott

Solicitors: James Murphy, Daniel O'Donnell & Son

Auditors: Frank Lynch & Co

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Introduction

In 2009 Dundalk was the first town in Ireland to adopt a Business Improvement District Scheme (BIDs) and has now got the benefit of three successful terms, equal to fifteen

years' experience on the ground. There are now currently five BID companies in Ireland, nine in Northern Ireland and this number is only expected to grow in the coming years, more recently we have seen the successful application of the newly formed "Love Drogheda BIDs, and Newry BIDs with many Irish towns now taking the lead from Dundalk's celebrated success.

The scheme is common across Europe, United States & The UK, where the ratepayers of a designated geographical area contribute an agreed additional percentage of their rates to be ring fenced for particular actions and projects, pertaining to the future wellbeing of our commercial area.

Historically Dundalk's commercial ratepayers in the designated area have contributed 1.5% of their Rates to Dundalk BID CLG. In the upcoming fourth term Dundalk BIDs will be asking ratepayers to contribute 3.5% of their commercial rates.

Example: If your rates are €3,000 per annum then you contribute €105 towards the running of the BID office and the future development of the town centre regeneration process.

Dundalk BID CLG based at the Market Square, which has been involved in numerous tangible projects and events in Dundalk over the last fifteen years. In our first two terms we invested over up to €1m in projects, 200k in new town centre Christmas lighting, 20k in the installation of a footfall monitoring systems and 7k in the Townwatch Radio Network system. It has also organized and assisted in visual art displays, living walls, street floral displays, street cleaning and public and private realm graffiti removal, and are the first border town to have completed a town centre health check in partnership with Louth County Council and The Heritage Council. We have also played a fundamental role in the positive activation of the Shop Front Grant Scheme and are the mastermind by the hugely popular EPSO project.

Over the last 5 years we have seen the activation of two of our most fundamental pillars, "Operations and Infrastructure" and Cultural Development". With projects like **"SEEK Urban Arts Festival, "Facades Operation Town- formation"** and our Christmas Lighting Festival **"Frostival"** which attracted over 30,000 visitors to the event, this was the largest event in Dundalk's history and arguably the most successful.

In 2020 and 2021, in conjunction with lead partner Louth County Council, once again we led the way during a global pandemic with the installation of fourteen outdoor eating spaces, more commonly known as "Parklets" helping galvanise the recovery for our hospitality sector, with many if not all, still in use today.

During the last five-year term, we have played an integral role in nurturing the reinvention and rapid growth of the town centre as vibrant cosmopolitan destination, reaffirming our Identity both within the existing communities locally and transcending this to a wider audience, both nationally, and internationally. Dundalk is a leading example not only in Ireland but across the UK for its hands on collaborative approach to the regeneration of our Town Centre

By voting to continue with BID 4 you will be empowering the BID office to work with all stakeholders to

- a) Ensure that Dundalk continues its journey to becoming a vibrant, exciting, sustainable town, attracting even more businesses and visitors, driving the local economy, and enhancing the quality of life of residents and visitors to Dundalk.
- b) Ensure that Dundalk is the primary 'Market Town 'in the Northeast and underpin its reputation as an attractive and accessible retail destination, diverse specialist shopping, and supporting complementary uses.
- c) Facilitate and support programmes of actions that will enhance the cultural identity of the town, boost its national and international profile and image.
- d) Consolidate the valuable work done to date by Dundalk Ratepayers in supporting BID 1, 2 & 3
- e) Build on and learn from the experiences of BID 1,2 & 3.
- f) Continue to work with all landlords on vacant property and deliver value for money and a clear return on investment to all ratepayers in Dundalk.

Listing of current Company Directors:

- Deborah Conlon, (Chairperson) Conlon Food Hall **(Rate Payer)**
- David McGee, Christy McGee Insurance (Vice Chairperson) **(Rate Payer)**
- Martin Mc Avinney, DCS Systems (Finance) **(Rate Payer)**
- Tim Mullins, Glen Gat Bed & Breakfast **(Rate Payer)**
- Gwen Conlon, The Digital Bakery **(Rate Payer)**
- David Minto Dundalk Chamber **(Rate Payer)**

- Cllr. Marianne Butler Councillor nominee (**Elected Member**)
- Cllr. Emma Coffey Councillor nominee (**Elected Member**)
- Brian Lynch Louth County Council (**CE Nominee**)

Governance & Management Structure

It is proposed that the Dundalk BID office will continue to be located at the Market Square in incorporating the Dundalk Tourist office. In addition to the employment of the Town Centre Manager, Dundalk BID would employ one full-time and one part-time admin assistant, along with one full-time Tourist officer.

Governance

Code of Corporate Governance for BID Dundalk CLG

A code of corporate governance has been adopted by the board members of Dundalk BID CLG, who have ultimate governance responsibilities. It helps to lead the company through example, and to achieve excellent governance. It is also aimed at the Town Centre Commercial Manager, who provides the bridge between members and staff, and has a central role in ensuring good governance.

The Code aims to help enhance the effectiveness of the board by:

- clarifying what effective governance looks like and how it can govern effectively.
- Reassuring stakeholders about how BID Dundalk CLG is governed.
- maintaining and enhancing public confidence in BID Dundalk CLG

These key principles have been used in the drawing up of this Code.

- Board leadership
- The Board in control
- The performance of the Board
- Board review and renewal
- Board delegation
- Board integrity
- The open Board

General Purpose of the Dundalk BID CLG

The board is the governing body of the Dundalk BID CLG. It determines appropriate objectives within the BID proposal to promote the achievement of goals and priorities. In addition, the board controls the BID company monies and resources.

Composition of Board

The Local Government (Business Improvement Districts) Act 2006 states a BID company shall have a board of directors consisting of not less than 6 members and at least two-thirds of the directors shall be.

- ratepayers of rateable property in the bid district or
- representatives of such ratepayers

The rating authority (LCC) is entitled to have the following representation on the board of directors for the BID Company

- if the board consists of less than 13 members, one of those members selected by the elected board and one shall be selected by the manager.
- if the board of directors consists of 13 or more members, 2 of those members selected by the elected board and 2 shall be selected by the manager.

Members have ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs Dundalk BID CLG, ensuring it is solvent, well-run, and delivering the outcomes for which it has been set up.

The Board has a statement of its strategic and leadership roles, and of key functions which cannot be delegated. These should include as a minimum:

- ensuring compliance with the objects, purposes, and values of the organisation, and with its governing document.

- setting or approving policies, plans and budgets to achieve those objectives, and monitoring performance against them.
- ensuring the solvency, financial strength, and good performance of the organisation.
- ensuring that the organisation complies with all relevant laws, regulations, and requirements.
- dealing with the appointment (and if necessary, the dismissal) of the employees.
- setting and maintaining a framework of delegation and internal control; and
- Agreeing or ratifying all policies and decisions on matters which might create significant risk to the organisation, financial or otherwise.
- The Board must ensure that the organisation’s vision, mission and values and activities remain true to its objects.
- Members are bound by an overriding duty, individually and as a board, to always act reasonably in the interests of the organisation and of its present and future beneficiaries or (in the case of a membership organisation) members.
- All Members are equally responsible in law for the board’s actions and decisions and have equal status as Members.
- Each member must act personally, and not as the representative of any group or organisation; this applies regardless of how that person was nominated, elected or selected to become a trustee.
- The Members must ensure that they remain independent, and do not come under the control of any external organisation or individual.

Management Structure / Proposed Management Committee

BID Manager: (TCCM) - Martin Mc Elligott

1. Deborah Conlon, (Chairperson) Conlon Food Hall
2. David McGee, Christy McGee Insurance (Vice Chairperson)
3. Martin Mc Avinney, DCS Systems (Finance)

4. Tim Mullins, Glen Gat Bed & Breakfast
5. Gwen Conlon, The Digital Bakery
6. David Minto, Dundalk Chamber
7. Cllr. Marianne Butler, Councillor nominee
8. Cllr. Emma Coffey, Councillor nominee
9. Brian Lynch, Manager Nominee, LCC
10. Grainne Mc Keown, Manager Nominee, LCC
11. Fiona Cunningham, Dundalk BID Company Secretary

The Town Centre Commercial Manager

The Board should make proper arrangements for the supervision, support, appraisal, and remuneration of its Town Centre Commercial Manager.

- The Board should ensure that formal arrangements are set up for the regular supervision, appraisal, and personal development of their Town Centre Commercial Manager. This may be carried out by a small group of the boards Members.
- The Board should ensure that there is a formal mechanism for setting the remuneration of the Town Centre Commercial Manager, which should be ratified by the Board. The remuneration package for the Town Centre Commercial Manager should:
 - (a) Be adequate to attract and retain the quality of staff required, but no more.
 - (b) Be openly disclosed in the organisation's accounts, including pension and other benefits.

It is proposed to establish, principally from the management committee, number of working sub committees for:

- Finance – Inclusive of sponsorship opportunities

- Events – development, inclusive of business promotional activity
- Town Watch – Safer Street radio scheme & CCTV enhancement
- Operations – Street cleaning, floral schemes Town centre health check reports,
- Infrastructure – Data capture, Christmas lighting, Visual art displays

Business Consultation

In 2014 Dundalk BID successfully secured votes that insured its retention for a second term. As part of our consultation for a third term, we have polled over 400 commercial businesses within the BID domain. 89% believed that the Dundalk BID company is their preferred option to help drive growth in the Town Centre. Meeting with rate payers including those from the service and manufacturing industry, supported by direct consultations with recognised business interest unanimously endorsed the continuance of the BID process.

Proposed Boundaries for the Business Improvement District

The Board are proposing that the BID levy should continue to be supported by the full Dundalk urban district rate base of Louth County Council.

The premise that we have adopted with respect to boundaries, evolves from our view that a Vibrant Town Centre is an essential pre-requisite for Dundalk to both serve and retain its local regional population and to become the preferred point of visit for retail and leisure visitors to the region. A regenerated Town Centre following on from the recently re-development of Clanbrassil Street and the Saint Nicholas quarter and future development all the way to the river. This has been built on the success of the Market square design in 2011, which has as much a pre-requisite for industry as a tool to attract

industrial Improvement, as it is for the rejuvenation of the overall town centre. There has been a positive 'ripple' on the entire town from a vibrant Dundalk.

List of current Rateable properties in the Proposed Business Improvement District
See appendix 1 Supplied by Louth County Council

(C) Map of Geographical Boundary of Dundalk BID
See appendix 2 Supplied by Louth County Council

Description of the five pillars of work to be continued under the Dundalk BID scheme 2024 -2028

1. Marketing & Promotion

Dundalk can now stand tall as a lucrative destination to attract investment and other opportunities. We will work to increase the level of marketing & promotional activity at a national level to ensure that Dundalk's strong public image continues to attract new business, new talent, and sustained footfall to our town. We will work to further elevate the promotion of our strong retail & commercial offering that will be beneficial for the entire town.

We will continue to work with local partners that focus on, and assist, with retail promotion, securing a lead advantage for Dundalk as a primary destination in the north-east.

We also aim to improve consumer's night -time experience by working towards the international purple flag accreditation. Through this mechanism we will work, in partnership with the hospitably sector to enhance our night- time quarters and promote a vibrant local food economy. We will achieve this through targeted place branding and

marketing campaigns, utilizing press and radio, online technology, social media, and signage.

Over the last five years we have been working hard on developing Dundalk's brand and offering as an economically vibrant and diverse destination, our goal is to help enrich Dundalk's destination storytelling in a way that benefits both visitors and local communities. Many of the tangible improvements that have been progressed since 2018 have been designed to ensure that we deliver our promise of a focused place management strategy, while ensuring Dundalk is marketed as a culturally diverse destination.

2. Cultural Identity & Development

Dundalk BIDs has organized and sponsored a range of successful events in and around the town centre. Our aim is to deliver a selection of events that showcase the town through a variety of different lenses, we also recognise the symbiosis between urban renewal, and the nurturing and development of a strong arts and culture ethos, ensuring an eclectic mix of experiential opportunities as part of our overall offering. A good working example of this is SEEK Urban Arts Festival. Now entering its fifth year, in this time the festival has delivered a unique cultural experience for visitors and locals alike, capturing stories from days and eras gone by, peeling back the layers of history, and bringing them to life in the heart of the town.

Seek Urban Arts highlights the important influence art can have in the public domain, its role as a catalyst for change, inspiring local pride as well as helping to reinvigorate and refresh some of our town centre spaces. Running for up to six weeks it has become the longest event in our calendar year.

Our plan for the next five-year, we will work to develop street/area brands and work with stakeholders to promote and highlight our town, our culture and heritage, and our emerging arts scene and all that our town has to offer collectively. We will also continue

to raise much needed private sector sponsorship that allows the company to deliver many of its marketing objectives including supporting existing local and community events. This can be both operationally and/or with marketing and PR assistance and enhances and increases the overall offering of arts and culture related events planned throughout the year.

3. Operations & Infrastructure

Over the last five years the BID Company has undertaken a programme of work as part of our operational & infrastructure strategy to help maintain and visually uplift public spaces in a way that focuses on the consumers and communities that use them most.

A clean area that includes visual art, floral displays, public realm, and wayfinding maintenance has been an active part of our ethos since 2015.

Through collaboration with various stakeholders and our partners Louth County Council & Tidy Towns we have delivered as many different aspects of our good place making strategy as possible.

A good working example of this is the Facades painting project. Over the last 5-year term we have helped transform the Saint Nicholas quarter and Clanbrassil Street areas, along with ongoing projects on Earl Steet, Crowe Steet, Park Street and Francis Street - to date we have painted a large proportion of our historical main streets, using over 3,500 litres of paint. The value proposition of these services alone has delivered an estimated cost saving to our levy payers worth over 400k.

Over the proposed five-year term, you will see a notable increase in our operational delivery for Dundalk, with our tangible results to date momentum is building and many key partnerships have been firmly established, we can now achieve even more success, double our efforts within the Facades project and speed of up the timeframe of delivering our objectives of the pillar, including.

- Facades

- Christmas Lighting
- Christmas Festival
- Urban Arts Festival
- Floral Displays
- Public Realm upkeep
- Visual Art
- Data capture.
- Up to date Town Centre Health Checks
- Street Cleaning / Power hosing
- Wayfinding

In Dundalk the culture of Christmas lighting and all its associated events, can be traced back as far as 1970's. We believe that Light has the power to change the way we perceive our town, it is a positive tool that not only makes Dundalk safer, more attractive, and a more inviting place to be, It is crucial to the economic development, and commercial wellbeing of the retail fingerprint of our main streets and enhances our night time economic proposition. It plays a fundamental role in the vitality of the town and the quality of life for the people that live here and visit the area.

Dundalk BIDs have been working hard since it took over the Christmas lighting in the town centre. Since 2015 have invested in strategic events and systems that have played an important role in the overall perception of Dundalk, making new investments every year. Over the next five year term, once again we are working to upgrade the current system with an ambition to present a brand new illumination show that will be the first of its kind in Ireland, the project is already at an advanced stage and our aim is to have it ready by Christmas 2023 and no later than November 2024.

4. Town Watch

One of our key pillars is the Town Watch security programme for town centre businesses which was originally launched in 2013. The focus of this initiative is to ensure

that Dundalk town centre is a safe and enjoyable place for consumers to shop in, tourists to visit, retailers and services to do business, and for all workers to feel safe in the town. The network is currently made up of Dundalk BIDS, An Garda Síochána and local representatives from the business community. Through this vital service and the introduction of a town centre direct radio-controlled communication system in 2016 we have been able to deal with anti-social behaviour, aggressive begging, and retail crime for SME's as it arises. This has added a much-needed level of security for our members.

- Over 25 radios in operation
- An Garda Síochána co-operation and endorsement
- Over 30 real time arrests
- Providing instant security for its members

Our future plans for the expansion of this security system in town centre will be to extend the Townwatch radio network and introduce this successful scheme into night - time economy. This will help tackle security issues and help with anti-social behaviour that impacts on the overall night-time experience. We will be working towards new street level CCTV systems in critical areas that will run in conjunction with An Garda Síochána and enhance the infrastructure already in place.

5. Tourism

For over 10 years now Dundalk BIDS & Tourist Office has been part of an essential network of Visitor Information Points who, in conjunction with Fáilte Ireland, provide essential tourist services across the country.

Tourism is one of the most important economic sectors in Ireland and Tourist Offices are a fundamental part of this industry and are traditionally the first point of contact for millions of tourists every year who rely on them for up-to-date local information and advice.

Re-opening the Tourist Office after Fáilte Ireland closed their doors in Joycelyn Street back in 2012 was vital to establishing our sense of place within the tourism industry. In addition to incorporating the physical tourist office, the BID Company employs a full

time Tourism Officer ensuring that there is a dedicated person, at the heart of the Tourism, Hospitality & Retail Sector in the town centre. This has now become a key asset in our overarching strategy to develop Dundalk as a destination.”

Dundalk Tourist Office provides a first-class visitor information service, works personally with the local tourism and hospitality sector, support festivals and events, and assists with the implementation of the County Louth Tourism & Heritage Action Plan as part of the Ireland’s Ancient East brand portfolio.

A good working example of this is the ‘sea louth’ Scenic Seafood Trail - a new tourism initiative and visitor experience showcasing Louth's picturesque coastline, local seafood producers and participating restaurants along the trail. The Tourism Officer worked closely alongside Louth County Council as part of the project team on this exciting initiative from initial concept, through product development, and implementation. ‘sea louth’ has already paid dividends in Dundalk with numerous travel journalists and influencers having visited and written positive reviews in the first year alone. The biggest uptake of restaurants in the county to sign up to this initiative was from local Dundalk eateries.

Another beneficial opportunity that has emerged and evolved have been public walking tours of the historical SEEK Urban Arts murals throughout the town. The success of the festival has created a legacy of street art that is a hugely popular addition to the town’s tourism offering in its own right, as well as the catalyst for creating an event schedule of regular public walking tours, as well as offering group bookings and school tours that take place year-round.

In the next five years we will continue to work collaboratively with local businesses, Louth County Council, regional and national tourism bodies to further develop our tourism offering and seek opportunities that will generate revenue, create employment,

and that will benefit our local community.

Operating period

Dundalk BID CLG wish to see the continuation of Dundalk BID, from the 1st of January 2024, to run for 60 months to the 31st of December 2028

The BIDs term expenditure sought under this five year BID term is projected to be €380,000 (net) per annum

The BID Levy calculation is uniform for all ratepayers as:

Annual BID Contribution Levy

The Annual BID multiplier is calculated as follows:

$$\frac{A + B}{C}$$

A = Annual BID Contribution determined by the BID Company pursuant to Section 129L(2) (i.e. €380,000)

B = Total of all estimated costs that the rating authority expects to incur over the next chargeable period (currently set at €0)

C = The aggregate valuation of all rateable properties in the relevant BID district (i.e. €50,567,690)

Therefore, the Annual BID multiplier = €380,000 / €50,567,690 = 0.007515

For any rate payer to determine their Annual BID contribution levy they take their commercial valuation as per their rates bill and multiply by 0.007515.

Example: If your commercial valuation is €14,000 for your property your annual BID contribution levy will be €14,000 X 0.007515 = €105.21.

This will equate to an additional contribution of approximately 3.5% of your existing rates bill.

Outline of net annual estimates of income and expenditure for BIDS outputs.

Income	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
BIDs Levy (net)	€380,000	€380,000	€380,000	€380,000	€380,000
Tourism Contributions	€25,000	€25,000	€25,000	€25,000	€25,000
Additional Funding	€20,000	€20,000	€20,000	€20,000	€20,000
Total Income	€425,000	€425,000	€425,000	€425,000	€425,000

Expenditure					
Salaries Manager & Admin x 2	€112,000	€112,000	€112,000	€112,000	€112,000
Professional Accounting Services	€ 6000	€ 6,000	€ 6,000	€ 6,000	€ 6,000
Revenue	€40,000	€40,000	€40,000	40,000	€40,000
Utility Costs Membership Insurance	€22,000	€22,000	€22,000	€22,000	€22,000
Marketing & Promotions	€100,000	€100,000	€100,000	€100,000	€100,000
Operations & Infrastructure	€100,000	€100,000	€100,000	€100,000	€100,000
Total Net Expenditure from BIDs Levy	€380,000	€380,000	€380,000	€380,000	€380,000
Tourism spend	€25,000	€25,000	€25,000	€25,000	€25,000
Marketing & Promotions	€20,000	€20,000	€20,000	€20,000	€20,000
Total expenditure	€425,000	€425,000	€425,000	€425,000	€425,000

Dundalk BID offers the above expenditure projection as the baseline to enable the workload for the upcoming five year term. The value to the local economy will be many multiples of this baseline but does not accrue directly to the Dundalk BID promoters. A

BID Levy rate of 3.5% will be required to support this proposal and would be fixed for the duration with no further demand on the rate payer.

Additional Funding

Dundalk BID will continue, along Louth County Council, to identify funding opportunities that would enhance Town attraction e.g. Leader funding etc.

Dundalk BID will continue to work on additional funding applications under BID 4 and will also examine potential private sector support from the larger Dundalk connected companies that could support individual projects as well as a national publicity campaign to improve the image & profile of the town.

Annual Estimated budgets for activities and outputs from the BID scheme.

It is the case that the activities targeted from this project are not income generating, particularly from events. The promoters aim, is to ensure that the events funding meets all those liabilities, this is the realistic outcome. The promoters will ensure that both Marketing and Promotions activities are matched with at least equal participant funding lines, given that these are quite low levels. Dundalk BID avail of funding from public bodies e.g. Louth County Council, Louth Leader and Private Sector company contribution/sponsorship, for particular projects which cover the running costs of these initiatives outlined above.

The key measurable output Dundalk BID expects to deliver include:

- Comprehensive data for both Local authorities, Existing and In-coming Businesses.
- Improved Profile for Dundalk through professionally organized and adequately funded Events.
- Systematic assessment and identification of businesses and investors that meet the identified gaps in diversity.

- Focused marketing of the Towns strengths, with organized promotions that hit the optimal targets.
- Identification and adoption of retail and leisure best-practices for regenerating and growing regional towns.
- A step change in the efficiency to deter crime, so to improve businesses and shoppers' confidence.
- A flow of Cohesive, researched, and inclusive policy papers into the decision matrix from business
- Improved communication & Communication between all stakeholders of the town, ratepayers, and local authority



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