

Committee Report Checklist

Please submit the completed checklists with your report. If final draft report does not include all the information/sign offs required, your item will be delayed until the next meeting cycle.

Stage 1

Report checklist – responsibility of report owner

ITEM	Yes / No	Date
Councillor engagement / input from Chair prior to briefing		Sent 10/12
Commissioner engagement (if report focused on issues of concern to Commissioners such as Finance, Assets etc)	Yes	Sent 10/12
Relevant Group Head review	No	
MAT+ review (to have been circulated at least 5 working days before Stage 2)	Yes	01/12
This item is on the Forward Plan for the relevant committee	Yes	
	Reviewed by	
Finance comments	N Brown	04/12
Risk comments		
Legal comments	J C	09/12
HR comments (if applicable)		

For reports with material financial or legal implications the author should engage with the respective teams at the outset and receive input to their reports prior to asking for MO or s151 comments.

Do not forward to stage 2 unless all the above have been completed.

Stage 2

Report checklist – responsibility of report owner

ITEM	Completed by	Date
Monitoring Officer commentary – at least 5 working days before MAT	L Heron	12/12/25
S151 Officer commentary – at least 5 working days before MAT	T. Collier	4/12/25
Confirm final report cleared by MAT		

Business, Infrastructure & Growth Committee

15 January 2026

Title	Visit Staines BID - Voting Report (as part of the renewal process).
Purpose of the report	To make a decision.
Report Author	<i>Julia Owen, Senior Economic Development Officer</i>
Ward(s) Affected	Staines-upon-Thames
Exempt	No
Exemption Reason	N/A
Corporate Priority	Resilience
Recommendations	<p>Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Agree that Spelthorne Borough Council supports the principle of the Visit Staines Business Improvement District (BID) ballot and voting “for” in October 2026. ii) Delegate authority to the Group Head for Place, Protection & Prosperity to exercise the ballot vote in support of the Visit Staines BID. iii) Note the financial implication associated with the Visit Staines BID in respect of paying the BID levy as set out in this report.
Reason for Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting the Staines BID is a key action of the current Corporate Plan and proposed Council Plan. • The BID attracts £1.5million in investment to the local area across 5 years. • The BID adds value to the town centre by delivering enhanced services beyond those provided by Spelthorne Borough Council to support the economic vibrancy of the town centre.

1. Executive summary of the report

What is the situation	Why we want to do something
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The current 5-year cycle of the Visit Staines BID ends on 31 March 2027. The Visit Staines BID is seeking renewal which relies on businesses voting “yes” subject to a ballot of all eligible voters. This will include Spelthorne Borough Council, in September - October 2026. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To support the Visit Staines BID renewal. The Council is obliged to vote “Yes” or “No” to the renewal of the Visit Staines BID.
This is what we want to do about it	These are the next steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit Staines BID invests a substantial amount annually (approx. £300k). The Visit Staines BID adds services in the town centre that is proving key to the success of the town centre. The Council reaches a position of support for the renewal proposals and agrees to appoint a nominated officer to receive and cast all Council BID ballot votes in September 2026. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being responsible for a number of business-rated premises, the Council will be invited to vote within the ballot which will decide whether or not the Visit Staines BID continues to operate beyond 31st March 2027. Vote “Yes” to the renewal of the Visit Staines BID. If approved, it is requested that the nomination of an officer to discharge the Council voting function is delegated to the Group Head for Place, Protection & Prosperity.

2. Key issues

- 2.1 Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) are business led partnerships which are created through a ballot process to deliver additional services to local businesses. They allow the business community and local authorities to work together to improve the local trading environment. There are now over 300 BIDs operating across the UK.
- 2.2 The Visit Staines BID has existed since 2017 after a successful ballot, followed by a second term in 2022. The BID is now seeking a third term by holding a ballot in October 2026.
- 2.3 If the ballot is successful, the third term starts on the 1 April 2027 until March 2032.

- 2.4 The Visit Staines BID operates on a not-for-profit basis, that aims to improve Staines-upon-Thames town centre on behalf of the 275 businesses within its boundary. The Council has maintained representation on the Board of Visit Staines BID and has always enjoyed excellent relations concerning BID activities, several of which align with the priorities of the Council.
- 2.5 Currently the Economic Development Manager is a Director of Visit Staines. The Head of Communications and Customer Experience attends board and the Marketing Sub-committee meetings to provide Council updates and coordinate events and communications between the two organisations.
- 2.6 A decision for the Council to vote positively for the renewal proposals would increase the likelihood of the overall ballot outcome being successful and the BID continuing to operate its third cycle, 2027 - 2032.
- 2.7 The Council's "Economic Prosperity Strategy 2023 – 2028" acknowledges the existence of the BID as a positive point as it states the possibility of creating similar projects in other towns across the borough. The possibility of creating a BID in Ashford is also being highly explored following the success of the BID in Staines-upon-Thames.
- 2.8 Visit Staines invests approximately £300,000 per annum in activities, promotions and other initiatives including working with the Police and other agencies to tackle anti-social behaviour and shop lifting. These have dramatically fallen as a direct intervention by the collaboration of the Visit Staines Rangers and partners.
- 2.9 The Business Improvement District in Staines-upon-Thames has four key pillars:
- (a) Safe and Secure – delivering key initiatives to keep the town centre safe such as BID Rangers, Radio Scheme, DISC (data sharing app), a Business Crime Reduction Partnership and a Pubwatch.
 - (b) Marketing and Events – delivering key events in the town centre such as Theatre, Comedy Nights, Open Air Cinema, Trails, Workshops, etc.
 - (c) Bright and Welcome – sponsoring flower baskets, flower towers, Christmas Decorations, Poppies on the Lamp posts, Litter Picking, Murals, etc.
 - (d) Informed and connected – delivering weekly business newsletters, Business Breakfasts, sponsoring spaces to business-to-business events, supporting businesses writing applications to awards, representing the town centre in key events, etc.
- 2.10 If the ballot in October 2026 is successful, the Council will be legally obliged to pay a BID levy. The levy for large organisations is currently capped at £5,000. It is proposed that the cap is increased to no more than £7,000 from 1 April 2027.
- 2.11 The new Unitary Council will be responsible for paying the Levy from 2027 to 2032. The voting takes place in October 2026 so it is this Council that will agree the levy charge.
- 2.12 Due to Local Government Reorganisation, the Council recognises that the Shadow Unitary Council could decide to vote differently.

3. Options appraisal and proposal

3.1 Option 1 – Preferred Option

- i) Vote “Yes” to renewing the Visit Staines BID and
- ii) agree to the proposed Levy cap of £7,000 per annum.

The proposed option is that the Council agrees to vote positively to renew Visit Staines for a third term.

This would add momentum to the ongoing annual investment of approximately £300,000 per year into town centre improvements, which currently include a system to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour, a programme of high-profile events to attract footfall into the town centre, as well as significant promotional campaigns to promote the town to a far wider audience.

If the proposals are approved, it is calculated that the Council would incur BID levy costs of no more than £7,000 per year.

3.2 Option 2 – Not preferred

- i) Vote “No”, as not in favour of the Visit Staines BID renewing for a third term

This option is not recommended, as it would be likely result in reputational damage to the Council, and would also make an anticipated investment of £1.5 million into Staines-upon-Thames far less likely.

This would be acting outside the Council’s policy framework in the Economic Prosperity Strategy 2023 - 2028.

3.3 Option 3 – Not preferred

- i) “abstain” from voting and defer the decision to the new unitary Council.

If the Council votes against the proposals, or abstains from voting, and the result of the ballot is positive, then the Council is statutorily bound to pay the levy regardless.

The Council should also note the possible reputational risk of either voting against the proposals or abstaining from voting.

4. Risk implications

4.1 Financial risk to the Council

There is a minimal financial risk to the Council – the maximum required to pay is £35,000. This would take effect from April 2027 so would be an obligation passing across to West Surrey Unitary Authority.

4.2 Reputational risk

As indicated in point 3.4, the Council would face a reputational risk if it decides to either vote against the proposals, or abstains, from voting, in that this would be likely to be perceived by a significant and influential section of the local business community as the Council withdrawing support from what is generally considered to be a very successful local organisation.

5. Financial implications

- 5.1 The financial implications to the Council would be no more than £7,000 per year, resulting in an overall cost of up to £35,000 over the proposed five-year term of the BID, between 2027-2032.
- 5.2 The Business Improvement District levy is currently at 1.5% of the Rateable Value (for the term of 2022-2027), with a 50% discount for properties within the shopping centres to acknowledge the duplication of some BID projects with services provided for by the service charge i.e. security and marketing.
- 5.3 The Visit Staines BID's current business plan has a provision for a £5,000 cap per annum as the maximum levy payment for an individual business and those with multiple hereditaments. This cap is significantly lower than the national average, which currently sits at £10,000 (British Bids - Page 49).
- 5.4 It is proposed that the cap is increased to £7,000 for the period 2027 to 2032 to account for an increase in business costs.

The cap applies to the Council's own assets, however if assets were to be disposed in Staines, the amount will be recalculated each financial year.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1 The framework for the creation and operation of BIDs is contained in the Local Government Act 2003.
- 6.2 The ballot and collection process is governed by The Business Improvement District (England) regulations 2004 as amended.
- 6.3 Provided all applicable statutory provisions are complied with there are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.
- 6.4 It should be noted that the obligation to pay the levy will rest with the West Surrey Unitary Authority as statutory successor to Spelthorne Borough Council.

7. Corporate implications

8. S151 Officer comments

The S151 Officer confirms that all financial implications have been considered. The impact if there is a further term of the BID would be that the levy would be payable by West Surrey, however this is not a material obligation, and it would pass across to the unitary.

9. Monitoring Officer comments

- 9.1 The Monitoring Officer confirms that the relevant legal implications have been considered.

10. Procurement comments

There is no procurement for this activity.

11. Equality and Diversity

The BID has robust policies in place which promote and support equality and diversity and which, in many ways, mirror those of the Council.

12. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications

The BID has put in place an Environmental Policy with the ambition of promoting sustainable operations within the Staines BID. This aligns with the Council's Climate Change Strategy, specifically in key action 40, to "Encourage

businesses in Spelthorne to be leaders in reducing emissions and tackling climate change, and to showcase good practice.”

13. Other considerations

As indicated in point 2.12, any future decisions regarding the BID would need to be made by the Unitary Council.

14. Timetable for implementation

<u>Month</u>	<u>Milestone</u>
January - July 2026	Business consultation
July 2026	Business Plan issued to Council
August 2026	Final arrangements confirmed
September 2026	Notice of ballot issued Ballot papers issued
October 2026	Ballot Result of ballot announced
April 2027	3 rd term commences

15. Contact

15.1 Chris Norrington, Economic Development Manager.

***Please submit any material questions to the Committee Chair and Officer
Contact by two days in advance of the meeting.***

Background papers: British Bids – Guiding principles

Appendices:

Appendix A – Visit Staines Equality Policy Nov 2025 – further information relating to 10.0

Appendix B – Visit Staines Environmental Policy Nov 2025 – further information relating to 11.0