

Summary of Consultation: Proposed 2021-2026 BID Term

Consultation	Date conducted	Number of respondents
2021-2026 BID Term Consultation	February 2020	88
Responsible Business Plan	August – October 2019	17
Sustainable Business Strategy	November 2019	52
User Panel Survey	Bi-annual (latest July 2019)	305
Retail Strategy	December 2018	34

1. 2021-2026 BID Term Consultation

This online survey was sent to our businesses community in February 2020 asking which current and proposed future services they would like Team London Bridge to deliver in the next BID term. The survey was completed by 88 respondents – 62 of whom were confirmed representatives of levy-paying businesses; 3 were non-members; and 9 were anonymous. The member organisations who responded have a combined rateable value of £53,813,100 (33% of the BID area’s total) which is a high proportion for an electronic survey, and slightly higher than that achieved in 2015 at our last renewal (30%).

Key Findings:

- 89% would vote ‘Yes’ in the ballot, 1% ‘No’ and 10% ‘don’t know’.
- Additional street cleaning (much of it delivered through a contract with Southwark Council) proved our most popular service with 90% wanting it to continue.
- Our BID-funded police officers and mass notification platform were the two most popular safety & security services (88% and 87% respectively).
- There was a strong desire to improve and create new public green spaces, with a particular focus on biodiversity and floodwater reduction.
- Our Dealcard and regular promotional materials for the retail/hospitality/leisure sectors remained popular with 78% wishing it to continue.
- Sustainability appeared to be a prevalent theme with 80% supporting our new public infrastructure for recycling disposable coffee cups; 83% wanting the subsidised recycling service to continue; 79% wishing to target a ‘zero-waste’ business community; 70% in favour of encouraging businesses to use cargo bikes instead of vehicles for deliveries; and 84% supporting our work with Southwark Council and TfL to reduce vehicle congestion and air pollution.
- Improving the public realm for pedestrians and cyclists was popular (76%) as was continuing to develop the Low Line walking route (83%).
- 74% were supportive our work with the local community, including our grant funding programme and programme of events focusing on wellbeing, community and sustainability.
- Support for the arts sector was strong with 79% wanting Team London Bridge to continue delivering an extensive calendar of cultural events.

2. Responsible Business Plan

Our aim is for London Bridge to become one of the most environmentally sustainable and socially responsible business districts in the world, and in late 2019 we developed our Responsible Business Plan to lay out how this could be achieved. The Plan forms the backbone of all our BID services, therefore strongly influencing our work in the 2021-26 BID term and as such, it required input from our members to ensure those services are aligned with their ambitions. We ran both a group workshop and an online questionnaire during consultation.

Key Findings:

- When evaluating a range of responsible business elements as 'very important', 100% mentioned the sustainability/green agenda; 94% employee wellbeing; and 94% facilitating volunteering in the local community.
- Members identified the following top 5 UN Sustainable Development Goals that Team London Bridge should prioritise: *Sustainable Cities & Communities; Climate Action; No Poverty; Good Health & Wellbeing; Responsible Consumption & Production.*
- 41% said it was difficult for them to collaborate with other local employers on responsible business, pointing to a role for Team London Bridge to act as a facilitator and builder of networks.
- Collaborative recycling / joint procurement was identified as an area Team London Bridge could lead on.

3. Sustainable Business Strategy

Although elements of environmental sustainability were discussed in the Responsible Business Plan consultation, we felt there was a need to explore the topic in more detail and see what action could be taken at a local level to tackle climate change and other pressing environmental issues. On the 26th November 2019 we therefore held a workshop, to which all BID members were invited, to discuss whether businesses agreed that the climate emergency should be at the heart of an enhanced local sustainability strategy, with a more specific aim of becoming a carbon neutral business district. 52 people attended, representing 30 businesses.

Key Findings:

- Agreement that the climate emergency was the appropriate focal point for the Team London Bridge Sustainability Strategy.
- Four themes identified: Reduce carbon emissions to net zero by 2030; build a climate resilient neighbourhood that adapts to climate change; adopt circular processes around resource consumption and waste generation; deliver a biodiversity net gain within the built environment.
- Team London Bridge would need to develop a Climate Action Plan and a series of targets.

4. User Panel Surveys

These bi-annual surveys are run to keep track of area priorities and monitor the awareness and take-up of Team London Bridge Services. They are sent to a selection of subscribers to our mailing list (the vast majority of whom are local employees) and respondent numbers typically range from 250-350. The most recent was run in July 2019 and the highlights are below.

- 81% agreed that Team London Bridge makes a positive difference to the local area.
- 82% agreed that TLB keeps them well informed about what's going on in the local area.
- Only 14% said they wouldn't notice any difference if TLB stopped operating.
- 72% felt 'very safe' in the BID area during business hours which is the highest it's been since October 2016.
- Respondents have increasingly experienced rough sleeping, anti-social street drinking, threatening behaviour in the streets, bag theft and cycle theft with all of them at their highest levels compared to previous years.
- 59% would like to see a more visible police presence in the area.
- 58% described parks, open spaces & street planting in the BID area as 'much better' or 'a little better' than the rest of London, the highest proportion it's ever been.
- 21% described cycling facilities in the BID area as 'much better' or 'a little better' than elsewhere in London. However, this was lower than 2018 when that figure was 25%.
- The proportion describing cultural activities as 'much better' or 'a little better' increased from 44% in 2018 to 52%. Similarly, 'Entertainment' grew from 39% to 49%.
- The public's perception of good air quality in the BID area has decreased in the past 3 years.
- When asked what they would like more of in the BID area, retail and green spaces / street planting came out clear front-runners.

- Engagement with our email updates (news, events & offers) remains high with 67% having seen or used them in the past 3 months.
- The DealCard remains as popular as ever with 63% having used it in the past 3 months.
- Participation in the subsidised recycling scheme is low which suggests scope for growth.
- Participation in our series of Love Lunch events is higher than previous years.
- Awareness of and participation in Arts & Cultural Events was very high at 73%.

5. Retail Strategy

In 2017 retail units in the newly developed London Bridge Station, Retail Arcade and One Tower Bridge began to open, the first of what would eventually be almost 100 of them. Traditionally the BID area had been dominated by the office sector, however these new businesses would significantly evolve London Bridge into more of a retail, leisure and hospitality destination. As such, in 2018 we began work on a strategy to take advantage of this shift and help and improve the services we offer to our retail members; and it's a strategy we will carry through to the 2021-26 BID term. The 'Redefining Retail' report involved consultation with 24 member businesses and 10 landlords/developers.

Key Findings:

- A desire to better highlight the area's cultural offer to encourage footfall and dwell time in the area.
- A need for greater public wayfinding, navigation and initiatives that encourage visitors to explore.
- Adapting retail / hospitality offers for different demographics at different times of day.
- Re-position London Bridge as a 'place to go to rather than go through'.
- Activate outdoor trading areas with seating, planting and cultural activity.
- Encourage ethical business practices such as using cargo bikes for local deliveries.

Overall summary

The priorities of our business community remain consistent with what we've been delivering over the past 5-year term and the evidence points towards continuing to build on this rather than introduce radical change.

The most valued services / projects were identified as:

- Continue the additional street sweeping, litter picking and graffiti removal service on top of Southwark Council's baseline provision.
- Continue the additional specialist cleaning and maintenance services such as pavement deep cleans and street furniture painting.
- Continue funding additional police officers (Metropolitan Police and British Transport Police) who are ringfenced to operate only within the BID area, tackling crime affecting our businesses community.
- Continue operating a mass notification system to provide alerts and information during security incidents and civil emergencies.
- Work with Southwark Council and TfL to radically reduce vehicle congestion and air pollution in line with being a zero-carbon business district by 2030.
- Continue current zero-waste projects such as the subsidised recycling service for members and public coffee cup collection, and consider additional initiatives to become a zero-waste business community.
- Continue to regenerate the railway arches and their environs, developing the Low Line concept and creating a new walking destination.
- Continue a focus on the retail, food and leisure sector.
- Continue to deliver green infrastructure projects which capture floodwater and increases biodiversity.
- Continue to deliver an extensive and wide-ranging arts and culture calendar.

We should take encouragement from the 89% of respondents to our specific 2021-26 survey who said they would be voting 'Yes'. However, the support for projects and services that aim to improve environmental sustainability is more prevalent than before, as is the desire to develop local arts and culture. Developing these two strands with new projects and services will therefore be a focus for the 2021-26 term. It should be noted that much of this consultation was undertaken before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, out of necessity, engagement with our membership from March 2020 to present has been incredibly high and this ongoing dialogue – particularly via our regular Back to Business conference calls – has provided valuable insights into the needs of our community. Whilst some proposed projects have needed adaptation, we are yet to see that COVID-19 has dramatically changed the nature of the services BID members would like us to provide. Arguably, the core 'cleaner, greener and safer' message is stronger than ever, and the provision of additional investment into our local retail/hospitality sector – particularly concerning marketing & promotion – has been vital and its need will continue for months or even years to come.

Our 2021-26 Business Plan compiled off the back of this research has been developed with and approved by our Board – itself a form of consultation via the eight non-executive Directors appointed to represent our membership.