

Myths vs facts: understanding your levy

Every levy payer will naturally have different levels of understanding, experiences and perceptions of how the BID works and what it delivers. We always encourage businesses to speak with us directly, ask questions and get involved in shaping our priorities.

To support that ongoing conversation, we've also put together a simple Myths vs Facts explainer. It addresses some of the most common misunderstandings we hear and provides clear information about how the BID operates, what it can and can't do, and how levy payers benefit.

The BID levy is just another tax.

The BID levy is a statutory charge, but not a tax. It is ring-fenced and controlled by levy payers, with spending dedicated only to city centre improvements, not council services.

I don't see any improvements, so nothing is happening.

The BID works across the **BID area** and prioritises activity based on:

- Evidence and data (safety, footfall, cleansing demands)
- Hotspots and recurring issues
- Where interventions will have the greatest combined impact
- Calls for service and direct reports from businesses
- The need to balance proactive work with reactive pressure points

My street doesn't get attention, so the BID isn't working.

The BID prioritises based on data and city-wide impact. Some interventions are area-specific; others benefit the wider centre. If you are experiencing issues please get in touch: operations@sheffieldbid.com.

The BID should fix homelessness or anti-social behaviour.

Sheffield BID has no statutory powers in enforcement or social care, but works closely with the Council, Police and support agencies to escalate issues, coordinate responses and advocate for more visible city centre interventions.

BID money is replacing council services.

By law, BID activity must be additional to statutory services. BID funds enhance the city centre rather than replace public services.

Bigger businesses get all the benefits.

Many initiatives - cleaning, safety, problem-solving, advocacy - benefit independents the most.

The BID decides everything on its own.

The BID doesn't make decisions on its own. It is guided by the very businesses that fund it - and levy payers are not only welcome but *encouraged* to take an active role in shaping the future of the city centre by joining the Board. This keeps governance open, transparent and representative — and ensures the BID remains driven by the businesses it serves.

In practice, the BID's decision-making is shaped by:

- A democratically approved Business Plan, voted for by levy payers.
- A Board of levy payers from retail, hospitality, leisure, office, culture and property sectors.
- Regular engagement with levy payers through meetings, forums, business visits and consultations.
- Legal and financial frameworks that ensure accountability and transparency.

If I don't use a BID service, I get no value.

The BID is a collective investment. All levy payers benefit from a cleaner, safer, more attractive city centre.

The BID only benefits retail and hospitality, not office-based businesses.

Office-based businesses benefit from a safer, cleaner and better-managed city centre, which directly supports staff, clients and recruitment. Much of the BID's work - from safety coordination and rapid-response cleaning to city advocacy, transport discussions and improving the overall environment - is designed to make the city a more attractive place to work. Even if the benefits aren't always street-level or customer-facing, they have a real impact on the daily experience of office workers and employers.

The BID area was expanded to raise more levy income.

The boundary was expanded to improve connectivity across the city centre and prevent key areas from being left behind, not to increase revenue for its own sake. The city centre has changed significantly since the original BID was created, with new developments, emerging destinations and shifting footfall patterns. Expanding the boundary ensures the BID can support these areas, join up activity more effectively and create a more cohesive, well-managed city centre for everyone.

A wider BID area allows us to:

- **Connect key routes and destinations** that businesses rely on

- **Extend safety, cleaning and activation activity** into areas with increasing footfall
- **Prevent “gaps” in the city centre** where businesses would otherwise miss out on support
- **Strengthen the overall experience** for workers, visitors and investors
- **Reflect the way people now move around the city**, rather than old administrative boundaries

The change wasn't about generating more levy income — it was about making sure the BID can operate in a joined-up, effective way that benefits the whole city centre, including businesses in newly developing or previously under-served areas.

The BID just does things most businesses are doing anyway.

Individual businesses can only influence what happens on their own premises. The BID delivers improvements **at a city centre scale** that no single business - or even a cluster of businesses - could coordinate or fund alone. Safety partnerships, rapid-response cleaning, destination marketing, advocacy with the Council and Police, and major events all require collective investment, shared priorities and citywide coordination. The BID doesn't duplicate what businesses already do - it **amplifies, connects, and fills the gaps** between them to create a safer, cleaner, more attractive and more successful city centre for everyone.