



BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT
BUSINESS PLAN

22nd AUGUST 2026 – 21st AUGUST 2031



Est. 1975
BELHAVEN
SMOKEHOUSE

East Lothian Food and Drink



Introduction

“I am delighted to introduce the Business Plan for the renewal of the East Lothian Food and Drink Ltd Business Improvement District for 2026–2031.”



East Lothian Food and Drink Ltd is the collective voice for food and drink producers across the county. Since the creation of the world’s first food and drink BID back in 2016, we have worked together to promote East Lothian as Scotland’s Food & Drink County, a place known for quality, provenance, innovation, collaboration and outstanding local produce.

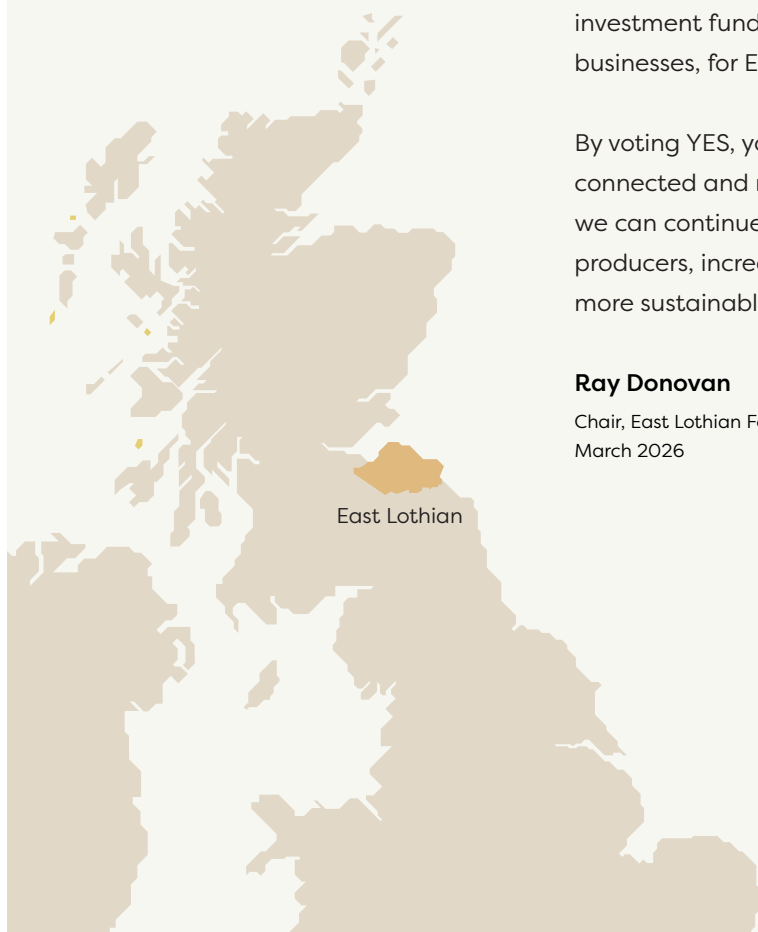
Our consultation with food and drink businesses has clearly shown the priorities for the next five years: stronger marketing and promotion, more access to trade and consumer markets, practical training and workshops, networking opportunities, food tourism development and support to increase sales.

The proposed BID renewal offers a vital opportunity to continue this work. It gives East Lothian’s food and drink businesses a shared voice, a practical delivery structure and a dedicated resource to attract investment, build partnerships and create new opportunities for growth. This Business Plan represents a valuable investment in the future of our sector. It is not simply a levy, but a local investment fund controlled by East Lothian food and drink businesses, for East Lothian food and drink businesses.

By voting YES, you are supporting a stronger, more connected and more visible food and drink sector. Together, we can continue to raise the profile of East Lothian’s producers, increase business opportunities and secure a more sustainable future for our industry.

Ray Donovan

Chair, East Lothian Food and Drink
March 2026



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BID area



Executive summary

East Lothian Food and Drink Ltd is the only organisation dedicated solely to championing, connecting and growing East Lothian's food and drink producers.

Over the next five years, the renewed BID will focus on the priorities identified by local businesses:

- Marketing and promotion;
- Training and workshops;
- Networking opportunities;
- Discounted access to trade and consumer shows;
- Increasing sales and routes to market;
- Food tourism;
- Business support.

The BID will deliver practical projects and services that support business growth, improve visibility, build stronger partnerships and create tangible benefits for levy payers.

Current priorities identified by businesses

Food and drink businesses told us they want:

- More access to training and workshops;
- More networking opportunities;
- More discounted trade show and market opportunities;
- More support to increase sales;
- Stronger promotion of East Lothian food and drink;
- Better collaboration between producers, hospitality, tourism and public-sector partners.





Our objectives

The objectives of East Lothian Food and Drink Ltd BID are:

- To provide collaborative marketing and promotion of East Lothian food and drink products to local, regional and national audiences;
- To improve economic opportunities for food and drink businesses in East Lothian;
- To deliver clear value for money for BID levy payers;
- To strengthen relationships between businesses, East Lothian Council, Scotland Food & Drink, Regional Food Groups and the wider East Lothian community;
- To support business growth, resilience and sustainability;
- To act as the collective voice for the East Lothian food and drink sector.

Your decision

All eligible food and drink businesses in East Lothian will have the opportunity to vote for or against the proposed BID renewal. The ballot closes on 20 August 2026. A positive ballot result will allow East Lothian Food and Drink Ltd to continue promoting, supporting and growing the sector from 22 August 2026 to 21 August 2031.

A YES vote is a vote for collaboration, visibility, investment and business growth.

Business Improvement Districts



What is a BID?

A Business Improvement District, or BID, is a formal partnership where businesses work together and collectively invest in projects and services that support their sector or area.

A BID is created through a statutory ballot. If successful, it runs for a fixed period. In Scotland this is five years.

A BID does not replace local authority or government services. It provides additional investment, led by businesses, to deliver projects that businesses themselves have identified as priorities.

Stronger together

A BID brings businesses together with public and private partners to deliver practical improvements. It gives businesses a stronger collective voice and helps create opportunities that would be difficult to achieve individually.

Our BID

East Lothian Food and Drink is unique. It is recognised as the world's first and only food and drink sector BID.

The BID is managed by East Lothian Food and Drink Ltd and funded through a levy paid by eligible food and drink businesses. This levy is spent locally on projects and services that support the growth of the sector.

Your levy stays local

The BID levy should be seen as an investment, not a tax.

Unlike business rates, the levy does not go into a Scottish Government or East Lothian Council pot for redistribution. It stays within East Lothian Food and Drink Ltd to be spent on the things that businesses identify as priorities.

Renewing the BID

Towards the end of the term of the BID, businesses must be balloted for the BID to continue.

BIDs in Scotland

Since 2008, there are 27 operational BIDs in their second or third term, equating to 51 successful renewal ballots. There are over 35 BIDs in Scotland, with 20 in the development stage, with a strong track record of delivering economic growth and being supported by Scotland's Towns Partnerships.

The history of BIDs

BIDs first started in Bloor West Village, Canada, over fifty-five years ago. At that time, businesses were struggling to cope with competition from a new out-of-town shopping centre, which resulted in business insolvencies, empty shops and a neglected town centre. Businesses got together to devise a plan to revitalise the town and successfully lobbied for all businesses in the BID area to pay a levy.

This investment was used to make physical

improvements to the town centre. The success of this model has been copied around the world, and the popularity of BIDs has grown rapidly. There are over 250 established BIDs in the UK, with many now pursuing renewal ballots.

The future of BIDs

BIDs are no longer restricted to town centres and have grown and matured to become highly focused and committed delivery bodies. They are acknowledged as being innovative, delivering partnership and meeting local challenges across a range of sectors.

Many BIDs are now pursuing their second and even third terms, proving that BIDs do work as a positive benefit to the businesses that participate in them.

East Lothian Food and Drink BID

We are the ONLY Food and Drink BID in existence in the world. We believe that the renewal of the East Lothian Food and Drink BID will provide a key delivery vehicle for the post-Covid recovery of the sector.



What East Lothian Food and Drink Ltd has delivered 2021–2026

During the current BID term, East Lothian Food and Drink Ltd has delivered a wide range of activity to support members, promote the county and create new opportunities. East Lothian Food and Drink Ltd has also created the first two income streams for the company since inception in 2016: the monthly North Berwick Harbour Market and the *Land, Sea and Hills* publication.

Marketing, brand and digital promotion

East Lothian Food and Drink Ltd has:

- Continued to develop the Scotland’s Food & Drink County brand and shout about East Lothian’s vibrant and high-quality food and drink scene;
- Created and promoted content across Facebook and Instagram;
- Supported members through shared photography and promotional material;
- Developed the website: www.scotlandsfooddrinkcounty.com;
- Promoted member news, events, products and opportunities;
- Increased digital reach across key platforms;
- Self-published the book, *Land, Sea and Hills*, in December 2025, which sold its first 500 copies within weeks.

Platform	Followers 2021	Followers 2026	% Increase
Facebook	2,092	3,099	+48%
Instagram	1,203	3,011	+150%

Markets and direct sales

East Lothian Food and Drink Ltd has supported direct sales and local trading opportunities through:

- The development of North Berwick Harbour Market in May 2025, a monthly market every second Saturday of the month with 25 stalls and 2 food trucks;
- Support for Haddington Farmers’ Market;
- Collaboration between producers, farm shops, retailers and hospitality businesses;
- Opportunities for members to reach consumers directly;
- Monthly member networking on the second Tuesday of every month at Company Bakery in Musselburgh.

Land, Sea and Hills

East Lothian Food and Drink Ltd created and self-published *Land, Sea and Hills* in December 2025.

The book celebrates the people, places and produce of East Lothian. It is a marketing tool for contributors, a showcase for the county and a revenue-generating project for East Lothian Food and Drink Ltd, with income being reinvested back into activities that support members.

Since its launch in December 2025, the book has sold over 800 copies and continues to sell.

Training and business support

The BID has delivered and supported training in areas including:

- First aid for mental health;
- First aid;
- Personal licence training;
- Food hygiene;
- Social media content creation;
- Instagram stories;
- TikTok;
- Business development and networking.

Networking and collaboration

East Lothian Food and Drink Ltd has created regular opportunities for members to connect, share ideas and develop partnerships, including:

- Monthly informal meet-ups at Company Bakery in Musselburgh, the second Tuesday of each month;
- Networking events at local producer venues; for example, we have met at S Luca, Glenkinchie Distillery, Belhaven Brewery and Company Bakery;
- Collaboration with other Regional Food Groups;
- Participation in Larder of the Lowlands wholesale event in Dumfries and Galloway;
- Engagement with Scotland Food & Drink and public-sector partners.

Showcase events

Members have benefited from an East Lothian Food and Drink Ltd presence at major trade, consumer and stakeholder events, including:

- Royal Highland Show yearly;
- Haddington Agricultural Show yearly;
- Scottish Parliament showcases – Taste of Scotland at Dover House, London 2023, 2024 and 2025;
- Westminster Houses of Parliament – 2024, 2025 and 2026;
- Scottish Speciality Food Show;

- ScotHot;
- Larder of the Lowlands;
- Haddington Farmers' Market;
- North Berwick Harbour Market.

Additional achievements

East Lothian Food and Drink Ltd has also:

- Secured yearly Regional Food Groups funding from Scotland Food & Drink;
- Established its role as Regional Food Groups coordinator, and mentors other Regional Food Groups leaders;
- Developed a supporter membership programme;
- Supported member promotion and photography;
- Built stronger links with hospitality, tourism and local partners;
- Secured a multi-year sponsorship partnership with Papple Steading.



Consultation - listening to your needs

Consultation and partnership are central to the BID process.

In recent months, East Lothian Food and Drink Ltd has listened to businesses to understand what support would make the biggest difference during the next five years.

The consultation process has included:

1. Online survey

A questionnaire was sent to food and drink businesses in the BID area in February 2026.

2. One-to-one conversations and member meetings

Regular networking meetings have provided an opportunity for businesses to discuss priorities, challenges and ideas.

3. Feedback opportunities

Members have had the opportunity to comment on the future direction of the BID, including through the Next Steps document and AGM process.

What businesses told us

The strongest priorities were:

1. Training and workshops;
2. Networking opportunities;
3. Discounted access to trade shows and consumer events;
4. Support to increase sales;
5. Stronger marketing and promotion;
6. Food tourism development;

This Business Plan has been shaped around those priorities.



How will I get the most out of the BID?

The BID works best when businesses are actively involved.

East Lothian Food and Drink Ltd will:

- Promote East Lothian food and drink products through collaborative events and campaigns;
- Raise awareness of members' quality, provenance and sustainability credentials;
- Support members to access new markets and opportunities;
- Champion East Lothian as Scotland's Food & Drink County;
- Provide a central point for information, signposting and networking;
- Represent the sector with public bodies, elected representatives and national partners.

Getting involved

By being involved and working with others, we can deliver change and bring improvement to the food and drink sector in your local area.

A BID provides a structure and finance to be able to get things done which are of benefit to food and drink businesses in East Lothian. Using a collaborative approach, we will be able to achieve more.

Working together

The BID will work to achieve strong, local partnerships with East Lothian Council, Scottish Enterprise and other bodies such as Scotland Food & Drink, Scottish Agritourism and East Lothian Climate Hub to find solutions to deliver improvement.

What you get from the East Lothian Food and Drink Ltd BID

BID member package

As a BID member, you will receive access to:

- Social media support and promotion;
- Member news, events and listings on the website and social media;
- Discounted trade and consumer show opportunities;
- Signposting to grants and funding;
- Training and business support;
- Networking opportunities;
- Consultation support with local elected representatives;
- Access to BID-funded projects;
- Opportunities linked to *Land, Sea and Hills* and future publications;
- Collaboration with other producers, hospitality venues and tourism partners.



How will the BID operate?

BID operation

Structure

This renewal proposal for the BID has been developed under the direction of the East Lothian Food and Drink Board of Directors.

Following a successful BID ballot, East Lothian Food and Drink Ltd will continue to be the vehicle which manages the BID projects.

The Board of Directors will continue in their current roles to monitor the implementation of the Business Plan.

The Board of Directors will comprise a maximum of eight Directors and include a chair, vice chair and a company secretary. Positions on the Board will be voluntary and will be unpaid.

On the board, six places for members' representatives will be appointed through nomination, and an election held where places are contested.

Every eligible person that pays the levy will have the opportunity to nominate themselves or someone else from within the BID area to be elected to the company Board, but will be limited to one eligible person from each eligible business.

Directorships will also be open to those persons who pay a voluntary levy, but restricted to one eligible person per eligible business and subject to the continued payment of the voluntary levy.

The Directors, where possible, will be appointed to reflect the various business types in East Lothian's food and drink sector.

If the company does not receive enough nominations to the Board, Directors can be co-opted to fill the vacant positions.

A further two places will be allocated to East Lothian Council for its nominated representatives on the Board.

The Board of Directors will reserve the right to consider creating a charitable arm of the company to enable it to secure additional funding that can only be sourced via a social enterprise with charitable status.

Governance

The Board will take all steps necessary to minimise any risk associated with the BID (financially or otherwise) by only using reputable contractors to deliver BID projects.

The Board will also adopt best practice in governance and operational procedures, whilst being open and transparent in its operations.

The company will undergo an evaluation of its activities at the half-way point and at four years of its five-year term to ensure that it is delivering all the projects and services as detailed in this plan.



BID management

The BID will be managed by a Business Manager. The post is accountable to the Board of Directors. The roles and responsibilities of the BID Manager will be to:

- Deliver the objectives of the Business Plan;
- Act as a central coordinating portal for BID activities;
- Act as fundraiser for projects which contribute towards delivery of the BID's objectives;
- Establish and facilitate an online forum for East Lothian food and drink businesses;
- Maintain direct communication with BID levy payers and key partners;
- Manage the finances of the BID;
- Ensure compliance of the Operating and Baseline Service Agreement between East Lothian Food and Drink BID and East Lothian Council BID.

Performance monitoring

The BID company will formally measure performance through the outcomes set out in the Business Plan.

Reporting

Progress will be reported back on a regular basis to BID levy payers through:

- An annual review of progress and performance;
- Annual meeting (AGM);
- Record of regular board meetings;
- Regular website updates;
- Regular emails on project status and updates.



Our vision, mission and values

Our vision

Our vision is for East Lothian to continue to be recognised as **Scotland's Food & Drink County**, a leading destination for food and drink buyers, visitors and consumers.

We want East Lothian products to be known for:

- Quality;
- Provenance;
- Sustainability;
- Innovation;
- Collaboration;
- Local pride.

Our mission

East Lothian Food and Drink Ltd will:

- Deliver positive economic impact for members and partners;
- Act as the collective voice for East Lothian food and drink businesses;
- Support growth, resilience and prosperity;
- Attract funding, sponsorship and investment;
- Build a more connected and collaborative sector;
- Promote East Lothian food and drink locally, nationally and internationally.

Our values

East Lothian Food and Drink Ltd and the BID Board of Directors will be committed to:

- Passion for East Lothian food and drink and their provenance;
- Transparency and accountability;
- Collaboration and partnership;
- Innovation and creativity;
- Practical support for business growth;
- Sustainability and long-term resilience;
- Listening to members and acting on their priorities.



Managing your BID

Your BID will be managed with:

- Integrity, in an open and honest manner;
- Passion and enthusiasm;
- A focus on positive and measurable outcomes;
- A creative and innovative approach.

Evaluation and reporting

Throughout the lifetime of the BID, all work on the BID projects will be monitored to ensure the projects in the BID Business Plan deliver the agreed impacts and outcomes and that they are progressing to the satisfaction of the businesses that voted for the BID.

The BID Board of Directors will monitor and oversee the efficient delivery of the BID projects.

The BID will undergo an independent evaluation of its activities at the half-way point and towards the end of its first term to ensure it is delivering all the projects and services as detailed in the Business Plan.

The BID will report annually on its activities and performance against agreed outcomes.

Our aim

Our aim is for the East Lothian Food and Drink BID to provide:

- Opportunities and inspiration;
- An environment where members and partners feel supported and valued;
- Strategic direction and a plan for achieving it;
- Innovation and development;
- Support for business growth;
- A portal for collective and individual promotion;
- A central point for information, signposting and networking.

Working together – your Directors will be responsible for:

- Setting strategic direction;
- Delivering the Business Plan;
- Efficient and transparent operations;
- Financial management;
- Monitoring performance;
- Annual reporting.

A five-year plan

The next term: 2026–2031

East Lothian Food and Drink Ltd BID is focused, measurable and accountable to deliver.

Priority	Outcome
Marketing and promotion	Deliver at least 10 coordinated marketing campaigns per year and increase combined social media following by at least 50% by July 2031.
Trade and consumer shows	Provide members with access to at least 1–2 discounted trade or consumer showcase opportunities each year.
Training and workshops	Deliver at least 2 member training or workshop sessions per year, based on member demand.
Networking	Host at least 10 member networking meetings per year.
Sales growth	Create at least 5 new market, retail, hospitality or buyer opportunities for members each year.
Food tourism	Develop at least one annual food tourism campaign, trail or showcase by 2027/28.
Funding and sponsorship	Secure at least £25,000 additional funding or sponsorship across the BID term, beyond levy income.
Sustainability	Deliver at least one sustainability-focused project, campaign or workshop per year.
Member communication	Provide regular member updates and publish an annual review of progress.

The next five years will focus on three core themes:

1. Marketing and promotion

East Lothian Food and Drink Ltd will continue to promote the county as Scotland's Food & Drink County.

Activity will include:

- Social media campaigns;
- Website promotion;
- Member features;
- Press and PR;
- Photography and storytelling;
- Seasonal campaigns;
- Promotion of *Land, Sea and Hills*;
- Support for producer launches, awards and events.

2. Business support

The BID will provide practical support to help members grow, adapt and thrive.

Activity will include:

- Training and workshops;
- Business signposting;
- Funding advice;
- Peer-to-peer support;
- Networking;
- Digital marketing support;
- Collaboration with partners including East Lothian Council, Scotland Food & Drink, Scottish Enterprise and Queen Margaret University.

3. Food tourism and routes to market

The BID will help connect producers with consumers, buyers, visitors, hospitality and tourism partners.

Activity will include:

- Trade and consumer show opportunities;
- Market development;
- Food tourism campaigns;
- Producer showcases;
- Hospitality and retail connections;
- Regional collaborations;
- Supporter membership engagement.

BID criteria and levy

A BID levy is an equitable and fair way of funding additional projects and services, which the local authority and other statutory bodies are not required to provide. It has been agreed by the Board of Directors that the levy rate will be a fee structure based on the rateable value of the food and drink business premises on the day of the ballot, 20 August 2026, and throughout the BID term.

BID criteria

The BID levy will be paid by the business owner as the person eligible to vote. Where businesses operate from more than one premises, only their primary production site will be eligible for the BID levy. Vacant properties are excluded from the scope of the BID.

The Board of Directors has agreed that the levy amount will increase by RPI annually subject to approval. For the purposes of financial planning, this has assumed to be 2% pa.

There are circa 27 food and drink businesses in the BID area, which will generate a BID investment levy income of approximately £13,100 per annum and an estimated total levy income of £65,500 over 5 years.

Further notes on the collection of levy payments

The BID levy will be paid by the property occupier (the eligible person liable to pay the non-domestic rate).

The levy payments are not linked to what businesses pay in rates but are based on the rateable value of the property.

Eligible businesses are those that produce or manufacture food and drink products, are based in the East Lothian Council area, occupy

premises subject to non-domestic rates and where the product is sold to other businesses.

Preferably, payment should be made in full within 28 days from the date of invoice; however, by prior arrangement with East Lothian Council, payment can be made on a monthly or quarterly basis.

New businesses which meet the terms of the BID levy will pay a reduced levy of £150 for their first two trading years. In subsequent years of trading, the businesses will be required to pay the appropriate levy from the levy table.

VAT is not charged on the BID levy.

The BID Board of Directors has agreed that the levy would be applied to properties with a rateable value of £2,000 and above. Various band levels have been applied, with a maximum banding of £95,000 and above.

Rateable Value	Annual Levy Payable
£2,000 or less	£0
£2,001- £9,999	£385
£10,000-£34,999	£400
£35,000-£54,999	£450
£55,000-£74,999	£550
£75,000-£94,999	£650
£95,000 or more	£750
Businesses in their first two years of trading	£150

Voluntary levy membership

Businesses that do not meet the full BID levy criteria may apply to become voluntary members.

This may include businesses operating from:

- Agricultural properties;
- Domestic-rated premises;
- Premises with a rateable value below £2,000.

Since these businesses do not have a non-domestic rateable value, their membership fee will be based on the size of their business as per the table below.

East Lothian Food and Drink Voluntary Levy Table 2026–2031, where BID terms are not met (e.g. where an agricultural rated property is occupied). Subject to annual RPI increases.

Number of employees	Annual Voluntary Levy Payable
Fewer than 10 employees	£385
10 or more employees	£450
Businesses in their first two years of trading	£150

The voluntary BID levy will be adjusted annually (Levy Invoice Billing date) in line with the Retail Price Index (RPI), with any increase capped at a maximum of 2% per annum. For financial projections within this proposal, a 2% annual increase has been assumed, subject to the agreement of the Board of Directors on an annual basis.

Voluntary levy payers must commit to their status for the full period of the BID term.

Voluntary levy income is expected to contribute £6,000 in Year 1 and a total of £30,000 across the BID term.

Further notes on the collection of voluntary levy payments and associate membership fees

Preferably, payment should be made in full within 28 days from the date of invoice; however, by prior arrangement with East Lothian Council, payment can be made on a monthly or quarterly basis.

In the first two years of trading, where new businesses wish to become voluntary levy members, these businesses will be required to pay an annual levy of £150. In subsequent years of trading, the businesses will be required to pay the appropriate voluntary levy from the voluntary levy table.

Voluntary levy rates will be based on the size of the food and drink business. For businesses with fewer than 10 employees, the levy rate will be £385 pa. For businesses with 10 or more employees, the rate will £450 pa. These rates are subject to annual RPI increases.

Voluntary members do not have the right to vote in the BID renewal ballot.

Supporter membership

Hospitality venues, restaurants, hotels, tourism venues and other aligned businesses may join as supporter members.

Supporter members will pay £100 per year and may access networking events and other agreed projects.

All voluntary and supporter memberships will be subject to approval by the BID Board.

BID legislation

Business Improvement District legislation – approved by the Scottish Government in 2006 – sets out the legal framework within which BIDs must operate. This includes the way in which the levy is charged and collected and how the ballot is conducted.

The BID term will run from 22 August 2026 to 21 August 2031.

Variation

The Board of Directors of the BID company will have the authority to vary or amend projects and services as the needs of the business dictates and as economic circumstances change, without recourse to an alteration ballot.

Levy collection

The levy can be paid in one payment or in quarterly or monthly instalments by agreement. Payment must be made within 28 days from the date of issue of the levy invoice.

East Lothian Council will be appointed to issue businesses in the BID area with a separate levy invoice under the heading Business Improvement District Levy. A charge of £360 per annum will be made by East Lothian Council for collection of the levy.

All income collected under the BID levy will be kept in a separate BID Revenue Account and passed to East Lothian Food and Drink Ltd to be used only for BID projects and services.

The BID levy cannot be used as an additional source of income for East Lothian Council.

Non-payment of the BID levy will be pursued, and statutory powers will be enforced to ensure fairness for those businesses that have paid the levy.

BID operation

The BID board will meet at least six times per year.

Directors will be nominated from the levy-paying members of the BID. The Board will produce a set of annual accounts available for members at the AGM.

An Annual General Meeting will take place for each year of the BID Term. Levy-paying members will be able to vote at the AGM.

BID governance

The Board of Directors of the BID company will have the authority to vary or amend projects and services as the needs of the business dictates and as economic circumstances change, without recourse to an alteration ballot.



Finance

The BID will be funded through a combination of:

- BID levy income;
- Voluntary levy income;
- New member income;
- Supporter income;
- East Lothian Council support;
- Regional Food Fund from Scotland Food & Drink income;
- North Berwick Harbour Market income;
- Corporate sponsorship;
- *Land, Sea and Hills* book sales.

Income will be used to deliver the projects and priorities set out in this Business Plan.

The key areas of expenditure will be:

- Marketing and promotion;
- Business support;
- Food tourism;
- Management and administration;
- BID renewal costs;
- Bad debt contingency;
- Reserves.

Reserves will be retained to protect the organisation against unexpected costs, including redundancy, business closure or future financial pressures.

There are currently 27 businesses who meet the qualifying terms of the BID. BID levy income is calculated to be approximately £13,015 in Year 1, increasing by 2% annually.

The voluntary bid income is based on the current voluntary membership of nine businesses and is calculated to be £3,465 in Year 1, increasing by 2% annually. It is anticipated that collection rates for the BID levy will be 100%.

However, a contingency has been set aside to allow for any bad debt. East Lothian Council's intention is to support the East Lothian Food and Drink BID company over the next five years.

Notwithstanding this, the Council will be required over this period to periodically review this position.

Income plan

Income	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
BID Levy	£13,015	£13,275	£13,541	£13,812	£14,088	£67,731
Voluntary Levy	£4,935	£5,034	£5,134	£5,237	£5,342	£25,682
New Members	£600	£900	£1,200	£1,500	£1,800	£6,000
Supporter Members	£1,500	£1,700	£1,900	£2,100	£2,300	£9,500
East Lothian Council	£25,000	£12,500	£6,250	0	0	£43,750
Project Income	£12,600	£12,600	£12,600	£12,600	£12,600	£63,000
Market Profit	£11,630	£11,630	£11,630	£11,630	£11,630	£58,150
Corporate Sponsorship - Papple Steading	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000	£25,000
Book Sales per 1,000 based on 50/50 direct/wholesale	£15,000	£15,000	£15,000	£15,000	£15,000	£75,000
Total	£89,280	£77,639	£72,256	£66,879	£67,760	£373,813

Expenditure plan

Expenditure	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
Marketing and Promotion	£9,500	£9,500	£10,000	£10,300	£11,000	£50,300
Business Support	£2,000	£2,400	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000	£13,400
Food Tourism	£1,750	£2,830	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000	£13,580
Management & Administration	£42,000	£42,250	£43,122	£44,002	£45,944	£217,318
Contingency/BID Renewal	£1,215	£1,224	£1,248	£1,273	£1,299	£6,259
Bad Debt	£1,000	£1,020	£1,040	£1,061	£1,082	£5,203
Reserves	£13,143	£13,342	£13,547	£13,755	£13,967	£67,753
Total	£70,608	£72,566	£74,957	£76,391	£79,292	£373,813

Assumptions

As per the improvement requests, Marketing and Promotion remains the largest proportion of expenditure, increasing across the BID term in line with anticipated inflation levels.

Business Support and Food Tourism receive smaller expenditure levels but improvement initiatives are closely allied to Marketing and Promotion expenditure (e.g. website and social media).

Management and Administration is based on one FT business manager and one PT administrator with associated office and sundry costs.

BID Renewal monies will be accrued across the course of the BID term to facilitate renewal costs.

A small amount for Bad Debt is reserved based on 2026 rates.

Reserves will be retained to cover any redundancy or business closure costs in the BID term.



Our business approach

Partnership

East Lothian Food and Drink Ltd will continue to build strong partnerships with East Lothian Council, Scotland Food & Drink, Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Agritourism, Visit East Lothian, Queen Margaret University and other relevant organisations.

Start-ups and small businesses

The BID will support start-ups and small food and drink businesses through promotion, mentoring, networking and access to opportunities.

Innovation

The BID will encourage creativity, product development and new ideas across the sector.

Brand identity

The BID will continue to strengthen the East Lothian Food and Drink Ltd brand and promote East Lothian as Scotland's Food & Drink County.

Quality

The BID will promote East Lothian food and drink as premium, high quality and rooted in strong provenance.

Learning

The BID will support continuous learning through training, workshops and partnerships.

Lobbying and advocacy

The BID will act as the collective voice of East Lothian food and drink businesses, representing members with local, regional and national decision-makers.

Environmental approach

East Lothian Food and Drink Ltd is committed to supporting a cleaner, greener and more sustainable Scotland.

The BID will work with members and partners to:

- Reduce waste;
- Encourage reuse;
- Improve recycling;
- Support sustainable packaging;
- Promote local supply chains;
- Reduce food miles where possible;
- Encourage collaboration in transport and distribution;
- Support sustainability training and awareness.

The BID will also work with partners such as East Lothian Climate Hub and local environmental groups where appropriate.



Working in partnership

East Lothian Council



East Lothian Council will continue to work with the East Lothian Food and Drink Business Improvement District (BID) as it enters its third term (2026–2031).

Head of Development, Keith Dingwall, said:

“East Lothian Council has worked with the East Lothian Food and Drink BID over previous terms to support activity within the sector and to help promote food and drink businesses both locally and to a wider regional, national and international audience. As the BID moves into its third term, the Council recognises the role it plays in bringing businesses together and supporting collective action. We also recognise the strength of the food and drink industry and the role it plays in the East Lothian economy.

“Our Economic Development team will continue to engage with the BID board, providing business support and officer input where appropriate to help develop and deliver activity that aligns with the vision, goals and objectives of the East Lothian Local Economy Strategy 2024-34.

“The Council has allocated funding for the BID for a further three-year period within the new term. The Council will continue to hold two places on the BID board.

“The BID forms part of a wider Council interest in the food and drink sector and via, for example, membership of Scotland Food & Drink’s Local Authority Group, Inclusive Growth and Employability Service activities in the visitor economy and business development will continue to engage with BID members and wider industry partners to support sustainable business activity and employment within the sector.”

Working in partnership

Papple Steading



East Lothian Food and Drink Ltd is proud to have entered into a multi-year sponsorship agreement with Papple Steading.

The partnership reflects shared values around local produce, rural enterprise, provenance, sustainability and the future of farming and food.

Papple Steading provides a fitting platform for showcasing East Lothian food and drink, and the sponsorship will support East Lothian Food and Drink Ltd's wider work to promote and strengthen the sector.

This partnership is a strong example of how collaboration between local businesses can generate wider benefits for the county's economy, communities and visitor offer.

Papple is a new farm hospitality destination. It combines food and drink in a beautiful rural place with great hospitality. It is a place to eat, drink, stay and experience the built and natural heritage. The project started ten years ago to save a steading and to preserve and celebrate East Lothian's rich farming heritage, which has

always been at the vanguard of agricultural developments in the UK. The steading itself is probably one of the best designed and now restored set of farm buildings in Scotland. It has a history that tells the story of how farms were managed in the productive disruption of the agricultural improvement movement. Papple is a very fine "model farm". Its heritage is further advanced by its association with Lady Eve Balfour, who spent her early years on the estate. Lady Balfour was a farming educator, the author of the seminal *The Living Soil* and she went on to found the Soil Association. His Majesty King Charles III is the Royal Patron of the Soil Association, a position he has held since 1999. As a long-term advocate for organic farming and sustainability, he has supported the charity's work in nature-friendly agriculture and research.

Papple includes Eve's Court, a café, restaurant and wine bar and, with a theme of "Art in agriculture", it blends contemporary art with agricultural heritage. Consequently, Papple is a fitting place where conversations about the future of farming and the food and drink industry take place. It is also an ideal location for showcasing East Lothian food and drink products, many of which are already on the menu in Eve's Court. Papple is proud to hold a Green Tourism GOLD Award.

Papple has proved how a rural business can be developed from scratch and become a vibrant destination which delights local communities and tourists, creating jobs and business activity. It is a hub serving the county's economic and cultural interests.

The ballot process

Pre-ballot

The BID Proposer must submit the BID Proposals to the Local Authority, the Scottish Ministers and the billing body at least 98 days in advance of the ballot date and of their intention to put the BID Proposals to ballot. The local authority then has 28 days in which to veto or accept the BID Proposals. The local authority is required, under legislation, to notify the BID Proposers and the Scottish Government, in writing, if the authority is or is not vetoing the BID Proposals.

A “Notice of Ballot” will be issued at least 42 days before the day of ballot.

The BID Proposer will make available a copy of the BID Proposal on request to any person who is eligible to vote. Requests for a copy should, in the first instance, be lodged with the local authority.

Prior to, or on the date the ballot papers are issued, the BID Proposer must provide all those eligible to vote in the proposed BID area with a detailed BID Business Plan.

The ballot

Ballot papers will be issued to every eligible person in the BID area at least 42 days before the final ballot date.

Voluntary levy members and associate members do not have the right to a ballot paper.

Ballot papers, together with a copy of the BID Business Plan, will be posted to the eligible person responsible for casting a vote within their business. In the case of national companies, the responsibility for voting may lie with head office or a voting agent.

The BID renewal ballot is a confidential postal ballot conducted by East Lothian Council on behalf of East Lothian Food and Drink BID and in accordance with Scottish BID legislation.

For the East Lothian Food and Drink BID, voting papers will be issued no later than 9th July 2026.

The last date for all ballot papers to be returned is 5pm on 20 August 2026. Papers received after this date will be deemed null and void.

Voting papers are easy to complete; simply place a cross on either “yes” or “no” to the question “are you in favour of a BID?”

The ballot paper must then be signed by the person eligible to vote and returned in the pre-paid envelope.

Pre-ballot (cont'd)

For the ballot to be successful, there must be a minimum turnout of 25% (the headcount) by number of eligible persons and by combined rateable value; and of those who turn out, the majority must vote in favour by number and rateable value.

All eligible persons (i.e. the food and drink business owner or designated person) will have one vote per business, with the rateable value taken from their primary production property.

Ballot papers will be issued on the basis of per business and primary production property only.

The ballot papers will be counted on **21 August 2026** and the results announced by East Lothian Council within one week.

Following a successful ballot, the new BID term will commence on **22 August 2026** and will run for a period of five years until **21 August 2031**.

For every £1 of levy income received over the next five-year term, East Lothian Food and Drink will access an additional £4.16.

This sponsorship, support and project income will deliver activities which will benefit your business.

Across the five years of the BID term, this will be £353,750 of investment to support East Lothian's Food and Drink sector.



Meeting the challenge

East Lothian Food and Drink has exceptional provenance, outstanding businesses and huge potential.

A renewed BID will protect and strengthen the only dedicated food and drink business network in East Lothian.

Without the BID, the sector risks losing its collective marketing platform, its coordinated presence at trade and consumer events, its shared voice with local and national partners and the dedicated resource needed to attract funding, sponsorship and new opportunities.

With a renewed BID, East Lothian Food and Drink Ltd can continue to champion producers, grow markets, support collaboration and keep East Lothian firmly recognised as Scotland's Food & Drink County.

Working together, we can achieve more.

A **YES** vote is a vote for visibility, collaboration, investment and growth.
Vote YES for the future of East Lothian Food and Drink!



Key dates

Ballot papers will be issued no later than 9th July

20 August 2026 at 5pm

Final date for return of ballot papers

21 August

Ballot papers counted and result announced

22 August 2026

BID Term begins if ballot returns YES vote

Contact Details

East Lothian Food and Drink Board of Directors

Ray Donovan (Chair)	Ambient / Water
Chris Luca	Frozen / Ice cream
David Strachan	Ambient / Preserves
Fiona Matheson (Maternity)	Alcohol / Beer
Matt Foulds	East Lothian Council
Councillor John McMillan	East Lothian Council
Rannoch Donald	Ambient / Bread and Pastries

Comments, feedback and more information

If you would like to comment or provide feedback or would like more information about the next steps for the BID, please contact Emma Bouglet.

manager@scotlandsfooddrinkcounty.com

+44 7377 721459



East Lothian Food and Drink