

DECEMBER INSIGHTS by CHRIS TURNER

This is the last insight of 2025, and I wish you a very happy Christmas and a very prosperous new year.

The BID community continues to be busy, and much is happening at a policy and strategic level, as well as some of the critical day-to-day tasks involving new rateable values and BID levy amounts. There have been some 20 recent **ballots** and we congratulate Newquay, Northampton, Wimborne, Cheltenham, Make It Ealing, Hounslow, Langthwaite, Your Bromley, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Walton, Glasgow, Ballymena, Hainault, Carlisle, Knutsford, Leatherhead, Blackpool and Blackpool Tourism, Purley and Brighton on their successful ballots; four of these are brand new BIDs and we welcome them to the BID community. The headline figure is that there are now 350 BIDs across the British Isles.

One of the major stories of the month was the very abrupt about turn on **tourism taxes** or [Overnight Visitor Levies](#) [OVL] for English Mayoral authorities. England's mayors will be able to invest in transport, infrastructure, and the visitor economy through a new levy on overnight stays. The fee would apply to visitors' overnight trips, and it would be up to mayors and other local leaders to introduce a modest charge if it's right for their area. To maintain consistency and prevent market distortions, the levy is intended to apply to virtually all types of short-term commercially let visitor accommodation used by leisure or business visitors, regardless of size, price, or booking method. Examples of accommodation that would attract the levy include hotels, guesthouses, B&Bs, campsites, caravan parks, self-catering properties, serviced apartments, and short-term lets (STLs) as well as university halls when commercially let during holidays. The [consultation](#) seeks feedback on the design of this new power, including its scope, how it would be adopted locally and what national and local exemptions should be required.

The initial consultation period itself lasts 12 weeks, running from November 26, 2025, to February 18, 2026.

Ironically, only a week or so after this announcement the government decided that the [elections for newly-created mayors will be delayed](#) in four more areas of England, pushing back regional devolution plans. New mayors were expected to be elected in Greater Essex, Norfolk & Suffolk, Hampshire & the Solent, and Sussex & Brighton in May next year, but will now have to wait until May 2028.

At the same time, there is still much uncertainty on the arrangements for the new [local government reorganisation](#) that will be setting up larger Unitary Authorities in many of the areas in which BIDs operate and the various local paper stories [mirror](#) that uncertainty. The Local Government Information Unit has produced a [timeline](#) of the LGR process based on the most recent MHCLG announcements which will be updated regularly. The timeline was updated on 4 December 2025 to reflect the delay in inaugural mayoral elections announced by the government, but they do reckon that there is every chance that timings may change again.

The new **rateable values** were received by local authority taxation departments on the day of the budget, and many BIDs are now having the updates on their new levy amounts. Of course, many BIDs link themselves into an earlier rateable value list, in this case the 2023 list; but all of us will be moving onto the new 2026 lists at some stage in the next few years, depending on our ballot dates. The feedback we are receiving from many BIDs and local authorities is that, overall, rateable values are going up, following the post Covid reductions, and thus BID levy should not be under some of the pressures they were following that re-evaluation. It is important that we all make contact with our local taxation departments to discuss this, and details on individual properties are available on the [VOA database](#), and as you know one of our listed suppliers on the British BIDs Suppliers' Portal, [Vicinity](#) can provide a detailed mapping service.

Following the completion of the work of the High Streets Task Force, **The High Street Sector Leaders Group** is a collaborative forum that includes representatives from various organisations and bodies that have a sectoral interest in the high street. This group, which met again last week, provides an opportunity for sector leaders to stay connected, share insights, and work collaboratively. It also offers government officers a direct channel to hear feedback on live issues affecting the high streets. The latest meeting discussed various topics, including the [Budget](#), Business Rates Review, [National Licensing Policy Framework](#), and [Martyn's Law](#). British BIDs is a member, alongside representatives from most of the major organisations championing high street interests. The December meeting included officers from the UK Home Office, the Department for Business and Trade, and HM Treasury. As [Ian Harvey from IPM](#) posted “the combination of taxation, licensing, and security legislation (like Martyn’s Law) means that forums like this are important so high-street sector leaders and government stakeholders can actively discuss issues from various perspectives which can only help ensure we get better policy. Thank you to Ojay McDonald for chairing”. Some of the organisations represented include Association of Town & City Management, British BIDs, Local Government, British Independent Retailers Association, British Retail Consortium Libraries Connected, NABMA - National Association of British Market Authorities, ukactive, The Booksellers Association, Night Time Industries Association, and the Society of Local Council Clerks.

British BIDs will host a members’ webinar on Martyn’s Law, titled ***Preparing for Martyn’s Law***, on Wednesday, 21st January 2026 at 2 PM. **Andrew Williams**, Head of Security & Resilience at **Savills**, will explain the legislation, its implications, and how to prepare effectively. Click [here](#) to register.

Many of you will already know of [Highstreet Positives](#) , who are dedicated to transforming the narrative across the UK and Ireland by sharing positive high street news and stories of resilience, community, and innovation. They celebrate the people and businesses that make these areas thrive, and their recent summit [The Art of the](#)

Possible was a joy about that mindset in action. It starts with what moves the needle first: boosting confidence and safety, creating visible momentum, and making progress feel normal again. It's about learning from quick local wins and long-term regeneration and sharing ideas that can be adapted place by place.

The British BIDs 2026 Online Course schedule is now [available](#). The Academy Courses provide easy access to expert advice, accessible learning tools, professional development for you and your team, reassurance to stakeholders that qualified staff are in place, opportunities to knowledge-share with colleagues in the industry and a relaxed and friendly learning environment. The 2026 Academy [courses](#) include: *An Introduction to BIDs, BIDs and Place Shaping, Managing a BID Efficiently, Planning & Managing a BID ballot* and the *Responsibilities & best practices for BID Directors*. The 2026 class dates for our [Certificate in BID Management](#), [Diploma in BID Leadership](#), and [Certificate in BID Marketing](#) courses are also all now available – click on the links provided for more information. If you would like to enrol, please email Shayni.Langhelt@britishbids.info.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Professor Christopher Turner, Head of Research, British BIDs