

GOING UNDERGROUND — Alternative Market Positioning

LIVE-ACTION WITH CGI / HEIGHTENED COLOUR-CONCEPT VERSION

Going Underground is positioned as a **live-action fantasy comedy adventure** aimed at adult mainstream audiences aged 15–70, with crossover appeal to younger viewers drawn to time-travel, music culture, British humour, and visually distinctive storytelling. The screenplay follows three sixty-year-old friends — Danny, Ricky and Peter — who descend into Edinburgh’s underground tunnels with Ricky’s beagle Buddy and emerge into the Edinburgh Festival of 1984, where they encounter their younger selves, a talking dog, punk/goth nightlife, biker criminals, hallucination sequences, stolen jewels, and a comic race to get home.

In this version, the film’s key market differentiator is its **visual language**:

- **Present day** is photographed in a muted, subdued, almost monochrome or desaturated palette — grounded, ordinary, slightly faded, reflecting age, routine, and diminished excitement.
- **1984 Edinburgh** explodes into heightened colour, energy, and theatricality — not literal animation, but a heightened “animated-colour” sensibility, where costume, production design, lighting, nightclub imagery, and selective VFX make the past feel vivid, seductive, and larger than life.
- **Buddy** is realised as a live-action dog enhanced with CGI facial and mouth performance, with effects used selectively and characterfully rather than in a hyper-photoreal, effects-heavy way.

This gives the project a clear visual hook for buyers, audiences, and marketers:

“A drab present-day world gives way to a gloriously vibrant 1984 underworld.”

Tonally, this version sits between **British ensemble comedy**, **fantasy time-travel adventure**, and **stylised nostalgia cinema**. It evokes the emotional mechanics of *Back to the Future* and *About Time*, the British comic energy of *Shaun of the Dead* and *Hot Fuzz*, the visual transition logic of *The Wizard of Oz* and *Pleasantville*, and the talking-animal integration proof-of-concept of films such as *Paddington* and *Babe*.

This treatment is especially strong because it turns budget spend into **visible production value**. Rather than simply recreating 1984 naturalistically, the film can present 1984 as a heightened, seductive, comic dream-state — allowing stylisation to do part of the world-building work that would otherwise require more expensive realism.

Core Visual / Creative Hook

The “Muted to Vivid” Transition

The strongest commercial version of this live-action concept is to treat the story as a journey from:

routine → vitality

age → youth

grey realism → heightened memory-fantasy

present-day caution → 1984 possibility

This is not just a stylistic flourish; it is a **marketable storytelling device**.

In practical terms:

- **Present day** can be shot with restrained grading, modest wardrobe palette, cleaner compositions, quieter production design.
- **1984** becomes brighter, bolder, glossier, busier, more colourful, more musical, more excessive.
- Hallucinations, club imagery, bikers, football chaos, and Buddy’s speech all sit naturally inside that heightened visual world.

That means the film can feel premium and imaginative **without requiring wall-to-wall spectacle**.

Market Positioning Summary

This version of *Going Underground* occupies the space between:

- **mainstream British fantasy comedy**
- **nostalgic time-travel adventure**
- **music-culture ensemble comedy**
- **visually distinctive premium live-action event film**

Its clearest selling points are:

1. A trailer-friendly premise

Three older men go underground in Edinburgh and wake up in a vividly alive 1984.

2. A strong visual identity

The muted-present / vivid-past contrast makes the film instantly legible in stills, trailers, posters, and sales materials.

3. Broad audience appeal

The concept plays to:

- older audiences through memory, regret, and nostalgia
- mainstream comedy audiences through friendship and absurdity
- younger audiences through music, subculture, visual flair, and Buddy

4. Commercial use of CGI

CGI is used for:

- Buddy's talking performance
- portal / tunnel transitions
- selective hallucination imagery
- occasional enhancement of 1984 Edinburgh
- stylised visual flourishes

This is a smarter proposition than a VFX-saturated fantasy feature because the effects support character and tone rather than replacing them.

Best-Fit Budget Positioning

For this concept, I would position the film as:

\$25–35 million USD / £19–26 million GBP

with a **best-fit sweet spot of:**

\$28–32 million USD / £21–24 million GBP

That is a little more disciplined than the broadest live-action/animation-hybrid version, because this concept can control costs by relying on:

- colour design
- production design
- selective CGI

- contained Edinburgh locations
- stylised enhancement rather than constant heavy VFX
- one principal CG character (Buddy) rather than multiple creature characters

Why this budget makes sense

You still need to cover:

- period 1984 dressing
- costume and extras
- club and football crowd material
- talking-dog CGI
- hallucination sequences
- time-travel moments
- biker action / chase material
- a premium-grade visual finish

But the “heightened memory-fantasy” concept allows you to avoid the cost of full photoreal historical recreation on every frame.

Comparable Titles — Positioning & Market Logic

Title	Relevance to this version	Market lesson
Back to the Future	Time-travel comedy with strong concept and mainstream accessibility	Clear premise + nostalgia = durable audience appeal
About Time	Time-travel with emotional warmth and British accessibility	Demonstrates broad appeal when fantasy serves relationships
Pleasantville	Visual grammar built around colour transition	Shows how palette itself can become a narrative and marketing tool
The Wizard of Oz	Reality-to-fantasy colour logic	Useful touchstone for a world-transition concept
Paddington / Paddington 2	British live-action with CG character integration	Demonstrates that British charm + high-end CG character work can be highly commercial
Shaun of the Dead / Hot Fuzz	British genre-comedy tone and exportability	Shows that British specificity can travel with strong concept and execution
Ted	Talking CG-led comic character in a live-action world	Confirms audience acceptance of a comic CG-speaking character in a broad audience comedy

Positioning Against Other Versions

Version	Strength	Weakness
Animated feature	Most efficient for surrealism, Buddy, hallucinations, scale	May narrow audience perception if marketed incorrectly as “animation”

Version	Strength	Weakness
Straight live-action period comedy	Grounded and actor-led	Risks feeling visually ordinary unless cast is very strong
Live-action with CGI and colour concept	Best balance of accessibility, visual distinctiveness, and premium feel	More expensive than animation and requires strong execution
Heavy hybrid / effects-led version	Biggest visual scope	Cost escalates quickly and financing becomes harder

Verdict:

This “muted present / vivid 1984” version is likely the **best live-action expression** of the material because it gives the film a recognisable creative identity without forcing it into constant blockbuster-level VFX.

Territory-by-Territory Sales Expectations

Territory	Sales outlook	Rationale
UK & Ireland	Strong	Edinburgh setting, British humour, 1980s nostalgia, strong theatrical identity
Australia / New Zealand	Moderate to strong	British comedy and nostalgia traditionally travel well
North America	Moderate / platform-led	Strong concept and visual hook; best with recognisable cast and festival/platform rollout
France	Moderate	Visual stylisation and fantasy concept improve export appeal
Germany / Austria / Switzerland	Moderate	Stronger if positioned as an accessible fantasy comedy rather than a niche British comedy
Scandinavia	Moderate	Time travel and stylised visuals help international accessibility
Spain / Italy	Selective to moderate	Streamer / broadcaster route likely stronger than pure theatrical
Japan / South Korea	Selective	Strong visual concept may help, but cast and marketing will matter
Rest of World	Ancillary-led	Airline, TV, SVOD, and streamer value driven by concept and humour

Overall Sales Profile — Agent Summary

Primary revenue drivers:

UK & Ireland, Australia/New Zealand, selected European territories, North American specialty/platform buyers, premium streamers, broadcasters, and ancillary outlets.

Best release pathway:

Festival launch or market premiere → UK theatrical / event release → selective international theatrical → premium streaming / broadcaster acquisition.

Commercial strength:

The film’s strongest market advantage is the combination of:

- clear high concept

- visually legible hook
- older-audience accessibility
- talking-dog appeal
- 1980s music and nostalgia
- British comic identity

Core sales line:

Going Underground is a visually distinctive British fantasy comedy in which three men in their sixties step out of muted present-day Edinburgh and into the vivid, anarchic colour of 1984 — where they meet their younger selves, a dog starts talking, and the past becomes impossible to control.

GOING UNDERGROUND — One-Slide Finance Waterfall

LIVE-ACTION FEATURE WITH CGI

Total Production Budget

£23.0 million / approx. \$31 million

Premium British fantasy comedy

Edinburgh • 1984 • Time travel • Talking dog • Stylised colour transition • Punk/goth nightlife • Bikers • Football chaos

Sources of Finance

Source	Indicative Amount	Notes
UK tax incentive / rebate	£4.5M–£5.5M	Subject to qualifying spend and final structure
Streamer / broadcaster licence	£3.0M–£6.0M	Strong fit if cast and visual concept are compelling
International presales	£4.0M–£7.0M	Best in UK, ANZ, Europe, selective North America
Gap finance	£2.0M–£4.0M	Against unsold territories / sales estimates
Equity investment	£6.0M–£8.5M	Core private financing piece
Regional support / co-production / soft money	£1.0M–£2.0M	Scotland / UK / European co-financing opportunities

Recoupment Waterfall — Standard Live-Action Feature

1. Collection Account / Gross Receipts

All theatrical, broadcaster, streamer, ancillary, airline, TVOD, SVOD, and AVOD revenues flow through the collection account.

2. Sales Agent Fees & Expenses

Typically 10–15% of gross receipts plus approved recoupable expenses.

3. Senior Lenders / Gap Finance

100% recoupment plus agreed interest, fees, and premium.

4. Tax Credit / Rebate Bridge

If bridged, lender recoups against confirmed rebate / incentive proceeds.

5. Equity Investors

100% recoupment plus negotiated premium, typically 20–30%.

6. Producer Corridor

10–20% of defined net profits.

7. Backend Participation Pool

Writer, director, producers, key cast, and approved participants.

Why This Version Works Commercially

Risk Mitigation

- Effects are concentrated around **Buddy**, transitions, and select fantasy beats rather than throughout every scene.
- 1984 can be conveyed through **stylisation and palette**, not solely through expensive full-scale period recreation.
- Present-day muted photography reduces the cost of over-designing the first act.
- Edinburgh provides strong natural production value.
- The film remains actor-led and concept-led rather than depending entirely on spectacle.

Commercial Upside

- The visual treatment becomes a major marketing asset.
 - Buddy provides a memorable trailer and poster hook.
 - The older-men-meet-their-younger-selves concept remains broad and relatable.
 - The contrast between dull present and vibrant past is emotionally resonant as well as visually appealing.
 - This treatment could attract stronger cast interest because it gives performers a clearer stylistic playground.
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What Pushes This Budget Up

The biggest cost drivers in this version would be:

- **CG Buddy performance**
 - **1984 period dressing**
 - **licensed music**
 - **club / football crowd scenes**
 - **hallucination and portal VFX**
 - **biker action and chase work**
 - **premium-grade colour design and post-production finishing**
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What Helps Keep It Under Control

This version stays manageable if you:

- keep **Buddy** expressive but not hyper-complex
- use a **small number of major VFX showcase scenes**

- treat 1984 as **heightened stylisation**, not pure realism
 - use selective set-pieces rather than constant action escalation
 - anchor the film around **performance and comic situations**
 - keep the visual rule very clear:
present = restrained / 1984 = vivid
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Final Positioning Line

Going Underground can be powerfully re-positioned as a **£21–24 million premium live-action British fantasy comedy** with selective CGI, built around a striking visual conceit: **the present is faded and muted, while 1984 erupts in vivid, near-animated colour**. This approach gives the project a distinctive commercial identity, supports the talking-dog and fantasy elements, and offers a more premium and marketable live-action alternative to the fully animated version.