

Halesowen Town Business Improvement District

2022 – 2027

Full Proposal Document - FINAL DRAFT V4

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Introduction

Halesowen is one of the many hidden gems located within the Black Country with a population of over 60,000 people. Each year the annual Christmas Light Switch On attracts in excess of 40,000 visitors to the town and the Black Country 10K and 5K road races sees in excess of 1,100 of entrants each year take to the local streets. As well as a number of local events managed by Halesowen BID.

With a local college located on the periphery of the town boasting some 6,000 full and part-time students it appears consistently in the top 10% of colleges for examination performance thus attracting young people from all over the county. With its links to major motorway and public transport networks it has subsequently attracted new businesses, young families and working professionals to benefit from this convenience.

The proposed Business Improvement District (BID) area is home to some 350 businesses, which includes amongst others InTouch Games, Ruskin Properties, Travelodge, Asda & Aldi, which has created numerous employment opportunities.

However, the difficulties our businesses face in the post-pandemic economy and challenging competitive economic environment, means that the town needs to consider how it faces the future. This is of paramount importance if we are to ensure the continuing prosperity of all our businesses and the livelihoods of those that depend upon them.

Following extensive consultation across the proposed BID area, this Proposal will be put to a Ballot on **10th June 2022** with the Ballot Day on **11th July 2022** of all businesses in the proposed BID area, administered by Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council (DMBC).

The development of the BID Proposal has been supported by DMBC and Black Country Chamber of Commerce.

If successful, the BID will be delivered by Halesowen BID Company (HBC), a not-for-profit company that will support the businesses in the town to deliver the BID Business Plan. It will be managed by a BID Manager and Board which will be made up of a representation of business people from within the proposed BID area.

The proposed start date for a Central Halesowen BID is **1st August 2022**.

The BID will work in partnership with all the existing statutory organisations for which Baseline Statements will be agreed where applicable. These will ensure that the BID only invests levy payers' funds in activity that is **additional** to that which the statutory organisations already have a responsibility to deliver. These will be identified separately and will be agreed between the parties prior to the BID coming into operation.

The BID will deliver operational and marketing activity for the BID area and levy payers for a five year period until 2027 funded by the levy described in this document.

Section 1: The Need for a BID

1.0 Why Halesowen needs a BID

Halesowen is still falling victim to the increase in out of town and online shopping. Whilst the work of the BID in its past term has stabilised footfall and in some cases encouraged greater footfall. During the reopening of the town we saw huge growth in footfall year on year and in June 2020 we were reported as the fastest recovering high street, post-pandemic, in the UK. Without the much needed investment the area could lose the current gains and stability in trade. Businesses across the town have praised the BID for their work in developing and maintaining Halesowen's reputation as a visitor magnet and its stronger image.

A determined drive is needed to encourage our independent retailers to continue to increase the overall footfall for Halesowen in order for it to remain a desirable shopping destination. With the support and tools the BID has to offer we will continue to see a thriving town that is full of shoppers, as well as a source of employment, growth and prosperity.

Maintaining standards in the town has become a main role for the BID and therefore by finding further solutions to improve them is an absolute priority. The continued existence of a new way of working together in Halesowen, through a Business Improvement District, will continue to provide new innovative solutions and forward thinking approaches to the overall look and feel of the town; continue to provide elements that are no longer affordable for the local authority, like Halesowen-by-the-Sea; encourage new employers to see Halesowen as a town in which their businesses can thrive and tackle challenges that will enable new and existing businesses to compete in the future. The BID has provided much needed support for new businesses and for levy payers with continued activity throughout the pandemic and services such as webinars, property advice, grant support & collaborative marketing.

The key challenges:

- Economic growth is difficult and therefore businesses increasingly need to work together to reduce costs, benefit from economies of scale, increase brand awareness and share risk to sustain and improve their turnover and profitability.
- The development of on-line trading activity has challenged traditional methods of retail management; even more-so after the recent pandemic, therefore new facilities and new ways of delivering what the customer and client want need to be developed as well as supporting business owners in working within the digital age.
- The increasing reduction in DMBC funding will result in further key services and initiatives gradually being cut back making it more difficult to attract visitors and for businesses to compete on a level playing field.
- The increasing expectations of customers and clients (including shoppers, residents, students, investors) mean that businesses have to improve standards continuously to thrive and survive. The saying 'it isn't broken, why fix it', no longer applies as customers demand more and are

looking for added value in their shopping experience and therefore this experience needs to be constantly improved upon to meet ever rising expectations. The BID has currently supported businesses in making changes to adapt to new customer expectations and provided advice and guidance on handling new policies and procedures, most notably in regards to the pandemic.

- Growing competition from other surrounding towns and cities will attract visitors away from Halesowen as a result of investment being put into their regeneration, such as West Bromwich following their successful ballot. The convenience of out of town shopping centres such as Merry Hill with their offering of free parking spaces including electrical charging points, free Wi-Fi access, and restaurants all under one roof is also gradually taking business away from Halesowen. However; with the closure of national stores there are opportunities for small independents to thrive and encourage shoppers from larger shopping centres back to the high street, the time to act is **now**.

The BID can continue to resolve areas that were out of control of the local authority and other organisations. By application to funds and grants totalling over £180,000 the BID has invested in a range of services and provisions that have supported our businesses and helped Halesowen maintain a strong image. Examples of this are improvements to the signage across our business parks, installation of CCTV, the introduction of a security radio network, Safety & PPE initiatives, business training and ensuring the town becomes inclusive to all visitors. with further applications for investment and the continued hard work of the BID team we can continue our role in fulfilling the aims laid out in this Business Plan.

Halesowen's Brand Development & Marketing Strategy

The issues:

- The BID has established a much larger presence across social media, local press, local and national television as well as remaining a key focus for public figures both in and out of office.
- External marketing has assisted in promoting attractions and events and with the success of our 2020 borough wide digital Christmas Lights switch on event we were able to work closely with Dudley MBC & Black Country Radio to bring Christmas joy and advertisement for local businesses to over 60,000 members of the community.
- The town continues to engage with everyone through its annual schedule of events, however due to the recent pandemic our visitors have not been able to experience the same memorable activities as we used to provide. We will aim to exceed expectations with events throughout 2022 - 2027

Halesowen as a Destination

The issues:

- Due to limited DMBC resources street and environmental cleaning standards are not as good as they potentially could be. Fly tipping on the pavements is a major issue as are graffiti laden walls and shopfronts.

- Events such as Halesowen in Bloom and the Christmas Lights add a touch of colour to the town and make it a much more pleasant place in which to be, however these are becoming more and more difficult to sustain due to increasing costs. More needs to be done to make the town attractive all year round and to build upon our current successes.
- Gone are the traditional 9am - 5pm shopping hours, with staff now working shifts, working from home and enduring longer days, the town needs to adapt to these changes. In order to attract young professionals into the town, a focus needs to be made on developing the nightlife available in a controlled and responsible manner.
- With the provision of extra CCTV and a stronger police street presence, we can begin focusing on developing a nightlife in Halesowen.
- Businesses in the town are often unaware of what is happening and they lack knowledge of the support that is available to them. Nor do they know how to resolve issues that impact on their businesses or have the time to follow them up in a satisfactory manner.
- With almost 5,000 students attending Halesowen College each year, dozens of visitors to The Cornbow Hall every week day and many hundreds attending the town's Leisure Centre, there is currently no information readily available which provides them with an introduction of the town and what is on offer. This is also applicable to visitors from out of town who arrive not knowing where to go and what there is on offer. There is a need for a 'Welcome' Information Pack to be developed to ensure that everyone receives the most from their visit and for adequate 'way finding' signage and directional information.

Halesowen as a Business Hub

The issues:

- Halesowen's strategic position on the main east/west routes from Birmingham to Stourbridge and Kidderminster and its close proximity to the M5 motorway, rail links and Birmingham International Airport makes it the perfect destination for start-up businesses and existing businesses seeking new locations. The BID has been able to support new businesses with claiming grant funding and finding new premises as well as marketing support and networking with other local businesses. The BID has more to do to provide resources and advice on key areas of business or to enable established businesses to coach others. We have the location and the facilities or the potential for their provision but we can do more to ensure they thrive.
- In addition, SMEs (Small to Medium sized Enterprises) are unsure of what to do when it comes to choosing the correct premises from which to conduct business. Because of the lack of guidance available, they simply choose to go elsewhere. The BID has proven that we can assist in providing this guidance.
- All businesses face rising costs and therefore are constantly looking for ways in which to save money. The BID is implementing more support for businesses to assist them financially. There is an aim to further reduce business spending during the next BID term.

- The BID has been fundamental in providing support for businesses looking to apply for grant funding. Most businesses are unable to spend time searching for grant funding and Local Authority support packages. There must be continued support for businesses hoping to receive specific funding if we intend to allow our local businesses to flourish.

Halesowen as a Connected Town

Often businesses located on the periphery of the town get left out of the action occurring within the centre. There is an opportunity to connect the town as well as the surrounding areas to create a greater visitor experience.

- We are privileged to be situated in an area of the Black Country that is connected by major public transport links. The BID has improved signage in and around the town as well as working hard to improve signage at Rowley Regis Train Station.
- The BID has long campaigned for improved parking and whilst we have achieved some success in being able to provide 2 hours free parking in the town, more can be done to ensure that we compete with Merry Hill shopping centre in order to improve footfall.

1. Consultation Process

September 2021

- March 2022

Halesowen BID Proposal Team will commence the consultation process with all the business properties within the defined proposed BID area.

A multi-faceted approach was used which included; face-to-face meetings, a survey and workshops. The BID Manager and members of the BID Development Team will carry out the consultation work.

The purpose of this research is to; confirm contact details of the key decision makers within each business, inform them of the BID process and the benefits that a BID could continue bringing to the town, and to obtain their views on how Halesowen could be improved.

Newsletters and information. Newsletters will be produced and **delivered by hand** to all of the businesses located within the defined area. They will be circulated with full information on the intention of the Halesowen BID company to seek to promote a Business Improvement District for Central Halesowen and give full information in summary as to the implications of this proposal. Full information will be given as to how to contact the Town Manager and about open days and Q&A sessions that will be available.

Feedback in general has been favourable, particularly from the individual traders who see the day to day efforts of the BID team to help support Halesowen Town Centre. They have understood how the BID has been an

essential part of their businesses' future and their hope to continue to thrive and expand. The feedback has been initially face-to-face. Only a very small number have expressed outright opposition to the proposal.

Press Releases and press publicity. We will implementing extensive press publicity in The Halesowen news and The Express and Star throughout the period from September to March 2022 and representatives of these media will be invited to most of the BID Q&A activates and committee meetings meetings, resulting in articles appearing in all three publications.

Open days and workshops. We will host two open Q&A sessions to which all traders and businesses will be invited, one in The Cornbow Hall in late October and the other in the Cornbow Hall in February.

Additionally, the Halesowen BID Office will be open for anyone looking to find out more about the BID proposal and the impact this will have on the town and the local traders.

Shared office buildings will also be visited where any tenants will be able to meet with the BID representatives to discuss the BID and find out more information.

Surveys. Between September 2021 and February 2022 the BID Company will conduct a survey of all the business premises within the proposed BID area to obtain data and information about the decision makers at each location. This will involve extensive one-to-one discussions with many of the traders and businesses. The full implications of the proposal will be fully explained and the ramifications for each business fully explored.

There are more than 350 individual businesses within the proposed area embracing retail, finance and professional services, manufacturing and warehousing and service industries such as car maintenance and repair and other similar businesses. A number of the premises are occupied by charities comprising some 10 charity shops, 4 charity headquarters and one regional charity office.

The survey interviews will include in most instances an explanation of the nature of a BID, the implications for each individual business and to gauge the reaction of the interviewee as to their likely attitude to the proposal. In all cases explanatory leaflets were left giving full information about the proposal and how to contact the BID Manager.

Of the 350 plus businesses, we anticipate over 150 positive responses in support of the initiative, 8 opposed. The remainder are difficult to gauge as they are mainly national companies with decision makers located elsewhere.

In these latter cases, letters explaining the proposals will be sent by post to the declared head offices and addressed to the persons understood to be the decision makers in January and February 2022 with full contact information and enclosing explanatory leaflets.

Survey questions included:

1. Do you know what the Halesowen BID is?
2. Do you understand the implications for your business?
3. Does Halesowen require the support of the Halesowen BID?
4. What initiatives by the BID would you expect that would help your business?
5. When asked to vote on these proposals, are you likely to vote in favour or against?
6. Are you interested in becoming actively involved in the management of the BID if it receives a vote in favour?

2. Halesowen BID's Mission Statement

“Together we'll prosper by creating a brighter and stronger town; a visitor magnet and a thriving, attractive business destination; enjoying a clean, safe and pleasant area by all those that live, work and socialise within it”.

3. BID Strategic Objectives

The Halesowen BID will focus on areas of activity that businesses within the BID area have informed us are important through the consultation process already undertaken:

- **Experiential Destination** – We need to create fresh, modern and exciting experiences for our town's visitors to enhance their engagement with our levy payers
- **Environmentally Focused** – enhance the appearance of our town whilst incorporating new ways to take care of our environment.
- **Economy Focused Support** – support new and existing businesses and build a wider business support community.

Under-pinning the whole BID Proposal is the use of effective communication as well as working together to achieve a common aim.

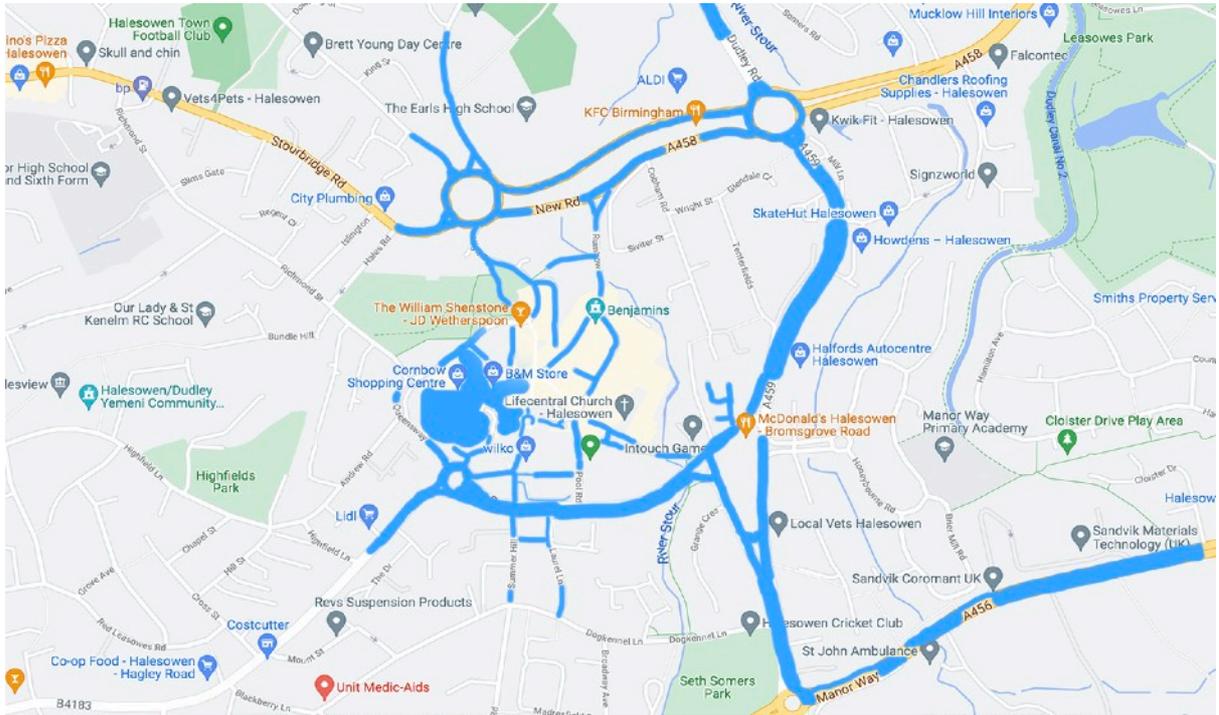
4. The BID Area

The streets that fall within the Halesowen BID proposed area cover not only the Town Centre but also the surrounding areas and consist of more than 330 active companies with some 30 premises currently vacant in total. The vacancies in the retail areas are fluid and the number change a occupations change.

Areas within the BID area:-

- Andrew Road (Car Park and Day Centre)
- Birmingham Street
- Bromsgrove Road (including Shenstone Trading Estate)
- Bull Ring
- Cornbow Centre (Hagley Mall and Queensway Mall)
- Dudley Road (Halesowen College Annexe and Numbers 5, 5a & 11)
- Earls Way
- Furnace Lane (Earls High School)
- Grammar School Lane (Borough Court)
- Great Cornbow (including Fountain House)
- Hagley Road (from Lidl Supermarket towards the town centre)
- Hagley Street
- High Street (including Plaza Mall)
- Laurel Lane (Neville House and Halesowen Police Station)
- Little Cornbow (including Zion Church Centre)
- Mill Lane
- New Road (Trinity Point)
- Peckingham Street
- Pool Road
- Queensway (including Maybrook House)
- Rumbow
- Stourbridge Road (2 & 10 and Hales Court and Church Court)
- Summer Hill (1, 49 & 51)
- Vine Lane
- Whitehall Road
- Manor Way

- The BID area was defined geographically as the core of the town and the key periphery areas.



5. The BID Duration

The proposed commencement date for the BID is 1st August 2022 will be for a period of 5 years. The 5 year period is in line with 98% of successful BID ballots nationally. While the BID could be for 3 to 5 years, the view is that 5 years gives time to operate effectively for a substantial period, adjusting during that time if needed and still deliver successful outcomes.

The BID period has been the subject of consultation as part of this Proposal and has been endorsed on every occasion by those supporting a BID.

6. BID Membership

In order to generate significant funding membership of the BID should include all businesses that fall within the proposed BID area with a Rateable Value (RV). Only those that would be liable to pay a levy will be entitled to a vote.

All defined ratepayers will be entitled to one vote per rateable hereditament (item of property), if the business occupies more than one hereditament they will receive additional ballot papers.

7. BID Levy

The proposed BID levy will raise approximately £600,000 over the 5 year life of the BID, that will be spent exclusively in the BID area during its 5 year life. The amount of levy that will be required from each business levy payer will be calculated at 1.25% of the rateable value (RV).

The occupiers or if appropriate the owners of unoccupied property (being the persons entitled to possession of the property), of all property with an entry in the Rating Lists held by Dudley MBC as at 1st August 2022 for the area of the BID will be liable to pay the levy. The owners (as defined above) of vacant properties undergoing refurbishment or being demolished will also be liable.

The only exception will be that the owners of vacant former business properties undergoing refurbishment as dwellings will be exempt from the levy.

The local authority is entitled to make a deduction from the proceeds of the levy for the costs of collecting the levy at a rate agreed with the BID Company.

The table below provides an indication of the amount that each business would be liable to pay.

Rateable Value Range	Annual Levy @ 1.25% *	Weekly Amount
£	£ - p	£ - p
Under 1,000	Up to £12.50	Up to 24p
1,001 to 5,000	12.52 - £62.50	24p – 1.20
5,001 to 10,000	62.51 – 125.00	1.21 – 2.40
10,001 to 12,500	125.00 – 156.25	2.40 – 3.00
12,501 to 15,000	156.26 – 187.50	3.01 – 3.61
15,001 to 25,000	187.51 – 312.50	3.61 – 6.01
25,001 to 50,000	312.51 – 625.00	6.01 – 12.02
50,0001 to 100,000	625.01 – 1,250.00	12.02 – 24.04
100,001 to 200,000	1,250.01 – 2,500.00	24.04 – 48.08

- The levy will be fixed at 1.25% of rateable value (RV) using the 2022 rating list as at 1st August 2022.
- The BID levy will be applied to all business ratepayers located within the BID area with the only exception that the owners of vacant former business properties undergoing refurbishment as dwellings will be exempt from the levy.
- All new hereditaments entering the rating list after 1st August 2022 will be levied at 1.25% on the prevailing list.
- Any levy payer vacating a property during the year will only be liable for the levy for the period during which they are in occupation and based on the equivalent daily rate.
- Vacant properties, properties undergoing refurbishment or being demolished will be liable for the BID levy, payable by the owner or registered business rates payer.
- The BID levy will not be affected by the Small Business Rate Relief Schemes, service charges paid to landlords, business rates exemption, reliefs, discount periods or any schemes in the National Non-Domestic Rates Regulations 1989.
- The levy is not subject to VAT.

The BID Levy can only be collected by DMBC on behalf of the BID Company. This money will then be ring-fenced and transferred into a BID account which is managed by the BID Company and BID Board.

The levy will be on a Chargeable Day basis and due as a single annual payment collected by DCC in April each year. In appropriate circumstances, the Council may collect the levy in two half yearly instalments where the charge is above £500.00 per annum.

Landlords will be liable for the levy on a vacant property and no charity relief will apply.

Voluntary Contributions

It is not uncommon in BIDs for businesses and organisations within the proposed BID area to make voluntary contributions.

If an organisation wishes to participate then this will be agreed with the BID Board and arrangements made on an individual basis.

Voluntary Contributors will have a say about how the BID is delivered by way of the BID Board, the AGM and through the BID team. However, they will not have a vote in the Ballot or at the AGM unless they are also levy payers.

Education, Street Traders, Churches and Advertising Bill Boards may all generate additional voluntary contributions.

8. BID Ballot

The Ballot will be conducted by DMBC to ensure that it is carried out to the Government Legislation of 2004 which outlines the rules and regulations under which the BID ballot must be conducted.

The BID vote will take place by the issue of ballot papers on 10th June 2022 and every levy paying business that is within the BID area will have the opportunity to vote. The BID can only be formed following consultation which has already taken place and a ballot in which businesses vote on a BID Proposal or Business Plan for the area.

In order for the ballot to be successful it must be won on two counts to ensure that the interests of large and small businesses are protected;

- 1) Straight majority **YES** vote of over 50% by number of those voting and a
- 2) Majority by rateable value of those voting

Once a ballot is successful the BID levy is compulsory for all eligible businesses. This levy can only be collected by the local authority on behalf of the BID Company and is duly ring-fenced for projects set out in the BID Business Plan.

Ballot papers will be sent to ratepayers on 10th June 2022 and must be returned no later than 5.00 p.m. on 11th July 2022 The result will be announced after completion of counting.

9. BID Levy Collection Costs 2017-2022

The collection costs for this service will be as follows:

Financial Year	2021/22 £	2022/23 £	2024/25 £	2026/27 £	2028/29 £	2030/31 £	Total £
Software & set up *	4,000	1,340	5,500	5,500	5,500	5,500	27,340
Collection fee **							
Total							

NB. Although the BID will have a life of five years, as it is likely to start operations in August 2022 it will span six financial years.

* These costs are estimates based upon information from the software suppliers and assuming that Dudley MBC will be willing to accept payment spread over the life of the BID.

** This fee will be subject to agreement between the BID Company and Dudley MBC but is unlikely to be a significant sum.

With some 350 plus hereditaments in the proposed BID area, there is a small per hereditament collection fee per annum and in addition there is the cost of the associated software and set up costs. These are not additional costs to levy payers but will be paid from the total levy received as an on-going cost by the BID Company. This includes all collection, follow up and activity associated with ensuring that the levy is paid in full by all those liable for it.

The BID will adhere to the Rateable Value on the Rating List, and after 2022/23 the levy placed upon it at 1st August 2022 and 1st April each year subsequently, for the life of the BID. Where a property is subject to change of use from business to residential then the levy will cease in the year after which the change takes place. No refund of levy or part levy will be payable in this instance.

The levy for new, extended or altered properties liable for the BID will be collected in the first year in which they appear on the Rating List.

The BID will not take any account of changes to the rating regime, proposed for 2022, and will collect the levy set at the date of the Ballot, in each year of the BID.

An Operating Agreement will be set in place to regulate the procedures for the transition of levy payer funds to the BID and the necessary banking arrangements.

There will be quarterly meetings with DMBC to monitor levy collection rates and other financial matters.

10. Working with Existing Service Providers

The services provided by a BID are over and above those provided by local councils and other statutory providers. BIDs enter into baseline agreements with the local authority and other service providers which demonstrate the level of service provision in the area. These arrangements ensure that any services the BID provides are truly additional to any that were previously supplied.

Statutory services have to continue to be provided by the relevant authorities; however, both statutory and discretionary services are subject to resource constraints and the BID will work with the providers to minimise the impact of such pressures. These arrangements will be subject to annual review.

The actual baselines will be established by agreement between the Interim BID Company Management and the statutory providers but will need to be monitored and varied as circumstances dictate during the life of the BID.

Section 2 – What the BID Will Achieve

2.0 An Experiential Destination

Faced with fierce competition from glitzy shopping centres and the lure of online shopping Halesowen needs to take every opportunity to create unique, interesting and engaging events and activities to attract visitors. By creating experiential activity we can more easily communicate what Halesowen has to offer for visitors and by developing our creativity in events and activities, we can work to introduce more short term and long term additions to our town. The BID can offer our local businesses and its visitors more interactive experiences and build a sense of community to help drive footfall to our town centre.

Events & Activities

During its first term Halesowen BID have launched and managed a series of successful events that has increased town footfall. We have encouraged residents and visitors to join us to celebrate, participate and interact with engaging events and interactive experiences across the town centre.

The BID's investment in creating opportunities to bring our communities together will remain a key focus for a second term. With key calendar events that require continued financial support, The BID will establish new and exciting events across the town to encourage further footfall and establish Halesowen as a destination. These include street food experiences, Santa's Grotto's, Local Trade Pop-Up Shops, outdoor cinema experiences and further collaboration with our town market to allow local traders an opportunity to increase trade and reach new customers.

Welcome Spaces

The BID has increased its commitment to keeping our town clean and vibrant. By working closely and supporting organisations like Halesowen In Bloom we have been able to transform many of our public spaces. Projects like the town's Friendly bench and the hand painted picnic benches have already had a huge positive impact. This however; is only the start.

The BID will continue to invest in creating unique public spaces where visitors can meet, interact and engage within unique environments. We plan to generate green, clean and calm public areas where families, friends and colleagues can experience a town centre experience that increases visitor dwell time and encourages further visitor growth.

Connecting To The Digital Future

Halesowen has a unique opportunity to harness emerging technologies to create new and exciting digital experiences across our town centre. From QR code technology to Augmented Reality projects, The Halesowen BID are already starting to plan new ways in which our visitors can interact with our businesses. By creating cutting edge digital experiences; setting us apart from our neighbouring towns, we can entice younger generations of visitors and families to connect with our businesses and the digital future of high street shopping experiences.

2.1 An Eco-Friendly Future

Halesowen, like most towns and cities is continually striving for a greener future. During the BID's first term, we have enhanced opportunities to recycle and created eco-friendly spaces that support our natural wildlife and eco systems.

Greener Future For Businesses

The BID will continue to invest in new ways to protect our environment and will also look to procure further funding to support our businesses with ways in which to improve their CO2 output. By supporting our businesses in reducing fossil fuel consumption we can assist with saving them money on utility bills and further support their efforts to reuse and recycle. We will look to create a sustainability action plan carrying out a gap analysis audit we wish to ensure that our town contributes to clean air and forward thinking community that enriches our local contribution to keeping our environment clean and. Carbon neutral.

Cleaner Streets

Whilst the BID have been able to enhance cleaning street cleaning provision across the town there is still work to be done in effectively deterring fly tipping and littering. Keeping our town clean will feature heavily in the BID's plan to secure an eco-friendly future for Halesowen.

The BID aims to continue working closely with the Local Authority to ensure Halesowen remains litter free. We will also support local businesses who regularly deal with fly-tipping and unwanted rubbish around their properties. By increasing CCTV operations further and providing necessary guidance and support we aim to keep Halesowen a clean and safe town to visit.

Plants, Parks & Wildlife

The Halesowen BID has worked closely with partner organisations to bring more plant life in to the town centre. The BID had introduced the regions's first Buzz Stop a unique eco-friendly structure that not only provides a contemporary shelter for public transport users, but also supports our local bee population. The BID has also introduced pocket parks in to the town and has supported the efforts of Halesowen in Bloom allowing volunteers to change unwanted spaces of land in to thriving gardens.

Halesowen has many unknown green spaces and the BID will continue to seek new ways to not only work with local and national organisations to bring the latest eco-friendly ideas and opportunities to Halesowen but to also attract new funding streams that can further protect our environment and increase our town's sustainability.

Climate Alliance

Working with our businesses we will commit to making a change with the introduction of Carbon calculators, waste and travel audits and sharing best practice. We wish to create a caring business community and assist our businesses in achieving a carbon neutral working environment.

2.2 A Thriving Local Economy

With over 350 businesses within the BID area it is of paramount importance that they see a return on investment if they are to survive. In order to do so business support needs to be provided by the BID in order to upskill and coach individuals to success.

In its first term the BID has supported local businesses with a hands-on approach, giving time and attention to any of the members of the BID area when required. The Bid manager, ambassador and volunteers have dedicated hours of their time patrolling the town, meeting, greeting and supporting businesses old and new. Supporting local business remains our number one priority and we will continue to work hard on behalf of our traders to ensure a healthy economic future for our town.

Direct Assistance

Our Bid Management team have been on hand to support business owners and managers directly. Our town centre office has become a hub for information and enquiries for businesses across the town and the region. Located in Somers square the BID has delivered personal and bespoke support for a wide range of issues, incidents and general enquiries on a daily basis.

The BID understands the importance of a human approach to its levy payers and the BID will continue to maintain an open door policy. Further to that, we will continue to ensure that every business has the opportunity to meet and spend time with our BID management team whether during a town patrol or through an organised meeting. We will continue to provide direct assistance to each and every business in Halesowen.

Professional Support

Many of Halesowen's businesses faced incredibly difficult times during the 2020/21 Corona virus pandemic. The roll out of much needed funding from the UK government created challenges of its own with grant and funding applications. Many of these applications had detailed terms and conditions and specific eligibility requirements. The BID were on hand to support our local traders with information, support in finding the correct funding streams and grants and also provided one to one support in completing documentation and applying for funding.

As part of the BID's professional support for Halesowen businesses during the pandemic we have strengthened our relationship with the local authority and local government representatives to ensure that we continue to lobby for further funding and development in our town centre. The BID will continue to represent the businesses of Halesowen, listen to our members concern's and ensure that their voice is heard. It was this relationship that allowed our traders to be one of the first to receive information and applications ahead of other regions in the Midlands.

A Warm Welcome

The BID will continue to welcome new business and provide all necessary support from marketing, information, advice and guidance to assist new businesses in their first few days of trading. The BID has not only supported new business in Halesowen but it has also worked hard to introduce businesses to potential locations to set up shops and offices.

Security

The BID has become an integral part of keeping Halesowen Businesses safe. Working closely with local police the BID has assisted local businesses with a wide number of security issues. The BID will continue to lobby for improved police presence, CCTV coverage and will be on hand to assist any business or visitor with security concerns across the town.

Section 3: Working Arrangements

3.1 Communication

Effective communication between the BID Company and the BID levy payers is critical to the success of the Halesowen BID. This is also true of any relationship that the BID Company forms such as with its existing partners (DMBC, West Midlands Police Service, etc.) and any newly formed partnerships. There is the need for everyone to work harmoniously together to achieve one common aim, which is the success of the town in terms of prosperity.

This section sets out how through effective communication and a holistic approach we will;

- Operate the BID
- Make key decisions
- Spend the BID Money
- Provide value to levy payers via the delivery of the BID
- Encourage levy payers to have a say about the day to day running of the BID

3.2 Governance: The Operation of the BID

Governance of the BID is vital to enable levy payers to participate and oversee the work of the BID and the way in which it spends their money. It is to be made clear to all involved that the Central Halesowen BID Company will deliver the BID, not DMBC. The BID Company will be governed by a Board of Directors who will be directly accountable to the BID levy payers.

The Board of the BID Company will be representative of the make-up of the business community within the defined BID area and principle business sectors. To ensure that the BID is established effectively, the members of the BID Development Team (see below) will serve as an interim Board until such time as, (within the first three to six months) a full Board of Directors with clearly defined terms of reference, can be elected and brought into place.

The BID Company is a 'Not for Profit Company Limited by Guarantee' and therefore any surplus funds must be spent during the agreed 5 year term of the BID on the delivery of the services and projects agreed by levy payers in conjunction with the Board of Directors.

The BID will be managed by a Central Halesowen Town Manager to ensure that all projects are delivered efficiently and effectively and in strict accordance with the aims and objectives set out within this Proposal and in the associated BID Business Plan.

BID projects, costs and timescales may be altered by the Board of Directors provided any such changes remain in line with the BID's overall objectives as set out in the BIS Proposal. The BID Board

of Directors will meet at least six times per year and the BID Company will produce a set of annual accounts. These will be made available as well as an annual report detailing the BID's achievements and the progress made throughout the year to all levy payers.

BID Board

This Board is as follows:

- Eve O'Connor (Centre Manager, Cornbow Shopping Centre & Chairman, Halesowen In Bloom)
- Nick Burton (Ruskin Properties)
- Tracey Nicholls (WorkoutzFitness)
- Dean Ford (Owner, Full Range Print Solutions)
- Jamie Green (Community and Engagement Manager, Halesowen College)
- Dave Dancer (BID Development Manager)
- Zoe Gmaj (Visitor Economy Development Officer, Dudley Council)
- Lisa Starkey (Director, Starkey Electrical)
- Andy Hancock (Associate Pastor, Life Central Church)
- Matt Mc Swiggan (Business Insurance Professional, Beam)

It is intended that Board places will be for a period of 3 years and this will be enabled by allocating initial periods of 1, 2 or 3 years to new Board members, subject to their agreement. In this way a cycle will be created so that the transition is managed appropriately.

Selection in the event of more than one nominee per place will be by ballot of those attending the BID AGM.

The recruitment of new Board members will be by nomination by designated organisations (DMBC, West Midlands Police Service and West Midlands Fire Service) and by self-nomination by local businesses/levy payers.

An independent Chair will be appointed by the Board from among their number. This must be a person currently running a levy-paying business within the town's BID area.

The independent non-executive Board will run the BID on behalf of Levy Payers and only the BID Manager will receive payment as an employee of the BID.

Area and Sector Representation

With regard to the six proposed places for BID Levy payers on the Board, these will cover;

- Retail
- Business, Law, Property & Finance
- Manufacturing and Warehousing

- Education
- Independent Businesses
- Other Professional Services

Community Representation

The interests of the local community should be represented on the BID Board, therefore an open invitation will be offered to representatives from Halesowen in Bloom and the Civic Society for example in a non-voting observer position.

Reporting: Making Decisions

The BID Board will meet at least six times per year for the life of the BID delivering and controlling the agreed BID Business Plan in accordance with this BID Proposal. Minutes will be documented at each meeting and made available to all BID Levy payers via the intranet.

BID Levy payers will have an opportunity to voice their opinions and suggestion via feedback mechanisms including the AGM, intranet site, quarterly BID clinics and via the BID Board Members.

Reporting: Spending the BID money

BID Clinics will be held quarterly for BID levy payers to receive an update on the BID's progress and a BID Annual General Meeting (AGM) will also be held.

In addition, the work of the BID will mean that the BID Team will be meeting with levy payers on a regular basis and therefore will be able to update them informally during these times.

BID Staffing Structure

In the event of a successful Ballot, the BID Board will oversee the BID's operation, delivering the actions set out in this Proposal and the Business Plan.

The BID Board will agree the staff structure, pay and conditions of the BID Company employee/employees. The permanent BID Board will be in place from 12th July 2022. A BID manager has already been appointed and will continue to work as part of the BID team.

3.2 BID Finances: 2017-2022

The allocation of resources is based on the delivery of the BID's three strategic goals.

- An Experiential Destination
- An Eco-Friendly Future
- A Thriving Local Economy

Income

Financial Year	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Total
Levy	80,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	40,000	600,000
Voluntary Contributions							
Total							

The BID finances for the proposed 5 year period will comprise the following components over and above the Levy:

Voluntary Contributions

It is anticipated that businesses may choose to contribute in the event of a successful Ballot and we will encourage them to do so. However, we have only accounted for the known contributions in the BID Financial projections.

Expenditure

While the BID will generate overheads, the commitment is that this will never exceed 12.5% of levy payer funds and every effort will be made to maintain them at a lower level during the life of the BID.

It is not possible prior to start of operations by the BID Company to set out details of how much of the levy funds will be spent on each segment.

The table on the following page sets out the principal heads of expenditure acknowledging that in the earlier years, expenditure will be heavier on some segments and in the latter years, on other segments e.g. expenditure on Stronger Image and Creation of a Thriving Business Hub will be higher in the earlier years whilst expenditure on other segments will increase steadily as the life of the BID progresses. The principal Heads of Expenditure are:

Expenditure on Projects
Improving and developing experiential activities and events in Halesowen
Promoting Halesowen as a visitor destination
Making Halesowen a Brighter more attractive place in which to shop and enjoy leisure activities.
Developing modern digital technology and incorporating its use in our town

Expenditure on Overheads
Meeting the cost of software for billing and collecting the levy funds
Paying the Council's administrative costs of billing and collection of the levy funds
The costs of professional fees – legal, accountancy etc.
The costs of development and maintenance of the BID Company's Website and other IT requirements.
Recruitment and costs of employment staff and contractors as necessary.
Provision for Reserves and Contingencies.

The BID Manager will operate from office accommodation in Central Halesowen, Hobbs Corner, Somer's Square. This places the manager in the heart of the BID area and thus easily accessible to traders and businesses alike.

Contingency and Reserves

The BID will allocate an average of 5% of income as contingency/reserves over the course of the BID period. Adjustments to this allocation will take place as each year's operation and any surplus accrued will be evaluated by the BID Board.

Financial Reporting

The BID Board will receive monthly financial reports from the BID Manager, and provide DMBC with reports detailing monthly income, expenditure and an overall balance sheet. A mailed Billing Leaflet will be issued at the same time as the Bill.

There will be quarterly meetings with DMBC to monitor levy collection rates and other financial matters.

An independent accountant will be enlisted and will report on the accounts each year, for submission to Companies' House.

Variation Policy

The only elements of the BID that are **not** open to variation without reference to a Ballot during the life of the BID are the BID Area and the BID Levy.

The following are areas where the BID Board will have the discretion to alter arrangements during the BID to ensure operational and strategic advantage for the levy payers, as long as these alterations are in line with the overriding BID objectives set out in this Proposal and Business Plan:

- **Re-allocation of resources at any time:** the BID Board can authorise changes to the resources allocated to individual projects and between activities if it is to be to the benefit of the BID Levy payers.
- **Management and operating structure:** the BID Board are responsible for ensuring that the management of the BID is effective and that the operating structure is fit for purpose at all times. The BID Board may make changes as they see fit at any stage of the BID in order to ensure that this is the case.

Measurement: Delivering Value to the BID Levy Payers

Return on Investment (ROI) is a key component of the BID and it is essential that the ROI is clear for levy payers. Measures will include:

- Footfall
- Sales
- Crime
- Event Numbers

The BID team will work to ensure that the information gathered is relevant, timely and able to be measured against national benchmarks to provide crucial data upon which to make sound business decisions throughout the five years of the BID. Monthly reports will be presented to the BID Board to ensure that levy payers' funds are producing a substantial return on investment.