



Report for:	Cabinet
Title of report:	Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Business Improvement District – Ballot arrangements and Business Plan
Date:	27 th September 2022
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Alan Anderson, Portfolio Holder for Place
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	
Appendices:	1 – Proposed BID Business Plan 2 – Map of BID Area 3 – Letter to Secretary of State 8 July 2022
Background papers:	
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	BID – Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Business Improvement District RV – Rateable Value of properties

Report Author / Responsible Officer

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Corporate Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A clean, safe and enjoyable environment• Building strong and vibrant communities• Ensuring economic growth and prosperity• Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery
Wards affected	All Hemel Hempstead Wards, but especially Hemel Hempstead Town Ward.
Purpose of the report:	To set out for Cabinet's consideration, approval of the new Business Plan for the next phase of Hemel Town Centre BID along with the arrangements for a ballot of businesses within the defined levy area.
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. That Cabinet approves the Business Plan for the next phase of the Hemel Hempstead Town Centre BID as attached at Appendix 3 to this report2. That Cabinet confirms arrangements, as set out in this report, for a ballot of businesses within the defined BID levy area for

	Thursday 24 November 2022 with the Count to take place on Friday 25 November 2022.
Period for post policy/project review:	It is proposed that an annual review of the BID's performance is carried out annually.

1 Introduction/Background

Hemel Town Centre BID has been running now for nearly five years following a successful and positive ballot of businesses and landowners at the time. Dacorum Borough Council is a key partner within the BID and indeed a levy payer for the properties it owns within the levy area. It has permanent representation on the BID Board and currently the Strategic Director for Place occupies this position as a Director of the BID.

BIDs can only run for a five year period and must seek re-election if they are to continue. Hemel Town Centre BID wishes to seek a further five year term and the purpose of this report is to present to Cabinet both the future Business Plan and outline ballot arrangements, for which the Council is responsible for.

Hemel Town Centre BID has been effective over the past five years and a number of its achievements are summarised in the Business Plan which is appended to this report. It adds value through the financial resource obtained from the payment of the BID levy by businesses. Importantly for the Council, a further BID term can help to support the efforts it is currently making to put in place a new strategy for the future of Hemel Town Centre.

2 Key Issues and proposals

Proposed Business Plan

A 'text-only' version of the latest draft is at Appendix 1. The BID will prepare a final version with photos, illustrations etc.

Members will note that Hemel BID has been running successfully for nearly five years. BIDs run on a five-yearly term and, to enable them to continue beyond this period, they must seek re-election on the basis of a proposed levy area, levy arrangements and intended activities set out in a Business Plan covering the next five year period.

For Hemel Town Centre, no changes are proposed to the levy area, nor the levy rate of 1.5% of the rateable value (RV) of property.

The proposed levy area is shown on the map at Appendix 2. The area extends northwards from, and including, the Riverside Shopping Centre, the whole of the Marlowes pedestrianised area, the indoor Marlowes Shopping Centre, Bridge Street (south side only), Waterhouse Street as far north as Combe Street, and the Council's car parks at Moor End Road and Water Gardens South and North.

The BID hopes to raise in the order of £750k over next five years starting in early 2023 with the majority of this coming from levy payments.

The Business Plan is based on three key themes for the levy area within Hemel Town Centre: 1 – **Experience** – place marketing; 2 – **Caring** – looking at the presentation and perception of the town centre; and 3 – **Safety** – to provide a friendly and welcoming environment.

Proposed actions, which are broad in nature, are set out in the business plan. Its content is based on feedback from levy payers and users of the town centre and reflects the priorities they consider the BID should be focusing on. Detailed actions, targets and performance and success indicators will be developed by the BID on the basis of a successful ballot outcome.

Ballot Arrangements

Dacorum Borough Council is responsible for holding ballot arrangements and managing the electoral process. The Council's elections team has been involved in arrangements and is geared up to support them.

Around 180 properties, or hereditaments, are eligible to vote in the BID ballot. For the BID to be confirmed, there must be a majority on the following two counts: firstly, a simple numerical majority of votes cast, and secondly, a majority according to rateable value (RV) of the businesses that cast ballots. To be clear, these majorities are determined on ballots cast only, and not on the total number of hereditaments – and the total RV – of the levy area, whether they voted or not.

If confirmed by the Borough Council, the ballot will take place from 25 October and run to Thursday 24 November when it will close. The count is scheduled to take place within office hours for Friday 25 November.

The Council's Chief Executive will be the Returning Officer for the ballot.

Ballots can be returned by post, and it is expected that most will take place in this way. Arrangements will also be put in place for ballot boxes in locations to be agreed. Presently it is expected that one will be available at The Forum, and another at a location within the levy area, for the duration of the ballot period.

Following a positive vote, the new BID arrangements will come into effect on 1 February 2023.

A letter notifying the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities of the BID's intention to seek a new ballot was sent by the BID Chair, Humphrey Mwanza on 8 July 2022 and this is attached at Appendix 3 to this report.

3 Consultation:

A list of consultees for this decision are as follows:

- Councillor Alan Anderson, Portfolio Holder for Place
- Strategic Leadership Team
- Hemel Place Strategy Programme Manager
- The Council's Elections Manager
- Chris Turner, CEO – British BIDs
- Humphrey Mwanza – Chair, Hemel Town Centre BID

4 Financial and value for money implications:

The proposals for a second BID phase for Hemel Town Centre offer the opportunity to continue to levy businesses within the defined area to provide additional resources to support and promote activity within the area. On this basis it provides very good value for money.

The Borough Council is a landowner within the levy area and, as such, levy payments will continue to apply to affected property which is essentially the three public car parks at Moor End Road and Water Gardens South and North. The levy rate remains unchanged and payments are built into current budgets.

5 Legal Implications:

None directly arising from this report. Arrangement for the BID ballot, for which the Council has responsibility, are set out in the report above.

6 Risk implications:

Hemel BID has been operating successfully for nearly five years and the resources it has brought in through levy payments have enabled a number of successful interventions, activities and improvements to take place, as summarised in the Business Plan. There is likely to be a public expectation that these will continue. Should support not be given to the new proposals for a second phase of the BID, or should the ballot fail, there will be a resourcing gap. As noted in the report, the Council's plans for the next stages of regeneration of Hemel Town Centre in the light of changing circumstances, retailing patterns and the risk of town centre decline, could be put at some risk by the absence of resources to encourage footfall, activity and business growth.

7 Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:

A Community Impact assessment is being prepared. Members should note that the implementation of the Business Plan is the responsibility of the Hemel BID rather than the Council, although the Council is a key partner. The proposals in the Business Plan are broad and their aim is to encourage activity for all sections of the community in the town centre. It is not expected that any equalities or community impacts will arise, though the Community Impact Assessment will address any issues.

There are no Human Rights implications arising from this report.

8 Sustainability implications (including climate change, health and wellbeing, community safety):

None at this stage.

9 Council infrastructure (including Health and Safety, HR/OD, assets and other resources):

As noted above, the main Council property within the levy area includes its three main car parks adjacent to Waterhouse Street and the Water Gardens. The Business Plan proposals do not affect them. The Council owns other assets within the levy area such as the play areas, rainbow stage, waterplay feature and the big screen, and is the freeholder for other assets such as the food court, travel office/toilets and the Roundhouse which are let to other organisations.

11 Statutory Comments

Monitoring Officer:

The formal ballot will follow the procedures as set out in the Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004. The Council's electoral services team will be running the ballot to ensure that it is compliant with the regulations.

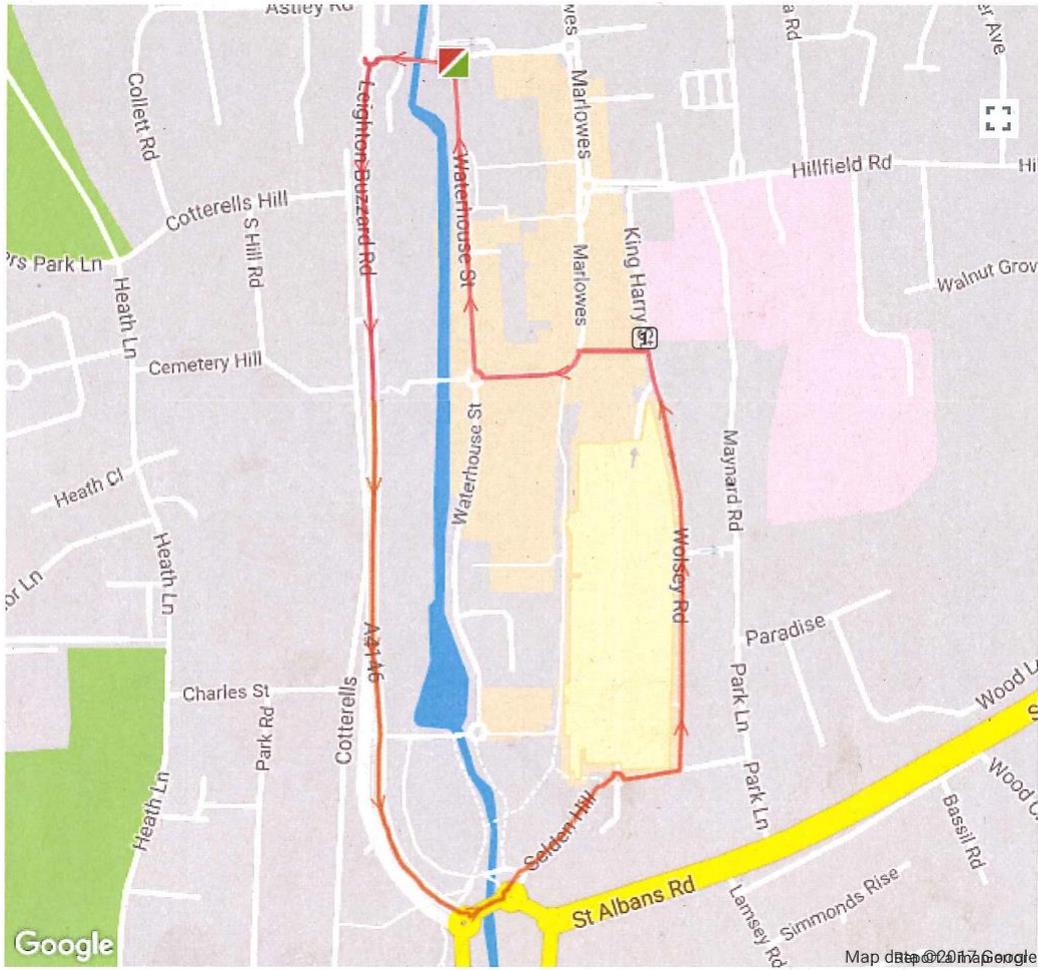
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No further comments to the report.

12 Conclusions

At a time of considerable change in Hemel Town Centre, where retailing patterns have changed substantially over the past few years, and as the Council brings forward new plans for its future, it is considered that an active and vibrant BID is essential. The proposals set out in this report and the proposed BID Business Plan will enable the positive work carried out by Hemel Town Centre BID to date to continue for a further five year term.

Appendix 1 – BID Area



Appendix 2 – Letter to Secretary of State