



ANNUAL

ANNUAL REPORT



REPORT



Halifax BID
2019/20

Welcome

Welcome to the Halifax BID annual report for 2019/20.



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Lively & Well Promoted



Shop Local Messaging

As you'd expect for an initiative designed to generate more business for them, our Christmas 'Shop Local' campaign was well received by retailers. Our creative team worked hard to design a compelling campaign that promoted the message in a clear and attractive way, and we took every opportunity to plug the key message in our wider Christmas publicity. The public responded well: although the temptation of low-cost of online shopping remains, people increasingly understand the wider benefits of supporting local shops and services.

Christmas Lights Switch-on

For 2019 we made a bold decision, moving the Christmas Lights Switch-on to a new venue at George's Square. It's an area better able to accommodate the growing number of people who attend this highlight of the Christmas calendar. The move was a resounding success, and we estimate that more than 4,000 people safely enjoyed live music and entertainment as well as some free giveaways. The town's special new Christmas lights, shaped like Quality Street chocolates, also went down well. An interesting fact people stayed in Halifax for longer, which no doubt translated to higher till sales for many of the town's businesses.

Digital Board & Christmas Publicity

As always, we ran a high-profile publicity and PR campaign to tempt residents and visitors into Halifax this Christmas. As well as notifying them about Christmas events, we also used it to spread the 'shop local' message. We have taken over the management of a digital advertising board outside Heron Foods as part of this publicity drive, and we also coordinated visits to events and interviews by shopkeepers with Leeds TV. Social media was also key to our wider publicity effort, so we ran a busy campaign on Facebook and Instagram.

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Easter Trail

A number of businesses took part in our special Easter Trail, and treasure maps were made available around town, in businesses, and at local schools. To increase participation and maximise revenue for levy payers, every completed entry earned its applicant a modest gift, while the winners received bigger prizes of Easter eggs.

Elves

Although our new elf costumes were a big hit with onlookers, the Elves Workshop itself was quieter than expected. To combat this we're already thinking about next year's show, including taking the elves out of the workshop and onto the streets. Street entertainment was extremely popular during Christmas 2019, and the elves always do a great job of spreading information about other events, so it makes good sense not to confine them to a single venue. We might decide to continue with the free wrapping service this year, but instead offer it from a small 'wrap station' in the Borough Market.

People stayed in Halifax for longer, which no doubt translated to higher till sales for many of the town's businesses.



Christmas Lights

**4,000
Visitors**

Food & Drink: The Festival & Guide

The Food & Drink Festival gave us a great chance to tap into this popular lifestyle and retail theme, and we managed to attract visitors from near and far. Organised by Calderdale Markets, this year's summer festival saw roughly 80 stalls occupying the town centre, and BID played a major role in the promotional campaign around the event. For 2019 we also updated the handy Food & Drink Guide so it remains a superb guide for residents and visitors alike. More people are spending more of their money on things like eating out, so events like this – and guides to them – have never been more important.

Supporting Partner Events

The popular Festival of Words was another event we sponsored in 2019, celebrating all forms of language including books, music, illustration and the spoken word. The event was smoothly run and well attended, and as well as giving a platform to local writers and creatives, it has also helped to establish Halifax as a cultural destination that supports and showcases the arts. We also supported the Halifax-based Calderdale Pride festival with a financial contribution – all part of our strategy to help make Halifax a modern, vibrant and inclusive destination for locals and visitors alike.

Halloween generated extra trade for local businesses at a traditionally quiet time of year.

Festive Entertainment

As always we worked extremely hard to book, create and manage a wide range of festive events this Christmas, with an emphasis on making Halifax a fun place to visit for all the family. Wherever possible we took opportunities to encourage visitors to explore more of the town and extend their stay, helping to generate extra trade for local businesses. We made a particular effort to make events accessible and affordable too, with most of them totally free.

The big success stories from Christmas 2019 included the Switch-on itself of course, and also a mixture of free-to-see music performances that happened in various street locations around the town. We ran a Charity Gifting Tree in Borough Market, which drummed up a huge amount of interest and support for a local children's charity, the Yorkshire Children's Trust.

Again in the Borough Market, animatronic reindeer from local company Seasonal Group attracted lots of onlookers and made a superb photo opportunity for social media. Our Christmas lights and painted shop windows helped Halifax to look the part for the festive season, and we ran a succession of popular competitions like Letter for Santa, a Hamper Draw and our annual Post Box Competition. There was even a turkey impersonation competition run in conjunction with Pulse Radio.



Gift Card

Our gift card initiative is going well, with spending through it currently running at £6,700: that's £6,700 spent at local businesses which might otherwise have been spent elsewhere. Better still, we can track where the money has been spent, which is good news when it comes to monitoring shopping habits and planning strategies to maximise local trade.

Halloween

Halloween proved a good opportunity to attract children and families into the town centre, generating extra trade for local businesses at a traditionally quiet time of year. We produced a kids' Halloween book which worked hand-in-hand with a special trail creating a route around Halifax. The book was popular, and it certainly encouraged children and families to explore new areas of town they might not otherwise. Children who finished the trail won a bag of sweets and a badge, and the event's timing worked well with half term.



Gift Card Initiative

£6,700 Spent



Heritage Festival & Newspaper

Our popular Heritage Festival lasted two weeks and went smoothly and successfully, helped partly by an excellent Heritage Newspaper distributed through various outlets. Around 5,000 copies were distributed in total, with interesting facts and information on the various exciting festival events taking place at several town centre locations. The festival won us some valuable PR too, with coverage in the popular Metro newspaper as well as a Leeds TV feature with local historian, David Glover.

Info Point

We monitor a simple unmanned information stand in the Borough Market to take advantage of great footfall there. Our Ambassadors reported having to restock supplies of our free magazine four times a day over Christmas – proof that it was a great way to reach a passing audience with promotional information about festive events.

The Heritage Festival won us some valuable PR, with coverage in the Metro newspaper as well as a Leeds TV feature.

Leeds TV

We worked closely with Leeds TV several times in 2019, helping Halifax gain useful exposure to a wider Yorkshire audience at every opportunity. Visual events like Christmas and the Heritage Festival lend themselves particularly well to this kind of on-screen publicity. We're planning to work with Leeds TV again in 2020, with around a dozen filming slots booked, including coverage for some of the year's main public events.

Loyalty Scheme

Our Loyalty Scheme was rebranded as Rewards and went live in November 2019, with an extra prize draw to incentivise uptake. To earn their discount booklet, shoppers need to collect seven loyalty stamps, with each one given out when they spend £2 or more. Completed cards are entered into the draw to win a £100 Halifax Gift Card.

Magazines

As always we produced some excellent free magazines for 2019, investing time, creativity and cash into making them attractive, engaging and, most of all, enticing. We do this because we know from experience that readers really enjoy these publications, using them as handy reference booklets to help plan their leisure time. By showcasing events and sharing relevant details about them, we help boost attendance, and that means more potential customers for every business in town, as well as bigger numbers for the individual events we feature in the magazines. In 2019 we produced magazines for adults covering Christmas and summer, and for children we covered, summer, Halloween and Christmas.



Mother's Day & Valentine's Day

Just as we will in 2020, for 2019 we ran some simple, small-scale promotions around these two fun calendar dates. It's a way of generating interest and engagement among residents and visitors, and also a chance to steer people into Halifax to enjoy its many opportunities for shopping and eating.

Photo Competition

In 2020 we'll be running four seasonal photo competitions through Facebook. Entry is open to anyone, and we're asking people to send their best photos of Halifax in winter, spring, summer and autumn. As well as a chance to engage with people through social media, it's also an opportunity to show Halifax off as a year-round destination.

Our Ambassadors reported having to restock supplies of our free magazine four times a day over Christmas.



Remembrance & The Great War Film Weekend

In October 2019 we were heavily involved in a Great War Film Weekend, designed to commemorate Remembrance Day. This collaboration between Square Chapel Arts Centre and Halifax Great War Heritage Society included film screenings, live discussions, and an exhibition about Calderdale People of the Great War.

Tour de Yorkshire

We made sure Tour de Yorkshire pulled in the crowds again in 2019, and we also worked hard to squeeze out every drop of PR we could, helping to raise the profile of Halifax. Hosting events like this helps put Halifax on the map as a unique and attractive place to visit, and also a cycle-friendly town at the heart of a region blessed with great roads, trails and scenery.

Tokens for Schools

The response to this competition was very good, with lots of local businesses helping to make it happen and our schools embracing it too. For 2020, we're planning to tighten up the administration and rules in an effort to eliminate any scope for mistakes or unfair multiple entries. Overall, it still provides a worthwhile incentive for shopping local.

VE Day & May Day

Please don't forget that the May Day bank holiday has officially moved to Friday May 8th throughout the UK for 2020, to coincide with the 75th anniversary of VE Day. We've yet to finalise our VE day plans, so watch this space or contact us nearer the time for details.

Website & Social Media

We've been maintaining and updating our website whenever necessary, and it still remains arguably the best and most attractive 'window' into Halifax. This kind of online presence is increasingly crucial in an age where people plan their leisure time through smartphones, tablets and laptops. Accordingly, we've also stepped up our social media activity, investing more time and creativity in our Twitter, Instagram and Facebook accounts, aiming to grow our following and boost engagement. Using digital platforms like these doesn't just help us reach crucial audiences in ways they respond to; it also lets us measure and target our campaigns more effectively.

We've invested more time and creativity into social media, aiming to grow our following and boost engagement.



Smart & Attractive

Bunting

Our thousands of metres of bunting proved as popular as ever in 2019, and we lent it out to businesses during the Tour de Yorkshire event, as well as Calderdale Pride. We reuse this bunting, so it's generally available for decorative purposes whenever there's a big event.

LED Lights

For Christmas we supplied around 40 sets of LED lights to help shops and businesses look fantastic. As with the bunting, these lights really help to brighten up the town centre, making it look festive and appealing for attracting visitors into Halifax, and also to look great in any photography we do for PR and promotional purposes. We use low-energy LED lights because that supports our aim to be as environmentally friendly as possible, and also help businesses keep their electricity bills to a minimum.

Duke of Wellington Statue

Summer saw the unveiling of a new statue to commemorate the Duke of Wellington Regiment, which has its heart right here in Halifax. The move was part of a wider commitment to improving the public realm, and we contributed by helping to fund some useful building work that enhanced the area around the statue's installation in Woolshops.

In Bloom

For the first time ever, in 2019 we managed the town's entry into this prestigious nationwide competition. Groups and individuals worked hard to keep Halifax looking its best, and we produced a compelling report to help document the town's efforts for the benefit of the judges. We are really proud that we managed to retain a Silver Gilt award from the previous year.

Clean-ups

We performed clean-up operations throughout 2019, using teams of people and targeting a wide range of locations across the BID area. We've been working closely with Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council too, with efforts to improve litter collection in and around the town centre. Fly-tipping and regular littering have also come under our spotlight and are problems we're continuing to address.

We attended the In Bloom judging day where Halifax achieved 'Silver Gilt'.



Quality Street Christmas Lights

In 2019 we worked closely with Quality Street – the famous chocolate brand manufactured here in Halifax – and we managed to secure their financial support to fund some new Christmas lights, shaped like the iconic chocolates. The lights were used for the first time at Christmas and made a positive impact on the overall festive look of the town.

Bollard Painting

We committed to a programme of bollard painting in 2019, smartening up these essential features to help the town centre look attractive and well kept.

Hanging Baskets

During the year we helped fund a limited number of free brackets for hanging baskets, which meant some lucky businesses saved money while the town benefitted from looking more attractive. We've tried to make this a regular offer in the past and will aim to keep it up in 2020.

Painted Windows

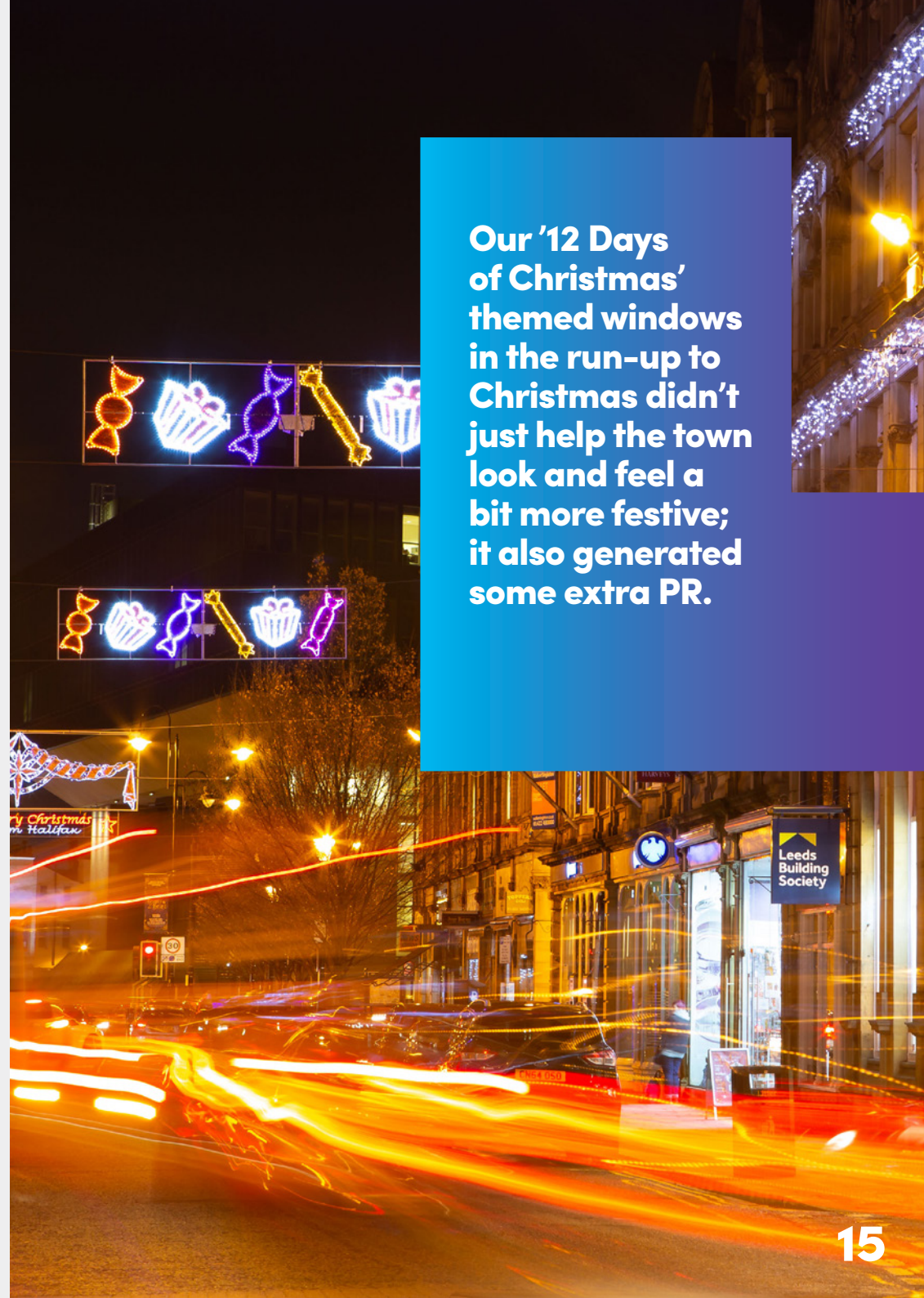
Our campaign to make Halifax a more welcoming and attractive town centre is ongoing, and as part of it we decorated the windows of some vacant shop units as well as our '12 Days of Christmas' themed windows in the run-up to last Christmas. This creative initiative didn't just help the town look and feel a bit more festive; it also generated some extra PR, which is always good for business.

Planters

For 2019 we invited community organisations to be involved with the upkeep of some excellent town centre planting schemes. Children, young people and members of an addiction support group helped to clear, replant and repaint planters in the BID area, including near the railway where they welcome visitors to the town. The wood used in these planters is reclaimed wood made from old railway sleepers, so it's an environmentally friendly project as well as a community-based one. In all there are 19 planters around the town, enjoyed by visitors and locals alike.

All this essential work helps the town centre look attractive and well kept.

Our '12 Days of Christmas' themed windows in the run-up to Christmas didn't just help the town look and feel a bit more festive; it also generated some extra PR.





Welcoming & Accessible

Responsible giving

We've spent a lot of time considering ways to deal with the issue of charitable giving by the public, direct to people on our streets. It's a complex issue, with many different elements and requirements to consider. At the moment, contactless giving points are planned for Halifax, and money raised by them will be managed and shared out by the Homelessness Forum. We think this approach strikes a good balance between practicality and compassion.

Street Angels

We've been liaising with Street Angels throughout 2019 and also made financial contributions to their work, which aims to protect and take care of those enjoying the town's night time economy. We're looking into opportunities for a more formal arrangement too, with the possibility of some kind of sponsorship agreement to help publicise the work of BID more widely.

Defibs

Amazingly, in 2019 the defibrillators we've had installed throughout Halifax were used more than 30 times in the months since April. This has been a worthwhile investment not only because it helps to save lives, but also because it contributes to public perceptions of Halifax as a safe place to visit.

Shoppers feel more confident about exploring more of the town.

Partnership Days of Action

This initiative aims to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour by increasing the visibility of officials, and in Halifax it has definitely had an impact. On certain days staff from the BID, Police, Council and Woolshops have worn high-viz vests and interacted with the public, and reports show that instances of criminality have dropped on those days. This is good for retailers and their businesses because of the drop in crimes like shoplifting, and it also has an indirect impact by helping pedestrians feel safer, which encourages them to visit town more often and for longer.

Pedestrian wayfinding

The town's wayfinding maps should be printed and ready for installation by the time we go to print, or very soon after. They've been designed for use as everyday pedestrian maps, but also to help visitors and shoppers feel more confident about exploring more of the town, which should be good for those businesses in less obvious places. Levy-paying businesses should benefit from extra footfall, and the public will hopefully find their visits to Halifax easier and more rewarding.



Making visits to Halifax easier and more rewarding.

Welcoming & Accessible

PCSO

Once again we helped fund a Police Community Support Officer for the town in 2019, all part of our effort to help levy payers feel that their businesses are protected. We also wanted the public to see a visible presence on the street, so they feel confident about personal safety.

Ambassadors

As always our Ambassadors had a busy year in 2019, and we added to their numbers with a new recruit who has settled into the role very well. Together, the team worked extremely hard to help BID deliver a full events programme and an even better all-round service for levy-paying businesses.

SentrySIS

After a great deal of careful research and deliberation, last year we finally chose a new system for sharing information among those responsible for our town centre's security. In the end, SentrySIS proved to be the preferred system and it will now help us communicate and share vital data between the Police and BID members, especially those in Pubwatch, Shopwatch and similar schemes. The system is 'data safe' in terms of GDPR, and a vast improvement over the system we've been using up until now. It's a significant investment for the town, and it will help make Halifax safer and more secure, which will be a positive outcome for everyone.

Accessibility

We continued through 2019 to look for ways to improve accessibility to the town centre, including introducing some new cycle racks to encourage people to visit on their bikes. More people cycling into town will help reduce traffic and alleviate parking issues as well as being good for the planet and the cyclists themselves, so it's very much a win-win move.

Pubwatch

In 2019 we put time and energy into the 'Best Bar None' scheme. This scheme assesses the standards and service of different drinking and entertainment venues, and then provides an official certificate to mark their efforts towards providing a high-quality customer experience. We want Halifax to be known as a safe and fun destination for everyone, and that includes those coming to enjoy its lucrative night time economy.



Deliver a full events programme and an even better all-round service for levy-paying businesses.

A Great Business & Leisure Offer



Footfall cameras

We installed a new footfall camera in 2019 and it's already helping us to record and monitor footfall on Southgate and Commercial Street. This technology enables us to collate crucial data on consumer numbers, demographics and habits, helping us plan and target our marketing campaigns far more effectively. Ultimately, the camera should play a significant role in boosting trade for levy-payers by helping us to increase visitor figures for the town centre.

Business support

We've continued, as ever, to provide businesses with a wide range of support, including advice, printed and online information, physical resources, marketing and promotional assistance, and personal face-to-face support from our busy team of Ambassadors. Thanks to various technologies we've invested in, we have a growing bank of visitor data and consumer insight too, which we'll be sharing with businesses more and more in the future.

Lobbying the council

As a 'voice' for local businesses, working on their behalf, in 2019 we've been active in representing their needs to different public sector agencies, including Calderdale Council. Over the years we've made it our business to properly understand the concerns and needs of levy payers, and we work hard to clearly express them at every appropriate opportunity.

Town Development Board

BID Project Manager, Chloe McNeill, has been actively working with the Town Development Board, helping to secure funding and PR when opportunities have arisen.

Monitoring and reporting

Monitoring footfall on Southgate and Commercial Street has been made possible by our new footfall camera, installed last year. Encouragingly, we used it to record footfall in the month leading up to Christmas, which showed a very impressive 420,511 counted visits. We're also looking into other ways to capture data about visits to Halifax, exploring new technologies and adapting campaign literature in order to gather more detail than ever about consumer habits, numbers and demographics.

Stall at HBOS

For the first time ever, in the run up to Christmas 2019 we set up a stall in the atrium at HBOS headquarters in Halifax centre. With employees there numbering thousands, we wanted to encourage as many of them as possible to visit the town and make use of its businesses, services, events and facilities. We handed out Halifax branded bags and our excellent Christmas magazine – all part of a drive to inform and inspire a captive audience of people, many of whom are active shoppers with disposable income. In 2020 and beyond, we're planning to organise a discount campaign to incentivise visits to the town centre even more.



Footfall in
Decemeber

420,511 Visitors





Training opportunities

Once again we collaborated with Leeds Beckett University and Piece Mill to offer a series of affordable – or even free – training opportunities for levy payers. Courses covered essential areas like marketing, social media or digital technologies, and were designed to help levy payers develop the skills they need to maximise their profitability. We'll be running more courses in the first quarter of 2020.

Business welcome packs

We continued our programme of distributing Welcome Packs to new businesses moving to – or starting up in – Halifax. The packs were rebranded with the eye-catching new Discover Halifax designs, and they are a great way of making businesses feel welcome and supported while also introducing them to the concept and benefits of BID.

Networking

Last year was a busy year in terms of BID networking and collaborating with other organisations, including other BIDs from around the region. By sharing insight and ideas, we've managed to forge some strong partnerships as well as learn useful methodologies for continuing our work more efficiently and effectively.

Fiver Fest

Although our direct involvement in Fiver Fest was limited, our Ambassadors did work hard to support the initiative in ways that they could.

Working groups

We ran a series of working groups right through 2019, inviting levy payers to come along and be involved in areas including Marketing, Tour de Yorkshire, Heritage, and our group which looks at promoting the so-called 'top end' of town. The groups are an excellent way of generating ideas and learning the concerns of local businesses direct from their owners, so we'll continue running them through 2020.

Calderdale Next Chapter

Exciting plans are still being developed and finalised for improvements to Halifax and the surrounding area, all part of the Calderdale Next Chapter remit. From renovations in the Borough Market through to better transport links for the town, much of the work will stimulate growth in Halifax and improve the profitability and working lives of levy payers. We've been actively involved in the decision-making process, voicing the needs and concerns of BID members and sharing useful information with other agencies involved in the scheme. We'll continue our involvement in 2020, and we'll also make sure we keep levy payers fully informed about opportunities to express their opinions or be involved.

Business Communications

Throughout 2019 we kept levy payers well informed and up to date with useful information and resources, distributed in a range of appropriate communications like our seasonal newsletters and digital 'enews' bulletins. Our Ambassadors visited many levy payers face-to-face too, helping to build up trust and prove that we're committed to listening to their needs as individual businesses, not just collectively. We'll continue using all of these communication channels in 2020.

Future High Streets

In 2019 we worked closely with the local Council supporting their bid for financial help from the Future High Streets Fund: a government initiative that helps pay for improvements to UK town centres. We'll continue with opportunities like this in 2020, and we'll carry on making our case for BID causes and acting as a voice for every levy-payer we serve.

Exciting plans for Halifax are still being developed and finalised.



Financials

Paying Your BID Levy

Every business in the Halifax BID area is required to pay a levy as well as Business Rates, and the levy needs to be paid separately (regardless of how you pay the Business Rates).

Paying quickly will help us to make sure that the objectives that were voted on in the Business Plan, do in fact come to fruition.

You can pay the levy in the following ways. Please always quote your BID account reference.

BACS, Telephone/Internet Banking

You need to contact your bank to make arrangements to pay this way.

- > Payments should be made to National Westminster Bank PLC.
- > The account to be credited is Calderdale MBC, Head Office Collection Account, Sort code 62:21:45
- > The bank account number should be formatted as 00000000 (eight zeros).

Please make sure that your BID Payment reference number is quoted in full, with no spaces.



Internet by Debit & Credit Card

Pay online, 24 hours per day by debit or credit card at our website: www.calderdale.gov.uk. Please note that a surcharge will be made for credit card payments. No charge is made for debit card payments.

By Telephone

To use the Council's 24-hour payment line, simply call 0161 627 9915.

Payment by Post

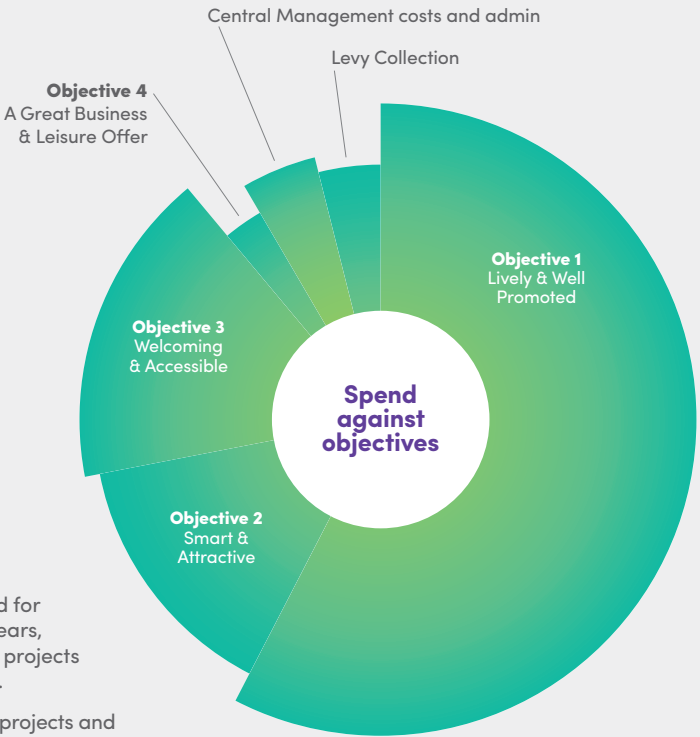
Please make cheques payable to Calderdale MBC and send to Halifax BID Limited, PO Box 51, Halifax, HX1 1TP.

Please write your BID account reference number and property address on the back of the cheque.

Unaudited accounts including estimated accruals as at January 2020

Income	
BID Levy Revenue	£411,447.11
Additional income	£6,600
Contingency	-£20,000
Total income	£418,047.11

Expenditure	Committed & Actual
Objective 1 - Lively & Well Promoted	£212,407.35
Objective 2 - Smart & Attractive	£62,217.83
Objective 3 - Welcoming & Accessible	£55,663.47
Objective 4 - A Great Business & Leisure Offer	£8,288
Central Management costs and admin	£10,159.99
Levy Collection	£13,498.02
Total expenses	£362,234.66



Underspend will be carried forward for additional BID projects for future years, including working with partners on projects including Calderdale Next Chapter.

Levy collected will be spent against projects and activities in line with the BID Business plan objectives.

Halifax BID financial year runs April to March, full audited accounts will be available to BID members at the AGM in July.



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