Annex G: Leatherhead BID Communications Plan – Updated (October 2025)

This updated communications plan reflects activity and progress since the initial draft prepared in August 2025. It covers the pre-ballot, ballot, and post-ballot phases of the Leatherhead Business Improvement District (BID) campaign, incorporating developments such as the Z-Flyer consultation, website launch, publication of the final BID Proposal and Business Plan, and engagement events planned through to the ballot result in December 2025.

1. Objectives

The purpose of this plan is to ensure that all communications with businesses, stakeholders, and the wider community are coordinated, consistent, and transparent during the final stages of the BID development process. Communications will:

- Raise awareness of what a BID is and the benefits for Leatherhead businesses.
- Provide clear, factual information ahead of the ballot.
- Encourage participation and ensure businesses feel informed and involved.
- Build a sense of business ownership and pride in the BID proposal.
- Support a fair and transparent ballot process in accordance with the BID Regulations.

2. Timeline Overview

The plan is divided into three phases:

- Pre-Ballot: August–October 2025
- Ballot Period: November–December 2025
- Post-Ballot: January 2026 onwards

3. Pre-Ballot Phase (August–October 2025)

The pre-ballot phase focused on awareness, consultation, and engagement with businesses across Leatherhead. It aimed to provide clear information about what the BID is, what it could deliver, and how it would operate.

Key activities included:

- Preparation for and presentation to Mole Valley District Council Cabinet on 23 September to secure approval of the BID Proposal and inclusion of MVDC hereditaments in the ballot.
- Distribution of the redesigned 4-page ‘Z-Flyer’ to all hereditaments in early October. The flyer served as Phase 2 consultation, explaining the BID concept, levy costs, and proposed projects.
- Launch of the Leatherhead BID business-to-business website (www.leatherheadbid.co.uk) containing FAQs, the consultation form, and early visuals of BID themes.
- Street-level business engagement by Shadow Board members and the BID consultant throughout September.
- Publication of the final BID Proposal and Business Plan online and in available print from week commencing 20th October.
- Mail out to all hereditaments an invitation to an informal drop-in ‘cheese & wine’ session in mid-November, post ballot dispatch but pre-ballot close.
- Local press coverage and neutral social media activity announcing the BID proposal’s release and explaining the next steps.

4. Ballot Period (November–December 2025)

The ballot period will focus on encouraging eligible businesses to participate in the vote through factual, transparent, and positive communications.

Planned activities include:

- Ballot packs issued by Mole Valley District Council between 31st October-3rd November, containing the official ballot paper, the final 4-page flyer, and links to the full BID Proposal and Business Plan.
- Ongoing information campaign across BID channels (website and local press) reminding businesses to vote before the 1 December deadline.
- Circulation of an invitation to a 'Cheese & Wine' business drop-in session in early–mid November, providing an informal opportunity for levy payers to ask questions and review BID priorities.
- Short video clips and social media testimonials by Board members and local businesses explaining why they support the BID, posted on the BID website.
- Use of the Board's WhatsApp and email network to maintain direct communication with business contacts, particularly targeting those who have not yet voted by mid-November.
- Regular updates to the website with FAQs about voting procedure, ballot deadlines, and contact details for further information.

5. Post-Ballot Phase (January 2026 onwards)

Following the close of the ballot on 1 December and the announcement of the result on 2 December, communication will transition from ballot information to delivery and implementation messaging.

Post-ballot communications will include (assuming positive):

- An announcement of the ballot outcome via website and press release.
- If successful, publication of a '90-Day Launch Plan' outlining early priorities and quick wins.
- Visible early delivery actions such as BID co-ordinator recruitment, possible Easter activity plans and a clean-up blitz to demonstrate immediate progress.
- Monthly e-newsletters or social updates showcasing project delivery, business support offers, and upcoming events.
- Engagement with stakeholders and MVDC on finalising the Operating and Baseline Agreements.
- Planning of a formal BID Launch Event in early 2026 to thank supporters and outline the Year 1 delivery plan.

6. Key Audiences

- BID levy-paying businesses (primary audience)
- Property owners and managing agents
- Local partner organisations (MVDC, Chamber of Commerce, Swan Centre, Surrey Police, etc.)
- Local press and media
- BID Shadow Board and volunteers
- General public (for awareness only – secondary B2C audience)

7. Communication Channels

- Direct mail – Z-Flyer, ballot pack flyer, and business plan mailing
- In-person visits – Board and consultant business walkabouts
- Website – www.leatherheadbid.co.uk (central information hub)
- Email updates – via Mailchimp / direct business lists

- Social media – LinkedIn and local Facebook community pages (post ballot)
- Local press and online news outlets
- Business drop-in events (Cheese & Wine session, November 2025)
- WhatsApp group for Board members and close supporters

8. Tone and Compliance

All communications will be factual, positive, and compliant with BID ballot regulations. The BID Shadow Board will focus on providing clear information about the proposal and its benefits. Individual Board members and businesses are free to express personal support for the BID as private stakeholders.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation

Effectiveness of communications will be monitored through business feedback (survey responses, event attendance, and website engagement metrics). Regular updates will be provided to the BID Shadow Board on progress, reach, and engagement levels. Lessons learned during this phase will inform the first-year communications plan if the BID is approved.