

Community Governance Review: Stage 1 - Consultation Response

Do you think that Canterbury should have a new parish or town council created? There will be further consultations about this before any final decisions are made. Yes

Please give reasons for your view. If you think there should be a new parish or town council, please also tell us where you think the boundaries of the new council area should be.

We support the creation of a Canterbury Town Council as a way to strengthen local leadership, representation and coordination. From a BID perspective, it would:

- Provide clearer, dedicated local representation for Canterbury's economic and community needs
- Enhance partnership working and more joined-up decision-making
- Support economic growth, place management and the visitor economy
- Reinforce civic identity and pride

It will be important that any new Town Council complements rather than duplicates BID activity, with clear roles to ensure maximum value for businesses and residents.

Our submission does not currently propose specific boundaries. However, in principle, we would favour a geography that closely aligns with the BID area to support effective partnership working and reflect the core commercial centre. That said, any boundary would also need to balance wider residential representation, so strong alignment rather than exact duplication may be the most practical approach.

If you have any other comments about this area or would like alternative arrangements considered such as an area forum, residents' association, support from the Canterbury Business Improvement District or coastal business groups, please tell us here.

In terms of composition, will there be provision for co-opted members and/or observers in addition to elected representatives? The current BID Board includes a Canterbury City Council officer and representatives from two residents' groups as observers, which helps ensure strong stakeholder engagement, effective communication and alignment between key partners.

If you have any general comments not already made about the governance arrangements for the whole district, please say so here.

Unrelated to Canterbury, there may be potential for a Business Improvement District (BID) to operate alongside a Town Council in the coastal towns, where a BID may previously have been considered financially unviable. Any such arrangement would need to be driven by, and have the support of, the local business community.

The BID and Town Council would remain separate legal entities, but there could be opportunities to share resources and reduce costs through joint funding of items such as office accommodation, staffing roles and the delivery of certain projects. A successful example of this approach can be seen in Falmouth.