



Draft Proposal 2024-2029

7 March 2024

Draft

For Canterbury Business Improvement District

Who we are

Canterbury Business Improvement District (BID) is an independent, business-led, not-for-profit initiative voted for by the businesses and organisations who operated in the city in 2014, and again in 2019, to ensure continued business-focussed investment in the city centre. BIDs are funded by the businesses and organisations that benefit from them by raising a levy based on rateable value, and the money is ring-fenced so that it can only be spent within the BID area on initiatives that have been agreed to in a formal business plan.

Vision and mission

We want Canterbury to be a thriving place for business where everyone can enjoy and benefit from the city's rich culture, heritage and commerce.

As a Business Improvement District, our mission is to represent the business community and to enable the city to be a vibrant, connected, successful and profitable place in which to do business. This benefits everyone – businesses, their staff, clients and customers, which includes residents, students and tourists. We want everyone to make the most of our beautiful city.

What we do

We are the leading voice for Canterbury city centre businesses and organisations.

Canterbury BID is dedicated to supporting the city's business community. We're focused on improving the trading environment and playing our part to solve the city's challenges; both supporting businesses and encouraging locals, visitors, staff and students to make the most of our beautiful city and its fantastic culture, heritage and commerce.

The past five years have been extremely challenging for everyone, and many challenges remain, not least funding challenges for local authorities, rising costs for businesses and cost of living for customers. We need to continue to work together as a business community, and collaboratively with the public, private and civic sectors, to face these challenges and to make the most of opportunities.

The ethos of Canterbury BID is to leverage partnership working amongst the business community, their customers and clients and, just as significantly, the organisations and institutions which influence the city's operation and vitality, including: Canterbury City Council (CCC), Kent County Council (KCC), Kent Police, higher and further education institutions, resident's groups and other public and community organisations.

What we do

We want to help ensure that Canterbury grows as a vibrant and professionally managed place and to ensure that all the sectors represented in Canterbury's city centre economy are supported and nurtured. Together we are a stronger voice, and we look forward to a third term and all that we can deliver for Canterbury and the business community.

Ten Years of Achievement

Canterbury BID has succeeded in making Canterbury a better place. Over the last 10 years (2014-2024), we invested over £5.6 million on projects and activities to benefit businesses and organisations in the city. Over £1 million of that was additional money raised on top of the statutory levy – from voluntary contributions, sponsorship, grants and commercial income. Nationally, there are 340 BIDs in the UK, investing over £1 billion every year, giving business an independent voice and investing in business-led initiatives.

Overseen by a voluntary, elected board of directors, the past ten years have seen us deliver demonstrable change and progress across a range of key issues outlined in our Business Plan – a plan directly influenced by businesses in Canterbury that has stood the test of time and a pandemic.

Here are a few highlights of the success we have seen over the last ten years:

Return on Investment

By sourcing **additional income streams** and encouraging voluntary contributors, the BID increased the levy investment into the city by 20% for a total investment of £5.6 million over the last ten years, which includes over £1 million on top of the statutory levy.

The average annual levy over the last five years was £658 and 90% of businesses (those with a rateable value of £100,000 or less) paid an average of £386 per year.

Cost Savings and Economic Recovery

- We funded a **Business Cost Reduction Programme**, which has seen 40+ businesses benefit from identifying £162,000 of savings.
- Over the last 10 years 6,233 people have attended BID funding **networking and training** events, with a combination of in person and virtual events, not only providing much-needed business support but also showcasing 122 businesses.
 - Our **Training and Accreditation programmes** have grown from one event in 2017 to 10+ per year
 - **Networking attendance** has grown from 200 to 750 per year.
- We responded quickly during the **pandemic** focusing on activity that was of immediate use, introducing online support webinars, communication on accessing grants, and a series of re-opening animation projects and marketing campaigns. We were awarded Welcome Back and RHSS funding from the Council to support this work. We followed the Institute of Place Management's 4-stage recovery plan and monitored any adaptation to our project delivery through the BID's Strategic Development committee.

Improved the Experience

- **Cleaning:** Using a Low Carbon Grant, we purchased our own street cleaning machine ('The Becket'). BID ambassadors spent over 100 hours **cleaning** vacant doorways and areas not covered by the council's cleaning schedule, and also to meet immediate business needs.
- **Safe & Secure:** In addition to Purple Flag accreditation and the Ambassador programme, which includes direct business support for reporting issues, we introduced:
 - **New Zero Tolerance** against harassment training and accreditation.
 - An audit of the city's **Safe Havens**, and the introduction of a new one (for anyone who needs to seek refuge in the city).
 - Established a new **Safety & Security Roundtable** to help resolve retail crime and anti-social behaviour, with Whitefriars and District Watch.
 - Support for **Best Bar None** accreditation, hosting the annual awards event, and with two members of the BID team trained to deliver assessments.
- **Net zero and biodiversity support:**
 - We introduced a '**Safari in the City**' trail in 2017, encouraging people to explore the flora and fauna in the city, organised the city's first ever Green Heritage conference in 2018 and continually won awards for Canterbury in Bloom, working with partners across the city.
 - Since 2019 we have been part of the **Canterbury Climate Action Partnership**, supporting and encouraging business decarbonization audits, and supporting the annual Climate Change Festival and Awards.
 - In 2023, we were delighted to support the inaugural **Wild Stour RiverFest**, organised by the Council.
 - In celebration of the River Stour we created a **new trail guide to the Great River Stour**, with contributions from the Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership, the Canterbury Society and St Peter's Methodist School.
- **Dressing the city**
 - Provided **6 miles of Christmas lights** from mid-November to early January every year.
 - Decorated Canterbury with 380 baskets per year from June to September bringing a plethora of colour to the city streets. In the last 10 years we have provided **3,750 flower baskets**.
 - Funded the **vinyling** of 250 windows over the last 5 years. These have included the entirety of Debenhams, the DWP building on Burgate, Poundworld, Top Shop, Beaverbrook and City Space.
 - Introduced new **lamp-post banners along the King's Mile, festive bunting across the whole city**, and enabled university and college students to display their own window vinyls.

Promoted Canterbury

- Reached over 30 million people per year through BID-funded **marketing campaigns** focused both on the national and international market.
- In November 2020, rolled out the **Canterbury Gift Card**, to keep money circulating in the local economy. Since its launch £150,000 worth of cards have been purchased. This free service is resulting in ring-fenced expenditure with some businesses making their levy back on gift card redemptions alone.
- Funding for the **Christmas Campaign** has increased by 30% over the last 4 years following the coordination of a Christmas Committee made up of funding partners. The

Light Parade now launches at the same time as the Christmas Market and then 6 weeks of marketing supports the city in this golden quarter. This year's campaign saw a **reach of 22 million**.

- Invested over £500,000 in funding **events and festivals**, bringing locals, international visitors and national press, including Pride Canterbury, City Sound Project in the Park, Canterbury Shakespeare Festival, The Gin Fling, Marlowe Summer Programme, Canterbury's Cooking, King's Mile Trick or Treat, Canterbury Wine Festival, Canterbury Festival and more.
- **Medieval Pageant and Family Trail:** This has been delivered by BID for the last 9 years and we have grown the event to:
 - Reach an audience of 5,000+ annually
 - Work with 18 heritage trail stops
 - Host workshops with 10 different local schools and community groups
 - Welcomed 200+ to the parade
 - In 2023 recorded 12,286 Medieval Trail visits over the course of the 6 hour trail
- **Visit Canterbury:** In November 2022 BID took over the management of the district marketing platform setting up as a consortium with key tourism businesses helping to shape the direction of the platform. Over this time we have:
 - Increased website visits by 46%
 - Increased Instagram followers by 4,000+
 - Launched an monthly Newsletter with 5,000+ subscribers
 - Produced posters, map pads, run competitions, hosted press and influencers, and invested in international campaigns.
- **MyCanterbury Local Offers Card** re-launched in August 2021 with new, recyclable, pink cards. Since then, BID has issued 3,186 cards to local residents (CT postcode) and currently has 28 deals and discounts available promoting local businesses.
- Won numerous awards for the city: tourism, events, floral displays, window vinyls and the evening and night time economy.
- Produced and circulated 20 **City Guides** (413,000 copies distributed) and 14 **Shopping Maps** (70,000 copies distributed).

Supported and Represented Business

- Invested over £54,000 in supporting and launching business quarters: King's Mile, Whitefriars, Cathedral Quarter, Castle Quarter and West End. Including ongoing support each year for events, activities, marketing, lamp post banners, vinyls and promotion through both MyCanterbury and Visit Canterbury.
- Represented the needs of businesses on 27 different committees, working groups and forums amounting to over 1,560 hours of lobbying on topics affecting the health of the city centre, from representing business needs in the Levelling Up consultations to funding a business cost reduction service, saving businesses over £162,000 (see Appendix 2: Partnership and Influence).
- Our BID **Ambassadors** walk the city streets 7 days a week, all seasons, and all weathers. Over the last five years, they made 600 visits per year totaling 3,000 business visits over 5 years. It means around 6,000 interactions through visits, meetings, conversations on the streets and emails.
- Graffiti, litter, ASB and any other issues are reported and monitored daily with 1,200 issues reported in the last 5 years.

- The BID is a member of the **Association of Town and City Management** (which BID CEO Lisa Carlson chairs), **The BID Foundation** (achieving BID Industry Standards accreditation in the first pilot round) and the **Night Time Industries Association**. In her capacity as Chair of the ATCM, Lisa also sits on the All Party Parliamentary Group for Town Centres and the High Street Task Force Sector Leaders Group. These groups have successfully campaigned for business support during the Covid pandemic.
- Provided 120 monthly **City Centre Reports**, providing essential information about the trading environment including figures on vacancy rates, footfall, sales performance, and tourism. Plus, a live footfall counter on the website and 520 weekly footfall reports, benchmarking the city's performance against the southeast, other historic cities and the UK.
- Produced 120 **Operational Reports** highlighting the impact of the BID and return on investment.

What Will BID 3 Deliver?

A third BID term will see us build on the strong foundations established over the past ten years and take on board the new challenges the city centre is facing.

Through ongoing engagement over the last ten years and extensive consultation over the last nine months, we have listened to what the business community thinks we have done well, what we could improve further and what new initiatives they would like to see introduced to make Canterbury the best it can be. This proposal sets out the priorities to establish Canterbury BID for a third term to operate from October 2024 to September 2029. The ballot for a third BID term will take place from 6 June to 11 July (with the final Ballot Day on 11 July 2024).

The dedicated BID team will work to provide leadership and representation to champion business within the city and ensure a strong voice on the issues that matter most. We will enhance the trading environment and user experience, generating tangible value and cost savings for businesses, promoting and supporting those trading in the city – as well as inspiring new visitors (locals and tourists) to discover all we have to offer. Without the BID, the activity described below wouldn't happen.

We will fine-tune the projects and services that businesses value most, such as marketing campaigns and support materials (maps, guides, photo and video library), tourism / Visit Canterbury, training, city decorating and animation, event support, cleaning, safety & security and bespoke business support. We will introduce and develop new initiatives based on the priorities expressed by the business community, such as:

- A new Ambassador programme, with a particular focus on safety and security in the city, while maintaining business support and visitor welcome.
- Ongoing voice for the business community in local government consultations, in particular over the next year with the Council's Levelling Up funded projects, also providing support and added value to these projects, for example by promoting the routes, trails and projects to locals via MyCanterbury and tourists via Visit Canterbury.
- Continued emphasis and promoting the city – locally, nationally and internationally, now enhanced via Visit Canterbury and all designed to encourage visitors, dwell time and spend in the city, along with targeted offers for employees of local businesses.
- Inward investment – leadership on the Canterbury Tales of England board to help encourage continued investment in the city and support for the new 'Invest Canterbury'

project with Canterbury City Council and Locate in Kent.

- New street animation to bring colour and vibrancy to the city, with new reasons to visit (vinyls, bunting, flowers, lights) and ongoing event support.
- Develop a new travel campaign that promotes the best ways to access the city.

Canterbury BID is now firmly established as a key partner in the management of the city centre and is respected by the council, business, community and industry partners at a local, regional and national level.

During a third BID term, we will deliver projects and activities based on the priorities of the business community, focused on **Promoting** the city, **Supporting** businesses and **Improving the Experience** for those who work, live, study and visit here. The projected expenditure over the BID 3 term under each heading is set out below.

PROMOTE CANTERBURY



- Local marketing
- International marketing
- Event support
- Canterbury Gift Card

SUPPORT THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY



- Business Insights
- Training & Networking
- Lobbying / Consultation

ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE



- Safe & Secure
- Ambassadors
- City Animation

Promote Canterbury

- **Over 5 years: £1,210,868**

It is essential that Canterbury remains a top destination for visitors, locals, students and staff. The BID will continue to fund fresh promotional campaigns focused on driving footfall and encouraging dwell time and spend.

Attract higher-spending visitors – In November 2022, Canterbury BID relaunched the district's Destination Platform, **Visit Canterbury**, with a new consortium, targeting visitors, students, locals and new businesses and offering free event and business listings. All activities will be shaped by the BID-commissioned visitor economy strategy – the **Destination Management Plan (DMP)** which was created to ensure Canterbury increases its visitor economy and high spending visitors over the coming years. The aim of the DMP is to promote Canterbury as a world-class cultural, heritage and commercial destination.

Reaching out to locals – **Marketing** to inspire locals to be tourists and shoppers in their own city is essential, including residents, staff and students. The people who are going to spend money on a regular basis are those who live within 30 minutes of the city and those who work in

and around the city. Canterbury's significant influence is reflected by the city centre's extensive shopping catchment area with a population estimated to be over 1,000,000 people. Canterbury BID will continue to target this market to encourage local spending through **MyCanterbury**, which includes regular eNewsletters to over 8,000, social media reaching on average 50,000 impressions per month, 40,000 city guides per year, a 'local deals and discounts' card and printed maps.

Keeping money circulating in the local economy – We will continue to run **The Canterbury Gift Card** which has ringfenced over £150,000 for the city since its inception. With over 130 local businesses signed up to the scheme, this is fast becoming the gift of choice for locals, corporate gifts and tourists with the language schools securing funding to give all students Canterbury Gift Cards to spend in the city over the summer.

Promotional campaigns – throughout the year BID will lead on a variety of marketing campaigns – some led by seasonality (Christmas, Easter, Halloween), some to promote business awareness (Shop Local, Night Out, Summer of Rewards) and some focused on specific events or themes (Pride, Canterbury Festival, It's In Our Nature). Most importantly, the campaigns created will be shaped by local businesses and will focus on increasing footfall and dwell time in the city centre.

Free promotional material – The BID will continue to commission content for a free repository of high-quality photography, circulate an annual calendar of events, create campaign specific **marketing toolkits** and stories that can be shared by all businesses to their clients and customers and press. The photos on our **Flickr** account are free to use.

Support events to provide vibrancy, drive footfall and dwell time – Events give locals and visitors alike a great reason to enjoy the city. They bring increased footfall, encourage dwell time and overnight stays, and attract visiting friends and relatives. In the last ten years, BID has supported 84 city centre events, 21 of these were organised, paid for and run by the BID, each bringing thousands of visitors to the city centre. The BID will continue to run and support events to ensure Canterbury remains a vibrant and creative destination for everyone.

Support the Business Community

➤ **Over 5 years: £ £943,869**

The BID will provide free business support to ensure access to business-critical insights and training to help with day-to-day and longer-term challenges and opportunities. The BID will also provide an Ambassador Service to help with monitoring safety and security, day-to-day business needs and visitor welcome.

Free networking, training and accreditation – The BID will continue to provide free **training** and **accreditation** on topics that are relevant to the business community, such as marketing, HR, First Aid, counter terrorism, cyber security, retail, zero tolerance, Best Bar None, climate resilience and AI. We will also continue the popular monthly **networking**, attended by 50+ people each month – a great opportunity to showcase businesses, and introduce new sector forums on issues affecting business to help share and network ideas and best practice.

Canterbury's Quarters – The BID supports the city's **quarters** (The King's Mile, Cathedral Quarter, Castle Quarter, Whitefriars, the newly developed West End and with plans to include the Riverside) with an annual financial contribution along with year-round marketing support. The quarters help promote to visitors the city's rich mixture of diverse and unique businesses.

Business Insights – The BID will continue to provide **city centre reports** that pull together information from Canterbury City Council, the British Retail Consortium, local businesses, Stagecoach, Southeastern, Whitefriars and others. The business insights, research and market intelligence are there to assist all levy payers with decision making to benefit their businesses.

Representing the voice of business – Canterbury BID will continue to represent businesses at committees and working groups, committees and forums, ensuring the voice of business is heard covering topics such as transport and access, cleaning and graffiti, connectivity, public realm improvements, marketing and events, the night time economy, heritage and anti-social behaviour (see Appendix 2: Partnership and Influence). Financial investment in projects and activities isn't the only role of the BID. It's this kind of persistent, joined-up working that will make a difference to all of us.

Ambassadors

The BID **Ambassadors** work closely with the Council's Enforcement team, Whitefriars Security and the Police, in addition to being on the District Watch radios which means there is a joined-up communication channel between those people who are in the city centre observing and reporting.

<p>They provide Business Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Reporting issues ✓ Delivering maps, guides & invitations ✓ Gift Card support ✓ Friendly chat ✓ Cleaning ('The Becket') 	<p>They are trained in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Best Bar None ✓ First Aid ✓ Counter Terrorism ✓ Bystander ✓ Zero Tolerance ✓ VAWG ✓ Neurodiversity 	<p>They provide visitor greeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Welcome ✓ Directions ✓ Safe Haven information
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Business Cost Reduction – following an intensive year of business visits with the Place Support Partnership, we will continue to support **business cost reduction** efforts with top up visits to ensure businesses can make the most of the support.

Support Directory – We provide a digital and printed **Support Directory** to each business, providing the latest information on who to contact for all business needs. This is updated regularly with the local authorities, Kent Police, District Watch, Canenco, the Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce, the FSB, Homelessness charities / StreetLink, and also provides the location of defibrillators and trauma packs.

National representation – The BID is a member of the Association of Town and City Management, which is chaired by Canterbury BID CEO Lisa Carlson. The ATCM leads the All Party Parliamentary Group for Town and City Centres and co-chairs the High Street Task Force Sector Leaders Group. Canterbury BID is also a member of the Night Time Industries Association and The BID Foundation, and achieved its BID Industry Standard Accreditation in

the first pilot round. All of these help to raise the profile of Canterbury and meet the needs of its business community.

Enhance the Experience for Everyone

➤ **Over 5 years: £952,566**

First impressions are important and ensuring everyone has a positive lasting impression of our city is high on our agenda. We are determined to help make Canterbury clean, safe and enjoyable for those who work, live, visit and study in Canterbury.

Decorating and animating the city – We will continue to provide award-winning **floral displays** from June to October which generate a positive lasting impression for locals and visitors. We also provide city-wide **Christmas lights** from mid-November to early January, **bunting**, colourful **vinyls** on empty units and eye-catching **installations** including umbrellas in 2023 and lamp-post banners along The King’s Mile. An improved environment means people are more likely to stay longer and spend more.

Cleaning – The BID has invested in a **cleaning machine** (‘The Becket’) which provides additional cleaning support in some of the more tricky grot spots and also in response to immediate business needs. The team are also equipped to deal with light graffiti removal.

Wayfinding – We will deliver projects to improve how people find their way into and around the city to encourage visitors to explore different areas of the city, helping to spread footfall and spend. These include a free printed **Shopping Map, map pads** for visitors staying in the area, **large maps in the windows** of vacant units, and online resources available through the **Visit Canterbury** website. Going forward, we will support the Council’s wayfinding project funded by Levelling Up with visitor FAQs gathered from wayfinding surveys and information gathered by the Ambassador team.

Improving security – The BID will continue to focus on our **crime reduction partnership**, delivering specific training for businesses, and working closely with the Safety & Security Roundtable established in 2023 with a focus on retail crime and ASB, and our **Purple Flag** committee which includes Kent Police, District Watch, the Universities and Unions, local security firms, Canterbury City Council, Whitefriars security, resident groups as well as owners and managers from businesses that operate in the early evening, night time and late-night economy. We lead on **Purple Flag** accreditation, promoting a safe and vibrant night time economy for everyone, provide free **Zero Tolerance** training for local businesses and, together with Kent Police, Best Bar None Accreditation.

BID Renewal Timeline

June 2023-January 2024	Formal consultation and workshops
18 March 2024	Draft proposal published
9 May 2024	Final Business Plan published (and Notice of Ballot information sent to all eligible voters)
6 June 2024	Ballot papers posted
11 July 2024	Ballot closes – Ballot papers must be received at Canterbury City

12 July 2024

Council (who are responsible for the ballot) by 5pm on 11 July
Ballot results announced

Canterbury BID runs regular networking events, sector group meetings and other workshops. Please join us or get in touch – we'd love to know what you think.

Proposed BID Area



Levy Rules

The term of the BID will be five years from October 2024 to September 2029. The BID levy rate will be charged at 1.8% of rateable value during this term, on all hereditaments within the BID area, provided they are listed on the 2023 National Non-Domestic Rating List.

A few other points to note:

- All new hereditaments entering the Rating List after 13 October 2024 will be levied at 1.8% of the prevailing list at the start of each chargeable year.

- Any adjustments to the rateable values will only be applied to the BID levy at the fixed date of the subsequent chargeable year.
- The BID will not take into account any changes in the national ratings revaluation during its five-year term so that everyone can budget for the full term of the BID.
- The levy is an annual charge due as a single payment, in advance for each chargeable period from October to September, starting on 13 October 2024 and no refunds will be made on the BID levy.
- A threshold of £5,000 rateable value will be applied, exempting any business hereditament within the defined BID area, falling below this rateable value.
- Non-retail charities will receive 80% relief on the BID levy.
- Non-income generating premises classified with the following Special Category Codes will be exempt from the BID levy: Public conveniences (224G), Communication stations (066G), Local Authority Schools (159G) and NHS Surgeries & Health Centres (436G).
- The BID levy may increase by an annual inflationary factor of up to 5%. The board will decide on whether to apply the inflation factor and at what level each year.
- In the case of vacant properties, the registered business ratepayer, who may be the property owner, will be liable to pay the full BID levy and will be entitled to vote in the BID ballot.
- VAT will not be charged on the BID levy.
- Collection and enforcement regulations will be in line with those applied to non-domestic business rates, with the Board of Directors being responsible for any debt write-off.

Canterbury BID
20-22 Watling Street
Canterbury CT1 2UA

T: 01227 787 055
E: enquiries@canterburybid.co.uk
W: canterburybid.co.uk

