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# Proposal for a Business Improvement District (BID) in Carmarthen

**DRAFT 7/1/19**

# Chair's foreword

As Chair of the Carmarthen BID steering group, and manager of a town shopping centre, I have seen much change over the past decade. A lengthy recession, widespread competition from the internet, Brexit, county and town council budget cuts, job reductions and many other uncertainties that affect the vibrancy of Carmarthen, resulting in a reduction in footfall figures, and therefore the spend in town businesses.

But Carmarthen is a resilient town and I believe that only by working together and taking control as businesses, with a clear vision of what needs to be done, can we maintain our standing as the West Wales place to do business in, and a memorable place to visit.

Successful BIDs in our neighbouring towns will have had a significant impact on their trading environments so we have no choice, Vote Yes, or we risk falling by the wayside.

## **John Nash**

*Chair, Carmarthen BID Steering Group*

If we all vote YES to make our vision real, we will have a fund of at least £847,000 over the 5-year lifetime of the scheme to invest in the town for everyone's benefit. We are confident that this could be increased still further by attracting additional funding from other outside sources to enable us to deliver even more.

For any of this to become a reality we need you to vote YES in the forthcoming ballot. Without your support Carmarthen will, at best continue as it is now, at worst decline further with more empty units and our market share being taken by our neighbours.

It is so important for businesses to back the BID. Our voices must be heard in how our town is shaped for the future. Only by working together can we make a difference.

Please join me and many of our colleagues in supporting this scheme by voting YES for Carmarthen BID.

# Introduction - A BID for Carmarthen

## What is a Business Improvement District (BID)?

A BID is a business-led and business funded body formed to improve a defined commercial area. It is a specific area, in this case Carmarthen town centre, where businesses work together and invest in agreed services, projects and special events.

The remit of Carmarthen's BID has been determined and will be controlled by you, the businesses involved. As you control the BID, you play the key role in deciding which projects and initiatives go ahead for the BID's five-year term.

The BID is financed by a levy of 1.5% made on the basis of your rateable value and the agreement to set up a BID is made on the basis of a postal ballot although other revenue streams can also be developed once the BID is up and running.

A BID cannot replace core public sector services and must offer clear return on investment for the levy payers.

Carmarthen BID will be led by the BID Board that includes volunteer representatives from the different business sectors and organisations in the town.

In March 2017 the BID team consulted with you to get your views on a BID for Carmarthen. We also had a consultation drop-in event in November 2017. Based on the consultation the group has created a five-year business plan (this document) across four key areas of activity which make up the Carmarthen BID pledges. This plan is based on what you think should be done to improve conditions for businesses within Carmarthen town centre over the next five years.

Since the UK's first BID was established in 2005, around 270 BIDs have now been formed. There are currently twelve BIDs in Wales covering areas in Swansea, Merthyr Tydfil, Newport, Bangor, Caernarfon, Colwyn Bay, Neath, Bridgend, Pontypridd, Aberystwyth, Cardiff and Llanelli. It is time for Carmarthen to join this long list of successful BIDs operating in Wales and throughout the UK. Success of the BID model is perhaps best illustrated by the success rate at ballot: 85% at first term, and higher still at renewal ballots. Now is the opportunity for change. Support Carmarthen BID.

**Visit our website: <https://www.facebook.com/lovecarmarthen>**

## The vote

You must vote to have your say.

Eligible businesses\* in Carmarthen town centre are being asked to vote on paying a 1.5% additional levy on business rates into a fund that will be used for activities and initiatives to deliver a more vibrant and economically successful town centre. The time is right for all businesses and the public sector to come together in order to provide a busier and more attractive town centre.

The YES vote is supported by Carmarthenshire County Council whose commitment to the Carmarthen BID is demonstrated both as a major rate payer and by supporting the development and set-up of the BID.

The businesses will have the ownership, as well as the responsibility, to ensure that money is well spent, and the BID will be overseen by its Board and evaluated independently. Every penny will count. We know Carmarthen is a fantastic town that offers much to do, see and experience. We also know there is much that needs to continually improve, especially in the town centre. Carmarthen BID can make this happen.

*\*Businesses, with a rateable value of under £6000 are exempt but can choose to make a voluntary contribution to become a member of the BID. There will be 80% relief for non-retail charity organisations.*

## Why develop a BID for Carmarthen?

The BID's purpose is to enable collaboration and working together to create improvement. The BID will benefit the local community as a whole by generating economic growth in the area, create a positive sense of place and improve the quality of life. More specifically, it will benefit the business community by increasing footfall and consumer spend, reducing costs, allowing businesses to decide and direct what they want for the area, giving them a voice, and creating a more appealing environment for employers and their employees.

Carmarthen has a lot to offer as a reputable destination town for retail and entertainment, during both the day and the evening, with a rich blend of modernity and strong heritage. Its retail centre includes a combination of modern shopping centres and several national retailers, restaurants and a large cinema on the one hand, whilst retaining a strong independent retailer presence on the other, including an indoor market that champions local produce. The town also includes a range of professional services businesses providing a variety of important product and services.

As the oldest market town in Wales, Carmarthen offers impressive heritage and culture with its connections to Merlin and its Roman heritage. The town hosts Carmarthenshire County Museum which is packed with local treasures such as the last piece of Merlin's Oak, mammoth bones, Roman gold and Egyptian artefacts. These strengths have made Carmarthen ideally placed to attract local visitors to its retail centre, and attract visitors further afield for its culture and heritage. Carmarthen BID will help the town centre to build on these strengths and thereby secure a more prosperous future.

We will work together to make our vision possible, and with Carmarthen BID over the next five years, the town centre will receive an investment of in the region of £847,000.

Picture what our future could look like:

**By 2024 Carmarthen town centre will have gone from strength to strength, visitor numbers will have gone up and our businesses will be thriving.**

If we get a 'YES' vote in the forthcoming BID ballot we will create a better town centre and make a positive difference to your business.



# What the BID will do

In March 2017, 190 Carmarthen businesses were consulted about the town centre and prospects for a BID. There was a second opportunity to comment and make suggestions via a drop-in session in November 2017. The consultations sought to establish whether businesses would support the introduction of a BID and opinion was overwhelmingly positive. Key issues and priorities voiced by businesses during consultation

included exploring possibilities that would address or mitigate parking issues, and increasing footfall through events, promotion and better signposting.

Therefore, the following aims, pledges and project ideas have been developed to address those issues and deliver improvements which meet the needs identified by the business community.

## Aim of the BID

**We aim to make Carmarthen a vibrant and prosperous town where businesses flourish, and visitor numbers increase by:**

- **Creating strong local partnerships that get things done and get the voice of businesses in the BID area heard;**
- **Improving the economic opportunities and trading environment for businesses in the BID area; and**
- **Increasing customer footfall, dwell time, spend and customer retention in the BID area**

The BID makes four pledges to deliver the above:

### 1. Improve business profitability:

Supporting businesses in the BID area to become even more successful by increasing their profitability. The BID will support businesses to reduce their bottom line costs through, for example, a collective / centralised purchasing programme, and will deliver a range of schemes and initiatives to improve business performance and thereby increasing turnover and profitability.



### 2. Improve the profile of the town:

Promoting Carmarthen as a great place to visit for heritage and culture, entertainment, shopping and learning. This is a fantastic opportunity for the business community to directly influence how the town is promoted. The BID will also help to ensure a "croeso cynnes" for those visiting and spending time in the town centre.



### 3. Improve the parking experience:

The BID will strive to improve the parking experience for both BID member staff and customers by reducing costs for our staff and incentivising consumers to visit more often and spend more.



### 4. Improve the look of the town:

This closely interrelates with the other pledges and is geared towards the same goal of increasing footfall and improving the vibrancy of the town. It will make the town an even better place to live and work, helping to drive increased footfall and attract businesses to invest in the town.

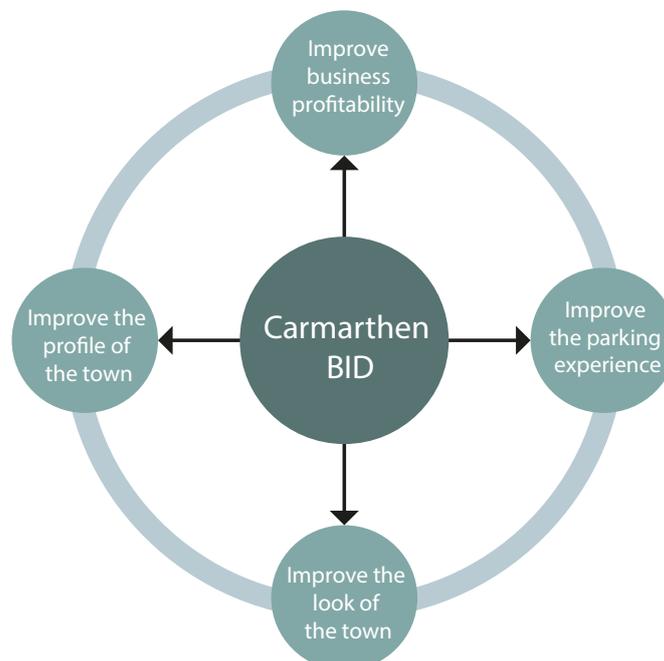


The BID proposes to focus on these four areas of activity. A proportion of the budget will however be ringfenced for supporting projects being developed and delivered by other local organisations which fit with the aims and objectives of the BID.

A **BID Manager** will be employed, initially on a part time basis, to deliver the activities of the BID. The BID Manager will be the key point of contact for BID member businesses. The successful candidate will be a self-motivated individual

possessing plenty of initiative, PR skills, social media skills, relationship management skills.

The BID will produce a detailed action plan with quarterly milestones and monitoring and an annual evaluation of progress towards its targets. Once the BID is established members will be able to influence the focus of the BID in order to deliver projects under these themes that best suit the changing needs of the town centre.



# Pledge 1: Improving business profitability



## **Projected BID investment over 5 years: at least £200,000**

The BID recognises that more could be done through greater collaboration and learning to improve the profitability of our businesses. With a positive vision for the future we will strive towards shared success. Under this pledge, the BID will provide exceptional value for money for its members by reducing bottom line business costs and delivering actions aimed to help bring in greater footfall and spending.

### ***The BID will...***

#### **Develop and deliver a collective and centralised purchasing scheme**

A service to manage collective and centralised purchasing of waste collection and recycling services for BID members will help to reduce business costs. This scheme could also include other key products and services as identified by BID member businesses such as utilities and security. Acting as a collective body, BID members will benefit from economies of scale and use their group buying power to reduce bottom line costs such as annual waste collection, electricity, gas and phone bills. The BID can negotiate with trade waste, recycling and other providers to drive down the costs of these contracts, whilst also maintaining a high standard of service and saving you time.



#### **Fund bespoke training for member businesses**

The BID will help to increase our members' turnover and profitability by funding training which is of most interest/use to our members. Rather than deciding what kind of training should be funded and provided, this will be a bespoke service led by BID member businesses who will decide what they need to improve their business, be that training around sales and customer service, marketing and social media, health and safety, crime awareness, SIA etc.

#### **Deliver a Mystery-Shopper Scheme**

The BID will fund and manage a mystery-shopper scheme within the BID area followed by feedback which will allow businesses to improve their service if necessary. This scheme has been delivered successfully in other BID areas such as Swansea, allowing businesses to confidentially assess their customer service and ensure it's as effective as possible. As outlined above, training can then be funded to allow businesses to react to the findings of the mystery-shopper process.

#### **Explore the potential for a Loyalty Card Scheme**

We will investigate the introduction of a loyalty card to reward and provide special offers to local people and staff. This would include a range of offers to incentivise people to spend their money locally and help to keep customers coming back time and time again. As part of this initiative, we would work with the Council and University who are already collaborating to develop a local loyalty/ voucher scheme for UWTSD students.

## Pledge 2: Improve the profile of the town



### Projected BID investment over 5 years: at least £200,000

This is a fantastic opportunity for the business community to directly influence how the resource available to promote Carmarthen and its businesses can best be utilised to make the biggest impact in raising the profile of the town. The BID can also fund and deliver specific activities to promote the town centre and its businesses.

Activities under this pledge will have the combined impact of raising the profile of the town to attract visitors and increase footfall, and provide a marketing platform to raise the profile of businesses directly.

This is one of the key messages you gave us in the business consultation survey in March 2017 and the event in November 2017.

You said the BID should aim to increase footfall in the town by...

- signposting visitors around the town;
- providing more marketing and promotion of events as well as the town in general

So, the BID will...



### Lobby to influence and improve town centre branding and signage

The BID will create a powerful lobbying group to represent its member businesses in discussions about the branding of Carmarthen and signage to and within the town. To promote the business community within Carmarthen, the new BID will seek to coordinate marketing activities to increase the profile of Carmarthen locally and further afield by working with local and regional partners. Where possible, the BID will seek to support and add value to existing marketing activities, and deliver new initiatives by working with partners locally and regionally. This could include creating marketing campaigns that will promote the full extent of the town's offer in a joined-up manner, including the culture, heritage, leisure, independent, and broader commercial offer.

In relation to signage, some of the initial ideas include lobbying to erect signs in key strategic places along the bypass and main roads to ensure people are aware of and can easily find their way into the town centre. The BID will also improve signage within the town as providing quality and up-to-date signage is central to getting people to their location and helping them explore what's on offer. Signage and information impacts everyone's use of a town. The BID will revitalise and upgrade signage and wayfinding provision to ensure people know the town and where things are located, whether it's our independent filled alleys, offices or the town's key heritage and cultural assets.

## Pledge 2: *continued*

### **Develop a “Warm Welcome / Croeso Cynnes” initiative**

The BID’s “Croeso Cynnes” initiative, linked to the mystery-shopper scheme as described in the first pledge, will build and promote the reputation of the town as a location for high quality customer and visitor experience. Carmarthen is already a very welcoming town and this initiative will enable us to be even more so.

Under this initiative the BID will develop and manage a scheme to enhance the customer and visitor service and experience offered within the BID area including mentoring and an effective customer referral process. Our “Croeso Cynnes” mentors will visit BID members to provide advice and information slips to any businesses who seek it with best practice customer service tips.

This initiative will also include a meet-and-greet scheme where we will fund and manage ‘Town Centre Ambassadors’. They will be responsible for welcoming people to the town and acting as tourism champions.

### **Develop a BID website with a local business directory**

We will establish a website to promote Carmarthen town centre and individual BID member businesses including micro-sites for individual businesses. It will include local business information and provide a shopping, leisure

and services directory, deals and vouchers, job vacancies noticeboard, news and events listings.

There will be a members’ section, including a noticeboard and forum for BID businesses. The members section will allow all businesses to discuss and raise topics and the BID manager will moderate this forum, responding to any questions, suggestions and problems. The reach of the BID website will be maximised by exposure on social media such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

### **Support high quality events and festivals**

The BID will support and enhance existing events and maximise the benefit for the city centre as well as exploring opportunities to develop new high-quality events in partnership with local community groups and others. This is designed to increase footfall within the BID area in the day and evening and throughout the year. They will engage residents and visitors, animate the streets and encourage everyone to spend time in the city centre.

The BID will seek to create a more coordinated approach in marketing the events and festivals with all included and marketed on the BID website. We will also explore the possibility of purchasing equipment and resources that event organisers could use.



# Pledge 3: Improve the parking experience



## **Projected BID investment over 5 years: at least £40,000**

The business consultation survey in March 2017 clearly showed that a key priority for the BID should be to address or mitigate parking issues in the town centre. People's experience of car parking is critical to their impressions of any town. The BID will work to improve that experience in Carmarthen by working with Carmarthen County Council and other parking providers to serve as a liaison with businesses and customers. The BID can provide a powerful voice to address these concerns.

### ***The BID will...***

#### **Lobby to improve the parking experience in the town centre**

The BID will act as a lobbying group representing the BID area businesses in discussions about car parking within the town centre. We will look to work with car parking providers to explore the possibility of offering incentives and deals for events, at key times of the trading year and at specific times of the week. We will also work with partners to explore developments such as card

payment options. Carmarthen BID will have an active and visible BID Manager that will act on behalf of BID members and act as a town centre liaison which will include ensuring the parking needs of businesses and visitors are met.

#### **Explore options for a parking refund or loyalty scheme**

The BID will explore options for the introduction of a parking scheme which would encourage visitors to return more often. One of the initial ideas is to develop a scheme which would reward loyalty by introducing parking tickets that could be redeemed by spending in a BID member shop.

#### **Negotiate a discount for BID member staff**

The BID would look to develop Staff and Business Parking Passes where staff would receive a discount when using town centre car parks. Under this scheme, all BID levy paying businesses would be eligible for a discounted annual parking pass

## Pledge 3: *continued*

### **Better maps and signage at car parks**

The BID will work with our partners to develop up-to-date and quality maps to be placed at key car-parks around the town centre as a means of welcoming visitors to the town. Online and printed editions will also be produced. Linked to this, as noted under Pledge 2, the BID will also work to improve signage within the town as providing quality and up-to-date signage is central to getting people to their location and helping them explore what's on offer.

### **Develop a 'meet-and-greet' scheme (this is linked to Pledge 2)**

This pledge also incorporates some of the themes

described in the second pledge, including to fund and manage a town centre ambassador / meet-and-greet scheme as part of the "croeso cynnes" initiative. These Ambassadors will be located at parking locations in the town centre at key dates and times (including when coaches arrive) to ensure visitors receive a good first impression and find out about what Carmarthen has to offer. The BID will also look at developing and installing town centre maps (linked to online/mobile versions) in key car parks within the town centre.



# Pledge 4: Improve the look of the town



## **Projected BID investment over 5 years: at least £40,000**

Improving the first impressions that shoppers, visitors and residents have of Carmarthen was a common theme raised in the consultation with businesses, particularly in relation to addressing empty shop fronts / units. With attractive alternatives such as McArthurGlen, Swansea and Cardiff being popular destinations for shoppers, Carmarthen needs to compete with such towns and cities to attract shoppers and visitors from across south Wales.

### ***The BID will:***

#### **Fund new and additional cleaning of the town centre**

The BID will work to improve the physical environment, helping to make the town centre a cleaner place. We will establish a rapid response Clean Team and 'Handyman' service focused on monitoring the management and cleansing of the town centre. This maintenance service will allow us to quickly react to issues within the BID area (e.g. clean-up, small-scale repairs). The aim is to ensure that the cleansing of the streets is kept to an acceptable standard, and that issues such as litter bin placements are agreed upon by all parties. The BID will provide more effective street cleaning to what is being undertaken at present e.g. more and regular cleaning as well as deep cleaning initiatives.

It is important to note that the BID will develop a Baseline Agreement with Carmarthenshire County Council to ensure that BID activities are in addition to existing services which BID activities are not allowed to replace.

#### **Utilise empty shops / shop-fronts**

The BID will seek to improve shop fronts in empty premises, including installing attractive destination marketing vinyl / graphics on empty shop windows. This would capitalise on the array of premier heritage sites that exist in the Carmarthen area. The windows will also include a "watch this space" notice to reassure people and businesses that there are plans for the premises.

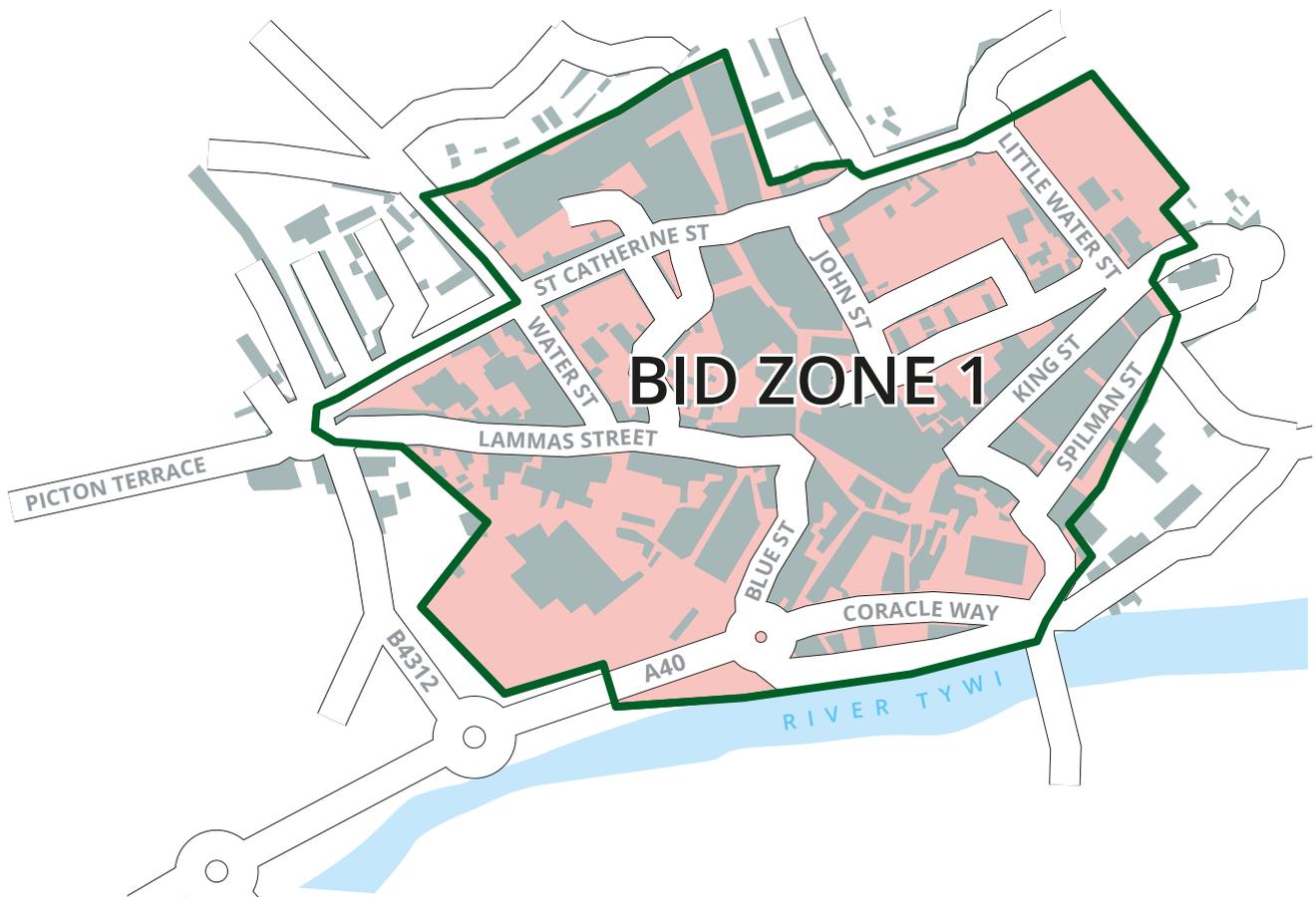
We will also explore the potential to establish and then support 'pop-up shops' in empty premises within the BID area as a means of utilising empty premises but also helping develop new businesses within the BID area. This could include a trial period of around three months which would allow businesses to assess the feasibility of utilising these premises more permanently. The opportunity for 'pop-up shops' and the availability of empty premises will be promoted on the BID website.

# The BID Area

The map below shows the proposed boundary for the Carmarthen BID area.

Streets included within the proposed BID area are as follows:

Barn Road	Hall Street	Orchard Street
Blue Street	Jacksons Lane	Parade Road
Bridge Street	John Street	Quay Street
Cambrian Court	King Street	Queen Street
Cambrian Place	Lammas Street	Red Street
Cambrian Way	Little Bridge Street	Spilman Street
Castle Hill	Little Water Street	St Catherine Street
Chapel Street	Mansel Street	St Mary Street
Church Lane	Market Way	St Peters Street
Church Street	Market Hall	St Catherine's Walk
Coracle Way	Merlin Street	The Mount
Darkgate	Merlins Walk	The Quay
Francis Terrace	Mill Street	The Market
Friars Park	Morley Street	Water Street
Furnace Road	Nott Square	Woods Row
Guildhall Square	Old Station Road	



# Projected BID Budget

Carmarthen BID will provide exceptional value for money for its members.

The BID will be financed, through an additional, annual levy of 1.5% of the rateable value of the business although additional sources of income can be explored once the BID is up and running.

The levy will apply to all business rate payers with a rateable value of over £6,000. There will however be 80% relief for non-retail charity organisations.

**Through its levy Carmarthen BID would generate an income of around £165,000 per year, or £847,000\* over the five-year term of the BID to invest in projects and services to benefit businesses.**

\*This proposal covers a 5-year period which means that inflation needs to be accounted for; an inflation rate of 2% per year has been included within the calculations.

This is the minimum amount of funding likely to be available to the BID. We will also seek to leverage in additional funds from other sources including: securing grant funding and sponsorship, voluntary contributions from businesses outside the boundary and landlords. Whilst exempt from the levy, businesses with rateable values below £6,000 may contribute voluntarily in order to be included as voluntary members of the BID and receive the benefits that go with membership.

As a levy payer you will be required to pay one annual payment towards the BID each year for five years. This annual payment will be calculated at 1.5% of the rateable value for your individual property (hereditament). So, if you own a business that has a rateable value of £10,000 you will pay £150 a year to the BID to deliver the services set out within this document. Note, inflation would be applied at 2% a year.

Business Rates 2018/19*	Rateable Value	Levy cost per year**	Levy cost per day
£5,140	£10,000	£150	41p
£25,700	£50,000	£750	£2.05
£51,400	£100,000	£1,500	£4.11
£102,800	£200,000	£3,000	£8.22

\* for 2018/19 the multiplier is £0.514

\*\* at 1.5% of the rateable value

The levy is an investment – for a business that has a rateable value of £10,000 it is an investment of only 41p per day. In return for that investment, businesses will benefit from projects that you

would not get without the BID. The BID company will be accountable for all monies received or generated and will be able to tell businesses what they are receiving for their investment.

This is a draft budget. For simplicity, the total expenditure per pledge has been allocated equally across the 5-years. Allocations could vary between years, depending on progress and Board

priorities but will keep to the allocated budget over the 5-year lifetime of this business plan.

		Year 1 (£)	Year 2 (£)	Year 3 (£)	Year 4 (£)	Year 5 (£)	Total (£)
<b>Income: Levy @1.5%*</b>		162,803	166,059	169,380	172,768	176,223	847,234
<b>Expenditure</b>	%						
Pledge 1: improve business profitability	25	40,701	41,515	42,345	43,192	44,056	211,808
Pledge 2: improve the profile of the town	25	40,701	41,515	42,345	43,192	44,056	211,808
Pledge 3: improve the parking experience	5	8,140	8,303	8,469	8,638	8,811	42,362
Pledge 4: improve how the town looks	5	8,140	8,303	8,469	8,638	8,811	42,362
Support for other projects	5	8,140	8,303	8,469	8,638	8,811	42,362
BID manager costs	20	32,561	33,212	33,876	34,554	35,245	169,447
Admin costs & overheads	5	8,140	8,303	8,469	8,638	8,811	42,362
Contingency, bad debt, surplus	10	16,280	16,606	16,938	17,277	17,622	84,723
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>162,803</b>	<b>166,059</b>	<b>169,380</b>	<b>172,768</b>	<b>176,223</b>	<b>847,234</b>

\* 95% collection, £6,000 minimum threshold, 2% inflation per annum

### Projected levy collection rate and budget contingency

The British Retail Consortium advises budgeting to be based on a 95% collection rate with a contingency of no less than 5% on all items of

expenditure. For this reason, the BID levy income in the table above is based upon a levy collection rate of 95%. A contingency for bad debt or surplus is included at 10%, as recommended by the Association of Town Centre Management.

# BID Management and Governance

The development of our proposed BID in Carmarthen has to date been led by an enthusiastic group of local businesses and representatives. If the BID receives a 'yes' vote, these individuals have agreed to take the newly formed BID company forward to the first AGM when Directors will be elected.

All businesses with a rateable value of £6,000 or above will be eligible to be members of the BID and can stand as a director. Those businesses who fall within the BID boundary but with a lower rateable value can make a voluntary contribution (amount to be decided) per annum in order to become members. We will establish a company limited by guarantee to run the BID although the structure of that company is yet to be decided.

**Board directors** will serve voluntarily. All BID levy payers will be entitled to become members of the company and may stand to be elected as members of the BID Board at its AGM. All levy payers will be asked to apply to become members of the BID company.

All levy payers will have **a stake in the BID company**, and can hold the BID company to account. The levy will be collected by Carmarthenshire County Council on behalf of the BID.

A **BID Manager** will be employed, initially on a part time basis, to deliver the activities of the BID. The BID Manager will be the key point of contact for BID member businesses. The successful candidate will be a self-motivated individual possessing plenty of initiative, PR skills, social media skills, relationship management skills.

## Alterations to BID Arrangements

Only minor amendments can be made to the BID arrangements without seeking formal approval from the BID members. There cannot be alterations that alter the following without an alteration ballot:

- The geographical area of the BID
- The BID levy in such a way that would:
  - cause any person to be liable to pay the BID levy, who was not previously liable to pay; or
  - increase the BID levy for any person other than for inflation purposes as set out in this document.

Where BID arrangements may be altered without an alteration ballot, the alteration will be made by a decision of the full Carmarthen BID Board.

## Performance measurement

The Carmarthen BID will be transparent and accountable to its members. The BID Manager, in conjunction with the management board, will develop a monitoring and evaluation framework with annual targets against key performance indicators. Performance against these targets and the impact of the BID's improvement programme will be regularly monitored and reports regarding progress will be communicated to levy payers and the wider business community. There will be a clear focus on performance management, visible impacts and the ability to show excellent value for money.

# Ballot rules

Each business rate payer will have a vote provided they are listed on the Non-Domestic Ratings List when notice of ballot is given by Carmarthenshire County Council, sit within the BID boundary with a rateable value over and inclusive of £6,000.

- A voting pack will be sent to the address of the hereditament (property).
- All votes must be returned by the deadline that will be specified.
- For the BID to go ahead two conditions must be met:
  - More than 50% of businesses that vote must vote in favour.
  - The aggregate of the rateable values of the "yes" votes must represent more than 50% of the total rateable value of all votes cast.
- Under the legislation, if these conditions are fulfilled payment of the 1.5% levy becomes mandatory for all eligible businesses, regardless of how they voted.

- The BID area, the BID levy percentage and the criteria of businesses eligible cannot be altered at any stage during the five-year lifetime of the BID without a full Alteration Ballot. This is to protect ratepayers and provide certainty of BID levy costs.

## Your vote counts!

Over the past year town centre businesses have shown a great deal of enthusiasm for a Business Improvement District in Carmarthen. Now is the time to take a sustainable and successful approach to managing our city centre for years to come.

## **VOTE YES - VOTE FOR CARMARTHEN BID**



# Your Questions Answered

## **Why are we running a BID ballot?**

To create a BID, we need to run a ballot of eligible businesses. The ballot will ask a simple question: 'Are you in favour of the proposals for the Carmarthen Business Improvement District? (BID)'.

## **Am I eligible to vote in the BID ballot?**

If your business premises falls within the proposed BID area and has a rateable value above £6,000 you are eligible to vote in the BID ballot

## **How will Carmarthen BID be funded?**

If the ballot is successful, Carmarthen BID will be funded by an annual levy of 1.5% of the rateable value of all eligible business units situated in the BID area, regardless of whether a business voted for or against the BID. For example, if the rateable value on your premises is £10,000 you will pay £150 per annum. The BID levy will be mandatory for all eligible businesses and other bodies, including the local authority. The BID could also raise additional income from voluntary contributions from smaller businesses and businesses outside the BID boundary wishing to become members as well as any success in grant funding applications.

## **Levy collection**

The BID levy will be collected on an annual basis and will be collected by Carmarthenshire County Council with the business rates. Carmarthen BID will be clear and transparent about how it is spending the money. There will be regularly updated information about income and expenditure available to all members of the BID.

## **Ensuring that any BID services are additional**

A BID in Carmarthen town centre will be a business-led initiative with funds that will be collected and managed by you. It must provide services over and above those offered by the local authority and other statutory agencies. The Carmarthen BID will sign a Baseline Agreement with Carmarthenshire County Council that will establish what the local authority already delivers

and will monitor this agreement.

## **How long will the BID last?**

The BID will last for five years, meaning guaranteed investment over that period. If businesses want the BID to continue beyond five years you will make this decision through a further ballot process.

## **How can I be represented?**

All businesses that pay the levy can become members of the company in order to be eligible to vote. Any member can stand for election to the board. Business premises with rateable values below £6,000 may contribute voluntarily on the basis of £X/annum minimum in order to be included as voluntary members of the BID, however only members who are mandatory levy payers will have full voting rights.

## **What research has been done during the development of the proposals?**

A feasibility study was produced in May 2017 to ascertain whether BIDs would be an effective mechanism to address current town centre issues with a focus on improving trading conditions.

Based on an analysis of rateable values and a survey of businesses within the proposed BID boundary, the feasibility study concluded that establishing a successful BID is not only an exciting and valuable prospect for businesses and the wider community of Carmarthen, but it also concluded that it is a feasible reality. There is support and demand for the BID, it will be financially viable, it can act on the specific needs of BID businesses over the long-term and it can add value to the levy on businesses through integration, partnerships, leverage and influence.

Surveys were completed by 190 businesses, of which 150 (79%) stated that they thought a BID for Carmarthen was a good idea in principle and should be tested in a ballot. Only twelve answered no and the remainder were not sure.

# Supporting Documents

Other documents related to the BID will be available on the BID website once they have been finalised.

These include:

- The draft Baseline Agreement between the BID and Carmarthenshire County Council, including a statement of the existing baseline services provided by Carmarthenshire County Council.
- The draft Operating Agreement between the BID and Carmarthenshire County Council, stating the terms how Carmarthenshire County Council will operate as the billing and ballot authority on behalf of the BID.

For more information on Carmarthen BID and to find out how you can get involved, please visit the website or send us an email:

**Visit our website: <https://www.facebook.com/lovecarmarthen>**

# Appendix 1: Essential Information

## Who is involved?

1. The liable person to pay the BID levy is the ratepayer responsible for non-domestic rates in respect of the hereditament.
2. The BID levy will apply to all hereditaments with an NNDR (National Non-Domestic Rates) address located within the Carmarthen BID boundary area.
3. Businesses with a rateable value that is below £6,000 will not be eligible to pay the BID levy but may contribute voluntarily in order to become voluntary members of the BID.
8. Businesses may become liable to pay the levy where they were not previously, for example where a hereditament in the BID area that was absent from the ratings list is subsequently added.
9. The chargeable period will be the BID term of five years. No account will be taken of any rating revaluation, unless a hereditament is shown in that list for the first time, in which case the rateable value shown in that list will be used. The exception will be any change of use or a physical change to a property or hereditament.
10. The non-payment of the BID levy will be pursued via all available mechanisms.

## Key Dates

1. The proposed BID will last five consecutive financial years.
2. All eligible businesses will be entitled to vote for the BID proposal in a 28 day postal ballot.

## The Levy

1. The BID levy will be 1.5% of each hereditament's rateable value for the full five years with a small increase each year to account for inflation.
2. There is no distinction to be made between occupied or unoccupied hereditaments.
3. The BID levy will not be affected by the small business rate relief scheme.
4. The local authority shall collect the BID levy and hold such sums in the BID Revenue Account.
5. The levy will be calculated for each hereditament on an annual basis and billed in time for the start of each year of the BID.
6. The levy will be charged according to chargeable day procedures. It will be based on the ratings list records for each hereditament in the BID area taken at the date when notice of ballot is given. This will ensure the completeness and accuracy of the rateable value listing used for generating bills each year.
7. The Operating Agreement will be made available on request by a potential levy payer.