



Vote **Yes** to **Barrow** **BID**



A Proposal for a
Business Improvement District
for Barrow Town Centre
2021 - 2026

bid
BARROW



WELCOME TO THE NEW BARRROW



Barrow BID 2021-2026 Business Plan



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

Business Improvement Districts are business led partnerships which are created through a ballot process to deliver additional services to local businesses. They can be a powerful tool for directly involving local businesses in activities and allow the business community and local authorities to work together to improve a defined area.

Businesses, local authorities and organisations within a BID area are charged a levy based on the rateable value of their premises.

This levy is used to develop projects which will benefit businesses in the BID area. There is no limit on what projects or services can be provided through a Business Improvement District. The only requirement is that they are in addition to those provided by local authorities and tackle the priorities of businesses within the BID area.

BIDs were first set-up throughout the UK in 2005 and there are over 320 active BIDs across the UK & Ireland.



What is Barrow BID?

Barrow BID was established in 2016 as a result of a democratic vote of the businesses within the defined BID area, when 77.5% of businesses voting said YES to the creation of a Business Improvement District (BID) in Barrow town centre.

The new term of the Barrow BID is being proposed by the Barrow BID Company Limited and will run from 1st September 2021 – 31st August 2026.

The BID levy is set at 1.5% of the rateable value (RV) of each non-domestic premises with an RV of £4,000 or more.



Barrow BID will continue to be responsive to the needs of businesses within the BID area and will amend its focus based on the requirements of businesses.



The main aims of Barrow BID for their second term are:

- Create a **Busier Barrow**
- Create a **Brighter Barrow**
- Create a **Better Barrow**
- Help businesses to **Bounce Back** following the COVID pandemic



Message from the BID Chairman:

“ Barrow BID is essentially a group of businesses **working together** to deliver projects and initiatives to improve OUR Town Centre. ”

“The world we live in has changed a lot in the last 14 months, which has, in turn, had a massive impact on our Town Centre, making the BIDs role more crucial than ever to ensure that we, as a business collective, can adapt and plan for a sustainable future where businesses can prosper.

Barrow BID is led by a team of Directors, all of who, like myself are business owners or managers within the town centre, meaning we all have first-hand experience of the challenges the town is facing and are best placed to overcome them. As a BID, we have delivered a wealth of projects over our first 5 year term. This includes some large scale events, of which, Barrow has never seen before; like the Super Soapbox Challenge and the Festival of Transport. These will continue to grow over the next 5 years and will help with our ambition to turn Barrow into a destination town. We have also provided countless businesses and community groups with financial support for their own events, or carry out improvements to their businesses. These are just a few of the many highlights and initiatives we have delivered.

Having lived in the Barrow area all my life, I want our Town Centre to thrive. I am a firm believer that our Town Centre still has a place as the hub of our community. It is unlikely this will be just retail lead anymore, but will become a mixture of hospitality, restaurants, leisure and services mixed in amongst the traditional independent and national retailers. This will be coupled with more people living within the Town Centre, creating a real community feel to the area, a place where you would want to spend time, to arrange to meet a friend for coffee mid-afternoon or sit outside with a glass of wine in your hand on a warm summer's evening.

The continuation of Barrow BID is not just about more of the same though, it's about growing, regenerating and revitalising the town centre so that it is fit for the future. We will strive to continue to listen to our levy-paying businesses, so that we, as a collective can shape our own futures and the future of the town where we live.”

- Paul Hodgson, BID Chairman

Our story so far...

In 2015 local businesses teamed up with the local authority to explore how a business improvement district could assist Barrow town centre to tackle changing shopping habits by marketing the town as a sub-regional shopping destination, improving access, increasing pride, re-establishing Barrow's evening economy and building effective partnerships.

Barrow BID was established on 1st September 2016 following a democratic ballot of local businesses and the newly formed Barrow BID Company Limited employed a consultant BID Manager to deliver projects, initiatives and events aimed at meeting the priorities set out in the business plan.

Town centre events have played a big part in Barrow BID's first term. We understand the importance of these to boost the local economy and increase footfall on event days. However, more importantly, events improve local pride in the town, help to change the perception of the town from the outside and create lasting memories. Barrow BID felt that Barrow town centre was being under-utilised as an event destination and set about establishing high profile events right in the heart of the town. The Festival of Transport is now in its 4th year and has become part of Barrow's established events calendar with its own committee which should make it sustainable for years to come. Barrow BID has also organised and delivered a Comedy Festival, Dino Day, Christmas Events and the Super Soapbox Challenge, which took place in June 2019 and attracted over 16,000 onto Barrow's high street creating a feel good factor which got local people talking positively about the town.



In 2018 Barrow BID were asked to partner with BAE Systems, Barrow Borough Council and Cumbria County Council to bring a stage start of the Tour of Britain Cycle Race to Barrow in Furness. The event was a huge success and put Barrow on the map as a destination town, highlighting the area as a staycation destination for cycling, walking, its diverse coastline and natural heritage.

Barrow BID seized the opportunity on the back of the Tour of Britain event to create the 'Visit Barrow' brand and promote Barrow in Furness as a destination via a marketing and promotional campaign which included, a website, social media, a tri-fold leaflet and regional advertising.

In January 2019 Barrow BID launched their Business Premises Improvement scheme which enabled BID levy paying businesses and new businesses to apply for up to £1,000 to improve the exterior of their town centre premises. As of April 2021, 33 businesses have taken advantage of the grant scheme and made their premises brighter with new signs, paint, doors, windows and external features.



The festive period is the most important time for high street retailers, however, competition has increased with an increase in out-of-town retail parks and the dramatic rise of online shopping. Barrow BID understands that high street retail cannot compete for convenience so has had to look at other ways of attracting shoppers to the high street and create a festive atmosphere that people want to experience. In 2019 Barrow BID invested in over 3km of cross-street lighting and put lights and festive music throughout the town. Additional lights were purchased in 2020 to improve Barrow's festive offer.

Barrow BID are passionate about improving Barrow town centre and safeguarding the businesses in the town. As well as the events and schemes already mentioned Barrow BID has also delivered an extensive marketing and promotional campaign, organised community clean events, tidied emptied units and improved signage to car parks and businesses. Our FREE after 3pm car parking scheme has become very popular and 'Shop Barrow Day' is established as one of the busiest retail days in the year.



The journey so far hasn't all been plain sailing and the town centre has experienced some setbacks on the way. Losing M&S in 2020, the outbreak of the COVID pandemic in March 2020 and the subsequent closures of River Island, Topshop, Thorntons, Winfields, Carphone Warehouse and inevitably Debenhams will create a huge void in Barrow's retail core, but Barrow is better prepared to transform the town centre by having a BID and we remain determined to create a town centre for future generations.

Barrow BID goes to ballot for a second term from 28th May to 24th June and we require your support to ensure that Barrow BID can continue to deliver projects, initiatives and events that will really make a difference.



Governance & Management of the Barrow BID

Barrow BID is managed, and will continue to be managed, by the Barrow BID Company Limited which is an independent not-for-profit limited company governed by a Board of Directors consisting of business, organisation and public sector body representatives from across the BID area. This ensures direct local control and oversight of all the decision making to deliver maximum benefits to town centre businesses. The Board, who give their time on a voluntary basis, are responsible for delivering projects, initiatives and events from the Barrow BID business plan and getting return on investment on the BID levy.

The BID Board oversees a paid BID Manager who is responsible for the implementation of schemes to benefit the BID area and businesses within the area.

An Annual General meeting is held to which Barrow BID Members are invited. BID Levy payers aren't automatically members of the Barrow BID Company Limited and must apply by completing a form at: www.barrowbid.co.uk/bid-members

Annual Accounts are produced and externally verified by a qualified accountancy firm. The Accounts will be submitted to Companies House and made available via the BID website. The company is VAT registered

All businesses eligible to vote in the BID ballot will be invited to nominate themselves, or other eligible individuals, to be considered for directorship of the BID Company and oversee the delivery of the BID to meet the aims and objectives set out in this business plan document.

The board members taking forward the 2nd term Barrow BID proposal include:

Paul Hodgson Chair

Ryman Stationery (*large retail*)

Phil Heath

Heath's (*small retail*)

Sandra Collings

Cumbria Sewing & Craft Centre (*small retail*)

Kay Bower

Labour Club (*evening economy*)

John Graham

McDonalds (*hospitality, food & drink*)

Allan Kerr

Simply Wall Art (*small retail*)

Keiron Hart

SAFA (*charitable organisations*)

Rowen McClure

RM Letting & Development
(*professional & financial services*)

Jonny Williams

Cando FM (*board nominated individual*)

Les McLease

Drop Zone Youth Project
(*charitable organisations*)

Cara Harvey

Nationwide Building Society
(*professional & financial services*)

Business Testimonials



"The event that made Barrow the busiest was the Soapbox, but December is great with the festive atmosphere and the range of events and activities. Dino Day was awesome and Barrow BID should be really proud of what they have achieved so far."

Miss Melvs Radiance Beauty



"The premises grant scheme has had a positive impact on the town, as many businesses benefitted from it and it drastically improved the look of the town centre."

RM Letting & Property

"As we've found ourselves in dire circumstances, the simple idea of improving the Christmas lights, cheered everybody up instantly. This changed the mood of shoppers and from personal experience as a retailer, all our customers appreciate it immensely."

Atomic Comica



"The past 12 months have proven how the perception of a town can be turned around with some innovative and aspirational ideas and some hard work. Colin and the team of BID volunteers can be very proud of what they have achieved during 2019."

Great British High Street Awards Judge

"The Christmas shopping guide had the best impact for us."

Special Occasions

Impact & Achievements of Barrow BID 2016 – 2021

Marketing & Promotion of Barrow

Established the Visit Barrow brand

- Website receives over 80,000 visits a year
- 12,000 leaflets printed & distributed
- 3,500 people follow Visit Barrow Facebook page
- Over 15,000 clicks onto our '20 Reasons NOT to Visit Barrow' campaign
- Creation of Barrow Heritage Leaflet in partnership with Civic & History Society

Production of Christmas Shopping Guide which highlighted over 50 national and independent retailers in the town centre.

The guide was distributed to 7,500 homes across the borough.

Extensive marketing and promotion campaign using local and regional media
Included a community radio campaign with Cando FM.





Events, Festivals & Activities

The Festival of Transport event is in its 4th year and attracts over 150 vehicles and 5,000 visitors.

The Festival of Transport started as the Classic & Vintage Car & Motorcycle Show but had a rebrand when other vehicle owners asked to join.

The Barrow BID Comedy Fest took place over a weekend in October 2019.

A Comedy Pub Crawl enabled Barrow BID to engage with six bars and take our comedy audience on a voyage of discovery. Family activities and mainstream comedians brought some laughs to Barrow town centre.

A diluted Dino Day took place in August 2020 and brought some respite to families during the COVID pandemic.

The event had strict controls to meet COVID regulations and ensure staff, volunteers and the general public remained safe.



The Super Soapbox Challenge attracted over 16,000 people to the town in June 2019. The event created a feel good factor in the town and got people talking about Barrow town centre and the work of Barrow BID.

BAE Systems and Orsted sponsored the event and proved that the town's major employers are backing Barrow BID and Barrow town centre. The estimated boost to Barrow's economy was in the region of £350,000.

Barrow BID has organised a series of family friendly trails across the town. The trails have been a good way to raise awareness of businesses and engage with families in a socially distanced capacity. So far Barrow BID have had over 500 people on their family trails.

Supported Events



Our 'Special Projects Grant' part funded a number of events in the town centre including; Santa Dash, Love Barrow Running Festival, Barrow Pride, This Is Me, The Flashmob... Barrow BID would like to encourage a programme of events and activities in the town centre throughout the year.

Barrow BID invested in the Tour of Britain as a major partner. We established a fanzone with a giant screen so people could watch the whole stage from Barrow town centre.



Barrow BID support the Christmas Light Switch On event which begins the festive celebrations in Barrow town centre.



Making the town more attractive

Our Business Premises Grant scheme has assisted 33 businesses with grants totalling over £27,000, this has included 12 new town centre businesses.

Barrow BID has invested in new Christmas lighting for the town centre

- Over 3km of cross-street lights have been purchased and installed.
- Lights for town centre trees, 2D shapes and speakers have added to the festive atmosphere.



We have funded a series of window vinyls to tidy up and enhance empty units, promote events and encourage people to stay safe during the COVID pandemic.

We have organised a series of community clean events and have encouraged local business owners and the general public to take pride in their environment. The clean events enabled us to identify areas which required further attention.

We continue to lobby the local authorities to improve cleaning, planting and maintenance of the streetscape.

Making the town more accessible

Barrow BID funded the cost of a new sign to be installed by Highways England to direct traffic to the town centre via Abbey Road.

Barrow BID has worked with Cumbria Highways to identify and deliver schemes from the 2016 Mott MacDonald report which highlights areas of improvement for access and movement in the town centre.

Existing road signs and phone boxes have been utilised to promote businesses.

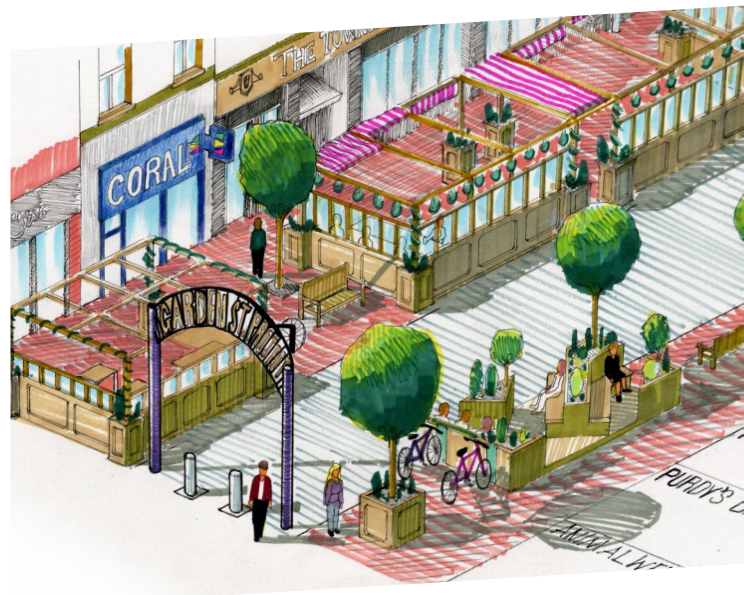
Barrow BID has written to the local authority to request a town centre car park strategy and have implemented a number of schemes to improve car parking, **including:**

- New car park signs which have enabled visitors to find town centre car parks more effectively.
- A **FREE** after 3pm scheme on the multi-storey and Whittaker Street car parks.
- **FREE** parking on 'Shop Barrow Day' and other days during the festive period.
- During 2021 Barrow BID has been working on a Train Station Gateway scheme which will see signs located from the train station to Dalton Road, promoting the route to visitors and encouraging them to visit Barrow's town centre.

Secure further investment into the town

To ensure Barrow BID maximises the funding from BID levy payers we use the money to lever in funding from other sources, **these have included:**

- Match funding the HSHAZ scheme which has enabled the borough council to draw down £1.9m
- Almost £60,000 in event sponsorship, predominantly from BAE Systems as our primary sponsor of the Soapbox Challenge, but also from Orsted, Furness Park and Stagecoach
- £1,000 from the Cumbria Rail Partnership towards our Train Station Gateway project



Barrow BID will actively seek to bring in further match funding and investment during our second term.

Build Effective Partnerships

Barrow BID has representation on the Town Deal board who have secured a £25m grant from the Government to enhance the town and surrounding borough.

We have representation on the Town Centre Programme Board which has secured £1.9m to support a Heritage Action Zone on Duke Street and Cornwallis Street using some match funding from Barrow BID.

Barrow BID also represent town centre businesses on the following strategic partnerships:

Cycling & Walking Infrastructure

Partnership which is a public sector led partnership focusing on how walking and cycling can stimulate economic growth, health and tourism.

Barrow Cultural Consortium which is part of the Heritage Action Zones and identifies and delivers cultural initiatives to support and promote Barrow's rich heritage

Furness Line CRP which is a public and rail partnership devoted to improving and promoting the Furness railway line.

The Local Focus Hub which is a Cumbria Police led initiative focusing on crime and disorder issues such as anti-social behaviour, street begging, vandalism and shoplifting.



Furness Tourism Forum which is a private and public sector led group focusing on enhancing Barrow as a tourism destination.

Market Traders Association which is a local authority led group set up to understand the needs of Barrow's indoor market traders.

Barrow Festival of Transport committee which was set up by Barrow BID to undertake the organisation and delivery of the Festival of Transport event held in July each year.

We are also working with **Barra Culture** and the new **Borough Council Events Team** to review and organise a series of events and event space in the town.

Business support during the COVID pandemic

Barrow BID created a directory of town centre businesses remaining open or reaching customers via takeaway or delivery services. We actively promoted town centre businesses throughout the local community and asked the 'community resilience partnership' to share the directory with vulnerable adults.

We produced a COVID support pack for businesses re-opening after lockdown one which consisted of floor stickers and posters containing information on social distancing and COVID regulations.

We aided town centre businesses with barriers and H&S support, particularly where there were issues with queuing in the streets where neighbouring businesses were affected.

Barrow BID supplied information about grants and support on our social media applications and created a Coronavirus area on our website. We also worked with private and public sector partners to deliver a range of guidance support, online seminars and Q&A sessions regarding the Government's grant scheme.

During the Coronavirus pandemic Barrow BID continued to promote the town and small businesses with localised promotional campaigns.

As a BID, during the first lockdown we embarked on a 'Business Focus' campaign on social media, highlighting many of the businesses within our town centre.



The Coronavirus pandemic changed the way we deliver events in the town, as social gatherings were reduced or stopped all together. We adapted to this situation by delivering a series of town trails, which attracted families to the town and encouraged them to explore the town centre and visit businesses in their own family bubble. Barrow BID has delivered three town trails with over 500 people participating and 25 businesses involved.



Consultation

Following consultation with local businesses we identified the main priorities businesses are asking Barrow BID to focus on for the next term.

Consultation has included a Business Satisfaction Survey for BID levy payers, which provided us with the following results:



1. What Barrow BID Schemes are you aware of?

Super Soapbox	100%	Tour of Britain	76%	Cando FM Advertising	48%
Festival of Transport	93%	Visit Barrow Brand	76%	Tourism Leaflet	41%
Dino Day	90%	Shop Barrow Day	76%	Tourism Signs	41%
End of Street Signs	90%	Barrow BID Website	76%	Comedy Festival	41%
Free Parking Days	90%	Visit Barrow Website	72%	Music Installations	38%
Barrow BID Facebook	90%	Community Cleans	69%	New Business Support	38%
Christmas Lights	90%	Outdoor Market	69%	Heritage Leaflet	34%
Premises Grants	90%	Pavement Cafes	66%	Cycling Leaflets	31%
Xmas Shopping Guide	86%	Car Parking Signs	66%	Heritage Action Zone	31%
Free after 3pm Parking	86%	Visit Barrow Facebook	62%	Heritage Trail	31%
Window Vinyls	83%	Grants for Events	55%	Choir Competition	31%
Christmas Events	83%	Buskers	52%	Street Football Festival	28%

Barrow BID is known for its delivery of high quality events and it is no surprise that BID Levy payers are aware of our primary events. It is encouraging that over 50% of respondents were aware of 24 schemes delivered by Barrow BID and shows where we need to increase communication with BID levy payers.

Many of the schemes in the right hand column have been delivered via our Visit Barrow brand and levy payers may not understand that this is a brand that we created and manage to promote the town as a destination location.

2. How successful has Barrow BID been in making an impact?

Excellent	12.6%
Very Good	29.9%
Good	32.2%
OK	20.7%
Poor	4.6%

It is encouraging to see that almost 75% of respondents believe that Barrow BID has made a 'good' impact or better in the town. It was interesting to read from respondents that the Super Soapbox Challenge event was a pivotal point for Barrow BID and made businesses aware of who we are and what we are aiming to achieve.

3. What should Barrow BID focus on next?

Busier Barrow	Score	Brighter Barrow	Score	Better Barrow	Score
Car parking	46	Tidy Empty Units	32	Regular Events	43
Promoting the town	27	Premises Grants	27	Attracting Business	34
Promoting businesses	26	More Entertainment	23	Large Scale Events	18
Public Transport	10	Pavement Cafes	19	Community Events	17
Improved signage	9	Community Cleaning	16	Tackle ASB	13

We asked respondents to rank their first three priorities in each of our main 2nd term objectives and gave them a score based on their rank.

Busier Barrow

As expected, we received a lot of feedback from businesses who feel that out-of-town retail parks with convenient free parking have an unfair advantage and this meant that car parking ranked as the highest priority for businesses. Barrow BID has written to the local authority with a request to produce a car park strategy which would see parking fees decrease and the pay on entry systems replaced with pay on exit, which encourages longer stays.

Businesses would like to see a continuation of marketing and promotion of the town centre and businesses within the town. They felt that the Christmas Shopping Guide (Nov 2020) was a great success and not only promoted the wealth of shops in the town but helped dispel the myth that Barrow town centre is full of charity shops and budget shops.

Walking and cycling infrastructure were separate schemes and totalled 15, showing that there is an appetite to improve green routes into the town.

Brighter Barrow

The main focus of respondents was to do something about the number of empty units in the town centre. If these can't be filled and put to use, businesses want to see them tidied so they don't affect surrounding properties/businesses.

The premises grant scheme has proven to be very popular and businesses would like to see a continuation of this scheme into the 2nd term. Pavement cafes were a popular choice from businesses with comments including, "This is an opportunity to use our pedestrianised streets to transform the town."

Better Barrow

Although large scale events scored well coming in 3rd, businesses were keen to see more regular events and felt that Barrow needed specific areas to host events and activities.

It is no surprise to see attracting businesses high on the list as there is a need to replace the businesses who have left the town and fill the empty units left behind. Barrow BID has written to our local MP to request a rate review which would affect town centre businesses in two ways. We have asked that non-domestic rates are reduced, but more importantly, that high street (retail core) premises have a higher reduction to bring them in line with the edge of town rates and encourage businesses to relocate into the retail core.

Anti-social behaviour in the town centre is a concern of many businesses who often do not feel safe.

4. Would you vote YES to keep Barrow BID for a 2nd term?

80% of respondents stated that they would vote **YES** to a 2nd term with 14% stating they would need more information before making a decision and 6% stated they would vote NO.

Further Consultation

As well as the business satisfaction survey detailed above, Barrow BID has conducted a series of consultations across our 1st term which has enabled us to engage with businesses and organisations within the BID area and discuss their ideas on how to regenerate, revitalise and transform the BID area.

Barrow BID uses the feedback from these consultations to build the Business Plan and to prioritise the projects, initiatives and events planned for the next term.

The Businesses that responded were very supportive and thought that Barrow BID would be needed more than ever to help the town centre recover from the effects of COVID. Discussions also highlighted some priorities for a second term which included:

- Promotion of evening economy businesses and leisure facilities to contractors and visitors
- A desire for improved off-street and on-street car parking
- Ways of tackling anti-social behaviour
- Promoting Barrow as a visitor destination and sign-posting them when they are here
- Creating more outside eating and drinking space
- Improving the festive lighting on Duke Street
- Engaging with businesses and improving communication



Consultations with BID levy paying businesses have included:

- Charity and CIC email consultation survey
- Hospitality sector meeting
- Face to Face meetings with companies and organisations including; *Opera Bingo, William Hill, Holiday Inn Express, Wetherspoons, Jeffersons, Lucidity Group, St Mary's Hospice, Debenhams, M&S, Wilkos, Bon Marche, The Kings Arms, Boots & Mannhattans*, as well as others.
- Attendance at Market Liaison meetings to discuss the needs of market traders
- A series of open meetings at venues across the BID area
- Telephone and email communication
- Regular Facebook posts
- A series of newsletters which have been hand delivered to businesses
- A series of e-newsletters and e-shots using Mail Chimp
- Face to face consultation and emails with businesses in the new BID area

Proposed Priorities for 2021 – 2026

BUSIER BARROW

To market and promote Barrow town centre as a destination for local residents and visitors offering a distinctive choice of retail, hospitality, leisure & entertainment. Improve parking, movement and access to reduce barriers into the town centre. Utilise technology to increase footfall and safeguard existing businesses.



BRIGHTER BARROW

To improve the visual aspect and environment of the town centre to create a positive impression and make the town more attractive to visitors and encourage them to return. Promote the town as a hub for art and culture which will inspire people and improve mental well-being.



BETTER BARROW

To improve the offer of the town centre and provide more reasons to visit. Transforming the town from being reliant on high street shopping to a mix of shopping, hospitality, living, working and playing. Increasing pride in the town centre via a programme of events and initiatives which will revitalise the town for future generations and attract a range of businesses and organisations to locate in the town centre.



BOUNCE BACK

To counteract the effects of the COVID pandemic and provide local businesses with the resources to survive, adapt and grow. To promote using 'local' businesses and supporting 'your' town.





Map of the Proposed Barrow BID Area



Existing streets in the Barrow BID Area

Abbey Road, Allison Street, Buccleuch Street, Carlisle Street, Cavendish Street, Clifford Street, Cornwallis Street, Crellin Street, Dalkeith Street, Dalton Road, Duke Street, Emlyn Street, Fell Street, Field Street, Harley Street, Harrison Street, High Street, Hindpool Road, Holker Street, Manchester Street, Market Street, Michaelson Road, Oldham Street, Paradise Street, Paxton Street, Portland Walk, Preston Street, Ramsden Square, Rawlinson Street, School Street, Scott Street, Slater Street, St Vincent Street, Stephen Street, Strand and The Mall

Amended boundaries for the BID area

The Barrow BID area will be extended to include Schneider Square and the Southern end of Duke Street to Ramsden Street. The new area reflects the local authority plans to develop major projects on this side of town and will enable us to work with businesses and create a gateway into the town centre from Buccleuch Dock. The extended area will bring five existing businesses into the Barrow BID area, increasing the total BID levy paying businesses to 461.



THE
4 B'S
OF
BID

BUSIER BARROW

To market and promote Barrow town centre as a destination for local residents and visitors offering a distinctive choice of retail, hospitality, leisure & entertainment. Improve parking, movement and access to reduce barriers into the town centre. Utilise technology to increase footfall and safeguard existing businesses.

The need

The COVID pandemic has accelerated the impact on Barrow's town centre with high street brands such as Debenhams, River Island, Topshop, Thorntons and Winfields closing their doors. Shopping trends have been changing for some time and footfall has been in decline so it is vital that Barrow BID promote the existing businesses and provide incentives to attract shoppers to the high street.

Barrow is ranked no.1 for its natural heritage in England, has over 60km of coastline and a range of attractions and places of interest. Barrow has the capacity to be marketed as a staycation destination with its close proximity to the Lake District, its range of activities and attractions and the quality of its hospitality infrastructure. By working in partnership with the local authority and partners we can promote Barrow as a destination town and attract more visitors.

Car parking is generally the biggest concern for local businesses who feel they aren't on a level playing field with retail parks who have the advantage of free parking on their doorstep. In 2016 a parking and movement strategy commissioned by Cumbria County Council identified a list of schemes to improve access, parking and movement in the town for pedestrians, cyclists, vehicles and public transport.

Barrow does not have a dedicated app or loyalty scheme to encourage people to visit the town. The COVID pandemic has encouraged a wider section of the population to embrace technology and it will be key to the transformation of Barrow's high street.



Key projects

- Promote the retail offer via a **Christmas Shopping Guide** which will showcase the range of national stores, independent retailers and market traders in the town.
- Utilise local and regional media to promote Barrow town centre and businesses to targeted audiences.
- Promote evening economy and leisure industry businesses to contractors and weekend visitors via a Night Out Guide which will provide information on bars, restaurants and leisure businesses within the town centre.
- Utilise the Visit Barrow brand to promote Barrow as a destination, highlighting our quality accommodation offer, town centre events and places of interest.
- Lobby the local authorities to create a town centre car park strategy and update car parking to satisfy the requirements of today's car drivers.
- Lobby the local authorities and government to improve road, rail and public transport links into the town to encourage people to visit.
- Give businesses a voice on partnership led schemes like Town Deal and the LCWIP which focus on the development of walking and cycling infrastructure.
- Identify and launch an app based scheme to assist businesses.



BRIGHTER BARROW

To improve the visual aspect and environment of the town centre to create a positive impression and make the town more attractive to visitors and encourage them to return. Promote the town as a hub for art and culture which will inspire people and improve mental well-being.

The need

The town is in need of some TLC, many commercial properties are dated and the COVID pandemic has seen an increase in vandalism and graffiti.

Barrow has a rich creative culture and the town centre is home to some leading arts organisations, however, we don't use the town centre to deliver arts and culture projects and initiatives, therefore the town centre is quite drab and sterile. The statues and artwork focus on the founding fathers and our shipbuilding heritage, but where is the creative inspiration for young people?

When you visit other towns and cities they have interesting courtyards and squares where people are performing or cooking. Barrow doesn't have this type of space and therefore we lack the sounds, smells and entertainment that would enhance a visit to the town.

Areas of the town are not cleaned to a high standard and Barrow town centre lacks green space.



Key projects

- Enhance the festive experience with new lighting and music
- Improve empty commercial units with external enhancements
- Support the High Street Heritage Action Zone scheme to enhance commercial premises.
- Work with creative partners to enhance creativity and cultural activity in the town.
- Attract specialist markets to Barrow town centre.
- Identify areas of derelict or underused land, consult with businesses and the local community and design and implement urban regeneration schemes to enhance areas of the town and increase the offer to visitors.
- Enhance cleaning and planting over and above the baseline services provided by the local authorities.



BETTER BARROW

To improve the offer of the town centre and provide more reasons to visit. Transforming the town from being reliant on high street shopping to a mix of shopping, hospitality, living, working and playing. Increasing pride in the town centre via a programme of events and initiatives which will revitalise the town for future generations and attract a range of businesses and organisations to locate in the town centre.

The need

Barrow town centre has a limited calendar of events. Events provide an economic boost to the town centre and also engage with individuals who may have stopped visiting the town centre, increase pride in local people and change the perception of the town from the outside.

Large scale events can be used to promote Barrow as a visitor destination and support the town's hospitality sector. Smaller, more regular events provide a reason for local people to visit the town and spend time (dwell) in the town centre.

Barrow's heritage buildings are often underutilised with upper floors falling into disrepair.

The recent COVID pandemic has led to an increase in empty commercial units particularly in the 'retail core' of the town.

Anti-social behaviour, vandalism, begging and minor offences have been magnified during the recent COVID pandemic and created an environment where people can feel intimidated or threatened.

Barrow town centre has historically had an over reliance on high street retail. In recent years it has lost its two anchor stores and a host of high street brands. The town centre needs to transform and develop a mix of retail, commercial leisure and residential to attract people.

Barrow's night-time culture and evening economy used to be the envy of neighbouring towns, with people visiting from South Lakes and further afield to enjoy the diverse range of bars, restaurants and leisure businesses. Recent private investment has seen an upturn in the evening economy and further investment could make a real difference to the town and bring back the glory days of the 1990s.



Key projects

- Organise and manage a primary 'Barrow' event (Super Soapbox Challenge)
- Organise and manage an Easter event (Dino Day proposed for 2022)
- Enable the Festival of Transport Committee to take more responsibility for the summer event and provide financial support
- Support organisations with smaller, regular events
- Support the High Street Heritage Action Zone scheme
- Work with partners to tackle anti-social behaviour and social issues affecting the town centre.
- Sign up to the Completely Retail scheme to promote empty commercial units
- Investigate ways to use empty commercial units
- Work with private sector businesses and the local authority to create more pavement café areas like the 'Garden Street Scheme'.

BOUNCE BACK

To counteract the effects of the COVID pandemic and provide local businesses with the resources to survive, adapt and grow. To promote using 'local' businesses and supporting 'your' town.

The need

The COVID pandemic has accelerated the change in shopping habits and has driven more people to shop online or at Supermarkets.

An increase in the use of delivery services, particularly for takeaways has led to a further decrease in footfall and some cafes may have increased turnover due to the pandemic and will never re-open as a café, choosing to remain as a delivery business.

A lack of beer gardens and pavement cafes in the town has meant that many businesses have been unable to re-open using an outside area only.



Key projects

- Set up an adaptation and relocation grant scheme to safeguard existing businesses and provide them with incentives to grow or relocate into town centre premises.
- Identify training requirements for business owners and managers and deliver online and classroom based training to provide businesses with the skills they need to adapt.
- Review the need for online solutions to help businesses reach their customers.
- Assist businesses to create outside areas and pavement cafes and help with licencing applications.

COMMITTED TO
THE COVID-19
SAFETY MEASURES

NO MORE THAN
[REDACTED] PEOPLE IN
THESE PREMISES
AT ANY ONE TIME
PLEASE



Financial Forecast

The income required to deliver a 5 year programme of projects and activities within the Barrow BID area will be mostly, but not entirely, drawn from the BID Levy. This will be collected on behalf of the Barrow BID Company Limited by the local billing authority and collection agency for the Non-Domestic Rates, Barrow Borough Council.

^ BID levy at 100% (cash reserves are a contingency for fluctuations in the BID levy)

* includes invoicing and collection fees by the Barrow Borough Council rates department set at £9,204pa

INCOME	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	TOTAL
BID Levy ^	£139,159	£139,159	£139,159	£139,159	£139,159	£695,795
Brought forward	£210,000					£210,000
Sponsorship	£35,000	£35,000	£35,000	£35,000	£35,000	£175,000
Other income	£4,000	£4,000	£4,000	£4,000	£4,000	£20,000
Total						£1,100,795

EXPENDITURE	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	TOTAL
Busier Barrow	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000	£125,000
Brighter Barrow	£50,500	£50,500	£50,500	£50,500	£50,500	£247,500
Better Barrow	£112,500	£112,500	£97,500	£97,500	£97,500	£510,000
Bounce Back	£19,500	£15,500	£14,500	£12,000	£11,000	£68,000
Operational Costs *	£24,136	£24,136	£24,136	£24,136	£36,136	£136,155
Cash Reserves					£14,140	£14,140
Total						£1,100,795

Who will pay the BID levy?

All non-domestic hereditaments in the Barrow BID area with a RV above £4,000 will have to pay the BID levy.

How much will it cost?

The BID levy will be calculated on your RV at the 1st September each year and invoices will be sent out around this time.

Will I get a refund if I move out of my premises?

The BID levy is charged as at 1st September each year, therefore if you occupy premises in the BID area and have a RV of £4,000 or above, you will receive an invoice for the year and will be liable for the whole year.

Can I opt out or just not pay?

BIDs are voted in via a ballot and have a specified BID boundary. If you are within the BID area then you will be liable to pay the BID levy in the same way you are liable for non-domestic rates.





Are there any reductions or relief schemes for the BID levy?

Yes, Barrow BID will be running a grant scheme where non-trading charities and CICs will be able to apply for 50% of their BID levy to be returned.

Other income

Barrow BID will not be limited to income derived from the BID Levy and can expect to raise further funds from: Voluntary contributions, advertising, ticket sales, grants and sponsorship.

Money brought forward

Our 2nd term budget shows monies carried forward from our 1st term at c£210,000. The balance has been created due to a number of factors, these being:

A full-time BID Manager was not appointed until mid-2018, nearly two years into the 1st term.

Barrow BID planned to deliver a large scale urban regeneration project to regenerate an area of land adjacent to Sports Direct on Dalton Road however the project was cancelled in January 2021 due to the land being no longer available.

The COVID pandemic has impacted on large scale events, resulting in £60,000 allocated to this project area not being spent.

The money carried forward will enable more to be spent on projects proposed within the priority areas set out in this Business Plan for the new term. This will ensure that every project, initiative and event adds value to the town and local businesses rather than spending for "spending sake".



If you have any questions regarding the BID levy please contact the Barrow BID Manager at:
07955 816000 | manager@barrowbid.co.uk

BID Levy Rules

The BID Levy will be charged at 1.5% of the rateable value, based on the non-domestic ratings list as at the 1st September each year of the BID term.

The term of Barrow BID will run from 1st September 2021 for 5 years until 31st August 2026.

The BID levy will be applied to all non-domestic ratepayers of occupied or unoccupied property with a rateable value of £4,000 and above within the Barrow BID area at any time that the BID is in operation.

Landlords will be liable for unoccupied properties.

There will be no VAT charged on the BID levy.

Non-trading charities and CICs will be able to apply to Barrow BID for 50% of their BID levy to be returned in the form of a grant.

Hereditaments below £4,000 RV will be exempt from the BID levy but can choose to become a voluntary member to take advantage of the benefits of being a BID levy payer.

The BID levy is set on a chargeable day for the year and no refunds will be given for businesses who leave the BID area part way through a BID year.

The existing recovery procedures for the standard non-domestic Rates bill will be utilised for any non-payment of the BID levy.

There are no costs relating to the development of the new BID term which will need to be repaid during the term.

The BID levy will be used to fund the delivery of initiatives as outlined in this Business Plan or other activities of benefit to Barrow town centre which are responsive to emerging priorities and approved by the Barrow BID board.

Notice of the intention to hold a ballot has been given to the Secretary of State and Barrow Borough Council.

For the purposes of definition the term 'Renewal' in regard to the Barrow BID means replacement of the existing BID at the end of its current term (August 31st 2021) with a new arrangement covering an extended area illustrated by the 'BID Area' map and which will be subject to the rules and arrangements herein.

The streets and hereditaments within the BID area may alter due to changes in the local ratings list. Hereditaments may be included if their rateable value – at any time during the BID period – is increased to £4,000 or over, or they are newly added to the local list and the rateable value threshold criteria (as set out in the above response to point 1 (1) (d) of schedule 1 of the BID regulations) is exceeded.

Hereditaments may also be excluded from the BID levy charge in those cases where properties are removed from the local list or drop below a rateable value of £4,000. Where this occurs such amendments will be adjusted from the effective date notified by the Valuation Office.

Operating Agreement

Barrow BID will enter into an operating agreement with the Barrow Borough Council Rates department for invoicing and collection of the BID levy. The operating agreement will also include monitoring of Barrow BID by the local authority to ensure that it operates within the rules and regulations for BIDs and delivers on its aims and objectives as set out in the business plan.

The BID levy will be collected on behalf of Barrow BID by Barrow Borough Council. In compliance with the Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004, the levy funds will be placed into a ring-fenced 'Revenue Account' and transferred to the Barrow BID Company for the purposes of delivering the Barrow BID business plan.



Alteration/Variation

The BID arrangements may be altered without an Alteration Ballot in the following instances: –

Alterations do not alter the geographical area of the BID

Alterations do not alter the BID levy payable

Alterations do not conflict with the Local Government Act (2003) or The Business Improvement District Regulations (2004)

Provided that the BID is meeting its overall objectives, the Board shall have the ability to vary service delivery and expenditure allocation according to the changing demands of BID Levy Payers and budget available.

Baseline Services

The BID's projects and services will be entirely additional to statutory services already delivered by Barrow Borough Council or Cumbria County Council. Your money will not be used to pay for any services that the council has a statutory duty to provide. This will be monitored through a baseline agreement with Barrow Borough Council detailing the existing level of service provided by them.

BID funding may be used to work in partnership with the local authority or any other authority to add value and extend existing initiatives to provide added benefits to the town centre. In accordance with the statutory requirements for BID renewals the proposals set out in this Business Plan were put before Barrow Borough Council elected members and management team and received approval.



What happens if Barrow doesn't have a BID?

If you vote NO to Barrow BID, or don't vote at all, it could mean

- | | |
|---|---|
| NO ...more signs promoting the town & businesses | NO ...voice for businesses on partnership led programmes |
| NO ...more marketing and promotion of Barrow town centre or the businesses within the town | NO ...'bounce back' strategy to safeguard, adapt and grow businesses |
| NO ...more FREE parking days or parking schemes to attract shoppers | NO ...local, passionate business people coming together for the good of YOUR town |
| NO ...Visit Barrow brand | NO ...COVID support or guidance |
| NO ...more Super Soapbox and less town centre events | NO ...more tidying of empty units and the streetscape |
| NO ...'Garden Street' scheme | NO ...more grant schemes for businesses |
| NO ...more new Christmas Lights and a reduced festive experience | NO ...more co-ordinated lobbying of your local MP to reduce business rates, improve public transport and enhance town centre access and movement |
| NO ...town trails and activities to bring families into the town | |

VOTE YES TO BARROW BID

Barrow BID remain passionate about revitalising, regenerating and transforming Barrow town centre. **We believe that businesses in Barrow town centre deserve better** and we aim to deliver on priorities which you have brought to our attention. We have a strong board of directors made up from a diverse range of businesses and organisations who are determined to make a real difference in their town.

Look out for your ballot paper in the post with the Barrow BID logo on the envelope, then simply **vote YES to Barrow BID** and let us deliver on our promises.



With your support, **Barrow BID** will...

- ✓ **Deliver on our four main aims**
- ✓ Promote Barrow as the hub of the local community
- ✓ Communicate with you and engage with you on key decisions
- ✓ Work in partnership with public sector, private sector & 3rd sector organisations
- ✓ Provide a voice for local businesses
- ✓ Remain proactive and responsive to changing circumstances
- ✓ Always have local businesses best interests at heart
- ✓ Deliver quality initiatives, projects and events which offer return on investment



HOW TO VOTE?

The vote will be via a postal ballot which will take place between 28th May and 24th June 2021. Results will be announced by 5.00pm on Friday 25th June 2021.

All defined business ratepayers with a rateable value of £4,000 or above in the BID area will be given the opportunity to vote during the formal ballot period. Each ratepayer will be entitled to one vote per hereditament on which a BID levy would be paid. It will be possible to appoint a proxy to vote on your behalf and information on how to do so will be included with the ballot information sent to you.

The ballot will be a confidential postal ballot managed by Civica Election Services. Look out for the ballot papers coming through your door in May with the Barrow BID logo on the envelope and make sure you place your vote to be certain that your voice is heard.

Any ballot queries or missing ballot papers should be brought to the attention of Barrow BID as soon as possible on manager@barrowbid.co.uk or **07955 816000**.

EVERY VOTE MATTERS

No one should believe their vote won't make a difference.
This only happens with you.

Our BID proposal can only go forward if you choose to reinstate us. Our plans for Barrow aim to improve the town for everyone, but if not enough people vote then we will be unable to do that. We need your support, so that we can support your town.

Vote between 28th May and 24th June and have your voice heard.
The decision is yours.

Are you in favour of renewing the Business Improvement District arrangements for Barrow for a further period of 5 years?

Place a cross (X) in the box of your choice:

YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
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This vote is in respect of -

respect of this hereditament

