

# Chester Accommodation BID

## Stakeholder Update

28 May 2024

Chester is a wonderful place. For centuries people have come to enjoy our history, unique architecture, world-class attractions and vibrant hospitality. Visitors from across the UK and abroad are the lifeblood of the city centre economy.

However, tourism in Chester is at a crossroads. Visitor numbers and footfall remain well short of pre-pandemic levels. The growth in hotel stays is sluggish when compared to competitor cities around the UK. Funding to promote Chester's visitor economy has declined significantly in the last decade while national and international competition has increased.

We need to invest in tourism in Chester now, or even the most successful businesses will start to suffer, and jobs will be lost. That is why we have been speaking to hotels across the city about setting up an Accommodation Business Improvement District (ABID).

The proposal is to introduce a £2+VAT visitor charge per room, per night, at 27 hotels in Chester. This would generate around £1 million a year over five years to invest in the city, all at no cost to our businesses or council taxpayers. The money would be spent on new events and festivals, visitor services, and national and international marketing campaigns. It would also fund work to attract more conference and business visits, all with the aim of increasing overnight stays in the city, and by encouraging visitors to stay for longer, increasing spend across the entire city. You can find out more in the Chester ABID Business Plan at [www.chesterbid.co.uk/abid](http://www.chesterbid.co.uk/abid).

This Business Plan has now been shared with the 27 hotels ahead of a ballot in June and July. If the majority vote in favour, the visitor charge will come into force from January 2025. An independent ABID board of hoteliers and tourism partners would be created to oversee the investment.

Visitor charges are common across European cities, while Manchester has recently celebrated the first anniversary and success of its scheme. More English cities are now working on plans for their own ABID. We need to seize this game-changing opportunity to invest in tourism in Chester and stay ahead of our rival destinations.

All work to date has been supported by Cheshire West and Chester Council, with funding provided by the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund, and by tourism body Marketing Cheshire.

We hope you will back our plan too and show your support for this vital investment in our beautiful city.



**Colin Potts**  
Chair of, Destination Chester



**Steven Hesketh**  
Chair of, Chester Hospitality  
Association (CHA)



**Carl Critchlow**  
Chief Executive of,  
Chester BID