

Agenda Item	5
Report No	CIA/1/20

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: City of Inverness Area Committee

Date: 20 February 2020

Report Title: Yearly Annual Report on Inverness Business Improvement District

Report By: Inverness City Area Manager

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of the activities of the Inverness BID Ltd, operating as Inverness City Centre Business Improvement District (BID), for the period December 2018 to January 2020.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
- i. endorse the work detailed in this report; and
 - ii. note the presentation provided by Inverness BID representatives and the on-going development of partnership working.

3. Implications

- 3.1 **Resource** - Since April 2017 the costs of collecting the Levy by the Highland Council have been met by BID from its levy income. Collection is administered by the Council as part of the collection arrangements for Non –Domestic Rates.

There are no additional resource implications other than those detailed in the report.

- 3.2 **Legal** - The roles and responsibilities of the Council and Bid are managed in accordance with the Planning Etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 and the Business Improvement Districts (Scotland) Regulations.

- 3.3 **Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island)** – No Implications
- 3.4 **Climate Change / Carbon Clever** - The Partnership working **undertaken** with the Inverness BID assists in progressing Council Policies which promote a Low Carbon Economy
- 3.5 **Risk** – No Implications
- 3.6 **Gaelic** – No Implications

4. Background

- 4.1 BID is a private sector led initiative where businesses, within the clearly defined geographical city centre area (**see Appendix 1**), work together, investing through payment of a BID levy to collectively deliver projects over an agreed period that will have benefit to the trading economy of that area.
- 4.2 BID is an independent, not-for-profit company limited by guarantee which is entirely separate from the Council. BID is run by a Board of 17 Directors (**see Appendix 2**) drawn from Members of the Company in the Retail, Hospitality, Office & Property Owner sectors of businesses located within the City Centre.
- 4.3 BID started operations in April 2008 as one of the first in Scotland and there are now 39 operational BIDs in Scotland with a further 30 in varying stages of development across a range of sectors (City Centre, Tourism, Business Park etc.) They are being used as the primary mechanism for the business community to collectively create a budget which can be used flexibly to promote business growth.
- 4.4 BIDs are supported by the Scottish Government as part of its economic strategy with the Scotland Towns Partnership recently took over as the Government's agent for BIDs.
- 4.5 BID is approaching the start of the 3rd year of its third 5-year term of operation following a formal Renewal Ballot organised by The Highland Council held in March 2018. That ballot confirmed the support of the city centre business with a massive 77% vote in favour of BID continuing the project.
- 4.6 BID's remit as agreed by BID levy payers and set out in its Business Plan 2018-23, is to deliver a series of projects and services to improve "the trading environment of Inverness City Centre to the benefit of the business levy payers, their customers, clients and visitors"
- 4.7 The BID Business Plan 2018-23 was developed following consultation with the City Centre businesses. It was supported by this Committee at your meeting on 30th November 2017. The Key focus in the Business Plan is on:
 - Marketing the City Centre – attracting people to a vibrant and thriving City Centre.
 - Enhancing the City Centre – enhancing the experience and fabric for visitors and residents alike.
 - Engaging and Championing the City Centre – engaging to champion the City Centre and its businesses.
 - A Safe and Welcoming City Centre – essential that the BID area is viewed as Safe & Secure.

5. Benefits and Partnership Working

- 5.1 Governance of BID rests with its Board of Directors who report to their 850+ members of the Company on a regular basis, with their AGM held each Spring. The Directors are drawn from representatives of each of the business sectors in the City Centre. Board Membership is shown at **Appendix 2**.
- 5.2 The Inverness Provost & Leader of the City is a Member of the Board of Directors and attends Board Meetings, which are held approximately every six weeks. The primary links to the Council are through the Provost/Leader of the City and the Inverness City Area Manager. The Area Manager meets with the BID Manager on a regular basis to ensure consistent communication at City level.

- 5.3 There is a focus on the need to promote economic vibrancy, which is at the heart of the objectives of the Councils Programme, the Inverness City Vision and the City Area Priorities with BID is clearly aligned with these ambitions.
- 5.4 The BID Chairman Peter Strachan will be present at committee to give a presentation on the work of the Company and answer any questions.

6. Partnership Projects

- 6.1 BID continues to work with Highland Council on a number of joint initiatives (see below) that add value to what is provided by the Public Sector in an effort to generate economic vibrancy.

6.2 Coach Friendly Project

In 2015 at the request of the Highland Council, BID took on the role of operating this Coach Friendly project by providing Coach Ambassadors (between the months of May and October) to welcome coach visitors on tours organised by both British and foreign coach companies as well as passengers from cruise liners visiting Invergordon and Ullapool. They also act as a liaison with local residents and businesses on Ardress Street as well as with the coach operators. In that first year (2015) the Coach Ambassadors welcomed passengers from more than 1530 coaches to the drop off point. In 2019 the number of coaches using the 11 bay drop off/pick up facility increased to 3000 (from 2249 in 2017) which represents an increase of 90% over the 5 years from when the project started in 2015.

In recognition of the success of this project in October 2016 Inverness was granted "Coach Friendly" status by the Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT) being only the second location in Scotland to gain such an award.

The 2018 project was jointly funded by Inverness Common Good Fund and BID. As an indication to the success of the project, using the industry norm of 45 persons per coach circa 135,000 coach passengers visited Inverness City Centre in 2019 via the Ardress Street facility.

6.3 Amenity – City Summer Floral Displays

On its creation in 2008 BID agreed to take over responsibility from the Inverness Project for co-ordinating the wonderful displays in the city centre. This role involves planting, creating the displays, installing, regular watering, removal and then disposal of the displays. In 2019 a total of 717 floral displays were provided in the city centre which attracted extremely positive public feedback as to the quality of the displays. Inverness Common Good Fund is the main funder of the displays with support from BID.

6.4 Amenity – Gull Management

In the original SNH report to this Committee it was always recognised that there was a need for a long-term programme to control the growth of gull population which without intervention, grows at a projected rate of 7% per annum. The project run by BID is to remove eggs and nests (where possible) during the gull breeding season from premises in Inverness City Centre and the adjacent areas. In 2019 a total of 1456 eggs were removed which it is projected will have prevented circa 600 additional gulls being fledged i.e. reared to an age at which they can fly. Overall the total number of eggs removed in the 8 years from 2012 to 2019 is 12,908. An independent count of the number of breeding pairs of gulls was undertaken in the week prior to the start of the 2019 egg & nest removal programme which confirmed a total of 502 pairs compared with 673 pairs in 2016, a reduction of 25%.

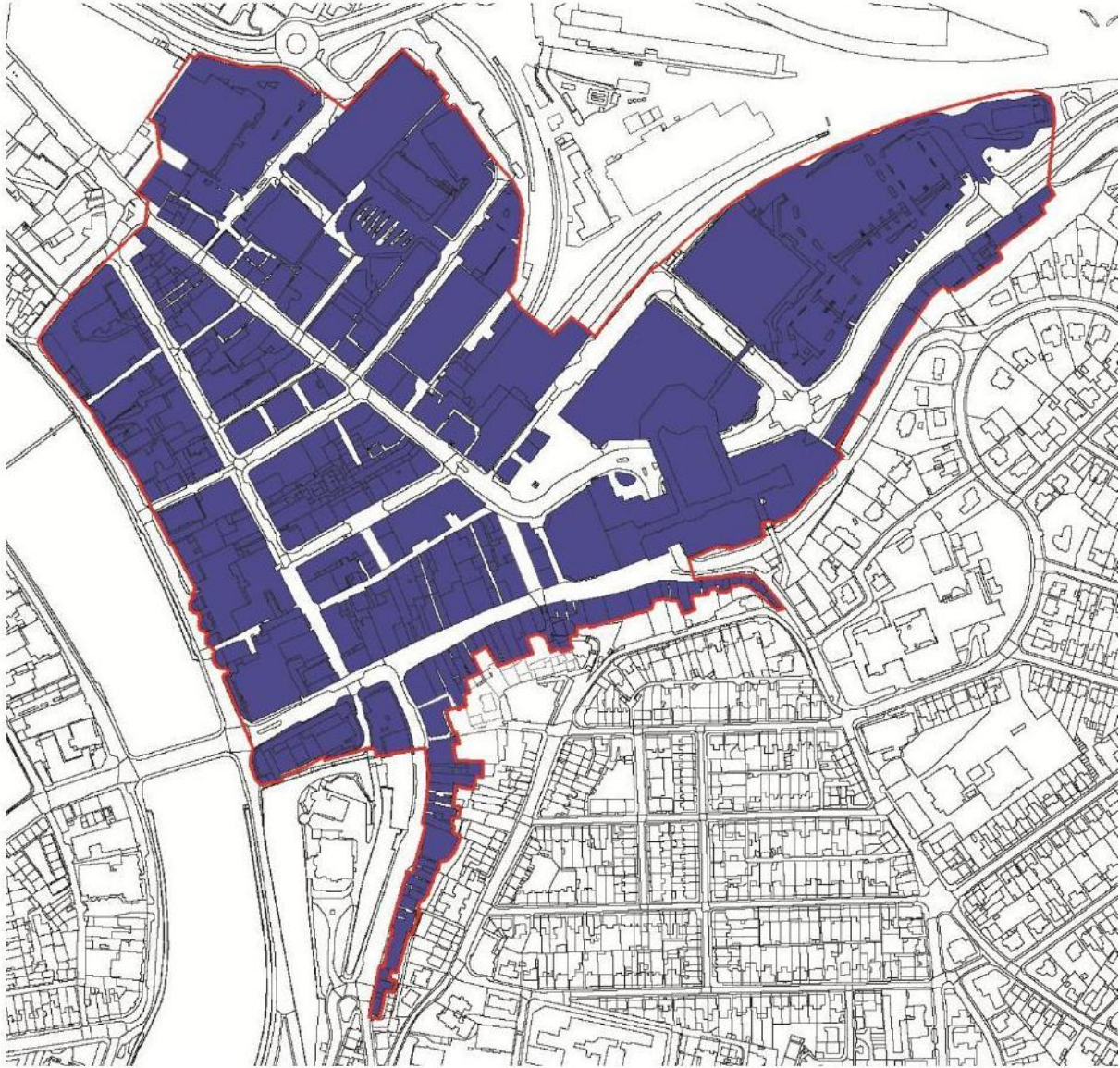
- 6.5 Marketing
BID seeks to market the City Centre as a whole through campaigns such as its Christmas promotion to get residents and those further afield to use the City Centre in the festive period. BID also stages a number of their own events as part of the marketing mix. BID has worked with the Council to create a “Welcome” to groups and individuals coming to the city.
- 6.6 Safety – Inverness Community Safety Partnership (ICSP)
Set up in 2010, the ICSP has become a template model for the delivery of partnership working in the City. The Council and BID have worked with the Police, NHS Highland, Highlands and Island Fire and Rescue service and others including the Third Sector, to deliver projects within this remit.
- 6.7 Safety – BID Security Task Team and Taxi Marshals
Jointly funded by Inverness Common Good Fund and BID - this has provided a service which has been recognised by the Police as providing a significant contribution to reducing crime and anti-social behavior in the City Centre.
- 6.8 Amenity – BID Ambassadors
The BID team continues to monitor amenity issues in the city centre as well as undertaking removal of fly-posting and graffiti which are reported to and dealt with in liaison with the Council and the Police.
- 6.9 The relationship between BID and the Council has developed over the years to one of a mutual understanding of the needs of each organisation. As stated the Provost is a member of the BID Board and regularly attends its meetings. A communications protocol has been put in place so BID is given prior notice of matters that may affect the City Centre. Presentations are also regularly made to BID Board meetings.
- 6.10 BID has been successful in making application to the Inverness Common Good Fund for project funding which has allowed more effective use of the funds put into BID by City businesses. **Appendix 3** provides a summary of the projects funded in the current financial year.
- 6.11 The relationship between business and the public sector is vital to the ongoing development of the City of Inverness. BID represents the 850+ businesses in the City Centre. Being a body incorporated under statute, BID is thus a significant partner of the Council in ensuring that Inverness has a high profile as “the City in the Highlands” and the private sector “adds value” to the activities of the public agencies. Although BID’s focus is on the City Centre, there is no doubt that the benefits of working with BID pro-actively and progressively is leading to reflective benefit on the wider areas.
- 6.12 If the projects listed in this report were not undertaken by BID in partnership with the Common Good Fund, the Council could find it more expensive to deliver such projects, certainly to the same high standard, or indeed to deliver some of them at all.

Designation: Inverness City Area Manager

Date:

Author: David Haas

Background Papers:



Inverness BID Directors (as at Nov 2019)**Appendix 2**

Peter Strachan (Chair)	Serco/Caledonian Sleeper
Jackie Cuddy (Vice Chair)	Eastgate Centre
Cllr Helen Carmichael	Provost & Leader of Inverness & Area
Duncan Chisholm	Duncan Chisholm & Sons
Colin Craig	Oil & Vinegar
Julie Crompton	Chisholm Hunter
Craig Duncan	McDonalds
Malcolm Fraser	Duncan Fraser Fishmonger
Corra Irwin	MacLeod & MacCallum
Charlie Lawrence	Graham & Sibbald
Norman MacDonald	Café One
Gordon McIntosh	Munro & Noble
Owen McManus	Marks & Spencer
Brian Philip	Co-opted Director
Graine Riach	Edinburgh Woollen Mill
Suzanne Ross	Lush
Graham Thomson	Coffee Affair

Contribution from Inverness Common Good Fund to BID delivered projects 2019/20 Appendix 3

Inverness BID Limited will receive BID levy income in 2019/20 of circa £200k part of which is invested in the following joint schemes with Inverness Common Good Fund:

Civic Amenity

City Centre Floral Displays	Summer 2019	ICGF Contribution of £58.3k to a total project cost of £82.6k
Gull Project	Summer 2019	ICGF Contribution of £12k out of total project cost of £18k

Community Safety

Task Team	Easter, Summer & Autumn 2019	ICGF Contribution of £8.1k of total project cost of £13.6k
Operation Respect Festive	Christmas & New Year 2019	ICGF Contribution of £4.9k of total project cost of £9.8k
Inverness Community Safety Partnership	2019/20	ICGF Contribution of £9k out of project cost of £29k

Coach

Coach Friendly Project	Summer 2019	ICGF Contribution of £9.7k for total project cost of £16..5k
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