

Agenda Item	3
Report No	N/5/18

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Nairnshire Committee

Date: 13 June 2018

Report Title: Nairn Business Improvement District

Report By: Inverness City Area Manager

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of the 'NairnConnects' Business Improvement Steering Group proposals to establish a Business Improvement District (BID) for Nairn Town.
- 1.2 Explains the Councils involvement and support for the process to date and;
- 1.3 Outlines the benefits for the Council and for Nairn in supporting the BID by voting in favour of the ballot.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the proposals for the establishment of a Nairn Business Improvement District and recommend to the Council that it supports the 'NairnConnects' BID Proposal when this is considered at the meeting of the Council on 28th June 2018.

3 Background

- 3.1 A Business Improvement District (BID) is a business led initiative in a defined area where businesses work together and invest collectively in local projects, services and improvements in their business environment.
- 3.2 Any BID projects and improvements are new and additional, and are over and above those provided by statutory authorities and do not seek to replace services that are already provided by the Highland Council and other statutory bodies.
- 3.3 The Council has a formal role in relation to BIDs with regard to:

Establishment of a BID – Local Authorities have to scrutinise any BID process to ensure fairness to businesses involved. This includes Local Authorities having a ‘Right of Veto’.

Service Provision / Added Value – It is fundamental to the role of a BID that it shows that it is ‘adding value’ to what businesses pay in Non-Domestic Rates. This is evidenced by a ‘Baseline Agreement’ between the Council and the BID (an agreement which is reviewed on an annual basis).

Levy Collection – The Council will undertake this role for the Nairn BID. This is governed by an Operating Agreement which sets out the roles and responsibilities.

4 Nairn BID

- 4.1 A presentation was given to the Nairnshire Committee on 23rd June, 2017 by the Nairn Business Improvement District (BID) Project Manager and the Chair of the Association of Nairn Businesses, outlining the proposed Nairn BID, during which it was explained that BIDs had been established in Scotland to bring together local businesses and statutory authorities to drive economic sustainability through partnership working. An overview of the timetable for the Nairn BID was provided, and it was highlighted that the first phase would include the set-up of a local steering group to help shape the vision and framework for the Nairn BID. Details were provided of the Nairn BID website www.nairnconnects.com. It was explained that this would act as a business portal and communication channel for interested parties and that it contained further information on how other BIDs in Scotland operated.
- 4.2 The prospect of a BID for Nairn was welcomed by members of the Nairnshire Committee and Members looked forward to working with Nairn BID in the future.
- 4.3 In addition to public engagement sessions held locally, an update was provided by the Project Manager to the Nairn Members in January 2018. At this briefing the main objectives for the Nairn BID were identified as follows:
 - 1. To build Nairn’s reputation as a desirable place to visit and shop with a reputation as a vibrant town with wonderful beaches, seafront and environment.
 - 2. Support and help develop a year-round programme of great events that generate a return on investment to local business.
 - 3. To market the town to a local, regional, national and international audience.
 - 4. To improve the economic opportunities for the businesses in the town and surrounding area.
 - 5. To increase footfall, spend and to extend the tourist season.
 - 6. To provide visitors with an infrastructure of great signage, orientation and better

understanding of what the area has to offer.

7. To work with and support individual sectors.
8. To improve businesses relationships with each other, the local authority and the community.
9. To give businesses a strong, unified voice.
10. To support local voluntary groups whose aims align with the BID

- 4.4 The Inverness City Area Manager, the Principal Tourism and Film Officer and the Nairn and Badenoch & Strathspey Ward Manager have worked closely with the Nairn BID team throughout the process to ensure that the BID proposers have had all the appropriate support from the Council.
- 4.5 'NairnConnects' BID has now submitted all necessary documentation and proposes to go to ballot on 16 August 2018.

5 Decision making process

- 5.1 A report was taken to the Environment Infrastructure and Development Committee on 1st February 2018 which offered a formal assessment of the Nairn Business Improvement District proposal relative to the Council's right of veto in accordance with the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 and the Business Improvement Districts (Scotland) Regulations 2007. The Committee agreed that, subject to satisfactory responses regarding outstanding issues, the Council would not use its right of veto.

Further discussions with the BID proposers addressed all the outstanding issues and the Council has therefore formally written to the BID steering group's chair and the Scottish Government confirming that it will not use its right of veto in relation to the Nairn BID.

- 5.2 The Nairnshire Committee has power to comment on BID proposals and the recommendation made by the Committee will be given to the Council when it meets on 28th June 2018. Highland Council will decide on how to cast its ballot at this meeting as the Council itself would be a levy payer.

6 Implications

- 6.1 Resource – The costs of collecting the levy by the Highland Council will be met by the BID from its levy income.

Legal – The process for the development of a BID and the statutory role of the Local Authority are prescribed in the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006, Part 9 – Business Improvement Districts. The legislation gives the Council the Power of Veto over a BID proposal, requires the Council to consider a BID proposal within a prescribed period and requires the Council to give notice that it is or is not going to veto the proposal and set out its reasons why. Consideration of this report and taking a decision on whether or not to use its right of veto will ensure the council's compliance with the legislation.

Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) – No implications

Climate Change / Carbon Clever – No implications

Risk – No implication

Gaelic – No implications

Designation: Inverness City Area Manager

Date: 31 May 2018

Author: Liz Cowie, Ward Manager, Nairn and Badenoch & Strathspey
Colin Simpson, Principal Tourism and Film Officer