

Agenda Item	7
Report No	CIA/22/24

Committee: City of Inverness Area Committee

Date: 19 August 2024

Report Title: Yearly Annual Report on
Inverness City Centre Business Improvement District

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive - Place

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report provides a summary of the activities and proposed activities of the Inverness BID Ltd, operating as Inverness City Centre Business Improvement District (BID) for the period 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2025

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i. endorse the work detailed in this report; and
- ii. note the ongoing development of partnership working in the key areas identified;
- iii. Note that a Members Briefing will be arranged to provide for further discussion with Bid Board representatives.

3. Implications

3.1 Resource

Since April 2017 the costs of collecting the BID Levy by the Highland Council, have been met by BID from its levy income (£17,366 +VAT for the reporting period which covers all costs). Levy Collection and enforcement is administered by the Council as part of the collection arrangements for Non –Domestic Rates in line with the applicable legislation and the Operation Agreement in place between the parties.

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.

3.4 Risk

No Implications

3.5 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)**

BID are responsible for ensuring that all health and safety requirements in relation to the delivery of projects are adhered to.

3.6 **Gaelic** No Implications

4. Impacts

4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.

4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.

4.3 This is an update report on the work of an external organisation and therefore an impact assessment is not required.

5. Background

5.1 A BID is a private sector led initiative where businesses, and property owners within the clearly defined geographical city/town centre area, work together, and invest through payment of a BID levy to collectively deliver projects and activities over an agreed period that will have benefit to the trading economy and result in enhancements to the area.

5.2 Inverness 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 15 Directors, appointed via co-opt or drawn from Members of the Company in the Retail, Hospitality, Office & Property Owner sectors of businesses located within the city centre. Link to access a copy of BID's most recent Business Plan for 2023-28 (including map of the defined area):

[Inverness BID Business Plan Inside Pages](#)

Please note listed board directors have now changed following this publication with an up-to-date list available via Companies House.

5.3 Inverness BID started operations in April 2008 and was one of the first Business Improvement Districts in Scotland. The BID model acts as the primary mechanism for the business community to work collectively and collaboratively within a budget that can be used flexibly to promote overall business and local economic growth.

5.4 BIDs are supported by the Scottish Government as part of its economic strategy and are supported by Scotland Towns Partnership as the Government's agent for BIDs. Scotland's Improvement Districts further provides guidance and support to all BIDs nationally.

- 5.5 Inverness BID was successful in their renewal ballot held by Highland Council on 23rd March 2023, and were elected to serve a fourth successive 5-year term to run from 1st April 2023-31st March 2028. The renewal ballot confirmed the strong support of the city centre business with over 75% of votes cast being in favour of the city centre BID continuing for the noted 5-year term.
- 5.6 Part of BID's remit as agreed by BID levy payers and as set out in its Business Plan 2023-28, is to deliver a series of projects and services (subject to funding) which improve "the trading environment of Inverness City Centre to the benefit of the business levy payers, their customers, clients and visitors". BID also has a key role in "promoting the value of the city centre" and providing advocacy and a "strong and representative voice for businesses".
- 5.7 The BID Business Plan 2023-28 was developed following consultation with the city centre businesses via 1-1s, focus groups and surveys. The BID Business Plan for 2023-28 was supported by Council at the meeting held on 8th December 2022.

The current BID Business Plan, now in Year 2 of execution has four themes:

- A Welcoming and Attractive City Centre
- A Safe and Connected City Centre
- An Enhanced and Represented City Centre
- Promoting, Marketing and Celebrating the City Centre

6. Benefits and Partnership Working

- 6.1 Governance of BID rests with its Board of Directors who report and are answerable and accountable to the levy payers on a regular basis, with an AGM held each Autumn. The next BID AGM is due to be held on 28th November 2024.
- 6.2 The Leader of the City is an appointed Member of the Board of Directors and attends BID Board Meetings, which are held approximately every 6-8 weeks. The primary links to the Council are through the Leader of the City and the Senior Community Development Manager, Inverness & South.
- 6.3 There is a focus on ways our organisations can promote and support economic development and vibrancy, which is at the heart of the objectives of the Council's Programmes such as, for example, elements of the Inverness City Strategy.

7. Partnership Projects

- 7.1 BID continues to work with the Council on a number of joint initiatives and projects (see below) that add value to and is additional to what is provided by the Public Sector in an effort to further enhance and develop the defined area. This report provides an update of the projects undertaken during 2023/24 and those underway for 2024/25.
- 7.2 **Coach Friendly Project**

In 2015 at the request of the Highland Council, BID took on the role of operating the Coach Friendly project by providing Coach & Visitor Ambassadors (between the months of April and October) to welcome coach visitors on tours organised by both British and non-British coach companies as well as passengers from cruise liners visiting via Invergordon and Ullapool.

Coach and Visitor Ambassadors also act as a liaison with tour companies, guides, drivers, and local residents and businesses via the Ardross Street facility. Coach & Visitor Ambassadors further assist with coach and contingency arrangements when there is an event at the Northern Meeting Park.

For the 2023 season, the BID Coach & Visitor Ambassadors assisted a total of 3689 coaches (including from 130 Cruise Liners) equating to approximately 150k visitors being assisted. Compared to 2022, this was a 28% rise in coaches and 13.5% more visitors with operating levels being 19% higher than 2019 and pre-covid demonstrating full recovery from pandemic impacts.

The 2024 season is currently ongoing and welcomed its 2000th Coach on the 17th July 2024.

The project has recently been successful in renewing via the Confederation of Passenger Transport, '**Coach Friendly Status**' for Inverness, with a presentation pending for the formal accreditation to be presented to The Inverness Leader of the City on behalf of BID and the Inverness Common Good Fund.

7.3 **Amenity – City Summer Floral Displays**

On its creation in 2008, BID agreed to take over responsibility from the Inverness Project for coordinating the floral displays in the city centre and wider city. This role involves a partnership with HLH and a sub-contractor, including to coordinate the procurement, planting, installation of the brackets and displays, remedial works as required, regular watering, removal and then disposal of the units.

In 2023 a total of 630 floral displays were hosted and provided in the city centre and surrounding areas. Inverness Common Good Fund was the main funder of the displays with an additional financial contribution via match funding from BID in 2023.

In 2024, a total of 630 floral displays are currently being hosted in the city centre and wider city with the display areas demarked and funded via Inverness Common Good Fund, additional financial contribution via match funding from BID for city centre and private contribution for the wider area.

Work is being undertaken by the Senior Community Development Manager to ensure that the project continues to deliver best value for the Inverness Common Good Fund and BID.

7.4 **Amenity – Gull Management**

In the original Scottish Natural Heritage (now NatureScot) report to this Committee in 2012, it was 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.

The 2023 Gull Programme facilitated the application via NatureScot for licenses at 99 premises following the completion of the annual survey on 27th April 2023, with 6 visits to the licensed premises from 30th April 2023 to undertake the controlled/licensed egg and nest removal. 1 requested license was refused.

For 2023, BID introduced the AVIX Laser activity (weekly pre-nesting season) as an additional measure which had the further benefit of being non-lethal; silent; painless and a further deterrent. Raising awareness via the 'Do Not Feed the Gulls' messaging continued. Residents in Oakwood Court were provided with Reflect-A-Bird Deterrents as a pilot/trial which proved further useful.

Following a change in the guidance for license approval by Nature Scot published in February 2024, the 2024 egg and nest removal problem encountered challenges, including due to the new requirement to apply for a license only once nests/eggs were in situ. Gestation can be as low as 21 days, with it taking up to 28 days for a license decision.

In addition, Nature Scot applied stricter criterion in relation to the grounds for granting an application, meaning that of the 90 licenses applied for in 2024, initially only 8 were granted. Following talks with Nature Scot involving BID, Highland Council and other North BIDs on 24th May 2024, progress for completion of the programme was agreed however due to delay only 178 eggs could be removed equating to less than 10% of 2023 levels.

Inverness BID is currently collating evidence of incidents involving Gulls via a dedicated portal with further discussion with Nature Scot and partners planned for August 2024.

In conjunction with Nature Scot, BID will lead a review in February and March 2025 to determine how best to meet the new requirements and deliver the programme in 2025, including a full arial survey (subject to funding).

7.5 **Gift Card, Events and Marketing**

BID markets the city centre as a whole through campaigns such as its Festive Marketing campaign promotion to get residents and those further afield to use the city centre during the festive period.

During 2023/24, BID undertook a number of events including for example, the Great Easter Egg Hunt, the Classic Vehicle Show, a new Halloween Pumpkin Trail (in conjunction with the Eastgate Centre), Elf on the Shelf hunt in the Victorian Market, a new Food and Drink Fortnight (in partnership with Visit Inverness Loch Ness) and a dedicated Festive Marketing Campaign.

The 2024 programme includes the Animal Games Safari (3rd to 24th August) and Mystery of the Star Eaters Trail (24th August to 14th September).

The Inverness City Centre Gift Card (with 176 businesses supporting) was launched in 2022, as part of an initial 3 year project. As part of the Festive Marketing campaign, BID operate a dedicated Gift Card stand in the Eastgate Centre and have used the card to offer competitions to help promote the Highland Games, Winter Festival and much more.

BID hosted the annual City Centre Business Awards on 6th November 2023 and the Best Bar None Awards on 8th January 2024. This years events are scheduled for 14th November 2024 and 7th January 2025 respectively.

BID continues to promote city centre businesses via the Small Business Focus and Person Behind the Business feature in the Inverness Courier monthly, and publishes an annual city centre 'Eat and Drink guide' for visitors (40k), a Visitors Guide for Coach Passengers (50k) and is developing a new 'LOVE Inverness' App for launch in Autumn 2024.

BID collate and share a monthly list, available also via QR download of City Centre job and volunteer vacancies with a download rate of over 500 per edition.

BID have a dedicated website with business directory, are the guardians of the City Centre notice boards, 9 upper High Street banners, and the BID social media pages produces unique content with a reach of over 50k followers over the various platforms.

7.6 **Safety – Inverness Community Safety Partnership (ICP) and Safe Inverness**

BID continues to actively assist in the delivery of partnership working and promotion of achieving a safer city centre. The Council and BID have worked with the Police, NHS Highland, Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue service and others including the Third Sector, to deliver activities and projects within this remit and BID is a stakeholder within the ICP group.

BID co-ordinates the security and servicing programme for the 5 public access defibrillators, sited in the city centre in 2022 via a public, BID and council partnership.

BID chairs the Inverness Retail Security Group; co-ordinates the shop safe radio programme, chairs the fortnightly Safe Inverness meetings with the Council, HADASS, street pastors, and other partners to progress and respond to issues including anti-social behaviour and shop lifting. BID further provides secretariat and support to the Inverness Pub Watch Group, comprised of 42 premises and administers the banned persons register to support the evening economy. BID undertake the Best Bar None accreditation assessments, represents businesses at the Highlands and Islands Local Resilience Partnership and co-ordinates the Support for Change project (funded by HTSI).

7.7 **Safety – Operation Respect and BID Security Task Team**

Jointly funded by Inverness Common Good Fund and BID - this has provided a service which has been recognised by the businesses and Police as providing a significant contribution to reducing crime and anti-social behavior in the City Centre. Full Operation Respect 2023 reports available.

7.8 **Amenity – Smart Scape**

The 'Smart Scape' project was supported by way of a pilot by the ICGF initially for period 1st December 2022 to 31st March 2023. BID continued the service from period 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024 with further support from ICGF.

The Smart Scape project allows high-pressure cold-water cleaning of key areas in the city centre above statutory requirements as required. The BID team further continues to monitor and highlight amenity issues in the city centre, as well as undertakes removal of flyposting and graffiti which are reported to and dealt with in liaison with businesses, the Council and the Police.

The Teamwork in partnership with the Highland Council Street cleaning team with Smart Scape providing an additional service over and above statutory requirements.

The results of the 2023 Visitor Survey undertaken by BID noted that the two most common words visitors say they would use to describe Inverness would be 'clean' and 'friendly'.

7.9 **Conclusion**

The relationship between BID and the Council has developed over the years to one of a mutual understanding of the needs of each organisation. A communications protocol has been put in place which gives BID prior notice of matters that may affect the City Centre.

7.10 BID has been successful in making applications to the Inverness Common Good Fund for project funding which has allowed more effective use of the funds put into BID by city businesses. These projects have all allowed co-investment and match funding for mutual benefit.

The table below provides a summary of the projects and activities funded in the reported financial year:

Project or Activity 2024-25	ICGF Grant Award	BID Contribution	Total Joint Investment
SAFE Inverness Project	£9,700	£23,300	£33,000
City Centre Florals	£52,410	£6,195	£58,605
Wider City Florals	£23,631	N/A	£23,631
Coach & Visitor Project	£19,865	£9,015	£28,880
Gull Management	£13,606	£6,419	£20,205
Operation Respect Q1-2	£13,403	£7,737	£21,140
Total	£132,615	£52,666	£185,461

Excluding HLH/sub-contractor Floral project costs, the total joint investment for the reporting period is projected to be c.£110,281 with c.£52,666 provided by BID and £57,795 via ICGF grant to BID with net match funding contribution % therefore being 47.75% BID v 52.5% ICGF.

7.11 The relationship between businesses and the public sector is vital to the ongoing development of the city of Inverness. BID represents and advocates in respect of a number of issues on behalf of the 800+ businesses (comprising property owners and business occupiers) in the city centre.

Being a body incorporated under statute, Inverness BID Ltd is thus a significant partner of the Council including to ensure that Inverness achieves a high profile as "the City in the Highlands" and enabling the private sector to add value to the activities of the public agencies.

Although BID's focus is on the City Centre primarily, there is no doubt that the benefits of working with BID pro-actively, progressively, constructively and in good faith leads to reflective benefit on the wider city and regional areas.

7.12 Partnership working with Inverness BID has delivered projects that have had a positive impact on the City Centre, including promoting footfall and vibrancy.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive - Place

Date: 2 August 2024

Author: David Haas

Background Papers:

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Inverness City Centre Business Improvement District
Business Plan 2023-2028

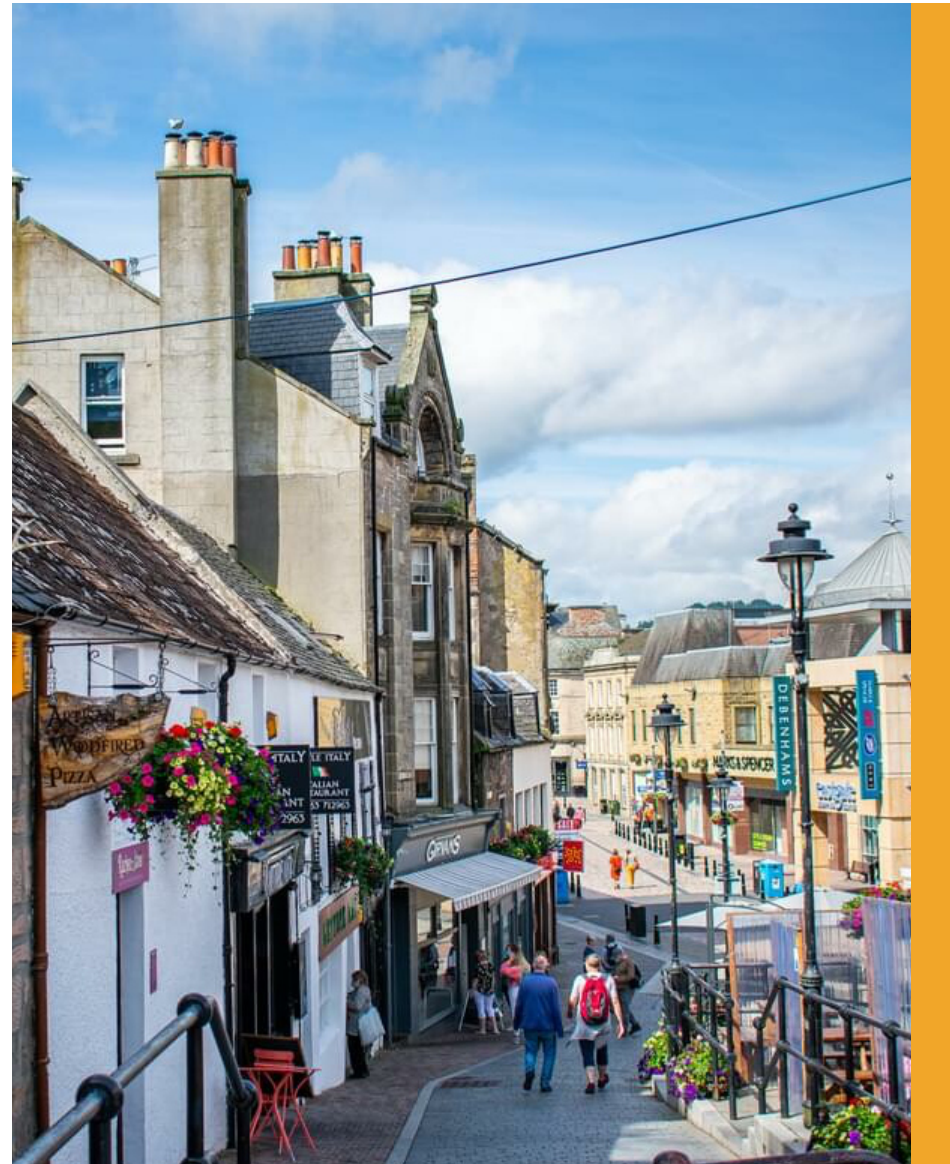


Inverness
BID
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

INVERNESS BID RENEWAL BALLOT
FOURTH TERM BUSINESS PLAN
1ST APRIL 2023 TO 31ST MARCH 2028

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Why Business Improvement Districts are Important

Business Improvement District's (BID) are a geographically defined area where businesses come together and agree to invest collectively in projects and services that the businesses identify will improve the trading environment over and above those provided by statutory authorities.

The activities undertaken by BID are funded with the money collected through the investment levy set and paid by all the property owners and property occupiers in the BID area (unless exempt in full or part).

Additional funding of nearly £160k per annum has been attained over and above the investment levy payments in the current BID term, to further improve the changes and development opportunities in our area which results in a greater impact via BID than individual businesses working alone or in small groups could achieve.

The first BID was established over 50 years ago and in spring 2008 the Inverness City Centre businesses voted 73% in favour to create Inverness BID which was one of the first to be formed in Scotland. In 2013 the City Centre businesses voted to renew the BID for another 5 year term with 77% in favour and in 2018 the businesses voted 79% in favour for a third term of a further 5 years from 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2023.

Development of Business Improvement Districts is part of the Scottish Government's Economic Strategy and as of November 2022, there are

35 fully operational BIDs in Scotland and a further 30 are currently in development. The Business Improvement District model is also replicated throughout the UK and Ireland where there are now over 322 BIDs. Having a successful Business Improvement District enhances and develops an area in ways that would not happen otherwise and further allows businesses to have a voice and be represented in respect of key matters to drive change in ways that benefits businesses, their staff, customers and clients.



Welcome from the BID Chair

It is my great pleasure to present the Inverness BID renewal proposal for term 2023-28, which outlines your priorities and gives a summary of how together, we as a resilient and diverse business community can continue to develop and enhance **Inverness City Centre** and its trading environment for our mutual benefit.

A Business Improvement District is where businesses, in a defined area, vote to invest collectively in local improvements over and above those provided by statutory authorities. It is a partnership arrangement whereby the local business community and the statutory authorities, and other stakeholders and partners work collaboratively on projects, services and activities that will benefit the local economy for the local business community.

I have been involved in business in Inverness City Centre for several years and know a lot of the people behind the businesses and stakeholders in the area. Inverness is a wonderful City, and it is the businesses and the people behind them that make the area such a great place to live, work and visit.

There is still much to do to help our centre reach its full potential and as the economic climate at present is tough I believe we need our BID more than ever and that we cannot afford to lose it at this critical time. Our response in crisis was put to the test during the pandemic but we met and exceeded expectations by providing our business community with extensive support every step of the way and our

actions were recognised nationally when we won an award for this response and our actions via Scotland's Towns Partnership.

By voting YES we will be there for you every step of the way again and whilst the situation is undoubtedly challenging, there is also much to be positive about including the completion of Union Square (Union Street) and Merchant House (Castle Street) developments, the Victorian Market revamp, the levelling up projects including 'Spirit of the Highland' at the Castle, the joint City Strategy and more.

Your continued support of Inverness BID also provides a great opportunity for us to invest collectively, pull resources and make sure that the changes we all want to see and as far as possible - happen. The cost to our businesses is relatively low and via our BID we have a strong voice, can influence and direct a vast array of changes and we can further maintain access to external assistance and funding which is not available to individual businesses.

Together we have achieved and can achieve much more.

All of the proposed improvements and projects detailed herein have been based on the results and feedback obtained during our renewal ballot consultation process, which comprised a Business Questionnaire, 1-1's and Business Focus Group sessions. Every business in the area has had the opportunity to let us know what their priorities are. Now that the consultation process has ended be advised that your ongoing engagement and feedback throughout the next term remains integral to our model not least to ensure that your BID can help address the issues and optimise the development opportunities that you and your fellow businesses identify and want to address.

Supporting Inverness BID also means we can preserve the substantial activities that we have already successfully put in place which help to increase footfall, stimulate investment in our local economy and which enhance the reputation and attractiveness of Inverness City Centre.

Overall the purpose of Inverness BID remains ultimately to greatly improve your trading environment by focusing activity on the areas you have identified as being of most importance i.e.

- A Welcoming and Attractive City Centre
- A Safe and Connected City Centre
- An Enhanced and Represented City Centre
- Promoting, Marketing and Celebrating the City Centre

Across these four themes we propose to continue to make positive changes and get the things done that you want, and by voting **YES** we can continue to work jointly to ensure that Inverness City Centre is better able to reach its full potential.

In respect of the voting process, a notice of ballot will be sent to all 'eligible persons' on 26th January 2023. Ballot papers and a copy of the Business Plan will be sent to those eligible to vote by 9th February 2023, voters must cast their vote before the ballot closes at 5pm on 23rd March 2023. Ballot papers received after this date and time will be null and void and will not be counted.

Your BID will only continue if a majority of businesses vote **YES** in the ballot on 23rd March 2023. A **NO** vote will mean that the Inverness City Centre BID will finish on 31st March 2023 and all the benefits and existing projects delivered will cease.

To have a say, secure a more prosperous, brighter future for our City Centre vote YES. Together we can help Inverness City Centre better achieve its potential and create a more vibrant, attractive and thriving centre and share in its success.



Kind Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Strachan'.

Peter Strachan
Chair of Inverness BID Ltd

Delivered in the Term 2018-23

The City Centre Businesses Aspirations were:

The BID Business Plan for 2018-23 reflected the comments, views and aspirations of the businesses to create a well promoted, safe, and vibrant and well managed City Centre for customers, clients, employees, businesses and investors which were of importance at that time across the themes of:

- Marketing the City Centre
- Enhancing the City Centre
- Engaging and Championing the City Centre
- A Safe and Welcoming City Centre



Examples of activity in our Third Term includes:

Marketing the City Centre

- Marketing of the City Centre Businesses and the area through social media, online, radio, print and other channels on an ongoing basis.
- Launch of the Inverness City Centre Gift Card to provide an economic stimulus for the BID area businesses with over 160 businesses now signed up.
- Campaigns with Highland Council/ICGF to encourage the public to return to the City Centre area post-covid pandemic restrictions.
- Festive Marketing Campaign to promote and highlight individual, sector and City Centre offerings and free festive parking for up to 4 hours on Fridays in December at the Rose Street Car Park.
- BID Coach Ambassadors welcomed visitors from 2200+ coaches in 2022 generating almost 100k visitors to the City Centre. IBID were awarded 'Coach Friendly' status in 2016 in recognition of the outstanding service provided to welcome coach visitors to the City.
- Welcome Package linked to and in support of the major events in the City Centre.
- Supporting Pub Watch with the NC50 Music Festival marketing.

Engaging and Championing the City Centre

- A strong representative voice to ensure that the views of City Centre businesses continue to be heard including in respect of the Academy Street and Millburn Road proposals.
- Ongoing advice and support for businesses on a range of issues throughout the term, as well as during times of exceptional pressure such as during the Covid pandemic
- We also started the annual Inverness City Centre Business Awards which recognise and celebrate the quality of businesses in the area as decided via public vote with almost 34,000 votes for City Centre Businesses being cast in 2022.
- Providing a strong voice and advocating on proposals, projects and initiatives to achieve optimal benefit for the City Centre and its businesses.
- Effective and beneficial Partnership Working with other City Centre Stakeholders
- Facilitating a strong voice for businesses on other City Centre developments and activities.

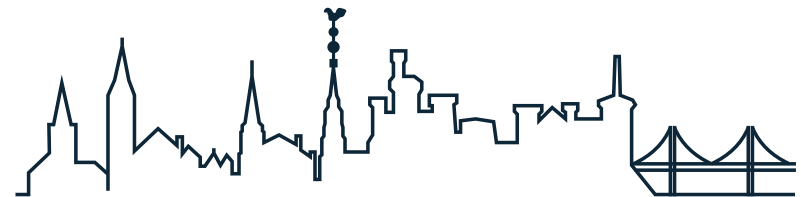
Enhancing the City Centre

- Annual events programme designed to attract the public to visit and move around the City Centre including The Great Easter Egg Hunt, Classic Vehicle Show, Elf on the Shelf, High Street Safari's and so forth.

- Gull Control Programme to reduce their nuisance – 8,500+ eggs removed to SNH guidelines over the last 5 years.
- Spectacular City Centre summer floral decorations with 650+ baskets/displays annually including regular watering and feeding programme throughout the display season.
- Worked in partnership with Highland Council and other stakeholders on City Centre developments including Inverness Castle, Victorian Market etc.

A Safe and Welcoming City Centre

- Regular liaison group focused on City Centre issues with Police, Council & other stakeholders.
- Recognition by agencies of the economic cost of anti-social and criminal behaviour in City Centre.
- Provision of BID Security Task Team and Taxi Marshals jointly funded with the Inverness Common Good Fund.
- Programmes with businesses and other agencies to assist community safety and crime reduction.
- Annual Operation Respect Campaign to increase security over the festive period.

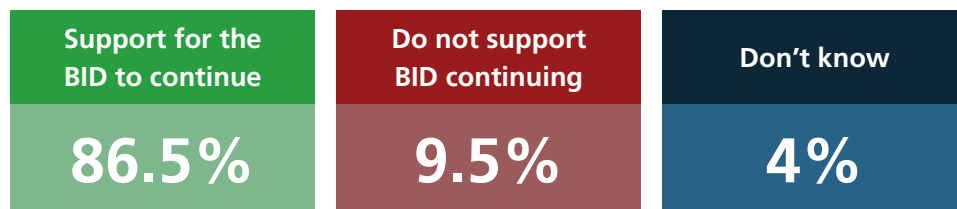


Looking to the Future – 2023-28

Consultation with BID Businesses:

In September 2022 we circulated a detailed Business Consultation Questionnaire to all the businesses based in the City Centre as well as to the head offices of respective national companies. We received back 80 replies representing a response rate which compares favorably with other similar sized BIDs.

The business consultation demonstrated overwhelming support for BID to continue for a further term with replies from our business stakeholders demonstrating:



In addition to our questionnaire survey further engagement and consultation was undertaken via Business Focus Group Sessions and 1-1's over the period August 2022 to October 2022.

Your Priorities for the Next 5 Years:

The responses and feedback to the consultation process have been evaluated and provide the basis and content for this, our next Business Plan. The proposal focuses on the priority projects, issues and activities which the City Centre businesses identified they most want addressed in term 2023-28 to improve, develop and enhance the BID area trading environment as follows:

1. A Welcoming and Attractive City Centre
2. A Safe and Connected City Centre
3. An Enhanced and Represented City Centre
4. Promoting, Marketing and Celebrating the City Centre

Focus of the BID Business Plan 2023-28:

The BID Business Plan 2023-28 aligns with the core BID mission:

OUR MISSION STATEMENT:

will continue to be “to deliver a series of projects and services to improve the trading environment of Inverness City Centre to the benefit of the City Centre economy, the levy paying businesses, their customers, clients and visitors”.

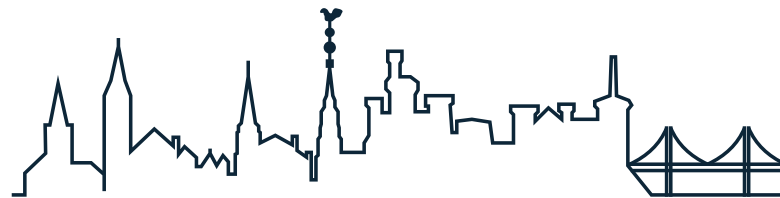
Our Core Themes to Deliver Your Priorities for the next Term are:

- 1. A Welcoming and Attractive City Centre** – ensuring the City Centre is a clean, friendly and attractive place to visit.
- 2. A Safe and Connected City Centre** – ensuring that the City Centre is a secure and connected place.
- 3. An Enhanced and Represented City Centre** – improving the fabric and experience of the City Centre for our businesses and those who live, work or visit our destination.
- 4. Promoting, Marketing and Celebrating the City Centre** attracting people to a more vibrant and thriving City Centre and championing and raising awareness of the City Centre businesses and their quality offerings.

Our Objectives are to work to:

- Create a welcoming, friendly and vibrant City Centre
- Expand the promotion of the City Centre area, its events and businesses as a destination
- Attract more people to enjoy the facilities and businesses in the BID area
- Encourage local, regional and tourist visitors to the City Centre
- Work with partners and other stakeholders on initiatives which promote footfall, investment and enhance the area

- Create a cleaner, more vibrant and attractive City Centre
- Support businesses to develop a stronger economy
- Optimise opportunities to develop initiatives and strategies which support, promote and enhance the City Centre business community
- Engage with businesses and facilitate feedback regularly to maintain a strong representative voice for our businesses on a range of issues
- Work with partner organisations to create a safe and secure City Centre
- Provide advice and support for businesses on an individual, sector and/or collective basis as required
- Championing the City Centre and its importance to the local and wider Highland economy
- Advocating for the needs of City Centre businesses
- Marketing and promoting the businesses and the area on an ongoing basis
- Optimising scope and opportunities to celebrate and champion the City Centre



The Four BID Themes for Term 2023-28:

A WELCOMING AND ATTRACTIVE CITY CENTRE

Attracting People To A Friendly, Vibrant & Thriving City Centre

City Centre Floral Displays

ACTIVITY

BID manages and co-ordinates all the arrangements for the 650+ impressive floral displays and hanging baskets staged each summer on premises throughout the City Centre including arranging planting, installation, maintenance, watering twice weekly and removal via a project jointly funded by the Inverness Common Good Fund and BID.

Coach Friendly

BID Coach Ambassadors welcomed and assisted visitors from more than 2200 tourist coaches in 2022 at the Ardress Street pick up/drop off facility via a project jointly funded by the Inverness Common Good Fund and BID. The scheme has been awarded national "Coach Friendly" status.

Visitor Maps

Each year BID distribute a 'welcome' map to Coach visitors for the City Centre. This assists with BID driving increased footfall into the BID area. Businesses reported that they would like more information given to visitors about their business.

Gull Programme

BID co-ordinates and helps to reduce the urban gull population via a nest and egg removal programme which has resulted in 3512 nests and 8101 eggs being destroyed over the past 5 years. This project is jointly funded by the Inverness Common Good Fund and BID.

Smart Scape

Businesses have strongly identified that having a clean City Centre is very important to them. The BID team facilitate and arrange for the removal of fly posters and graffiti to ensure the City Centre as far as possible remains optimally attractive. BID supports the Commercial Waste Management Policy (2018) and assists members resolve issues as may arise.

FUTURE

- BID to seek support from the Inverness Common Good Fund to ensure this important feature which enhances the attractiveness of the City Centre continues.
- The City Centre businesses have strongly confirmed their ongoing support for floral displays.
- BID to seek support from the Inverness Common Good Fund to ensure this important tourism project increases City Centre footfall continues.
- The City Centre businesses have strongly confirmed their ongoing support for this service.
- BID to co-design a new map (print and online) that will featuring QR codes to the City Centre Business Directory and will include a feedback questionnaire for Visitors.
- Businesses confirmed their strong support for this activity.
- BID to seek support from the Inverness Common Good Fund to ensure this important project continues.
- The City Centre businesses strongly confirmed their ongoing support for this service.
- BID has received support from the Inverness Common Good Fund to implement Smart Scape activities, a service, above statutory requirements, which will include deep clean and power wash of problematic areas of the City.
- The City Centre businesses strongly confirmed their support for this activity.

BT Smart Hubs

ACTIVITY

BID to work with statutory partners and BT to work towards replacing current payphones with 'Smart Hubs' which are more modern, attractive and have several additional features such as advertising screens, community notices, mobile charge points, telephone, and WiFi Hot Spot.

Heritage and Art Projects

Inverness City Centre is rich with history and heritage. BID to advocate and seek funding for more heritage and art projects which are business focused and led (and consistent with current projects such as levelling up of the Castle) to increase wider footfall, improve the attractiveness and cultural appeal of the area and to optimise these areas of potential development opportunity for the business community further including 'Inverness Old Town'.

Notice Boards, Banners and Signage

BID updates and maintains the 4 main City Centre Notice Boards on an ongoing basis. BID further hosts High Street banners on key themes. The Businesses consulted with identified support for additional and improved signage in and around the City Centre to raise awareness of their business.

FUTURE

- BID currently in discussion with partners in respect of 2 'Smart Hubs' being installed in the City Centre in the first instance and will continue this activity in any new term.
- The City Centre businesses confirmed their support for upgrading activity.

- BID to seek support for a pilot Heritage project in partnership with Inverness City Heritage Trust in the next term.
- BID to seek funding and work with businesses to enhance the City Centre via dedicated projects in this area.
- The City Centre businesses confirmed their support for this activity.

- BID to seek funding to replace the 4 main City Centre notice boards and improve signage and finger boards.
- The City Centre businesses via 1-1 and Focus Groups confirmed strong support for this activity.

A SAFE AND CONNECTED CITY CENTRE

A City Centre Where Everyone Feels Secure And Businesses Work Together

Inverness Community Safety Partnership

ACTIVITY

BID represents the Business Community at the Inverness Community Safety Partnership (ICSP) group alongside Police Scotland, Highland Council, NHS Highland, other Emergency Services, and key Partners, and raises issues for and on behalf of businesses relating to Community Safety, crime reduction, anti-social behaviour and retail crime and is involved in promoting and facilitating initiatives to prevent and deter such activities with a fortnightly meeting chaired by BID.

BID Security Task Team

BID organises and co-ordinates the SIA trained Security Task Team which offers additional security, reassurance and assistance to City Centre businesses, property owners and visitors. The Task Team respond quickly to real time issues reported to help reduce anti-social behaviour, retail and other crime. Over a period of (total 27) weeks in 2022, there were 247 recorded incidents and requests for assistance in the City centre. The project is jointly funded by ICGF and BID.

FUTURE

- BID will continue to represent businesses and work with others to help reduce crime and anti-social behaviour incidents in the City Centre.
- BID to seek support from the Inverness Common Good Fund to continue with its active contribution and involvement in the ICSP and Safe Inverness CRP
- The City Centre businesses confirmed their strong support for this activity.

- BID to seek support from the Inverness Common Good Fund to ensure this important service continues.
- BID, in response to business feedback, will during the term, explore the opportunity to make the Task Team service year round.
- The City Centre businesses confirmed strong support for this activity.

Safe Inverness – Crime Reduction Partnership

ACTIVITY

BID manages and co-ordinates the Safe Inverness – Crime Reduction Partnership and secure website for members which provides important community safety information and local intelligence for all member businesses on a range of relevant matters pertaining to preventions and interventions to keep people and premises safe. BID also chairs and co-ordinates the Retail Security Group, and facilitates access for businesses to the independent commercial ShopSafe Radio System operated across the City Centre by Retail outlets and the Hospitality Sector.

Operation Respect and Taxi Marshals

BID co-ordinates the seasonal 'Operation Respect' initiative in the City Centre in conjunction with Police Scotland Inverness Area Command and our statutory and Third Sector Community Safety Partners including Highland Council, NHS Highland, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, Scottish Ambulance Service and others, in order to enhance the security, safety and public reassurance arrangements in the City Centre over the Summer months and over the busy Festive Period. The project is funded in part by partners, BID and the Inverness Common Good Fund.

Pub Watch

BID co-ordinates and provides support to the local pub and hospitality, business led initiative 'Pub Watch' which aims to improve standards, reduce anti-social behaviour in and around licenced premises and promotes a more connected and collaborative approach to issues of commonality. BID further supports Pub Watch with event marketing and promotion.

Public Access Defibrillators

On an ongoing basis BID co-ordinates the security, servicing and repair of the 5 public access defibrillators sited within the City Centre. The units were purchased due to funding and support from local businesses and Highland Council.

Working Together

Businesses identified during our consultation that they would like to work together more and be better connected to each other in order to develop opportunities, share resources and to promote and raise awareness of each other's businesses as well as to unite on key matters. Businesses identified networking events and opportunities to collaborate should be facilitated by BID.

FUTURE

- BID will continue to represent businesses and work with others to help reduce crime and anti-social behaviour incidents in the City Centre.
 - BID to seek support from the Inverness Common Good Fund to continue with its active contribution and involvement in the Inverness Community Safety Partnership and Safe Inverness CRP.
 - The City Centre businesses confirmed strong support for this activity.
-
- BID to seek support from the Inverness Common Good Fund to ensure this important service continues.
 - The City Centre businesses confirmed strong support for this activity.
-
- BID to continue to co-ordinate and provide support to the Pub Watch Group and will work with members to identify further partnership working and development opportunities.
The City Centre businesses confirmed strong support for this activity.
-
- BID to continue to provide the co-ordination to ensure the life saving units are there when needed.
 - The City Centre businesses confirmed strong support for this activity.
-
- BID to set up a '**Members Only**' section of the BID website to connect businesses that will include a News section and a '**Shared Resources Hub**'.
 - The City Centre businesses confirmed strong support for this activity.

Training

ACTIVITY

BID has organised and facilitated training courses for City Centre businesses on a number of topics such as retail crime (shop lifting) and social media management over the last term. Some sectors, such as hospitality identified a need for vocational training in City Centre to fill staff vacancies.

Recruitment Service

BID to develop a City Centre Recruitment Service to advertise and promote member vacancies at no cost and to make BID one of the go to places for job applicants seeking to work in the City Centre.

“Quick Responder Service”

BID acts as a frontline responder and point of contact to assist businesses with a vast number of queries including in times of crisis, such as during the covid pandemic via the provision of advice, resources, sign-posting and support.

FUTURE

- BID to facilitate training sessions on topics identified by the Businesses as being required such as ‘Fair Work’ or ‘First Aid’.
- The City Centre businesses confirmed strong support for this activity.
- Recruitment service developed at no cost to businesses to advertise and promote City Centre vacancies as part of membership benefits.
- The City Centre businesses confirmed strong support for this activity.
- BID to continue to be there for when businesses have a query or when support is needed in respect of any issue.
- Businesses have strongly agreed that BID should continue this role.

AN ENHANCED AND REPRESENTED CITY CENTRE

Advocating For And Providing A Strong Voice For Business Needs And Priorities

Promoting the Value of the City Centre

ACTIVITY

BID positively and actively promotes the City Centre area and its business community on an ongoing and continual basis. BID also endorses the value of the City Centre both to residents and visitors alike. City Centre businesses contribute more than 10% of the non-domestic rates for the whole Highland area which demonstrates the respective value and benefit to the economy our City Centre provides.

Developing a Stronger City Centre Economy

BID seeks to work with other City Centre stakeholders (including the City Centre businesses) to recognise and optimise all opportunities to create a stronger City Centre trading economy and to help identify and develop improvements for the benefit of businesses.

FUTURE

- The City Centre businesses have approved BID’s role in continuing to promote the importance of the City Centre and its trading economy for the City of Inverness and the wider Highland region on an ongoing and continual basis to ensure that the area is represented and has a strong voice on key issues.
- The BID Directors and staff will engage with Third parties to develop, progress and implement projects or initiatives that benefit and enhance the City Centre economy.
- The businesses consulted were strongly in support of this activity.

Ensuring Business is Involved in Decision Making

ACTIVITY

By virtue of its formal mandate from the City Centre businesses in a statutory ballot, BID believes it should be engaged in key decision-making for issues affecting the BID area. BID is able to facilitate business feedback and act as the “voice” for the collective group of City Centre businesses. Representatives of levy paying businesses can stand for election as one of the 17 BID directors.

Strong Voice for Business

BID takes a proactive approach to ensuring it is aware of activity and developments in the City Centre which may potentially affect a business, sector and/or the overall City Centre trading economy. It is increasingly difficult for individual businesses to keep abreast of such matters including at present, in respect of the proposals for redevelopment of Academy Street and Millburn Road and BID will continue to strongly advocate for and represent members viewpoints in respect of such matters.

City Centre Ambassador(s)

The BID City Centre Ambassadors provide a presence and point of contact to businesses as part of our rapid response service which assists businesses with an array of individual and collective matters which businesses identify need addressed.

An Accessible City Centre

BID recognises the importance of access to the City Centre by groups who are disadvantaged by having a protected characteristic and will work with partners to ensure that the area where possible, including via Equality Impact Assessments and Action Plans is able to promote equality opportunities and access.

Partnership Working

BID represents the interests of the City Centre businesses a number of events and also in respect of City Centre and wider stakeholder forums. BID recognises that working with key partners and stakeholders can be important where it is mutually beneficial and that by doing so, we can help to achieve even more for the City Centre.

Business Continuity

BID is experienced and responsive to dealing with and resolving unforeseen incidents that can have a major effect on the City Centre. Examples include floods, fires, accidents, C19 pandemic and more. BID is able to provide assistance and present the business perspective in respect of any multi-agency response group. BID also ensures that businesses are kept updated on matters and their needs considered when appropriate.

FUTURE

- BID undertakes to liaise regularly with the City Centre businesses, will set up Business Steering Groups and businesses may contact the BID team in respect of any issue on an ongoing basis during the term.
- The businesses consulted were strongly in support of this activity.
- Increasingly BID is contacted by businesses seeking advice on issues which they are concerned could affect their trading environment with BID assistance being sought to help facilitate resolution or improvement and this will continue.
- The businesses consulted were strongly in support of this activity.
- BID to continue with a strong City Centre presence including via our dedicated City Centre Ambassador service.
- The businesses consulted were strongly in support of this activity.
- BID to work with partners to ensure that the City Centre is accessible and is responsive to the needs of groups facing barriers or disadvantage due to having a protected characteristic.
- The City Centre businesses confirmed strong support for this activity.
- BID values partnership working and will continue to engage with appropriate stakeholders on behalf of the City Centre businesses when appropriate.
- BID will continue to be a strong voice advocating for and on behalf of the City Centre businesses.
- Previously the absence of BID’s involvement has led to decisions being made which have disadvantaged individual businesses or the City Centre trading economy. The businesses have approved BID continuing in this role.

Fat, Oil and Grease (FOG) Management

ACTIVITY

Some businesses identified issues for their business due to FOG management and disposal, and cited they were in favour of activity to encourage and raise awareness of appropriate disposal methods.

FUTURE

- BID to work with Scottish Water and partners, for a FOG awareness pilot for the City Centre to improve drain issues and promote best practice and improve training and resource in this area.
- The businesses consulted were in support of this activity.

PROMOTING, MARKETING AND CELEBRATING THE CITY CENTRE

Raising Awareness And Attracting More People To A Vibrant And Thriving City Centre

Business Spotlights

ACTIVITY

BID manages and co-ordinates the 'Small Business Focus' and 'Person Behind the Business' features in the Inverness Courier each month to help promote small and larger businesses with the feature being in the top 10 of articles read both in print or online.

FUTURE

- BID to continue with dedicated monthly spotlight features to ensure the profile of City Centre businesses is promoted on an ongoing basis.
- The businesses consulted were strongly in support of this activity.

Inverness City Centre Business Awards

The BID Business Awards, sponsored by the Inverness Courier recognise the best in each sector as voted for by their customers and clients. Finalists are invited to celebrate their achievement at our annual awards ceremony. The awards are of particular value given that the public determine the winners in each of the categories.

- BID to host an annual Business Awards ceremony to promote and reward the achievements of City Centre businesses with an expansion of categories for 2023 onwards.
- The businesses consulted were strongly in support of this activity.

Annual Festive Marketing Campaign

BID promotes the City Centre and its businesses to the Highland area and beyond via a dedicated marketing campaign via print, banners, online, social media and radio channels to encourage spend in the BID area over the Christmas period. Campaign data is gathered to evaluate impact and to help shape future marketing activity.

- BID in liaison with our media partners will design and deliver an annual festive marketing campaign to encourage increased spend and footfall within the City Centre.
- The businesses consulted were strongly in support of this activity.

Events, Marketing and Promotion

BID hosts a number of events aimed to encourage people to visit, spend and move around the BID area, such as the Great Easter Egg Hunt, Classic Vehicle Show, Elf-on-the-shelf, High Street Safaris, Fiver Fest and more. BID further actively markets and promotes business and partner events held in or near the City Centre to encourage increased footfall to the area.

- BID to continue as a member of Highland Council Events and Festivals group, and to continue to host an annual events programme designed to encourage increase in City Centre footfall.
- The businesses consulted were strongly in support of this activity.

ACTIVITY

FUTURE

“Best Bar None” Awards Scheme

BID co-ordinates this national scheme in the Inverness area to enhance the standards applied in the licenced trade sector. BBN supports our Hospitality Industry and Licensed Trade venues to achieve national benchmarks and provides a platform for them to evidence their efforts and achievements.

- Annual Best Bar None Scheme to be continued. BID to co-ordinate the Inverness BBN Award Ceremony evening.
- The businesses consulted were strongly in support of this activity.

Inverness City Centre Gift Card

BID launched the Inverness City Centre Gift Card in November 2022, and over 160+ businesses within our area have signed up. The initiative has been funded via the Scottish Government Economic Recovery programme and via Highland Council. The Gift Card is a key offering as part of the wider #invernessloveslocal campaign.

- BID to continue to co-ordinate and manage the Inverness City Centre Gift Card scheme and will seek to secure additional funding to continue the initiative at no cost to businesses going forward.
- The City Centre businesses confirmed strong support for this activity.

Places to Eat and Drink Guide

BID profiles over 114 venues to eat and drink via the guide which is a key source of information to visitors to the City Centre. The guide is available online or in print copy with displays being prominent at the Airport, in hospitality venues and also available to electronically download.

- BID to update the Guide and add a QR code to ensure new venues or those who relocate are included.
- The City Centre businesses confirmed strong support for this activity.

Social Media Promotions

BID extensively and actively promotes the City Centre and its businesses via our social media platforms which have a reach of over 32k followers over Facebook, Instagram and Tik Tok.

- BID to continue to promote and market the City Centre and its businesses extensively online.
- The City Centre businesses confirmed strong support for this activity.

BID Website and Business Directory

The BID website promotes each City Centre Business via their own dedicated page in the Business Directory and markets events and news via the platform on an ongoing and continual basis.

- BID to continue to promote and market the City Centre, events and news and its businesses extensively via the BID website.
- The City Centre businesses confirmed strong support for this activity.

Visitor Marketing

BID is committed to promoting and marketing the City Centre area as a destination to a wide range of visitors (local, regional, national and international) by highlighting the many opportunities for retail, leisure, hospitality and staying trips within the BID zone.

- BID will continue this activity and will work with key partners who can assist BID to achieve this aim for the City Centre area businesses.
- The City Centre businesses confirmed strong support for this activity.

The BID Area

During the preparation of the 2023-28 BID Business Plan the BID Directors considered options to revise the BID area however after careful consideration and given the synergy of the BID programmes to the dynamics of our City Centre area, the Directors agreed that the City Centre businesses would be best served by maintaining the existing boundaries of BID for a fourth term.

The BID Area will therefore be unchanged and will again cover all separate rateable properties in the heart of Inverness City Centre – which includes retail, office, leisure and other commercial businesses. The BID area extends from the Eastgate Centre to Bank Street at Ness Riverside and from Castle Street to High Street and up Friar's Lane and the following streets are included either in whole or in part:



- | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Academy Street | Falcon Square | Queensgate |
| Academy Street Arcade | Falconer Building | Queensgate Arcade |
| Bank Lane | Fraser Street | Railway Terrace |
| Bank Street | High Street | Raining Stairs |
| Baron Taylor's Street | Inglis Street | Rose Street |
| Bridge Street | Lombard Street | School Lane |
| Castle Street | Manse Place | Station Square |
| Castle Wynd | Margaret Street | Stephen's Street |
| Church Lane | Market Brae | Stephen's Brae |
| Church Street | Market Close | Strothers Lane |
| Drummond Street | Market Hall | Union Street |
| Eastgate | Millburn Road | Victorian Market |
| Eastgate Shopping Centre | Post Office Avenue | |

BID Ballot Process

- The BID ballot is a confidential postal ballot conducted by Highland Council on behalf of Inverness BID Ltd in accordance with Scottish BID legislation.
- Ballot papers will be posted to the eligible person responsible for casting a vote within their business at least 42 days before the day of the ballot. In the case of national companies, the responsibility for voting may lie with head office.
- Both the owner of a property (the 'Property Owner') and the organisation trading from that property (the 'Property Occupier') are 'eligible persons' and are entitled to vote in the BID Ballot.
- An 'eligible property' is one based in the BID area that is registered with Highland Council as having a rateable value of £10,000 or more as of 26th January 2023 and which is not exempt from paying BID levy.
- As defined by the legislation the property owner and the property occupier shall have the following voting rights:
 - A Property Owner will have one vote in the **ballot by number** (irrespective of the number of properties owned) and in the **ballot by rateable value**, will vote 50% of the rateable value of each property they own.
 - A Property Occupier will have one vote for each property they trade from (as the eligible person liable to pay the non-domestic rates) in the **ballot by number** and in the **ballot by rateable value**, will vote 50% of the rateable value of each property they occupy.
- Where a property is vacant the Property Owner will receive the ballot paper as the person eligible to vote but will be required to pay 100% of the levy on the property.
- Ballot papers will be issued by Civica on behalf of the Highland Council (the election agent) to every eligible person in the BID area, on or before 9th February 2023 i.e. 42 days before the final ballot date.
- The ballot papers, together with a copy of the BID Business Plan will be posted to the person responsible for casting a vote within their business. In the case of national companies the responsibility may lie with head office.
- The final date for all ballot papers to be returned is 5pm on 23rd March 2023. Ballot papers received after this date will be null and void.
- Where an eligible property is vacant the voting papers will be sent to the property owner.
- Voting papers are easy to complete, simply place a cross on either "**YES**" or "**NO**" to the question "are you in favour of a BID?" The ballot paper must then be signed by the person eligible to vote and returned in the pre-paid envelope.
- For the ballot to be successful there must be a minimum turnout of 25% (the headcount) by number of eligible persons and by combined rateable value; and of those who turnout, the majority must vote in favour by number and combined rateable value.
- Where a person is liable for non-domestic rates for more than one property, that individual shall be eligible to cast more than one vote however, they will be required to pay the levy for each of the properties that they occupy.
- The ballot papers will be counted on 24th March 2023 and the results announced by the Highland Council within one week.
- Following a successful ballot, the BID term will commence on 1st April 2023 and will run for a period of five years until the 31st March 2028.

The BID Proposer

Inverness BID Ltd is a not-for-profit limited company with no share capital that was established in 2008 to deliver the initial BID for Inverness City Centre for the 5 years from 1st April 2008 to 31st March 2013. We will deliver the renewed Business Plan for the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2028 and will represent the interests of all BID businesses in our area through a dedicated Board of elected, voluntary, non-executive Directors drawn from the BID levy payers together with the Highland Council representative, Leader of the City of Inverness Area Committee.

BID Levy Arrangements

The BID investment levy is an equitable and fair way of funding additional projects and services, which the local authority and other statutory bodies are not required to provide within the BID area. The BID investment levy income will be approximately £206k per annum in year one generating an estimated total income of over £1.3m over the 5 year term. It has been agreed by the BID Board that the levy structure will remain the same i.e. 1.11% on the rateable value (RV) and:

- As BID proposer the BID Board of Directors propose that the BID levy arrangements for the term 2023-2028 are based on the rateable value of a property.
- The BID levy will be paid by the property occupier (the eligible person liable to pay the non-domestic rate) at a rate of 50% and the property owner at a rate of 50%, or paid at 100% by property owner-occupiers based on the rateable value.
- For year 1 the fee structure is based on the rateable value of the property on the date of ballot, i.e., 23rd of March 2023. Thereafter, taking account of the rates revaluation due to take place on the 1st of April 2023, for Year 2, and subsequent years, the fee structure will be based on the RV of the property (as stated on the Scottish Assessors Association website) on the 1st of April of that year.
- There will be no adjustments to the levy during a year to reflect changes in individual rating values following an appeal. Any such changes in rateable values (resulting in either a higher or lower value) will instead be applied in the following year on 1st April.
- All eligible non-domestic rates properties with a rates valuation that are listed on the Inverness City Centre Valuation Roll by the Scottish Assessors on the day of the ballot i.e. 23rd March 2023 will be liable for investment levy for the duration of the BID term subject to exclusions or exemptions as detailed below.
- The levy payments are not linked to what levy payers actually pay in rates but are based on the rateable value of the property.
- For the year 1, ending 31st March 2024, the BID levy will be 1.11% of the rateable value of the property on the date of ballot i.e. 23rd March 2023.
- For Year 2, 2024-25 and subsequent years for the term, the BID Board will have the discretion to increase the BID levy annually by the rate of inflation (index-linked to the Consumer Price Index, CPI) to a maximum of 2% per annum based on the previous year's levy to take account of inflation, so that those liable to pay the levy can budget accordingly for the full five-year term.
- For vacant premises it will be the responsibility of the property owner to pay the full levy at 100% after a period of 3 months vacancy.
- Where a business occupies the premises for less than 1 year then the levy due will be calculated on a daily basis.

- Where a property is vacant or undergoing refurbishment or being subdivided on the date the levy is issued, the property owner will be liable for the levy amount which must be paid within 28 days.
- The levy must be paid either in one payment within 28 days from the date of the levy invoice or in 10 instalments by arrangement with the billing body.
- Any new commercial development, subdivision of existing properties or merging of properties or new business with a non-domestic rateable valuation coming into the area during the 5-year term of the business improvement district will be liable for the BID Improvement Levy.
- If a property is vacant on the date the levy is issued and for any subsequent vacant periods, the property owner will be liable for the full levy amount, after a period of 3 months which must be paid within 28 days.
- The levy will apply to properties with a rateable value of £10,000 and above.
- There is no maximum levy banding.
- Highland Council, as the body responsible for the collection of the levy, will continue to pursue any non-payment of the BID investment levy using the available statutory powers to show fairness to levy payers that have paid the levy. The Highland Council will be entitled to charge an additional fee to the levy amount to meet any additional costs incurred in the recovery of the levy.

Exemptions to Paying BID Levy

The current BID Board of Directors as the BID Proposer, propose that the following BID levy exemptions operate for term 2023-28:-

- Premises that have a rateable value of less than £10,000 are exempt. These premises can pay a voluntary levy and become an "associate member" should they wish, at a rate of £80 per annum.
- Churches & other established places of worship shall be exempt from paying BID levy as shall non-retail charities and stand-alone ATM's.
- For clarity, retail charity shops will be liable to pay BID levy as they will benefit from the improved trading environment created by BID.
- There will be a discount of 35% for Eastgate Centre businesses and 30% for Victorian Market tenants on the basis that these businesses are liable to pay a service charge and therefore do not utilise full BID projects and services.

Financials for 2023-28

The BID Board of Directors will continue to seek to use the money raised through the BID levy to lever additional project support and sponsorship to add value to the contribution from businesses. In the year 2022-23 as of November 2022 a total of almost £160k of such additional funding was achieved to invest along with the BID Levy in the City Centre.

The Board shall have the ability to adapt or alter the projects and services as required to reflect any change in economic circumstances or any new opportunities that may arise and which are in the best interests of the businesses providing that the BID aims and objectives remain adhered to.

Budget	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Income					
BID Levy *	£206,400	£210,117	£213,836	£217,552	£221,269
Project Funding **	£97,750	£97,750	£97,750	£97,750	£97,750
Total	£304,150	£307,867	£311,586	£315,302	£319,019
Expenditure					
Welcoming & Attractive City Centre	£106,453	£107,756	£109,058	£110,356	£111,658
Promoting, Marketing & Celebrating the City Centre	£76,037	£76,966	£77,896	£78,826	£79,755
Safe and Connected City Centre	£48,664	£49,258	£49,853	£50,448	£51,043
Enhanced and Represented City Centre	£30,415	£30,786	£31,158	£31,530	£31,901
Organisational Costs	£42,581	£43,101	£43,621	£44,142	£44,662
Total	£304,150	£307,867	£311,586	£315,302	£319,019

* Net Levy is based on levy being invoiced at rate of 1.11% for 2022-23 plus projected annual cost of living (CPI) increases but limited to an additional 2% per annum. This is netted by the 96% rate of collection as achieved on average.

** BID has received project funding from the Inverness Common Good Fund during the current BID term to undertake mutually beneficial projects (including floral decorations, community safety & amenity and the gull programme) and this budget these projects are projected to continue in the further five-year period to 2028. Should this support not be available in any of the years 2023-28 detailed above, then the project(s) to be delivered would be reviewed to either be funded by alternative sources or to be reduced or cancelled.

What will the Levy Cost my business?

The proposal is that the BID levy for 2023-24 will be 1.11% of your business premises rateable value with the cost being shared equally between the Property Owner and the Property Occupier.

On that basis the indicative cost to business for 2023-24 is shown in the following table:

Rateable Value of Business	Annual Levy Cost - Property Owner (50%)	Annual Levy Cost - Property Occupier (50%)	Monthly Cost – (50%)	Daily Cost – (50%)
Under £10,000	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
£10,000	£55.50	£55.50	£4.63	15p
£15,000	£83.25	£83.25	£6.94	23p
£20,000	£111	£111	£9.25	31p
£50,000	£277.50	£277.50	£23.13	76p
£100,000	£555	£555	£46.25	£1.52
£250,000	£1387.50	£1387.50	£115.63	£3.80
£500,000	£2775.00	£2775.00	£231.25	£7.60



Meet the BID Board of Directors



BID Chairman:
Peter Strachan
(Director, Rail,
Serco UK & Europe Ltd)



BID Vice-Chair:
Colin Craig
(Oil and Vinegar)



BID Company Secretary
Katrina Ashbolt
(MacLeod & MacCallum)



Cllr Ian Brown
(City Leader –
The Highland Council)



Duncan Chisholm
(Duncan Chisholm &
Sons, Kiltmaker)



Chris Kershaw
(Eastgate Centre Manager)



Norman MacDonald
MBE
(Café 1)



Craig Duncan
(McDonalds Restaurant)



Malcolm Fraser
(Duncan Fraser,
Fishmonger)



Gordon McIntosh
(Munro & Noble)



Owen McManus
(Marks & Spencer)



Graine Riach
(Edinburgh Woollen Mill)



Graham Thomson
(Coffee Affair)



Suzanne Ross
(Lush)

The BID Board of Directors are drawn from the different trading sectors (retail, office, hospitality and property owners) and oversee delivery of the BID's City Centre programmes.



"Our City Centre is vital to the well-being of our people and our economy; since its inception, BID has been a key partner in generating our growing reputation for quality, hospitality, and cultural offering. They continue to work to support our businesses, and those who use the City Centre, through the challenges and opportunities that are so rapidly changing the way we live our lives, and work, in the City. Critically, BID's involvement in the Inverness 2035 vision means they are central to ensuring that the City Centre, and the businesses they represent have an even more successful future."

Drew Hendry
Local Member of Parliament for Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey



"The City of Inverness is the gateway to the Highlands and developing and enhancing the experience of locals and visitors alike is vitally important to the economic wellbeing of Inverness and the Highlands. Inverness BID have done a huge amount to promote Inverness, undertaking a variety of initiatives as well as effectively representing the business community of Inverness. I am delighted to support Inverness BID and I am sure that working together in partnership we can take forward our aspirations for Inverness."

Councillor Raymond Bremner
Leader of The Highland Council



"Inverness BID continue to make a real difference to our City, through their programmes of activity and support to businesses they are helping to enhance residents and visitors experience of the city centre through a wide and varied range of initiatives. BID have acted as the innovator, sounding board and strong voice ensuring that both businesses, the Council and tourist organisations all work in partnership to promote economic growth in the City. Inverness is a far better place through the hard work and focus that BID brings and it is for these reasons that I have no hesitation in supporting BID for a further term."

Councillor Alasdair Christie
Leader of the Opposition – Highland Council



"Inverness BID have continued to give a voice to local Business by supporting and promoting the City Centre. BID also plays a key role in keeping the city safe and welcoming for all working in partnership with Police Scotland and Highland Council. Inverness needs a vibrant and successful City Centre and BID continues to deliver this for its members, residents and visitors. I am delighted to give my support to Inverness BID as they seek another 5 year term."

Councillor Ian Brown
City Leader/The Highland Council



"Inverness City Centre remains a key destination and the gateway to the wider Highlands for those visiting the area. Working in tandem with Inverness Business Improvement District (BID) we have made significant inroads to ensuring that the collective approach to Safety and Security is high on all agendas and we are committed to ensuring that the City Centre continues to develop as a positive, welcoming and safe destination."

Police Scotland Superintendent Dave Ross
Superintendent (Operations) Highlands & Islands Division – Police Scotland



"At a time when town and City Centres are needing to redefine their role in society and businesses are facing enormous external pressures, an effective BID is crucial in representing the interests of stakeholders and promoting the City Centre. Inverness BID has demonstrated its value to City based businesses in recent years and, as Asset Managers of Eastgate Shopping Centre, we will be supporting the renewal of the BID in the upcoming vote."

Mark Hewett
Principal of Scoop, Owners of Eastgate Shopping Centre



"As current Chair of Inverness Pub Watch, I appreciate the support that Inverness BID provides to our City Centre Businesses, working with the licensed premises in providing a welcoming, vibrant and safe environment for all. BID remains proactive in supporting the day and night-time economy through initiatives, such as Best Bar None and BID Business Awards, as well as ensuring that Businesses have all the necessary information crucial to accessing advice, guidance and government funding streams. Going forward, I have no hesitation in endorsing the proposal seeking a further 5 year term for BID"

Don Lawson
Chair of the Inverness Pub Watch Group and Owner of Johnny Foxes and Jimmy Badgers



Governance and Measuring Success

BID Management

Following a successful **YES** vote, the management, staff and operation of the BID will continue under the existing company structure and name, Inverness BID Ltd, registered company number SC339914 which will operate from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2028.

Governance

Inverness BID Ltd, a not-for-profit limited company with no share capital, will continue and deliver the renewed Business Plan for the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2028 through its voluntary Board of Directors and a Management Team.

In carrying out this role the Board will take all steps to minimise any risk associated with the BID (financially or otherwise), adopting best practice whilst being open & transparent. It will report annually to the BID levy payers at an AGM.

If successful we will reaffirm a Baseline Agreement of services that Highland Council that will be maintained during the term of the BID. None of the activities or projects will replace what Highland Council or other statutory bodies are already providing. All activities outlined in this document are additional and do not replace what is already provided.

The Board will enter into a new Operating Agreement with the Highland Council to ensure that the projects & services that BID delivers are additional to those delivered by the Council.

Measuring Success

Throughout the lifetime of the BID, all work on the BID projects will be monitored to ensure the projects and services proposed in the BID Business Plan achieve a high level of impact and are delivering to the satisfaction of the businesses that voted for the BID.

The BID Board of Directors will monitor and oversee the efficient delivery of the BID projects.



What happens if...?

Without A Bid, The City Centre Will Not Benefit From:

- Spectacular City Centre Floral Displays throughout the summer months
- Dedicated Coach Ambassadors to welcome and direct over 100k visitors to the City Centre
- Marketing of the City Centre and its businesses, to local, regional and tourist visitors
- The Inverness City Centre Gift Card which helps to keep money in the local economy
- A strong representative voice to ensure the needs and views of businesses are heard
- Annual Gull Management Programme to help keep numbers controlled and manageable
- Annual City Centre Business Awards to recognise and reward excellence
- Annual Best Bar None Awards to recognise excellence and achievements in Hospitality
- Annual City Centre Events Programme including Elf on the Shelf, High Street Safari's, the Classic Car Show, the Great Easter Egg Hunt and much more.
- Security Task Team to enhance safety and reduce anti-social behaviour in the City Centre
- Monthly Small Business Focus feature in the Inverness Courier
- Monthly Person Behind the Business feature in the Inverness Courier
- Dedicated Business Directory to highlight each business on the BID Website
- Social Media marketing to celebrate City Centre businesses and activity
- 'Places to Eat and Drink Guide' promoting over 114 City Centre hospitality venues to visitors
- Operation Respect and Taxi Marshals to help the evening economy
- Retail Security Group to address issues such as shop lifting
- Improving equality rights and accessibility for the City Centre
- Free training, advice and support on a range of topics which impact businesses
- Development of the City Centre with businesses being represented

If majority support is not achieved when the ballot result is announced on Friday 24th March 2023, BID will cease to operate. All BID Projects and initiatives will terminate and the company will be wound up.

