



your **in**verness

ALL TOGETHER BETTER

Inverness Business Improvement District

Business
PLAN



more family friendly

Find more great shops this way...
←←←

well promoted

cleaner



more events



more attractive



a powerful voice



safer



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If you have any questions or comments about this business plan, please feel free to contact the Inverness BID team at

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www.invernessbid.co.uk



The Inverness Business Improvement District

Your opportunity to take control of your future trading environment

1. Welcome

BIDs are a new opportunity for businesses. This new strategy delivers key benefits for businesses located within the BID area:

1. A single, strong, voice for business: BIDs are excellent advocates for the business community, being driven by local businesses. The Inverness BID will develop strong working relationships with providers of public services in our area and ensure that public bodies are aware of local concerns and work effectively to address them.
2. BIDs allow the business community to self-fund additional projects which enhance their trading environment and so improve profitability.

This document is the Inverness BID business plan and it describes what a BID company would deliver for us, as businesses based within the city centre.

We already invest in various projects to help our businesses, be it through our own marketing campaigns, contributing to floral schemes, safety services and much more besides. The BID company will concentrate some of our resources in a company owned and directed by us. This company will make our money work harder and smarter for us, giving us greater returns than if we all continued to invest individually.

Moreover, a BID will allow us to move from ad-hoc projects carried out with limited funding, to a strategic approach to city centre management working in partnership with the public sector to deliver our objectives. Focusing resources and strategy will enable us to be far more effective, helping Inverness City centre to be an attractive, vibrant and thriving trading centre in to the future.

I hope that we as business people will seize this opportunity and realise its potential by voting “yes” to make these plans a reality.



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink.

Garek Begg
Chairman, Inverness BID
Shadow Steering Group



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hugh Nicol." with a horizontal line underneath.

Hugh Nicol
Chairman, Inverness
City Centre Management



A message from city centre businesses

Vote “yes” to create an Inverness city centre Business Improvement District.

Welcome to the Inverness BID. We as local businesses have a strong belief in the potential of our City Centre. A yes vote will allow all city centre businesses to act and invest collectively, so building a strong, successful trading environment for all businesses within the city centre to maximise their potential.

Reflecting business opinion

This BID proposal reflects the comments and views of businesses in Inverness gathered over the last four years. This business plan describes what an Inverness BID would do to bring greater profitability to our businesses and success to the city centre. For example, over 50% of the BID investment will be used to deliver marketing and events, bringing more people in to the city centre, so helping businesses to prosper. The BID company vision will be to create a well promoted, safe, vibrant, attractive and well managed City Centre for customers, employees, businesses and investors.

We urge you to support this initiative by voting “YES” for the Inverness BID

BID Steering Group

- Garek Begg, Begg Shoes and Bags, Chairman, Inverness BID Shadow Steering Group

Independent Retailers:

- Hugh Grant, Heraldic Art
- Hugh Nicol, Riverside Gallery, Chairman Inverness City Centre Management
- Stuart Robins National Schoolwear Centres

Business and multiple retail representatives:

- Simon Cole-Hamilton, Treasurer, Inverness City Centre Management
- Jackie Cuddy, Centre Manager, Eastgate Shopping Centre
- James Fraser, General Manager, Ramada Jarvis Hotel
- Nick Harvey, Store Manager, Debenhams
- Simon Phillips, Store Manager, Marks & Spencer
- Casia Zajac, Chief Executive, Inverness Chamber of Commerce

Proprietors:

- Don Maclver, Maclver Properties (Leisure)
- Tony Maclver, Maclver Group (Offices)

Public sector:

- David Haas, City Manager, The Highland Council



2. Executive Summary

- This business plan contains a proposal to invest £1.5 million of new money (and up to £4.5 million in total) on improvements and services in Inverness City Centre by creating a Business Improvement District (BID) company.
- BIDs are the modern way to channel much-needed investment into commercial areas. They have enjoyed great success in countries around the world and under legislation introduced in 2007, BIDs can now be created in Scotland.
- By collecting a small levy from every business, a fund is generated to deliver specified investments and services to improve and enhance an area, leading to commercial growth.
- Money invested by businesses into their BID company will be used to lever in additional funds. The BID company will work closely with public bodies to support the development of public services, and to ensure that additional sources of public funding are identified and effectively utilised.
- It is fundamental to all BIDs that they do not substitute any services which are the normal responsibility of the Local Authority. BID funds will only be spent on providing additional services which have been identified by the businesses in the area.
- BIDs are fair, because the cost is shared between every commercial organisation in the area of benefit. They are democratic, because a private ballot is held and the levy will be payable by businesses in the BID area only if a sufficient number vote in favour.
- BIDs are directed by the business community, because the businesses themselves elect the board to manage the BID company, putting businesses in the driving seat. The Inverness BID is based in the commercial heart of Inverness – the city centre. The BID area includes over 700 city centre businesses. Property owners and occupiers will be asked to vote on whether the BID should go ahead. Given a YES vote, they will appoint their own directors to manage the funds and to carry out agreed improvements and services on their behalf.
- Businesses in the BID area have told us that their main priorities for improvement are marketing and promotion, strong representation, and safety. The business plan is focused on making significant new investment to deliver these priorities.
- It is proposed to raise BID funds by a levy set at 1% of the rateable value on all commercial properties in the BID area. For some businesses this will be as little as £80 per annum. The levy costs will be shared between property owners and property occupiers.
- Very small businesses, those with a rateable value of less than £8,000, will be exempt from paying the levy. However they may pay a voluntary contribution to join the BID company if they wish, as may others outwith the BID area as long as they support the BID's objectives.
- The BID will have a defined life of 5 years.
- This plan has been prepared by local business people, and we seek your support in bringing this exciting proposal forward in the ballot which we plan to hold on 14 March 2008.



3. About BIDs

What is a BID?

A business improvement district (BID) is an area where businesses vote to invest in projects that strengthen their trading environment.

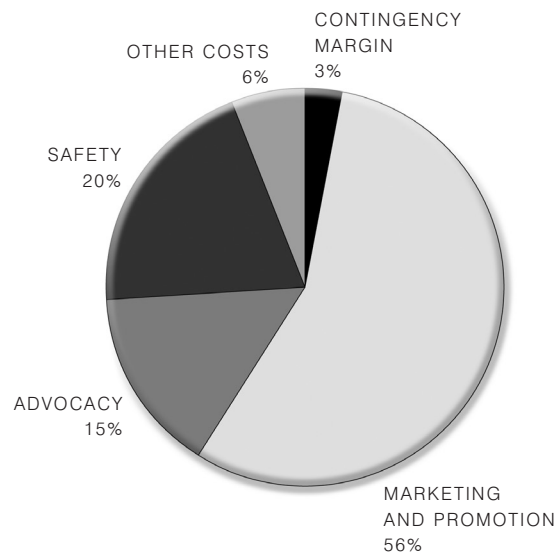
What's in it for businesses?

An Inverness city centre BID will benefit all businesses in the BID area. Property owners, first floor businesses, independent & multiple retailers and other service providers will all see a strong return on investment as their new BID company delivers:

- 1. A single, strong voice for business:** BIDS are excellent advocates for the business community, working in partnership with public services to air and address local concerns
- 2. Collectively invested money which works harder and smarter:** BIDS allow the business community to self-fund additional initiatives which can enhance their trading environment and attract more customers, so improving profitability.
- 3. Introduction of processes to support the development of public services.** Integral to the BID mechanism is a "Baseline Service Agreement" between the BID company and providers of public services in the city centre. Public services will be identified and monitored to ensure that there is no reduction in either standard or frequency of service delivery. The single, strong voice of the BID company will speak for all city centre businesses.
- 4. Potential to lever in additional public funding.** By providing the means for collective private sector investment, BIDS have the potential to lever in additional funds. This type of leverage has already allowed the pilot BID team to fund the city centre ice rink and Winter Festival this Christmas. A "yes" vote will bring more value for money promotions to the city.
- 5. Strong and effective Private - Public partnerships.** BIDS deliver strong and effective private – public sector partnerships, directed by the private sector and delivering real benefits to the trading environment

How much will it cost?

The Inverness city centre BID company will be core funded by an investment levy on businesses based in the BID area. This core funding will be used to attract additional funds, just as the BID demonstration projects have done to date. The levy for most will be equivalent to 1% of the property's rateable value and will run for the five year duration of this BID. In other words if your rateable valuation is £10,000 your investment levy will be £100 per year: less than £2 per week. The income raised will be spent on delivering key projects identified by businesses as follows:



How is a BID created?

A Business Improvement District comes in to being when:

- Businesses in the proposed BID area identify needs which, if addressed, would help them to be more profitable
- A costed business plan which would address these needs is drawn up. This is known as the BID business plan
- Businesses in the proposed BID area vote on the BID business plan
- A majority "yes" vote allows a new BID company to be formed and funded by all businesses in the BID area

The cost of developing the Inverness BID has already been met by significant contributions from both private and public sector bodies. Income from the BID levy investment will not therefore be used to recoup these costs.

What will an Inverness BID deliver?

Following extensive consultation with the local business community, three key projects have been identified:

- 1. Marketing and Promotion**
 - 1.1 Create a family-friendly city
 - 1.2 Promote the city centre
 - 1.3 Hold monthly city celebrations
 - 1.4 Clean and decorate the city to an exceptional standard
- 2. Advocacy** – speaking up for the city centre, working together to reduce costs and improve services
- 3. Safety** – reduce crime and the fear of crime

These three projects will raise standards for businesses, customers, guests and visitors.



Who is in charge?

The levy payers are in charge. The BID company will receive the levy income and use it to deliver its three key projects. The not-for-profit BID company will be managed by a Board of Directors elected by levy payers. Levy payers all have the right to nominate directors. This BID company will supersede Inverness City Centre Management (ICCM) and The Inverness Project, delivering services currently supplied by these organisations, as well as a whole lot more besides.

Why invest?

The three BID projects detailed in this plan will strengthen the city centre economy. Businesses operating in the BID area will see a return, whatever their line of trade:

Retailers and service providers

- Increased footfall and dwell times encouraging greater consumer spend
- A cleaner, improved environment for employees and customers
- A city centre which feels safer and is safer – helping employees and

- customers to feel more welcome
- Group marketing and promotion focussed on bringing additional trade to city centre businesses
- The opportunity to attract significant extra funding – BIDs commonly use the business generated “core” funding to lever in additional public funds, as has been achieved with Inverness BID demonstration projects (Ice Rink, City Centre Cleanliness and Security Task Teams etc) for these projects to be repeated an Inverness BID must be created
- Greater efficiencies through collective procurement of services such as buildings maintenance, resulting in lower overheads for participating businesses.

Offices

- A safer environment
- A cleaner environment for employees and clients
- The opportunity to promote the city centre as a diverse business centre – attractive to high calibre employees and clients alike

- An improved retail and leisure offer for employees
- Networking and partnership opportunities with other businesses
- Access to joint procurement initiatives to lower overheads

Property Owners

- Protection of asset value by reducing crime and vandalism
- Improved visual appearance of the area, enhancing long term growth in asset value
- Improvements in an area's desirability, attracting occupiers
- Increased occupancy rates and rental income for properties within the BID area
- Increase trade which benefits turnover-based rents
- Projects that will complement and reinforce individual investment plans
- Investment protection: ensuring property owners are, as part of the BID, consulted on matters affecting their area
- Strong and effective working relationships with public authorities and businesses.



4. Inverness: challenges and opportunities

Inverness City Centre has many assets and the BID offers us the chance to make the most of them.

Inverness's ability to retain and attract new custom faces continual competition from out-of-town centres and other retail and business destinations. Customers cannot be taken for granted, the world is shrinking and they will go elsewhere if their needs are not met.

Every year

Investment and customers are pulled towards out-of-town retail centres

Every year

Inverness struggles to fund city decorations with a "Wow"-factor.

Every year

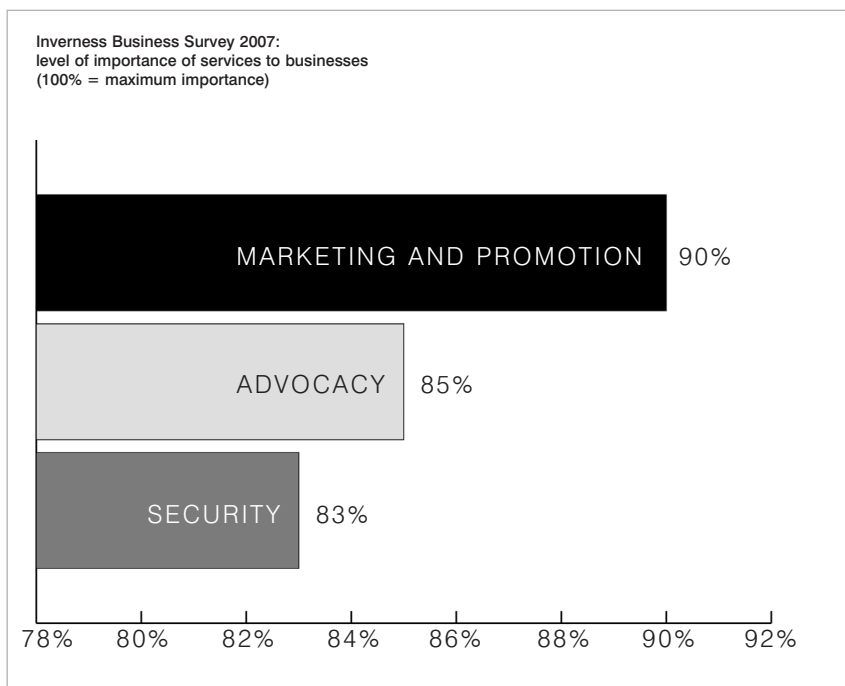
Inverness struggles to fund marketing campaigns to attract customers to the city

Every year

Inverness city struggles to deliver events and a standard of city centre services that one would expect in the Capital of the Highlands

Extensive consultation and BID demonstration projects have shown that businesses within the BID area have a number of key concerns. Businesses within the BID area place high importance on seeing action to address:

- Promotion, including
 - a) Marketing – creating a customer friendly city centre
 - b) Events – making Inverness an exciting place to be
 - c) Cleanliness and Decoration – attracting people to attractive spaces
- Advocacy – working together to get the most out of our public services and reduce costs
- Safety – reducing losses and helping customers & staff to feel safe



Key issues include:

Inverness's traffic and pedestrian signage is inadequate, inconsistent and outdated. This need to be addressed to make the city centre more visible and visitor friendly

Need for city centre focus and momentum. Inverness is a great place to be but so much more can be done to add sparkle to our Highland gem, and to attract visitors in all seasons

Need for public services and economy to address challenges of rapid growth. The city centre economy and associated services must be nurtured to ensure growth and to allow the sustained economic momentum of the Highland Capital

With a BID, action can be taken

As a dedicated new not-for-profit company, the BID can work to ensure action is taken to deliver a successful, thriving city centre.

This plan has grown out of the business community's needs. When asked to rate the importance of various services, businesses highlighted promotion as being a key concern, with the need to lobby for improved services, and provide a safe trading environment for businesses and customers also being highlighted as key ambitions. This plan reflects those ambitions.



5. What will the BID deliver?

The Inverness BID will deliver three key projects to strengthen the city centre trading environment.

5.1 Marketing and Promotion

In total 56% of BID income will be spent on marketing, focusing on four key projects:

1. Create a family-friendly city

The issue

There is little to encourage families to the city centre, for example difficulties with signage and parking, no family entertainment, stressful shopping, no “bag drop” service, no “safe space” for young people to interact and relax. Inverness is losing out by not providing family friendly services.

Create a family-friendly space in the city centre.

A place where parents can relax, drop their shopping off and young people can play.’

The proposal

Improve the city area by becoming more family friendly, with designated areas and services designed to assist and attract families and young people. This will help to establish Inverness as Scotland’s most family-friendly city, and help to increase footfall and dwell times in the city centre. A new facility in the city centre will be established to support this project.

The BID will bring together stakeholders and decision-makers to implement a project to develop and resource such a family friendly space. It will seek to lever in additional public funds by using this project as a “demonstration project” to bring vacant first floor spaces back in to use.

When will it happen?

Feasibility 2007 / 2008

Implementation, delivery of new family-friendly services 2008 - 2013

Asset management - developing services and delivering new ‘family safe’ pilot projects 2008 -2011

2. Promote the city centre

The issue

Other towns and cities invest money in marketing their centres locally, regionally and nationally, but Inverness does not. Customers and visitors vote with their feet – or their car – and go to the destinations with the best strategy for attracting custom.

The proposal

Step 1:

Develop the Inverness city brand with particular emphasis on city centre attractions as part of an “enjoyinverness” campaign. Tell people about the ‘Capital of The Highlands’, highlighting travel, accommodation, dining, shopping and leisure opportunities in the heart of Inverness. Review events and anniversaries scheduled over the next five years – from Rock Ness to the Olympics. Work with city centre businesses to identify opportunities and develop a marketing plan which will allow all to optimise benefits gained from these events.

Step 2:

Launch the “enjoyinverness” campaign - widely promoting what is unique and attractive about Inverness. Target new customers as well as those who currently use the city but may be tempted elsewhere. Inverness is the third most visited destination in Scotland for overseas visitors, and should make more of this and other opportunities. The BID will work closely with agencies such as Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Visit Scotland to develop new promotions and access the additional funding which these organisations can supply.

Step 3:

Implement action which will include the following:

- Promoting Inverness’s unique selling point – a beautiful city with all the modern attractions you could want BUT with unique “hidden gems” such as the Victorian Market and specialist shops throughout the Old Town
- Advertising and PR via a wide range of communication channels
- Developing joint promotion services with operators such as the Eden Court and local marketing groups to ensure that the “enjoy Inverness” message is widely supported and disseminated
- New modern city centre website with a free page for every BID levy payer
- Ensure policies and projects which are essential to business are brought to the fore

When will it happen?

The marketing offensive will take place each year for five years, commencing in 2008. Work on delivering a strategy of co-ordinated marketing activities will commence in April 2008.

3. Hold monthly city celebrations

celebrateinverness

The issue

Inverness benefits from a fantastic range of unique venues which appeal to a many different audiences: from the Market Bar and Hootananny’s to the Ironworks, Bakoo and Eden Court Theatre. By co-ordinating, marketing and boosting the range of events we see in Inverness we can help to position and promote our city as a vibrant year-round destination. A month-by-month, well co-ordinated and promoted programme of events will attract more families and customers to the city. To remain competitive Inverness needs to work to attract people – and events are a key way of doing this.

The proposal

Generate funding for the best events programme Inverness has ever seen. The programme will commence in 2008 and will extend to marketing and promoting events staged throughout the city. The BID will co-ordinate, brand and promote events happening throughout the city, so increasing awareness of what’s on, and the attraction of Inverness as a destination. A spectacular winter festival and monthly events featuring fashion, music, food, arts & crafts will increase footfall and profits.

The BID will promote Inverness as a “City of Music” and a “Family City”. It will initiate a high profile Summer Festival commencing in 2008 and a Family Festival to start in 2009. Potential venues across the City include Eden Court Theatre, the Cathedral, Ness Islands and Churches as well as restaurants and cafes. The Summer festival will also incorporate pubs as venues. Programmed entertainments will extend to the streets – attracting people around the city – from the Old Town and Victorian Market to Falcon Square, Eastgate and the High Street. The Festivals will be widely promoted locally and further a field to attract more people to the city centre.



These festivals will be part of a co-ordinated programme of regular events every month, expertly managed, co-ordinated and promoted. They will include outdoor theatre, regular live music and events planned throughout the day and in to the evening – boosting both day and night time economies.

When will it happen?

The Summer Festival will take place each year for five years starting 2008. A family Festival will start in 2009 and run each year for four years. Work on delivering a programme of co-ordinated events will kick off in Spring 2008.

4. Clean and decorate the City

bloominverness
cleaninverness

The Issue

We would all like to see higher standards of cleanliness in our city centre – more importantly so would our customers. Vandalism, graffiti, litter and general mess all need to be seriously addressed at a level beyond that which The Highland Council can deliver.

Many city centre floral arrangements are currently organised through the goodwill of The Inverness Project: a voluntary group whose members now wish to retire. The presentation and decoration of our central trading area needs to be put on a stronger footing: the BID can achieve this.

Signage within the city centre is woefully poor for visitors, and results in them missing many of our best shopping and commercial areas. The completion of the £6 million streetscaping programme will give the centre a terrific boost, but there is a lot more that should be done to beautify and promote our environment.

‘create a cleaner, safer, more family-friendly city.’

The proposal

Customers are drawn to pleasant and well-decorated destinations, and the BID will work to ensure that the city centre is just this. This will be achieved through:

- A highly visible team of four permanent city centre Ambassadors who will work in partnership with public bodies to support the delivery of enhanced public services in the BID area
- Delivering additional cleansing services and improved decorations in the city centre
- Bringing pressure to bear for better signage on the approaches to Inverness to attract passing trade
- Promote signage improvements within the city centre so that visitors using the main car parks and access points know where to go and what to see

The BID will take on and enhance the provision of attractive floral displays across the city – imagine what Inverness could be like adorned with flowers! Do you remember the PR opportunities created by winning the Britain in Bloom competition years back? These are the levels we should be aspiring to, and we can do it with the BID’s encouragement and leadership.

BID Ambassadors: an immediate first point of contact

BID Ambassadors will be businesses’ and customers’ first obvious point of contact for help and action. This highly visible presence on the streets of central Inverness will provide businesses with an easy and accessible point of contact. Ambassadors will make it their business to get to know the businesses in their “patch”. Businesses will find them an accessible point of contact to raise any issues, and an easy conduit for information to flow both from businesses to the BID company, and from the BID company to businesses. The BID Ambassadors will act as the “eyes and ears” of the business community – ensuring that standards of public services are monitored, maintained and improved. They will deliver additional safety, cleansing and welcoming services – ensuring that the city centre is an enjoyable place for all.

Inverness BID activities will NOT be a substitute for public services

In order to ensure that any projects delivered by the BID are additional to services supplied by the public purse, the Inverness BID has a baseline service level agreement with the Highland Council. This agreement details current public service levels and guarantees that any services provided by the BID will be ADDITIONAL to those provided by the public purse. Visit www.invernessbid.co.uk and click on “Baseline Agreement” to read about the public services detailed in this service level agreement.

When it will happen?

Ambassadors appointed Spring 2008
Work on improving signage 2008 – 2011
Floral displays and additional planting 2008 to 2012

What will the average annual levy investment be in marketing and promoting the BID area?

£230,780 =
56% of levy income



5.2 Advocacy - a single, strong voice for business – joint purchasing, joint lobbying

The issue

Businesses pay rates for public services to keep our city spaces safe and clean. Speaking with a single voice would help to ensure that providers of public services adhere to the standards we all aspire to.

We are all aware of overflowing litter bins; waste containers 'parked' on pavements; debris from night-time revellers despoiling our city streets well into the next day, litter; fly-posting and graffiti; drunken and anti-social behaviour including shop-front vandalism and street urination.

Businesses pay individually for many services such as waste management, building maintenance and office consumables. By joining together and purchasing these and other services businesses would save time and money.

The proposal

There will be a strong lobbying force which will work in partnership with public bodies to support the development of public services within the BID area. This united voice, along with the BID partnership approach will enable issues to be dealt with at an early stage. Effort will be focussed on actions which strengthen the trading environment. Improved waste management, litter reduction through enforcement and promotion of recycling will all be used to reduce costs and improve city centre ambience.

The BID company will submit comment to the local authority on planning issues where they impact on city centre vitality and viability; working to encourage the council to exercise restraint on any damaging or unnecessary out of town developments. Furthermore the BID will be pro-active in promoting area management strategies to enhance the trading environment within the BID area.

BID members will also be able to use the BID company to jointly purchase commonly used products and services, making savings for all.

The BID will lobby to lever in additional funds for BID projects in the BID area.

When will it happen?

2008 – 2013

What will the average annual levy investment be in advocacy services; joint purchasing and lobbying?

£63,500 =
15% of levy income

5.3 Safety – reduce crime and the fear of crime

BID Ambassador Team
safeinverness

The Issue

In positioning Inverness as a family-friendly city, it is important to ensure that our city centre is safe, and that it is perceived to be safe. There are still areas of the city that are not particularly welcoming which is off-putting for visitors as well as customers and employees. The award winning 'safeinverness' scheme has had a significant impact in reducing losses, but its public funding is running out.

'tackle the issues
before they are arise'

The proposal

The BID's highly visible BID Ambassador Team¹ will be in action in the city centre to tackle anti-social behaviour and litter louts. The team will report incidents to the local authority or police and work to create a better trading environment.

The safeinverness project, which shares information to alert members to potential hazards will be secured and expanded under the BID. This will help to establish a safer environment for everyone, leading to reduced losses, lower staff turnover and increased footfall

The BID would promote decorative lighting to highlight key features of the City, making Inverness well-lit and attractive, so enhancing its night time economy and creating a 'feel-safe' atmosphere.

When will it happen?

2008 – 2012

What will the average annual BID levy investment be in reducing crime and the fear of crime?

£85,500 =
20% of levy income

¹ BID Ambassadors: two-person 'BID environmental team' and two-person 'BID security team'



6. Measuring Performance

The success of the BID will be judged by the outputs that the BID company delivers in relation to the three key BID projects:

1. Marketing & Promotion

2. Advocacy

and

3. Safety

Every year the BID Company will publish an action plan which will detail specific projects which the company will deliver over the next twelve months. Key performance indicators will relate to the completion of this action plan.

The proposed action plan for year one of the BID company will be published on the Inverness BID website within the first three months of the BID company being created, ensuring that members and directors of the BID company direct project delivery.

KPIs for year one of the BID company's performance will relate to specifics contained in the action plan, however in general KPIs will relate to:

1. Marketing and Promotion

- delivery of events detailed in annual action plan
- establishment of baseline measures of footfall
- uplift in footfall created by events (year-on-year and against previous week)

2. Advocacy

- leverage of additional income in to the BID company as a result of relationship building with third parties. The BID will aim to achieve a leverage rate of 30% in year one rising to 50% in year five of the company's operation
- establishment of baseline service level agreements with suppliers of public services
- enhance levels of communication between businesses and public services via the BID company, for example by recruitment of city centre ambassadors
- establishment of reporting systems to expedite reporting and resolution of issues in relation to the provision of public services
- continuation of measures already in place which monitor number of incidents reported (for example graffiti and fly posting removal), and time taken to resolve issues raised

3. Safety

Continuing the work of safeinverness, the BID will adopt reporting processes instigated by this successful initiative, to include:

- information sharing – number of businesses participating in safeinverness information sharing projects, using safeinverness bulletins and reporting incidents
- business training – at least two seminars held per annum focussing on reducing risk and losses
- the number and types of incidents occurring within the BID area, and the year-on-year trends of such incidents relative to national average (aim to achieve a decrease)
- continuation of the safeinverness annual business survey – helping to identify priorities and trends

4. Business performance

The Inverness BID is designed to strengthen the city centre trading environment. The BID will, subject to businesses participating, deliver a measure of city centre business performance: the "city trading index". This index will rely on businesses agreeing to supply the BID – on a confidential basis – with information on percentage change in income. The BID will publish an average "score" based on this information and make this information available to all BID members. The BID will also provide reports on car park usage, vacant property counts and hotel occupancy rates – again subject to businesses supplying this information.



7. Where will the BID operate?

The BID will take place in the heart of Inverness City Centre, covering all separate rateable properties in the centre – this includes retail, office, leisure and other commercial businesses. The proposed 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.

The following streets are included either in whole or in part:

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



BID area – Inverness city centre



8. How does the voting process work?

For the Inverness BID to go ahead, there must be broad support for the projects detailed in this plan. A vote will be held and a three tier test will ensure that no one business sector dominates the decision making process.

For the vote to be carried, there must be a minimum 25% turn out, and, of those voting over 50% by number as well as over 50% by rateable value have to vote in favour. This "triple test" ensures that the vote can only be carried when there is widespread support.

The projects detailed in this plan will be delivered if businesses vote "yes" to the Inverness BID. Eligible businesses in the proposed BID area will have voting papers sent out to them by 18th January 2008 and will have until 14th March 2008 to vote.

A "yes" vote will enable the new BID company to be formed and funded, with the projects described in this business plan commencing from April 2008.

Who Votes?

Every business ratepayer and property owner in the proposed Inverness BID area will receive a ballot paper provided that:

- on the date when the notice of ballot is issued, the business address is on the Non Domestic Valuation Roll

and

- that property is located within the area of the proposed Inverness Business Improvement District as defined by the map in this document

and

- that property is not one of a small class of exempt properties as detailed below

Each ratepayer or owner entitled to vote will have one vote in respect of each property within the Inverness BID boundary. A proxy vote service will be available.

A few businesses and properties within the proposed BID area will be exempt from paying the levy and voting in the BID process, namely those with a rateable value of £8,000 or less.

Membership of the BID Company

Once the BID company is formed, membership of the company will be open to all organisations within the BID area, with a simple application process. Membership will be free to all those paying the levy. Members undertake to contribute up to one pound in the event of the company being wound up. Organisations which are located in, or have an interest in the BID area, but which are not liable for the levy, can apply to become members of the company for an annual fee starting at £80 per annum. Once members, these organisations can participate in decision-making and management decisions to the same extent as any other levy paying business within the BID area.

9. How much will be invested?

The BID proposals would result in at least £1.5 million being invested in improving the city centre trading environment. This money accumulated through the levy will be used to attract more funding from public sector agencies, grant bodies and landlords during the five year lifetime of the BID. There is good precedent for BID and town centre management companies levering in additional funds – as the recent Inverness BID demonstration projects have shown. We have every expectation that the Inverness BID company will achieve significant additional investment on top of that made by local businesses via the BID. We aim to achieve a target of at least 30% of the Inverness BID company's income being non-levy based in year one, with this figure rising to 50% by year five. That is to say for every £10 invested by businesses an extra £5 will be sourced and invested in

Inverness city centre via the Inverness BID company. The BID will multiply businesses' investment and deliver a greater return.

1% Levy

The Inverness BID will be core funded by a levy of 1% of the non domestic rateable value of each property in the BID area. The levy will be based upon 2005 rateable values, with indicative costs to businesses being as follows²:

RATEABLE VALUE	ANNUAL LEVY	MONTHLY COST	WEEKLY COST
£8,000	£80	£6.67	£1.55
£10,000	£100	£8.33	£1.92
£20,000	£200	£16.66	£3.85
£50,000	£500	£41.65	£9.60
£100,000	£1,000	£83.30	£19.23
£250,000	£2,500	£208.25	£48.08
£500,000	£5,000	£416.50	£96.15

Businesses with a rateable value of less than £8,000 will be exempt from paying the levy and will not be entitled to a vote in the ballot.

The levy will be collected after mid April 2008. Levy invoices will be sent out again on 1 April in each subsequent year, with the last invoice being issued on 1 April 2012. The BID will end on 31st March 2013. The BID company will contract The Highland Council to collect the levy on its behalf. Income will be transferred to the BID company to manage and spend in accordance with this business proposal. Rateable values will be taken from the 2005 non-domestic valuation roll, as at the ballot date (subject to the notes under Eligibility to pay the BID levy, as set out below). In each of the five years of the BID an inflationary increase will be added to the

² If you do not know your business's rateable value you can look it up on www.saa.gov.uk or contact the BID team at info@invernessbid.co.uk with your company name and full address, and the team will let you know the annual cost.



levy based on the increase in the UK's Retail Price Index as at December 31st in the previous year.

Eligibility to pay the BID levy

The list of BID levy payers and the amounts to be paid will be updated and amended during the life of the BID to reflect any changes in property owners/occupiers, value amendments made by the Assessor (including appeal settlements and physical changes), and properties added to or deleted to/from the 2005 Valuation Roll.

Property owners and occupiers

The 1% levy will be applied to each property. The bill will be split 50:50 between the property owner and the tenant – that is to say, an invoice for half the levy will be sent to the landlord, and an invoice for half the levy will be sent to the occupier of the premises.

Where a property is vacant, undergoing refurbishment or being demolished, the property owner will be obliged to pay the levy where applicable.

Where the business is owner-occupied (as in the case of many of our independent stores) the owner occupier pays the 1%. Where a property is vacant the property owner will pay the full 1%. There will be no charge on empty properties for the first three months, but the full BID levy will have to be paid thereafter.

The BID levy will have to be paid by any new ratepayer occupying an existing property within the BID area up until the end of the five year term on 31st March 2013. Likewise, any new rateable property created during the lifetime of the BID will be obliged to pay the levy. If a business ratepayer occupies premises for less than one year, the amount of BID levy payable will be calculated on a daily basis.

Levy exemptions and reliefs

Businesses in Inverness's Eastgate Centre already pay a service charge to obtain additional safety, marketing and promotional services for their own trading area. Likewise, businesses in the Victorian Market pay a rent which covers additional marketing, security and cleanliness services. The BID levy is akin to a "city centre service charge" – ensuring that all businesses in the BID area benefit from such additional services.

The projects detailed in this business plan will "top up" the services Inverness's shopping centre tenants already enjoy. As the ninety or so businesses in these centres will gain additional benefit from the BID projects, it is appropriate that they are able to join in the BID process. However, as these "shopping centre" businesses already have their own services, it is also appropriate that they have scope to make a degree of in-kind contributions in lieu of levy payments, as described below:

1. Eastgate Shopping Centre and Victorian Market

Properties in the Eastgate Shopping Centre and the area known as the Victorian Market will, along with all other eligible businesses contribute a 1% levy towards BID projects. However, the Eastgate shopping centre will be able to contribute up to 40% of the amount due as "in kind" support, subject to agreement of the BID Board. Likewise, properties in the Victorian Market: Academy Street Arcade, Market Hall and Queensgate Arcade will be able to contribute up to 30% as "in kind" support.

2. Established places of worship

Churches and other established places of worship³ will be exempt from the levy. Although they have frontage on to BID area streets, they are not run as businesses and are unlikely to see an increase in their income as a result of the BID activity. Thus it is not appropriate that these places of worship are made liable for the BID levy.

3. Charity Shops

Charity shops will pay the BID levy as any other city centre businesses do – the shops will benefit from marketing and an improved retail environment as any other retailer in the area will do, and thus it is appropriate that they contribute to BID.

Other Charities

Any other (non retail) charities operating in the BID area will not be charged a levy.

Collection of the Levy

The BID company will be core funded by the BID levy. This levy will be collected annually from April 2008, with the last invoice issued in April 2012.

The levy will be payable in one lump sum at the start of each year. The BID board will have the discretion to accept phased payments⁴ if asked to do so by any individual levy payer. Collection and enforcement arrangements will be similar to those for the collection and enforcement of non-domestic business rates. The BID company will engage the services of The Highland Council to collect the levy and to pursue any unpaid invoices in accordance with BID legislation. The levy collected will go in full to the Inverness BID company and be used to deliver the projects set out in this business plan.

The BID will end on 31st March 2013. Businesses will have the option to set up a new BID once this initial five year BID is complete.

³A building occupied by a religious body and used for the purposes of religious worship as defined in Section 22 of the Valuation and Rating (Scotland) Act 1956, will be viewed as an exempt place of worship for the purpose of this BID.

⁴Subject to administrative arrangements being put in place with the levy collection authority



10. Supporting improvements in public services

It is important that the activities of the BID represent added value over and above public services already provided in the area. For this reason, baseline service level agreements will be entered into with

suppliers of public services to clearly define the levels of service that can be expected from them. BID projects will be ADDITIONAL to such services and will not replace them.

There will be also a formal operating agreement between the BID and The Highland Council that will define all of the contractual arrangements, e.g. for collection and enforcement of the BID levy.

11. Who is in charge?

Control of the BID Company

A private company limited by guarantee, "the BID Company", will be formed and will become the trading vehicle to deliver the objectives of the BID. The BID Company will be directed by local businesses.

The new BID Company will quickly organise a general meeting to appoint directors. These directors will then be responsible for the BID funds and for delivering the objectives of this business plan. The current BID Shadow Steering Group has offered to continue to operate after the vote in order that momentum can be maintained until the BID Company's own management is in place, and in order that there can be an orderly handover of business to the new company.

The BID Board

The BID company will have up to 13 directors, all drawn from the members. Different sectors within the BID area will be entitled to a number of seats on the board, and should there be more nominations than places available, an election will be held.

Working with public partners

To be successful, the BID company will maintain and grow strong relations with providers of public services, experienced advisors and potential public funders. To this end, it is expected that the directors of the BID company will invite key partners from the public sector to sit as observers on the board. These observers may be drawn from organisations such as the police, the local authority, the local enterprise company and Visit Scotland, along with other such expertise as can usefully work with the BID company to further commonly identified goals. The BID board will deliver the best experience possible to all whose livelihood depends on a vital and vibrant BID area.

The allocation of seats on the board to different business sectors will ensure that the board reflects the overall make up of the city centre economy.

BID Board Structure

It is proposed to allocate places on the board as follows:

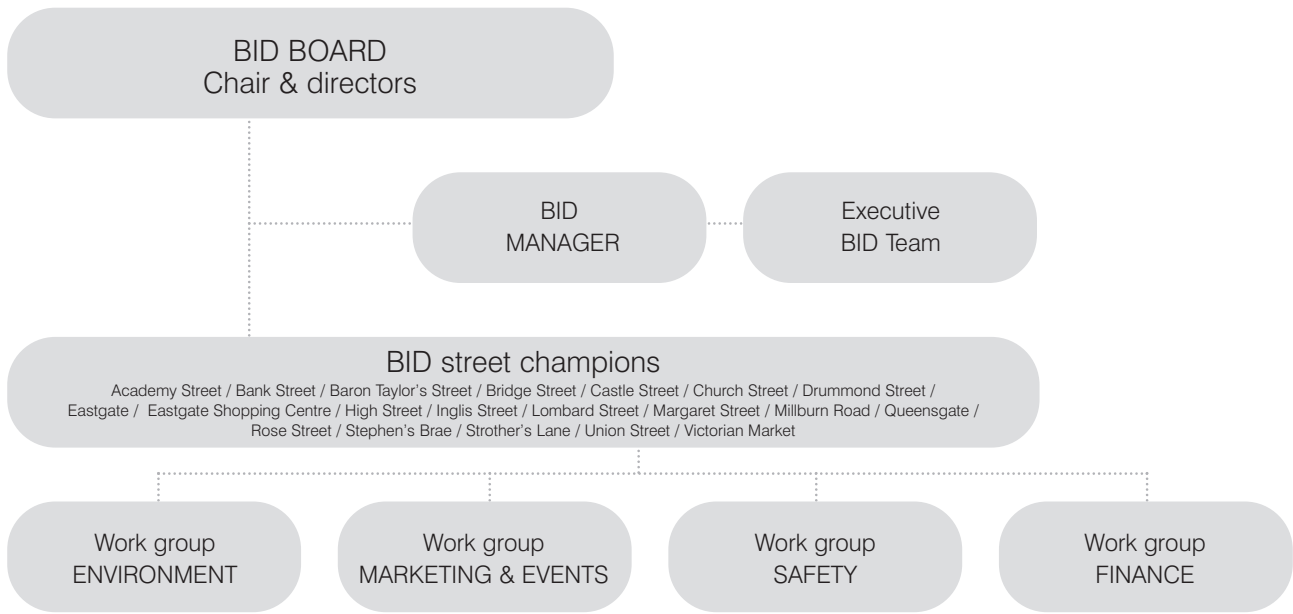
RETAIL SECTOR	6
OFFICE SECTOR	2
HOSPITALITY AND LEISURE SECTOR	1
PROPERTY OWNERS	3
PROVOST	1
Total	13



The directors will have powers to co-opt directors to address any imbalances within the board or to fill vacancies. At each Annual General Meeting, one-third of the elected directors will retire by rotation, but they may be reappointed if willing to act. Every BID member shall be entitled to one vote, regardless of the number of properties for which they are paying the BID levy.



BID company structure



BID street champions

Each street in the BID area will be invited to appoint a "BID Street Champion". These "Champions" will have one observer on the BID board. This will enable each Street in the BID area to feel truly involved and listened to throughout the life of the BID company. Individual street champions will be able to convene meetings of businesses in their street to identify issues of common concern which can be addressed by the BID company. Those interested in becoming "street Champions" can nominate themselves for election.

Working groups: environment, marketing & events, safety, finance

The new BID Company will create different working groups, each led by a member of the BID Board.

The BID Team

The proposed BID will employ a dedicated full time BID manager who will lead the BID team which will deliver the projects and services detailed in this plan. These members of staff will be recruited by the BID Board or their nominees.

This model will be reviewed 12 months from the date of incorporation. More details on nominations, election and the role of a BID director can be found at www.invernessbid.co.uk or contact the BID team.

Flexibility and responsibility

No company can anticipate all events and a business plan which is too prescriptive will restrict the ability of the BID company to react to opportunities and challenges as they arise. To this end, the board of directors will have the power to alter budgets within projects, and to make other such amendments to business plans as they see fit, in line with good company practice and the effective operation of the Inverness BID company.

The BID company will hold an Annual General Meeting where staff will report back to levy payers on performance in the year, and present BID plans for action in the subsequent year. Regular BID Board and stakeholder meetings throughout the year will ensure that plans reflect the current ambitions of the business community.



With thanks to all the businesses and people of Inverness who made the creation of this business plan and calendar possible.

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Whilst every measure has been taken to ensure that the contents of this business plan and calendar are accurate, no liability can be accepted for errors or omissions contained therein.