

Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee

10.00am, Friday 13 September 2019

Present

Councillors Kate Campbell (Convener), Watt (Vice-Convener), Booth, Jim Campbell, Douglas (substituting for Councillor McLellan), Lang, Miller, Munro, Whyte and Work.

1. Original Edinburgh – Old Town Business Improvement District; Proposal and Ballot

(a) Deputation by Original Edinburgh

The Committee agreed to hear a deputation from Jocelyne Fleming, James McGregor and Kat Brogan on behalf of Original Edinburgh in relation to the Original Edinburgh – Old Town Business Improvement District; Proposal and Ballot.

The deputation highlighted the following issues:

- That local businesses had come together to form Original Edinburgh in order to support the prosperity of the Old Town.
- That the deputation was keen to work with local businesses, the Council and the community collaboratively in order to support this project.
- That the Original Edinburgh BID steering group had developed a strategic long term plan for the future of the Old Town.
- That Original Edinburgh aimed to deliver a common vision to enhance the public realm for workers, residents and the general public to promote the Old Town.
- That the Board of Directors that would represent the members of the BID would be democratically elected and would work with the Council to find solutions using the levy that would be raised.
- To confirm that the Original Edinburgh BID had met all six of the necessary criteria required to move to ballot.

The deputation requested that the Committee consider the merits of the proposal put forward by Original Edinburgh.

(b) Report by the Executive Director of Place

Business Improvement Districts (BID) allowed business communities to raise funds through a levy on nondomestic rates (NDR) and take forward a range of activities to improve the area in which they are located.

The Original Edinburgh BID steering group wrote to the Executive Director of Place on 13 June 2019 to give the Council notice of their intention to hold a ballot on 28 November 2019. The BID proposal was received on 21 August 2019

The Council was required, under BID Legislation, to either approve the proposal and permit a ballot to take place, or exercise its right to veto.

Committee was asked to decide if the criteria set out in legislation had been satisfied. If this was the case, the Committee could not exercise its right to veto and was required to allow the ballot to proceed. Committee was not, at this stage, being asked to debate which way the Council should vote in the event of a ballot.

Decision

- 1) To note the progress towards a proposed BID for the Old Town and the production of a fully developed BID Proposal.
- 2) To agree that the Council found no valid reason to exercise its right to veto a ballot.
- 3) To support the aims of the Original Edinburgh BID proposals as set out in paragraph 4.3 of the report.
- 4) To agree that a ballot of eligible voters would take place on 28 November 2019 to determine if a BID would be established in Edinburgh's Old Town.
- 5) To agree to communicate with the BID on the need for a baseline of public sector services.
- 6) To agree that the Convener would meet with Police Scotland to discuss the baseline of public services.
- 7) To agree to a briefing between members and the deputation to discuss business proposals and the Council's role in the BID.

(Reference – report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted)