

Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee

10.00am, Monday, 20 January 2020

Business Improvement Districts

Executive/routine Wards Council Commitments	All
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1. Recommendations

- 1.1 Committee is asked to:
 - 1.1.1 note the legislation in place for the creation of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs);
 - 1.1.2 note that the Council will also sometimes be an eligible voter in the area in which BIDs are proposed;
 - 1.1.3 note the criteria used to determine the outcome of a BID ballot; and
 - 1.1.4 agree to delegate the responsibility for the Council's vote(s) to the Executive Director of Place, in consultation of the Convener and Vice Convener of Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work, the Convener and Vice Convener of Finance and Resources and the appropriate ward Councillors.

Paul Lawrence

Executive Director of Place

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Report

Business Improvement Districts

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report summarises the arrangements for establishing Business Improvement Districts. Where the Council is an eligible voter, the report makes recommendations on what the process should be to exercise this responsibility.

3. Background

- 3.1 BIDs allow business communities to raise funds through a levy on non-domestic rates (NDR) and take forward a range of activities to improve the area in which they are located.
- 3.2 The Business Improvement Districts (Scotland) Regulations (2007) cover how BIDs are formed and operate. Both Local Government and Scottish Government, including its agency the Scottish Towns Partnership, have a role in oversight of the development process and any BID.
- 3.3 There are a number of responsibilities within the legislation in respect of responsibilities which fall to the local authority to progress. However, these do not include responsibilities in respect of voting rights.

4. Main report

- 4.1 There are currently two business improvement districts in Edinburgh – [Essential Edinburgh](#) (City Centre – New Town) and Edinburgh’s [West End](#).
- 4.2 Recently a ballot took place on the proposal to create a BID in the Old Town, titled Original Edinburgh. The ballot took place in November 2019 and the proposal was narrowly defeated.
- 4.3 In addition to the Council’s statutory duties in respect of the preparation and administration of a BID, there are situations where the Council would also be an eligible voter in the area being considered for a BID due to the Council’s property ownership.
- 4.4 The actual vote (or votes) has to be submitted by an officer of the Council. It is proposed that this responsibility be delegated to the Executive Director of Place, in

consultation with the Convener and Vice Convener of Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work, the Convener and Vice Convener of Finance and Resources and local ward members.

- 4.5 There are four conditions which need to be assessed in determining the outcome of a BID ballot. These are:
- 4.5.1 The number of votes cast in favour of the BID proposals **exceeds** the number of votes cast against those proposals;
 - 4.5.2 The aggregate of the rateable values of the relevant properties in respect of which a person voting in the ballot has voted for the BID proposals (A) **exceeds** the aggregate of the rateable values of the relevant properties in respect of which a person voting in the ballot has voted against the BID proposals (B);
 - 4.5.3 At least 25% of the **persons** entitled to vote in the ballot (107 out of 426) **have** done so; and
 - 4.5.4 The aggregate of the rateable values of relevant properties in respect of which a person voting in the ballot has voted for the BID proposals (A) **plus** the aggregate of the rateable values of the relevant properties in respect of which a person voting in the ballot has voted against the BID proposals (B) **is** equal to at least **25%** of the aggregate of the rateable values of all relevant properties in respect of which a person is entitled to vote in the ballot.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 If the report recommendations are approved, the consultation arrangements outlined above will be followed for any new proposals to create a Business Improvement Districts where the Council is an eligible voter.
- 5.2 It is expected that the next BID ballot in Edinburgh will be a renewal ballot for the West End BID. This is likely to take place around June 2020.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 There are no financial impacts arising directly from this report.
- 6.2 However, if the outcome of a ballot is to go ahead to establish a BID in an area where the Council has property ownership, there will be a financial impact on the Council as a result of the additional levy applied. The additional levy % is determined by the individual BID proposers as part of their business plan development.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 The consultation on BIDs is undertaken by a BID steering group, usually established by interested businesses in a local area.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 None.

9. Appendices

- 9.1 None.